



JOURNALISM THROUGH THE EYES OF SCREEN ENTERTAINMENT: A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT:

Journalism including any news beat, be it investigative or interpretative, becomes a matter of discussion if it touches on the core issues of society. Lately, some of such news stories have attracted film and television serial producers apart from book publishers who are converting it into web series, documentary, or fictional movies serving it as on-screen entertainment. It expands the scope of mass communication more through storytelling or literary journalism.

Taking this aspect in mind, a narrative research based on the idea that people live and understand their lives in storied form, connecting events in the manner of a plot that has beginning, middle and end points are conducted among the 'She Said' (2022) movie adapted from the book 'She Said' by Megan Twohey and Jodi Kantor along with Jigna Vora's 'Behind Bars in Byculla' which turned into the web series Scoop (2023), Bollywood movie Lost (2023), the American Documentary film Endangered (2022), the Korean movie Terror Live (2013) and the Bollywood movie Madras Cafe (2013). They depict the trauma, terrorism and victimhood prevailing in society.

'She Said' exposes the sexual assault allegations against Harvey Weinstein, an American former film producer which kick started the #MeToo movement from USA to across the globe. 'Behind Bars in Byculla' is about the story of a woman crime journalist, known for many breaking front page stories, arrested in connection with the murder of a renowned journalist Jyotirmoy Dey by members of Chhota Ranjan gang in 2011 resulting her to spend time in the prison. 'Lost' movie is about a young man doing street plays who goes missing and a woman journalist covering the story making some powerful people uncomfortable. 'Endangered' documentary film portrays the fourth estate in strain. Korean movie 'The Terror Live' and Bollywood movie 'Madras Café' depict how journalists are involved in coverage of violence.

KEYWORDS: Narrative, Journalism, Screen, Entertainment, Society, Communication.

INTRODUCTION

Gone are the days when journalism was restricted only to television or print or radio. The digital world has taken it to a transformational phase where one can easily watch the life of a journalist through a documentary or commercial movie or webseries of which some are adapted from non-fictional writings. Taking this concept in mind, a study on the narrative analysis of journalism through



screen entertainment was done with non-probability sampling. Denoting variations in plot of violence, research focused on 'She Said' (2022) movie adapted from the book 'She Said' by Megan Twohey and Jodi Kantor along with Jigna Vora's 'Behind Bars in Byculla' which turned into the web series Scoop (2023), Bollywood movie Lost (2023), the American Documentary film Endangered (2022), the Korean movie Terror Live (2013) and the Bollywood movie Madras Cafe (2013).

It was basically qualitative research for the quality of the storyline that was observed over the time in last one decade. The analysis of Terror Live and Madras Café released in 2013 were initially carried following with Endangered released in 2022, Lost and Scoop released in 2023 respectively.

The purpose behind choosing these movies or web series was to understand how violence is portrayed for the journalists when they begin covering a news story in the field and further investigate it. It shows how their personal image or life is affected because of the challenging profession and how they cope with it.

OBJECTIVES:

- To find out how journalism centric movies or web series have portrayed the character of the journalist playing the lead role.
- To observe the language and scenes of these journalist characters

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What are the differences between the roles of journalists who are shown in movies or webseries adapted from a non-fiction writing and those showcased in fictional movies or webseries?
- Which gender is given more screentime among the chosen movies or webseries?
- How the storylines (narrative thread) in the selected movies or webseries are presented?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

It was basically secondary research. Qualitative method was used for data collection. The narrative inquiry was adapted for analysing the selected films where journalists are taken in context. The trauma, terror and victimhood of the journalists were looked upon the movies namely 'She Said' (2022) movie adapted from the book 'She Said' by Megan Twohey and Jodi Kantor along with Jigna Vora's 'Behind Bars in Byculla' which turned into the web series Scoop (2023), Bollywood movie Lost (2023), the American Documentary film Endangered (2022), the Korean movie Terror Live (2013) and the Bollywood movie Madras Cafe (2013). The structural narrative analysis was taken using consecutive sampling of non-probability sampling.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

To establish the claim- of possessing the tools to parse social reality – journalism resorted to a particular form of storytelling. This form of storytelling involves the practice of using anecdotes and attributions by those whom the journalist chooses to include in his/her story. This is an important distinction from fields such as science where experts can speak with legitimate authority of the reality of an event only after acquiring acceptable domain knowledge in the field. To establish (Dahiya and Sahu, 2022) its legitimacy as a purveyor of truth, the field of journalism has over the years established a process of objective routines. Journalists must demonstrate an expertise in interacting with sources, documents, and other evidence to produce news content.

