



## Deification of Stalking Crime (*Indian Penal Code - Section 354D*) as representation of love in South Indian Film 'Remo'

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**Abstract :** *Cinema drifts a superior impression in the minds of people, especially in a country like India where cinema has an indispensable role to be played. Film Sector in India seems to be more vibrant and eventually occupies significant space in the global arena by producing over One thousand films in more than dozen language every year. Stalking is one of the crimes that affects women in a plethora of ways. Stalking is a punishable offence in a country like India with the presence of Criminal Law, Amendment Act in the year 2013 in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) System. Although, there are media outlets that are voicing their concerns on the need for stopping stalking completely, there are avenues through which it is thriving and is becoming prevalent. Films in regional India are portraying stalking as a representation of love. This is evident from Bollywood (Hindi films) films as well as in other industries. Stalking is being portrayed as a way of showing love. This research study focusses on how stalking has been portrayed in the South Indian movie 'Remo.' The researchers have employed semiotics, pragmatics, iconographic analysis to understand the interpreted contextual codes stealthily encoded in the film.*

**Key words:** *Films, Stalking, love, crime, India*

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Cinema:

The whole world identifies with the cinema and thus it becomes a universal medium. The truth is that the global community is aware of and accepts the influence and impact of cinema on the society (Subramanian, 1990, p. 6). In the analysis of social change and development, the role of cinema has been recognized as critical. Mass communication in general accelerates and expands the spread of knowledge in the developing world and cinema has an important role as it increases the speed in social development and change. Cinema teaches new desires and satisfaction, new morality and ethics, devotion and worship, new paths and means of attaining power. It portrays role models particularly for children and youth to imitate (David, 1983, p. 2).

#### B. Stalking in India

In India stalking is a criminal offence, As per *Ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative department), Gazette of India, 2013* that **Section 354 D of the Indian Penal Code:**

354 D. (1) Any man who—

- (i) follows a woman and contacts, or attempts to contact such woman to foster personal interaction repeatedly despite a clear indication of disinterest by such woman; or
- (ii) monitors the use by a woman of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication, commits the offence of stalking;

Provided that such conduct shall not amount to stalking if the man who pursued it proves that —

- (i) it was pursued for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime and the man accused of stalking had been entrusted with the responsibility of prevention and detection of crime by the State; or
- (ii) it was pursued under any law or to comply with any condition or requirement imposed by any person under any law; or
- (iii) in the particular circumstances such conduct was reasonable and justified.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of stalking shall be punished on first conviction with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, and shall also be liable to fine; and be punished on a

second or subsequent conviction, with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, and shall also be liable to fine.

## II. LITERATURE

**A. Stalking in Popular Indian Films :** According to *Hindustan Times Correspondent*, in his article “*Darr, Anjaam, Fan and other Bollywood films that flaunt stalkers as heroes*” *Hindustan Times*, 2016, stated that Stalking is just one of the many voices Bollywood is often blamed for. The problem is, our society’s traditional gender equations make stalking seem normal to a large section of people. While men are supposed to woo and take the lead in pursuing a courtship, women are expected to shy away - even if they are interested; setting the tone for the infamous. Films holding stalking and love as a major plot in the script is surplus in number. Few among the Hindi cinema are R.Rajkumar (2013), ,Anjaam(1994),Darr(1993) ,Sholay(1975), Deewangi (2002), Saawariya (2007), Daraar (1996) Tere Naam, Jeet (1996), Raanjhana (2013) were most of the scripts in Bollywood holds stalking as nuclear component in its films. The concept of stalking was seems to be the major plot in most of the Tamil Romantic films from its inception like Alai Payuthey (2000), Minnale (2001), Run (2002) Jayam (2003), Kadhal Kondan (2003) Autograph (2004) , 7/G Rainbow Colony (2004), Manmadhan (2004), Ghilli (2004) Anniyan (2005) Sandai Kozhi (2005) , Sillunu Oru Kadhal (2006) Varalaaru (2006) Pokkiri (2007), Paruthi Veeran (2007), Unnale Unnale (2007), Naan Avanillai (2007) Sivaji (2007), Pollathavan (2007), Yaaradi Nee Mohini (2008), Subramaniapuram (2008) , (Varurthapadatha Vaalibar Sangam, 2015), (Maan Karate, 2015) (Rajnimurugan,2016) (Remo, 2016). The representation of stalking characters as a protagonist and glorifying the nature of stalking as pure love by the protagonist is one of the prominent cinematic stigma which has been predominantly show cast in mainstream Tamil films

## III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To analyze various iconographic elements in the film ‘Remo’ which carries diverse identities favorable to stalking

## IV. METHODOLOGY

The researcher has envisioned to analyse different shots in film ‘Remo’ by analysing the iconography in the movie, which carries stalking related references.

