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NARRATIVE PROSTHESIS IN THE FILM *MEMORIES*

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ABSTRACT

Disability is often perceived or viewed as a handicap or an abnormality pertaining to the body. But often, disability manifests itself in utmost diabolic forms when it is mental or psychological. This article aims at exploring the theme of narrative prosthesis or disability in the film *Memories* with reference to two characters – Sam and Peter, who play the role of the protagonist and the antagonist. Both of them exhibit different levels of disability. The article examines the ways in which the characters deal with their disability and how they either try to overcome their disability or aggravate it even further by their actions. The use of semiotics in highlighting the disability aspect is also analysed in the article.

Disability here is seen as physical and psychological. Both characters exhibit psychological disability. But while Sam's disability is one of disequilibrium that is transient or short-lived, Peter's disability is one of social maladjustment. Sam makes every attempt to return to normalcy after a point of time. But Peter never does so. Towards the end, when he holds Sanju and knife point and turns the cylinders on, he clearly says that there is no possibility of a return anymore. This affirms the fact that Peter is beyond redemption and being an object of social maladjustment and a threat to society, he is wiped out. Sam succeeds in killing him and saving his brother Sanju.

The purpose of this article is to emphasise the fact that most human beings find themselves disabled by circumstances either physically or psychologically. But, their success or failure that ensues afterwards is largely dependent on whether they proceed towards hope and normalcy or whether they recede into a more degenerative state of mind.

Keywords: disability, narrative prosthesis, crime, signs, disequilibrium, maladjustment

"...I subscribe to what's called the social model of disability, which tells us that we are more disabled by the society we live in than by our bodies..." – Stella Young

Ever since the dawn of Structuralism, the concept of a text has undergone significant transition thereby resulting in a massive genre embedding or genre network. Films and performance arts that were hitherto relegated to the non-textual realm, have now become part of the mighty confluence called THE TEXT. Films are no longer perceived as mere forms of entertainment – spicy 'gap-fillers' in the humdrum of mundane

life. They now form an integral part of the 'text spectrum,' where critics unravel layers of interpretation using disciplines like film studies, film semiotics, and the like.

Memories (2013) is an Indian (Malayalam language) mystery-thriller film that centres around a cop Sam Alexander who is haunted by memories of his dead wife and daughter due to which he turns alcoholic. But, when a series of identical murders begin to take place, Sam finds himself drawn into the web of action and the responsibility of solving the case rests heavily on his shoulders. How Sam reacts to the situation forms the major part of the film.

The film follows the usual, rather typical formula of a mystery-thriller film:

- A couple of murders are committed and the identity of the murderer is unknown.
- The hero is introduced and he sets out to solve the mystery behind the murders.
- There are snares and complications in his path, but he overcomes them.
- Finally, he finds out who committed the murders and arrests the murderer or shoots the murderer dead in a thrilling encounter.

It is apparent that Indian filmdom has no dearth of such films. Yet, when one hears that the film performed well at the box office, then one wishes to probe into the secret behind the film's success.

Generally, success cannot be attributed to a single factor. Films owe their success to the setting, the scope and grandeur (in the case of a mythical or historical film), the narrative techniques, the casting, and the dexterity at holding the audience in a "willing suspension of disbelief." As far as *Memories* is concerned, the key to the film's success is the narrative or in formalist terms, the *syuzhet*. The central characters that set the narrative in action are the dominant elements whose moves are gripping and who are drawn in the mighty tug-of-war between snare and truth.

The narrative, as mentioned earlier, is the unique selling point as far as the movie is concerned. What lends uniqueness to the film is the concept of *narrative prosthesis* – a narrative that is based on, or relies mainly on, disability inherent in the character/s. Narrative prosthesis is a term introduced by Mitchell and Snyder (2000) in their book, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*. In their view, "Narrative prosthesis forwards the notion that all narratives operate out of a desire to compensate for a limitation or to reign in excess" (53). The concept is elaborated further. "The very need for a story is called into being when something has gone amiss with the known world, and thus the language of a tale seeks to comprehend that which has stepped out of line" (53).