Ranajith Guha first used the term 'subaltern studies'. According to him the word 'subaltern' stands as a name for the general attribute (Cheerotha, 2022) of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office or in any other way. According to Ranajit Guha, subaltern studies intervened in historical schools of thought that could not represent the history of nationalism in India without celebrating the role the elites played in bringing the larger nation into the discourse. Representations can be clear images, material reproductions, performances,

and simulations. It can also be defined as the act of placing or stating facts to influence or affect the action of others.

Cinema is an effective medium that has a huge impact on society. It is believed to entertain people and to take them away from the daily routine of life. We witness the social issues and culture of society in one or the other way (Lakshmikantha and Goswami,2021). Cinema and culture are interlinked. Cinema should focus more on the content that is positively impacting the community as it has the power to influence people, their opinion, and construct the image.

Analysis: She Said:

Released in 2023, the movie taken from the New York Times Bestseller-Winner of the Pulitzer Prize Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey's book 'She Said', starts with an investigation of 2017. The reporting of these two women journalists concentrating on breaking the story of Film Producer Harvey Weinstein's decades of alleged abuse of women, helping to ignite a global reckoning on sexual harassment. His exploitation of the workplace by manipulating pressurizing and terrorizing women had become a legacy which was somewhere related as #metoomovement for the victims who were abused by Weinstein. The adaptation mostly follows the book's chronology of the investigation: how Kantor, a veteran workplace harassment reporter, was tipped off to Rose McGowan's account of rape by Harvey Weinstein after a Times investigation successfully unseated Fox News host Bill O'Reilly; how she met Twohey while the latter was suffering from postpartum depression (her first child was born between investigations into Donald Trump and Weinstein). Off-the-record, how they assembled the pieces - first McGowan, then Ashley Judd (playing herself), then Gwyneth Paltrow (not depicted - good decision), and former assistants bound by NDAs who slammed the door or ignored calls. How they put together the outline: a system of payouts and settlements, a culture of fear, an infuriating pattern of predation disguised as business.

Scoop:

The series is based on former crime journalist Jigna Vora's memoir, Behind Bars in Byculla: My Days in Prison. It begins in earnest in 2011, with Jagruti — a stand-in for Vora — landing a tip to a gang-related shootout in Mumbai. Her brightest and toughest contemporary is Jaideb Sen (based on Jyotirmoy Dey and played with solemn magnetism by Prosenjit Chatterjee), who offhandedly tips her off about a larger conspiracy involving gangsters and cops. Jagruti, leaning into her network of small-time informers, pursues but fails to land an interview with gangster Chhota Rajan. However, soon enough, Rajan dials up her office and agrees to speak. The interview goes swimmingly and Jagruti packs off for a family vacation in Kashmir. Naturally, the vacation is cut short. Jaideb is shot by Rajan's sharpshooters in a terrifying early morning sequence that concludes the first episode (J. Dey was killed in a similar fashion outside his Powai residence). Jagruti is unconcerned that a former colleague who was covering the same beat was murdered in cold blood. Instead, she moves quickly, debating theories about the murder even as her editor, the more emotionally disturbed Imran (Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub), advises caution and restraint. Jagruti's world is soon turned upside down. A recording emerges of Rajan admitting, on call, that he was spurred by Jagruti into murdering Sen. She is arrested under Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) charges and put in judicial custody. Genuinely, the vacation is cut short. Jaideb is shot by Rajan's sharpshooters in a terrifying early morning sequence that concludes the first episode (J. Dey was killed in a similar fashion outside his Powai residence). Jagruti is unconcerned that a former colleague who was covering the same beat was murdered in cold blood. Instead, she moves quickly, debating theories about the murder even as her editor, the more emotionally disturbed Imran (Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub), advises caution and restraint. Jagruti's world is soon turned upside down. A recording of Rajan admitting on the phone that Jagruti pushed him to murder Sen has surfaced. She was arrested and placed in judicial custody under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA). Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub, with his glasses, beard, and moral rectitude, is reminiscent of Liev Schreiber from Spotlight (2015). Karishma Tanna has the quick

