

Trance Disposition as a Social and Rhetorical Phenomenon: A Study on the Discourse of Cultural Memory in Select Malayalam Cinema

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Abstract

Cultural neuroscience examines the intersectional areas of the mind, brain, and culture. Memory links the three functional areas, often encompassing specific states of mind, like the dissociative phenomenon. The paper studies the dissociative trance-like states of the human, namely the dissociative trance disorder, its manifestations in particular cultural contexts, its agency over human memory and the delineation of the same in the protagonists of the movies, *Manichitrathazhu* (1993), and *Kaliyattam* (1997) with cross references to the concepts of Dissociative Trance Disorder (DTD) and cultural memory with specific focus on the narrative as a rhetoric phenomenon, as specified by James V Wertsch, in his work, *Memory in Mind and Culture*. The study elucidates the distinct modes of memory alteration during dissociation and analyses the representation of the trance-state in the selected cinema, through a collaborative psychological and anthropological approach. In order to explain this idea, dissociative phenomenon is perceived as instigated by the interventions of cultural memory and partly, as a trauma response from the individual's past as portrayed in the narratives chosen for the study. The prominence of cultural tools, like narratives, in the transference of memory and trance-states as an adaptive mechanism in humans, plays a significant role in the allied areas of memory studies. The conceptual understanding of dissociation, from a specific type of behaviour to a fundamental factor affecting memory, perception and identity, aids in decoding the human.

Keywords: adaptive mechanism, cultural memory, depersonalisation, Dissociative Trance Disorder, dualism