As far as *Memories* is concerned, this deviance or disability is seen in the two main characters Sam and Anand, who play the part of the protagonist and the antagonist. Throughout the film, one sees the narrative shifting between the past and the present. Both characters are haunted by memories and their disability is largely attributed to their past memories. But the impact of these memories on the two characters has differences too. Sam's disability (alcoholism) is self-destructive although it does have a saddening effect on his dear and near. But Anand alias Peter's disability only leads to destruction or murder of others. Due to haunting memories of his wife's and daughter's death, the protagonist Sam Alex falls from a high state (as an efficient police officer) to the fallen state of a staggering alcoholic only to regain his glory towards the end. Peter the antagonist, on the other hand, rises from the fallen state of a limping young man who was made a scapegoat, to the enviable status of a doctor, but falls ethically and psychologically as a psychopath and murderer, and dies at the hands of Sam in the end.

The film *Memories* starts off like any other regional film, by listing the names of the people behind the making of the film. But it also depicts Sam as a daredevil police officer on an encounter operation. He plans his moves with clinical precision and executes them at the right moment. Consequently, one sees most of the terrorists shot dead with the exception of one.

Against the background of all this action is the English song (a real rarity in a regional film), "Memories never die." As the song draws to a close, the audience finds the encounter team leaving the scene of action with a couple of terrorists whom they succeed in arresting. Sam is at the lead with a grim look and a winning stride. A bearded terrorist, who is assumed dead, watches him as he strides past. This is the director Jeethu Joseph's narrative strategy in order to emphasize who Sam was in the past, and also to hint at the idea of revenge that is likely to ensue.

The film then shifts to the present, startling the audience with an extremely well-planned kidnapping followed by the body being hung from a tree three days later. One obviously expects Sam to investigate the case. But it is done by an egocentric police officer Vinod Krishna. He holds the victim's wife Jansy's ex-lover responsible for the crime. But, as if to thwart his ideas and inflated ego, one sees another case of kidnapping and killing. The forensic department states that there is a certain pattern in the killings. The victims, in the two cases, have deep cut marks on their bodies, which indicate that they have bled to death. The forensic team infers that the killer must have never allowed their wounds to dry; he probably kept slashing at the wounds again and again so that the victims suffer a painful and gruesome death. The possibility of a serial killer also arises, but the police department is way too dazed to take a step in any direction.

The narrative immediately shifts to the past, where the terrorist, who was assumed dead, is seen shooting a child who calls out, "Daddy." The analepsis used here is a powerful technique for when it brings us back to the present, the person whom we see is Sam who wakes up from an alcoholic stupor with a horrifying shudder. This is followed by a series of scenes where Sam is portrayed in a degenerative or disabled state.

Joyojeet Pal in his article, "Physical Disability and Indian Cinema" aptly remarks, "Mass media has a strong impact on how people imagine disability. This makes our study one in which the lines between conceptions of disability derived from traditional social culture and religious texts blur easily with those derived from contemporary screen portrayals" (109). Pal further classifies disability into four categories – disability as punitive, disability as dependence, disability as disequilibrium, and disability as social maladjustment.

In the film *Memories*, Sam undoubtedly falls under the category of disability as disequilibrium. The death of his daughter and wife at the hands of the terrorist prove way too traumatic for him and as a result, he resorts to drinking in order to escape from those dreadful memories. The audience watches with sympathy, and perhaps also with a sense of empathy, the hero Sam staggering along with a whiskey bottle or wine flask in hand most of the time. The once daredevil of the police department is unable to even defend himself from a biker into whom he collides and who even breaks his bottle. He falls in the eyes of the public, particularly in the eyes of Varsha Mathews, the reporter, who is working on a feature titled, "Wine and the Police." Sam turns out to be the focal point of her article.