**Semiotic Analysis:** Swiss linguist, **Ferdinand De Saussure** created the concept of Semiotic analysis. According to Saussure, signifier refers to the material form (heard, seen, touched, smelled and tasted) and signified refers to the mental concept or the inner meanings associated with the signified object.

### **Theoretical Frame Work - Film narrative theory:**

Modern Narratology begun with Russian formalist, Vladimir Propp (Morphology of Folktale, 1928). Film narrative theory seeks to uncover the apparently “motivated” and “natural” relationship between the signifier and the story-world in order to reveal the deeper system of cultural associations and relationships that are expressed through narrative form.

## ICONOGRAPHY:



ICON 1



ICON 2

*Analysis on Icon 1 and 2 with Charles Pierce’s Signs and Object*

*Sign a) :* women walking alone

*Object a) :* A women who might be returning from a college/office/any workplace is getting back to home

*Sign b) :* Decent Chudithar (black tops dress with less design and good fabric)

*Object b) :* women with good taste sense / dressing sense with an elegant & contemporary mind set could be a middle class/ upper middle class and a college going or working women.

- Sign c*) : One sided Shawl  
*Object c*) : Not too traditional and not too westernized , not discourteous / not too flamboyant, a modern cum traditional women with an elegant taste.
- Sign d*) : Loose / free hair  
*Object d*) : It represents a sportive / modern / confident / free-willed / modern attitude girl or women.
- Sign e*) : Empty road at night.  
*Object e*) : It represents abandoned / scary / fearful / helpless / threatening / lonely.
- Sign f*) : Sindur (small or tiny) in forehead.  
*Object f*) : In India, sindur represents the virtuousness of a women. A tiny neatly placed sindur between the eyebrows represents a cultured righteous elegant young women.
- Sign g*) : earrings (tiny / small).  
*Object g*) : A tiny earring here represents a decent / traditional / classy / exquisite young women.
- Sign h*) : A disgusting or irritating face expression towards the protagonist (opposite person).  
*Object h*) : An unmannered / offensive / insolent / cheap / annoying mannerism or behaviour overconfident attitude or physical contact or verbal / non-verbal conversation of the protagonist towards the character which might evoked a disgusting reaction from the character.

On analysing Icon 1 and 2 with **Charles Pierce's Signs and Object** which enumerates that the character (heroine) who has been casted as a young college going or working women with a quality taste sense being modern, sportive, free-willed and independent in nature who might be coming back from college / office / workplace to the home by walking alone in the abandoned streets during the night time who might be followed or pursued or stalked by the protagonist who is casted as a strange, unknown, anonymous, unidentified, mysterious person who is attempting to convey or communicate or acquaint or interact, with the character (heroine) which might be unmannered or rude approach which evoked a pure disinterest or disgusting expression from the women (character). The portrayal of a protagonist in the above mentioned nature is prominently and directly relates with the description of crime, in the Indian Penal Code Section 354D where any man who follows a woman or attempts to contact for an interaction despite poor disinterest of the women is described as stalking.



**ICON 3**



**ICON 4**

#### ***Analysis on Icon 3 and 4 with Charles Pierce's Signs and Object***

- Sign a*) : Brown colour shirt with black inner tee.  
*Object a*) : A warm brown coloured full sleeved shirt with rolled up sleeves explains a guy from a city or urban or suburban belonging to a upper middle class or middle class having a modern taste sense, non-tradition, sportive outlook. The black inner crew neck tee represents stylish, westernised outlook and aesthetically it denotes the powerful, strong willed, mysterious and determinant nature of the protagonist.
- Sign b*) : Slim physique and clean shaven face.  
*Object b*) : A skinny physique with a fully shaven face interprets the protagonists' being so boyish, youthful, adolescent, teenager, boy next door who lacks heroic , flamboyant and super good looks.
- Sign c*) : Blurred coloured lights background, the protagonists' expression  
*Object c*) : The blurred orange and blue tint lights in a darker space behind the protagonist describes dreamy feel, a colourful vision or illustrious coloured vision and comparing with findings of icon 1 & 2, it also interprets the girl or woman or young lady who is being following or pursuing or stalked is the dreamy

colours of his life or the dream girl of his life which he wants to pursue constantly. It is also, represented as true colours of love. The protagonist's aggressive, sad expression enumerates a sense of fear, an expression of unhappy / blue / rage, / fury / shocking / revengeful, a sense of rejection or failure is precisely identical.

*Sign d*): women walking alone at a distance few meters away from protagonist.  
*Object d*): It denotes the protagonist might be noticing or following or pursuing or stalking the young women very intensely or the women might engage into a conversation or interaction and due to some unmannered, rude, rageful indecent approach of the protagonist, she might have left quickly with a disgusting reaction or disinterest.

