

# Spatial Narrative of Women as “Production of Space” in Charulatha

**K Pradeep**

Assistant Professor, Muslim Arts College, Tamilnadu, **INDIA**

ISSN: 2311-8636 (Print)

ISSN: 2312-2021 (Online)



Licensed:

Source of Support: Nil

No Conflict of Interest: Declared

\*Email for correspondence:

cpradeepklee@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

Films are one of the most influential cultural and creative discourses of the modern era as they reflect the socio-political and cultural norms of the society. The film has the potential to effect social change and open a new insight and experience to the human life. The relationships between women and space have now been recognized as an important issue for feminist discussion.

In this study, production of space is mediated by the everyday life of women and their mediated relations of women's space. Here the spatiality and practices are not complicated it mean the spatial location, spatial relations and the spatial accessibility of women. Further it seeks the knowledge production of this particular spatial practice. This study centered with Satyajit Ray film Charulatha.

**Keywords:** Women, Narrative, Space, Charulatha

## INTRODUCTION

Films are one of the most influential cultural and creative discourses of the modern era as they reflect the socio-political and cultural norms of the society. The film has the potential to effect social change and open a new insight and experience to the human life. The relationships between women and space have now been recognized as an important issue for feminist discussion. The developments in psychology and geography have encouraged the use of social map to explore the way in which space is perceived. The film occurs a power of control by fixing in place the conflicting idea about the constitution of social space, particularly film spaces can contribute to the dynamics, of the narrative (Ardener, 1981; Konstantarakose, 2010). Cinema is a peculiar spatial form of culture, of course, because cinema operates and is best understand in terms of the organization of space: both space in films – the space of the shot: the space of the narrative settings in sequence in a film: the mapping of a lived environment of film: and film in space the shaping of lived urban spaces by cinemas a cultural practice (Shiel, 2008). According to Konstantarakose (2010) this new perspective also starting to influence cinematic studies. Space is not merely setting of stories but actually generate the narrative in films, assuming the status of character and becoming the fabric of narrative itself. Cinema may appear to be more successful than other art forms in converging the dynamics of space but the usual analysis of film does not devolve much attention to this. However, space can be contribute to the dynamics of the narrative event

and can be shown to play an important part in the development of the variety of consideration, both ideological and artistic. Space is not only record as a background style its very organization implies a handling of space, revelling the ideology of its tune.

In the narrative process of film, space is very significant and three kinds of visual spaces are there to deal with it. The first one, physical space in front of the camera, the space as it appears on a screen and third the spatial size and shape of the screen itself in being so space is a multifaceted visual component. It is not only defining the screen where all the other visual components are seen, but space itself has several subcomponents. Employing this spatial notion, this study focuses on the socio- culturally centered spatial locations of women in the narrative discourse. "Space is fundamental in any form of communal life and is a basic fundamental in any exercise of power" (Foucault, 1984). "There is no space without space of the family, the school, the workplace, the church and so on and each one of them possesses its appropriate space" (Brenner *etal*, 2008). The spatial discourses are viewed in the new perspective in the inventions of Lefebvre's triadic space. In the 'The Production of Space', Lefebvre (1991) discovers space as fundamental to our understanding and interaction within society. It develops an alternative theory of space that would clarify the role it should play. He posited space as the primary locus of lived experience the world has conceived as an approach to space, which moves it from the realm of the mental to become the institution of our engagement with the world (Lefebvre, 1991). *Production of Space*: Social space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their relationship in the coexistence (Lefebvre, 1991). In this study, production of space is mediated by the everyday life of women and their mediated relations of women's space. Here the spatiality and practices are not complicated it mean the spatial location, spatial relations and the spatial accessibility of women. Further it seeks the knowledge production of this particular spatial practice. Spatial practice and spatiality of people in the society are one of the complex and crucial phenomena in our society and each day it produces gendered notion of socialization. In this way, domestic space is not innocent in gendered practices.

### **SPATIAL STIGMA OF WOMEN IN THE NARRATION**

Women, as actors in the formation of social issues have been presented in popular Indian cinema almost right from its beginning. Barnow and Krishnaswamy explain that as early as 1924, Chandulal Shah, a film producer who produced a cinema, that dealt with the women's question. From this new move, there are many works comes under the women way and also scholarly writings of film studies, scholars and social science researchers identified complex notions of spatial discourses in Indian cinema (Gosh, 1992; Nanda, 2002; Menon, 2010). In fact, there is a need to look into the representation of equality and disparity of gender equations that Indian cinema reflects. India has a long tradition of five thousand years of historical tradition and cultural context, which has a strong bearing on Indian cinema. Mainstream symbol and aesthetics may be used in cinematic representation to both reveal and mock dominant culture in the name of tradition. Films are the components of the important aspect of our popular culture irrespective of their cast, creed, and gender, find meaning in the narratives. Indian films have set the literary agenda in many forms. Film narrative also establishes social and intellectual properties. Gender representation is at the best, of cultural negotiation. Central to such negotiation is always the figure of women, which serves as powerful and ambivalent patriarchal symbol, heavily over determent of the expression of male psyche. The image of women has been a site of gender discourse draw from specific, socio, cultural experience of women and

shared by women which negotiate a space within and sometimes resist patriarchal dimension this not been in regular spectacle.