Sam suffers from a disability or abnormality in his personality (alcoholism) that stems from the psychological trauma that he faced in life. He is unable to even walk straight due to excessive drinking. Until almost the end of the film, he adopts a propulsive gait, stooping in an unsteady way with his shoulders hunched. This personality disability leads to social disability as well. Sam refuses to even smile except in a cynical way when he confronts his family or well-wishers (his younger brother Sanju, Father John, and the Inspector General of Police, Aravindaksha Menon). He adopts a blank and serious look all the time. The only change in expression that the audience perceives is through the glint in his eyes when he fumbles upon a clue.

Narrative prosthesis is optimised further to show Sam's fallen state even at home. His mother Mary Kutty and the local priest father John watch his wrecked state helplessly. In his drunken state, Sam even defies God for having deprived him of his family. His brother Sanju mocks at him saying that it is a shame to be called his brother. Even the men who run the local liquor shop wonder how Alex can be such an addictive alcoholic. The only ray of hope to Sam's family and to the audience is father John's statement that one day things will be fine and Sam will come to him and be part of God's flock. In fact, it is a foreshadowing that the audience is most likely to anticipate and enjoy.

Unlike the printed form where most of the details are co-created by the reader's imagination, the visual media offers everything for the audience to understand in terms of emotions and expressions. Prithviraj Sukumaran, who plays the role of Sam Alex, portrays the regression in the most effective way. His blank expressions when he is in a drunken state, his staggering gait, his sudden outburst of anger at his mother when she refuses to attend his brother's Sanju's wedding without him, and his remorseful look when he apologises to her, are undoubtedly laudatory.

Sam's disability or fallen state is presumed temporary because he happens to be the protagonist. So, the audience can almost predict that Sam will soon get over this state of prosthesis and return to his former

state of courage and glory. The first ray of hope that hints in that direction is the strange case of men being kidnapped and killed, and their bodies suspended from trees or walls or bridges of canals.

The person who initiates the move of trying to bring Sam back to his original self is the Inspector General of Police, Aravindaksha Menon. He tries to persuade Sam to deal with the case, but in vain. Finally, his mother Mary Kutty manages to persuade him to handle the case, much to the relief of the IG and the audience. This marks the beginning of a series of turning points in Sam's life.

Hurdles abound when Varsha mentions Sam in her article on wine and the police. This leads to raised eyebrows and frowns from the police department and from the home ministry. But, finally, Sam is allowed to conduct his own personal investigation as a parallel move apart from the line of investigation taken up by Vinod, another senior police officer, who regards him his staunch adversary and who is eaten up with professional jealousy. Sam is unable to stop drinking even in course of investigating members of the deceased men's families, and consequently, is thrown out of their houses. Sam feels alcohol has clogged his brain so much that he is unable to focus and the case seems to be vegetating. But, as the famous actor Paul Walker often remarked, "Sometimes the hurdles aren't really hurdles at all. They're welcome challenges, tests" (Qtd. in *brainyquote.com*).

In Sam's case, the next turning point comes when he runs out of liquor and, in a fit of rage, flings his flask at the idol of Christ on the wall. The idol falls on the heap of case-related papers and details scattered over the room and then something catches Sam's eye. He looks at the idol of Christ crucified, and then his eyes fall on the **Bible**. The audience wonders if Sam is struck by divine grace or has found something to do with the case.

The suspense is heightened further when Sam goes to Father John and asks him if the marks found on the victims' bodies resemble any ancient script. Father John promises to refer to books in the Bishop's library when Sam's eyes fall on a picture of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. From Father John, Sam comes to know that Jesus Christ spoke in Aramaic. So, the first breakthrough in the case is achieved when Sam surfs the internet for Aramaic letters in order to decode the deep marks (which are actually Aramaic letters) on the victims' bodies. Above all, it clearly indicates Sam's return to normalcy in terms of reasoning and deduction. To quote Pal,

The theme of the "disability cure" – the conceptualization of disability as a state requiring a cure that the narrative achieves however unrealistically – is not unique to Indian cinema, but the frequency with which disability is proposed as a state of disequilibrium is striking. In most Indian films, disability is marginalized, affecting one of the less important characters. When it does impact a protagonist, almost always in relation to a punitive act or stroke of ill luck, it is typically temporary. (120)