On analysing icon 3 & 4 with **Pierce's Signs and Object** it is elusively identical that the portrayal or imageries of protagonist is very similar to an adolescent, teenager, boyish guy who is not very flamboyant and has a look alike of boy next door wearing modern expensive clothes and adapting an elite or westernised look is constantly pursuing his illustrious or imaginary love with a strange woman fearlessly, determinately, mysteriously which is prominently relative to the characteristic descriptions of stalking crime mentioned in section 354D of IPC Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013.

#### ***Analysis on prominent dialect from the film:***

**Kavya** (Keerthi Suresh): Asingama illa unagu, intha mathiri pinnadi suthi enna torture panna , un kuuda vanduvane nu nenaikureya!!

*(ENG: Don't' you feel ashamed of yourself? Did you think that I would come with you just because you're constantly following me and torturing me?)*

**SK** (Sivakarthikaeyan): Thaputhanga! Inemel follow panrathu, phone panrathu, Visil adikarathu, ithellam panna maataen, enaku eppa Ok solluva!!

*(ENG: It is wrong. Hereafter, I won't follow, make calls, whistle. When will you accept my love? )*

Analysing the linguistic components of the dialect through pragmatics, by structural linguistics' Ferdinand De Saussure. Pragmatics is a sub field of linguistics and semiotics that studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. According to researcher Mey, 2001 "pragmatics studies, the use of language in human communication as determined by the condition of the society...." It describes that Kavya who is the women (character in the film) who outbursts against the protagonist who is the man who has been constantly following, pursuing or stalking. The women yells out with hardcore disinterest towards the protagonist making him understand how shameful his behaviour, attitude and approach is. The following or stalking nature of the man (protagonist) is very abusive, annoying and torturous and the protagonist response towards the women's expression is so cool and very much aware of his mistakes and confesses that constant following, trying to contact through mobile and whistling but, still wants the strange, unknown, unacquainted woman to accept his illustrious, dream like one-sided love.

On a holistic nature, comprehending the iconographic and linguistic analysis, the protagonist in the film has an exact identity, depiction, representation of an adolescent, teenaged, boy next door who tries or attempts to stalk a strange, anonymous, elegant, free-willed, confident and modern young women to showcase his illustrious love which is similar indication of stalking where the crime described in Indian Penal Code (IPC) is predominantly portrayed as true love in the film "Remo" through the above mentioned findings. Media portrayals of crime have been linked to biased information processing and beliefs about society and personal risks of victimization (Amy Sides Schultz *et. al.* 2013), were the crime stalking has been glorified and almost advertised in film 'Remo'

A recent study on *University of Nebraska –Lincoln* titled *Once Upon a Midnight Stalker: A Content Analysis of Stalking in Films, 2013*, argues that on comparing the film samples portraying stalkers as protagonist with the real word data of stalking criminals , on a same period of time, which show cast film released on the particular period which shows 35.4 % of stalkers as romantically influence or love driven comparatively on same period the reason for according to real word data of criminals who committed stalking is 51% from intimate relationship . This statement of finding is an elusive understanding of the impact created by stalking characters of film in the psycho-social development of individuals in the society.

## V. CONCLUSION

Film as a mass medium has great influence in the way it penetrates the cognisance of the people. Portrayal of various aspects in films is critical to understand some of the issues that are happening in the society at large.

Stalking is one of the crimes that is plaguing the women in the society in India. Despite stringent laws in place, it is one of the heinous crimes that is still prevalent. Although, it is a serious crime, the regional films in the country are portraying the same act in a very justifiable manner. Many films in popular Bollywood (Hindi films) and other film industries in India have had movies that portray stalking very directly. The perception of cinema viewers is extensively varied from viewers from other parts of the country. The concept of sychophantic is literally more predominant in the state of Tamil Nadu, India where film and film stars takes the treatment of demi-god status by the respective fans of the state. Also, Tamil films exercises colossal impact on the political and socio-cultural phenomena of the society from its inception as argued by Theodore Baskaran, a prominent film critique. In such phase, observance, perception and adaptation of contents or context portrayed in the popular film is prone to becoming a reality. Stalking which has been principally amended as a crime in Indian Penal Code (IPC), Criminal Law, Amendment Act in the year 2013 after witnessing constant and frequent crimes against women in various regions in India related to stalking. Popular cinema in India which has been using stalking and psychotic love as a nuclear component in the script has reached massive commercial gross in the mainstream industry and the same is still followed even after the stringent stalking laws in practice after 2013. The existing popular cinema attempts to sustain and perpetuate stalking crime as a popular culture in the 'cinema sychophantic' society which might exercise and influence on the occurring / might to occur stalking crimes in India.

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