The portrayals of women in cinema reflect their existence and social status, their positioning in the hierarchy which according to rules of patriarchy, is determined by male authority. Usually, women portrayals are of two types, first type is submissive, complacent, dedicated to home making, carrier of traditions and parampara, an ideal Hindu women, second self-centered, calculating, vamp, extravert and a menace of family stability, western dressed and a danger to male sexual pre-eminence. Family stability emblematic of bourgeois nautical stability has been continues as motif in those films (Deshpande, 2009).

In Satyajit Ray's *Devi; Constructing a Third – World Feminist Critique*, opens the female subjectivity with explicit manner of spatial aesthetic. The iconic sense of the movie deals with the problem of female subjectivity. And also it has widely criticized ideology as expressed through patriarchal feudal structure and Hindu religious orthodoxy with lured and the spatial narration (Ghosh, 1992). In the narrative diegesis keeps the male controlled of spatial practice in the screen. In this movie Ray's improvises by using the camera's explorative space and props the spatial details of gendered subversion in the visual discourse. The female protagonist Doyamoyee's access of halls, ceremonial place and public space all are that of her public sphere. These public spheres determine the identity of her public and private politic of women in domestic premise. The existing literature show there has important relation in the understanding of spatial metaphor and spatial politics of women in narrative location of women in film. And the patriarchal male dominant social ideological center power relation space in physical and private space of film domain. Films provide a space for men to begin to change their interpretations of women because they are exposed to the traditionally silenced narratives of women and thus given some insights into a woman's private and public worlds (Kaplan; 1998). In Satyajit Ray film, the female character of the Trilogy, are the women of Indian tradition loving and nurturing the whole family and make support to the male member who go out to fight the battle of survival. They are not the decision maker, who can decide either own or their female future (Gupta, 2009). The following statements made the concrete potential to analyse the spatial practice and the spatiality of women in the narrative trilogy.

## **NARRATIVE SPACE IN CHARU'S LIFE**

Bengal films are very deep in spatial representation particularly Satyajit Ray's films. Every sense of spatial relation creates beauty and deep sense of meaning-making. The film *Charulatha* (Lonely wife) is seen in the master piece category. In this film, spatiality and the spatial discourse of women paved so many complex production of social stigma. However in the spatial practice and spatial discourses around women are very crucial. The first sequence seeks our attention towards Charu's life and reveals about where she lived and her space in family life.

The narrative domain opens two poles of meaning-making about domestic and on the other side space. The domestic space is congested by women presence and their accessibility, women life is framed with modern domesticity with closed frames. The caged bird has some relationship with Charu's life in this film. In particular, Charu's private space here is that she spends most of her time in the house. The male centered social stigma provides the freedom of women only in house premise. Also the mental spaces are regulated within the limited access within the library, her bed, in front of piano and playing cards. There is no option for her to engage with outside world. This film

underlines the historical map of the women life in the yesterdays, and crucial experience of women in house and their everyday life as a married woman. The other narrative logic conveys that women are centralized with inside (domestic) narrative. In the case of men they are always engaged with outside world. For instance, in the beginning sequence Charu looks through opera glass as she could see only men community in the outside view. In another shot from her husband's work place which also show the men community. This narrative sense produces the notion about outer spaces are men centric. Here a strong message is conveyed through the society of the production of narrative men and women with two poles through spatial representation.

Liminality of feminine space which is another peculiar narrative dimension in this film is shown by the elegant techniques of opera glass view. The opera glass then playfully taken by Charu to look at the street below, ironically emphasize her separation from the world outside. Her spectatorship of the street scene, really across a series of windows frames, the window is specific to view outsider, the outside does not have chance to see whimsically renders the world of everyday street life as a spectacle remote from the subject's experience. The spectacles her function not so much as a vehicle for exchanging visual power, as providing a visual distraction from the isolation and monotony of the cloistered space of the household. The development of the thematic of externity/ interiority comes full circle when Charu subject her husband to the ionic, exteriorizing gaze of the opera glasses (Vasudeve, 2006). The extension of medium made the important part of narrative logic. Through the spatiality and its relational attachment toward the opera view determine and convey the message that she was separated from public space. Her private life shows clear that public spaces are very far. And also the liminality of her family members and their complex states of her thinking towards them. Thus magical meaning production through liminal space produces the spatiality of Charu's unwritten women sense of longing. In Charu's spatiality within the domestic space as well as private space indicate different disproportion in the family life of middle class people.