Sam's sharp intuition and analytical reasoning are best seen when he describes the killer. He says that the killings have striking similarity to the crucifixion of Christ. The positions in which the bodies are found resemble the crucified figure of Christ. The disappearance of the victims and the surfacing of his body on the third day are similar to the death and the resurrection/ascension of Christ. The markings on the victim's bodies are Biblical allusions and they indicate the killer's dislike for women. So, he killed the victims not because he hated them but because he was wreaking vengeance against their wives by giving them mental torture for the rest of their lives. He sees a parallel between the killer and the terrorist who killed Sam's wife and daughter to avenge his brother's death and to give Sam mental torment for the rest of his life. Soon after that, the third victim's body is also spotted, and a few days later, another young man also falls prey to this 'serial killing.' Sam staggers in as usual in his drunken state to investigate, much to the chagrin of Vinod. The director Jeethu Joseph clearly depicts Sam in this state mainly to project the remains of disability in terms of Sam's personality. Although Sam tries hard, he is unable to get rid of those haunting memories of his wife and daughter being shot to death.

Eventually, the third turning point comes when Sam manages to get an idea of the killer's appearance and his disability – a limp due to one of his feet being shorter than the other. This evidence is strengthened further when Sam and the investigation team interview the wives of the deceased men. They admit that they were a group of five students studying in a career coaching centre run by Isaac and Parvathi. Anand, an

orphan, was also part of the centre. He was brought up by Parvathi's parents and therefore considered her his elder sister.

The investigation reveals that in an attempt to take revenge against Isaac and Parvathi for being strict with them, the girls play tricks on Isaac and Anand, which results in a misunderstanding between them. Matters reach a point where there is a scuffle between the two with Anand pushing Isaac off the top floor accidentally in an impulsive move. With the emergence of Anand, the audience is now aware of the power and nature of the antagonist – a highly whimsical individual who will stop at nothing. This is further emphasised in Valsamma's (the maid who worked for Isaac and Parvathi) statement. It is she who tells Anand the truth about the girls after which Anand leaves with Parvathi (who was pregnant then), never to return again.

What is remarkably striking about the film is the dextrous use of signs in relation to narrative prosthesis. The film makes use of signs throughout to describe the personality of its characters and to illustrate how the same sign could mean completely different things to different individuals. Thomas A. Sebeok in *Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics* offers a clear and lucid definition:

A sign is any physical form that has been imagined or made externally (through some physical medium) to stand for an object, event, feeling, etc., known as a *referent*, or for a class of similar (or related) objects, events, feelings, etc., known as a *referential domain*. In human life, signs serve many functions. They allow people to recognize patterns in things; they act as predictive guides or plans for taking actions; they serve as exemplars of specific kinds of phenomena; and the list could go on and on. (3)

There are different types of signs that semioticians have coined and categorised. But the most seminal are the three types of signs that Charles Sanders Pierce puts forth. Daniel Chandler in his book titled *Semiotics: The Basics* discusses Pierce's categorisation of signs into the symbolic, iconic, and the indexical.

The indexical sign or mode is where the signifier is directly connected to the signified. For instance, a rash or a boil may be directly connected to a skin disorder; a footprint may be directly connected to a person or an animal. According to Chandler, the iconic sign or mode is a mode in which the signifier is perceived as *resembling* or imitating the signified (recognizably looking, sounding, feeling, tasting or smelling like it) – being similar in possessing some of its qualities: e.g. a portrait, a cartoon a scale-model, onomatopoeia, metaphors, realistic sounds in 'programme music', sound effects in radio drama, a dubbed film soundtrack, imitative gestures. (36-37)

Symbolic signs are those in which the relationship between the signifier and signified is arbitrary as in the case of flags, words and phrases, letters, traffic lights, etc. Signs are the subject of interest here because the film optimises on them. Jonathan Bignell in his book *Media Semiotics: An Introduction* aptly opines,

The concept of genre reminds us that films are not self-contained structures of signs, but texts which exist within a broader social context. Every film will exist in relation to two contradictory impulses, repetition and difference. To ensure comprehensibility, a film will repeat the signifying practices of other films, their conventional signs and established codes, and conventional narrative structures of disequilibrium and resolution. Part of the pleasure of seeing a new film is the viewer's ability to recognise and predict meanings appropriately. But every film will also need to be different, to find new ways of using existing signs and codes in order to offer the pleasure of the new. (200)

Although the nature and sequence of events in the film does usher in the element of intertextuality by reminding us of other films, the way in which the film deploys various signs is the key to the film's success.

The key signs used in the film are the *Bible* and the crucifix. The *Bible* is not merely a holy book. To Anand (now Peter), it is a symbolic sign that means something more and completely different. Peter is described as a book lover whose favourite book is the *Bible*. When he realises that the girls played a trick on him that ultimately led to the death of Isaac (in a fight between them, Peter unknowingly pushes Isaac from the top floor) and the consequent aphasic state of Parvathi, he decides to take revenge. The Bible that was his sole comfort becomes his source for vengeance. He tortures and kills the husbands of the four girls (now women). Even in the course of torturing his victims, he makes slit marks on their bodies that are actually

Aramaic letters. Aramaic was the language that Jesus was supposed to have used. The markings on the Aramaic letters are references to chapters and verses in the **Bible**. Peter's eccentric and abnormal mind sees the **Bible** as a symbolic sign of crime and punishment.

If one were to go by Pal's categorization, then Peter's disability is one of social maladjustment. "This theme of maladjustment is remarkably common with the characterization of maladjustment ranging from disgruntled evil to caricaturized comic with a full spectrum of poignant or pitiable in the middle" (Pal 124). Peter is full of evil although his evil is grounded in his desire to take revenge for the mistakes done by the five girls. According to the Crime Classification Manual, "Revenge killing involves the killing of another in retaliation for a perceived wrong, real or imagined, committed against the offender or a significant other" (179).

Peter uses Christ's sacrifice as his guiding metaphor for revenge. He bases his killings on the claim that the victims, in dying for their wives, reach a higher level of celestial existence. Peter 3:18 clearly states, "For Christ died for sins once and for all, a good man on behalf of sinners, in order to lead you to God. He was put to death physically, but made alive spiritually..." (*biblegateway.com*).

Peter affirms this idea while torturing his last victim. This is the reason why the suspended bodies of the victims are in the crucified position since their death is Christ-like (they died for their wives' sins). Peter follows the three-day gap where the victims are kidnapped on a particular day, and on the third day, their bodies are suspended in public places. This is akin to the Biblical concept of crucifixion and resurrection.

Peter suffers from two types of disabilities – physical and psychological. Peter's limp or physical disability is also a sign. While investigating the third murder case, Sam notices the boot marks of the killer on the wet sand. He gets the prints measured and is able to arrive at the conclusion that the person wearing them has one foot shorter than the other. The boot marks also indicate that the killer wears these boots to make up for his physical disability. Since the print leads to Peter's disability, it is an index sign. While he is able to overcome his physical disability, he is unable to get rid of his psychological abnormality. This is mainly because Peter does not consider it an abnormality or irregularity but his right to seek justice. His desire for homicide resulting from sadism clearly reveals his psychopathic tendencies.

In the **Crime Classification Manual**, Douglas et al define serial homicide as "three or more separate events in three or more separate locations with an emotional cooling off period in between homicides" (21). The emotional cooling off period for Peter is about five to six months between the first two murders. But, between the third and fourth murder, the cooling off period is only one and a half months, which shows that Peter is in a hurry to achieve his goal.

The following tendencies are those that a psychopath displays as per the Depravity Standard of the **Crime Classification Manual**. The manual also lists the corresponding characteristics for each of the tendencies mentioned.