In the entire film narration opera glass acts as a powerful elements. As film is the universal medium to convey complex problem and unexplained something these are easily convey through film. In the looking of opera glass shows multiple level of complexity existing in our society which connected different level of meanings which relate to the life of Charulata. She offers the chance to connect this opera views to the spectator. This peculiar extended narrative role is meaningful one who connect the four types of opera view logically. However its final view through opera glass ends when she looks a mother who pampered her child.

The representation of Charulata's image is controlled by closed space that her library books, movement inside house and her inside practices are framed with closed space. In some point the close space used to convey the emotional attachment towards the female protagonist these often compensate the pathetic circumstance of women in domestic space. However most of the woman frames are in close space. The close and deep spaces are represent the relation and distance from her family member particularly her husband.

In everyday life dining space makes the impotent sense of gendered production, spatiality and its relation of women in dining location is very crucial in Indian narratives. The narrative sequence of dining space proclaims the gendered discourses in the film. In the traditional form of relation in dining space women should be the observer and servant of this particular location. Here the space being as other extension of crucial system towards women, they are not allowed to share the dining space. However this narrative trilogy

opens complex system of spatial production of dining space. But in the Indian context this space used as the very centric to convey the thoughts and feeling of women to the male community. Serving food has always been viewed as a woman's responsibility, and is deeply ingrained in traditional Indian culture and belief. Neither globalization nor the impact of modernization has succeeded in changing this conservative notion. The "domestic kitchen is gendered feminine because the activity of cooking is something that is socially connected with women" (Rendell et al, 2000, p.101). Despite, the spatial narration in the film produce the general concern of women at dining space.

## CONCLUSION

According to Henri Lefebvre (social) space is a (product) which is concealed by double illusion, the illusion of transparency and the realistic illusion, each side of refer back to one another, reinforces the other, and hide behind the other. The physical spaces of narrative have treaded complex meaning through the elite visual treat. The narrative diegetic open the canvas of the women identity and their condition of everyday life. The narrative production of discourses hides the ideological sense and patriarchal determinate notion of women's self identity in the society. From the limited narrative trilogy of space in *Charulatha*, Sathyajit Ray captured the history of women and the crucial practice inside the domestic spaces.

## REFERENCE

- Ardener, S. (1981). *Women and Space: Ground Ruler and Social Maps*, London, CroonHelm.
- Brenner, N., Jessop, B., Jones, M., & Macleod, G. (Eds.). (2008). *State/space: a reader*. Germany: Blackwell Publisher John Wiley & Sons.
- Deshpande, A. (2009). *Class Power and Consciousness in Indian Cinema and Television*, Delhi: Primas Book.
- Foucault, M. (1984). *Of Other Space; Utopias and Heterotopias*, Trans. Miskowiec.J. (1967). Architecture / Movement. Retrieved from <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf>
- Ghosh, B. (1992). *Satyajit Ray's Devi: Constructing a Third- World Feminist Critique*, Screen, 33:2, pp162-173.
- Gosh, B. (1992). *Satyajit Ray's Devi; Constructing a Third – World Feminist Critique*, Sreen, 32; 2, Summur
- Gupta, K.R. (2009). *Gender Problems and Policies*, India: Atlantic Publisher
- Kaplan, E. Ann. (1998). *Women in Film Noir*. London: British Film Institute.
- Kostantarakos, M. (2000). *Space in European Cinema*: London. Intellect books.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *Production of space*. (Smith. Trans.). Australia: Blackwell.
- Menon, B. (2010). Malayalam Middle Cinema and Category of Woman (Pillai, T.M, Eds.). India, Orient Back Swam.
- Nanda, M. (2002). *Symbolism and Space in Aparna Sen's Paroma and deepa Mehta's Fire*, (Ed. Jain & Rai). Rawat Publication: New Delhi.
- Rendell, J., Penner, B., & Borden, I. (Eds.). (2000). *Gender space architecture, an interdisciplinary introduction*. London, England: Routledge.
- Shiel, M. (2008). *Cinema and the history city and in theory Cinema and the city in History and Theory*, France: Widely Online Library. Retrieved from: <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/>
- Vasudeve (2006) *Apu and After: Revisiting Ray's Cinema* (Ed) Biswas. *Nationhood Authenticity and Realism in Indian Cinema: The double Take Modernism in Ray*. Calcutta: Seagull Books.

**Publish Online and Print Version Both**

**Online ISSN: 2312-2021**

**Google Scholar: <https://goo.gl/eozEWi>**