Table 1: Items under Study in the Depravity Standard (page 70: *Crime Classification Manual*)

Item	Aspect of the Crime Reflected	Disrespect for the Victim After-the-Fact Diagnostic Correlate
Prolonging the duration of a victim's physical suffering	Actions	Sadism
Unrelenting physical and emotional attack; amount of attacking	Actions	Sadism, malignant narcissism
Exceptional degree of physical harm; amount of damage	Actions	Sadism
Disregard for the victim's feelings or the consequences of the crime on the victim	Attitudes	Psychopathy
Satisfaction or pleasure in response to the actions and their impact	Attitudes	Sadism, necrophilia
Projecting responsibility onto the victim; feeling entitlement to carry	Attitudes	Narcissistic personality

out the action		
Disrespect for the victim after the fact	Attitudes	Sadism
Indifference to the actions and their impact	Attitudes	Psychopathy, antisocial personality

Peter is a psychopath in the true sense of the word. He displays almost all the tendencies mentioned in the manual. He makes slits in the victims' wounds to make them bleed profusely and to torture them to death. He makes sure that the slits are made regularly so that the blood never clots and their pain never subsides. He has no regard for the fact that homicide is a sin by legal and ethical standards. He tells his victims that they should face this suffering because their wives have sinned. Above all, Peter takes immense pleasure in inflicting torture. Every one of these actions is a symbolic sign that reminds one of Christ's suffering for the sake of humanity.

The difference in perception that makes Peter depraved is that he does not understand on purpose that Christ sacrificed himself and did not offer sacrifices or kill others' for others' sins. While his new name that he has taken on suggests that he thinks he is the equivalent of Christ's best disciple. Peter – another fact in which he has completely managed to delude himself.

Towards the end, when Sam reminds him that his niece (Parvathi's daughter) will be orphaned if Peter continues this way, he says that such psychological moves will have no impact on him. In short, Peter's moral and psychological disability is focused upon till the very end. Since its magnitude is much greater than his physical disability, the latter eventually fades into oblivion.

For Sam, the Bible holds no value after the death of his wife Liya Mary, and daughter Teena. He refuses to accept God or even go to church. In fact, his deviance from God and the Holy Bible point to the fact that his psychological disability has also resulted in a kind of spiritual disability. But, in the course of investigation, it is Christianity and the Bible that lead him in the right direction. The image of Christ and the Holy Bible serve as iconic signs here. When the image of Christ falls on the case files and the pictures of the victims, he sees the similarity between the case and the concept of crucifixion. He is forced to learn the Aramaic letters and read the verses of the Bible in relation to the case. To him, the icon of Christ holds a significant place as far as the case is concerned. Though not inclined spiritually or religiously, he gets closer to Christianity purely because his antagonist is or was a 'staunch Christian' who uses Christian iconography as the modus operandi of his crime.

Once Sam stumbles upon the major clue related to the murder, the actions moves swiftly. Sam dominates the film from then onwards, but here and there, Sam the alcoholic assumes the role of a dark deuteragonist, trying to dominate Sam the cop, clamouring for attention, and justifying his presence. Sam the alcoholic is a symbolic sign of mental and psychological disequilibrium. Sam moves from one clue to another, unravelling more aspects of the case, but still unable to lay his hands on Anand. His seminal move to catch Anand is through Varsha Mathews. He makes her publish a statement in the newspaper that one of the cops has seen the killer. In fact, a constable named Somashekaran almost missed catching Anand. So, Sam Alex keeps an eye on Somashekaran knowing well that Anand will try to kill him.

Sam's efforts bear fruit when Anand goes to Somashekaran's house wearing a mask, gun in hand. Sam manages to save Somashekaran but is unable to run fast and catch Anand. At a point, he is unable to take any step forward and is forced to admit defeat as his alcoholism has wrecked his physique and he cannot run fast enough. This is when the real twist or turning point in the narrative occurs – the one that the audience has been eagerly waiting for. Sam decides to put an end to his dark alcoholic side and return to normalcy. Once again, he meets Father John and joins the rehabilitation centre.

Restoration of equilibrium is not an easy task and Sam faces quite a number of obstacles. He is unable to meditate or perform any of the exercises at the rehabilitation centre. But when the fourth victim's body surfaces, the IG Aravindaksha Menon and Antony go to meet Sam and there, Sam shows them how the murders were in places that are equidistant from each other and that the fifth place would be one that is equidistant too. He demonstrates that when joined, the four points form a cross and the fifth point is the circle in the middle. Here again, the iconic sign of the cross serves as a symbol of murder.

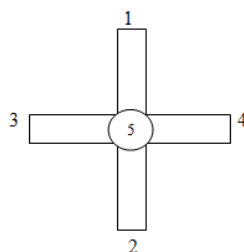


Fig. 1. The cross where the numbers denote the spot where the five murders took place and also their order

The next major turning point in the film occurs when the police team, acting on Sam's instructions, find out some information related to Peter's vehicle. The scene shifts to a daredevil Sam driving pretty fast in between buses to meet the boy at the service station who knows something about the vehicle. From then on, the audience sees Sam in action who finds out the truth about who Peter really is. The audience is stunned on finding that Peter is none other than one of the doctors in the forensic team. Once again, the Holy Bible turns out to be the password or key to Peter's desktop computer. The greatest twist in the movie comes towards the end when Sam has a quick view of the pictures stored in the computer and when he finds out that Sanju's wife Anitha is the fifth girl in the group. Terror grips Sam when he realizes that his brother Sanju hasn't returned home yet and that he is sure to be in Peter's clutches.

The climax is a replica of the scene that has been haunting Sam all along – his wife and his daughter bound and at gun point. The only difference is that here Sanju is held at knife point and is too weak to even protest owing to profuse bleeding. In addition, Peter turns on the cylinders on and takes out his lighter to strike a flame thereby aiming at reducing everyone to ashes. His statement that there is no possibility of a return is highly suggestive that Peter can never overcome his psychological disability. He is beyond redemption. But, this time, Sam manages to do something that he couldn't do, regarding his wife and his daughter. He shoots Peter dead and succeeds in saving his brother Sanju. As is the case with most films, the villain who is a social maladjustment must die for equilibrium to be restored. This is seen in the case of many Indian films (for instance, in the Tamil film *Vaali*, the evil twin dies). The movie ends with Sam striding confidently with Parvathi's daughter at the boarding school while Varsha and Sam's mother Mary Kutty look on, happily. Sam bears the same look that he had in the beginning of the film to imply that all's well that ends well.

While the disabled body and mind offer scope for interest and interpretation in the film, the director Jeethu Joseph's concept of disability is a disruptive state that causes havoc in the normal state of societal affairs and needs to be curbed. This is precisely what Mitchell and Snyder aptly state:

Our norm of narrative prosthesis evolves out of this specific recognition... – a deviance marked as improper to a social context. A simple schematic of narrative structure might run thus: first a deviance or marked difference is exposed to a reader; second, a narrative consolidates the need for its own existence by calling for an explanation of the deviation's origins and formative consequences; third, the deviance is brought from the periphery of concerns to the center of the story to come; and fourth, the remainder of the story rehabilitates or fixes the deviance in some manner. This fourth step of the repair of deviance may involve an obliteration of the difference through a "cure," the rescue of the despised object from social censure, the extermination of the deviant as a purification of the social body, or the revaluation of an alternative mode of being. (53-54)

The film follows the classic pattern of the hourglass spoken of by EM Forster. This shape refers to one character's moral or social fall crossing over another character's moral or social rise. According to Forster, pattern To quote Forster, "The two characters converge, cross, and recede with mathematical precision, and part of the pleasure we get...is due to this" (*Aspects of the Novel* 214). Forster further states, "...pattern is an aesthetic aspect of the novel, and that though it may be nourished by anything in the novel – any character, scene, word – it draws most of its nourishment from the plot" (217). It is the pattern that enables the reader or the audience to look at the book or film from a holistic perspective.

In the film, Sam's fall is first paralleled by Anand's rise and later inverted and there is also the fact that Sam himself goes through a helix structure of success to failure back to success while Anand goes from the counter one of being a failure with a limp to a seeming success as a doctor to a failure morally and ethically as a serial killer. To conclude, this imposed pattern (while it may fail in modernist texts) works excellently to give cohesiveness to the narrative structure of the plot and story of a film to make it fall into place. In other words the well made film stands for the well made story and a plot well told.

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