wit and guts of a high-functioning, exclusive-landing journalist like Jagruti. In an early interrogation scene, she keeps her cool even though the walls are clearly closing in. The prison scenes are garish and brutal, as Jagruti stands up to an influential inmate and later (briefly) falls in with a terror-accuse. Hansal, thankfully, keeps moving the drama around, and there's an interesting subplot involving Imran's chauvinistic successor and his wife. It's also fitting that, given the middle-class Gujarati milieu of Jagruti's home, actor Deven Bhojani gets the sweetest role, as her affectionate, signature-canvassing uncle. Despite, being set only a decade in the past, Scoop feels like a love letter to India's conscientious print journalism. Imran repeatedly requests 'sensitivity' and is chastised in return. The dated interiors of his struggling 'Eastern Age' stand in stark contrast to the rival 'Citi Mirror's' glass walls and sleek cubicles. The final episodes are a whirlwind of gruesome news flashes and hungry television cameras. "That's where I want to be," says Deepa (Inayat Sood), an ambitious trainee reporter and the scariest character of all.

Lost:

Lost is the story of a journalist, Vidhi Sahani (Yami Gautam), who has learnt about the missing case of a young boy, Ishan Bharti (Tushar Pandey). However, he is then tagged as a member of a radical group and as Vidhi gets deeper into the story, the mystery darkens. With his relationship with Ankita Chauhan (Pia Bajpayee) being kept out of the investigation and her links with politician Varman (Rahul Khanna), the question arises if Ishan had indeed joined a radical group or if he had been kidnapped for personal and political gains.

Endangered:

Following a nostalgic opening montage about how journalism was widely regarded as a respected line of work as recently as the second half of the twentieth century, "Endangered" introduces us to its subjects to demonstrate how drastically and recently things have changed. In So Paulo, Brazil, reporter Patricia Campos Mello uncovers fraud within President Jair Bolsonaro's election campaign. The fervent nationalist responds to her work by publicly attacking her with crude sexualized remarks, which are then spread and amplified by his followers. Mello then takes the risky step of suing him for slander to put a stop to it, hopefully sending a message that such behaviour will not be tolerated. Meanwhile, in Mexico City, photojournalist Sashenka Gutierrez covers protests in which women take to the streets to fight what appears to be a never-ending wave of misogynistic violence. The women are pitted against cops wearing full riot gear and an aggressive demeanor that threatens to devolve into brutality at any moment. True, these incidents occurred outside of America, but as the film clearly demonstrates, the sentiment captured in those sequences has become increasingly and depressingly common in these parts as well. Carl Juste, a Miami Herald photographer, covers a Black Lives Matter protest in Florida following the murder of George Floyd. When the police file false reports about their frequently violent response to protesters, his work is used to disprove them. He is soon followed and harassed by police officers. Meanwhile, British journalist Oliver Laughland, who follows American politics for The Guardian, covers Trump rallies where his followers have been encouraged to lash out at him and other journalists over so-called "fake news." When Laughland converses with some of them the film's basic premise—that anti-free press attitudes once only associated with foreign countries under repressive political regimes are now finding favour in the United States—will not come as much of a surprise to those who are aware of how accusations against the so-called Fourth Estate have been ginned up and fanned by those hoping to conceal their own misdeeds. What's surprising is how openly those attitudes are expressed here—in one particularly grotesque scene, we see a journalist covering a Black Lives Matter protest lying on the ground and identifying themselves as such to a cop, only to be sprayed directly in the eyes. While much of "Endangered" is depressing—and this does not consider how print journalism works.

Terror Live:

Released in 2013, it's about a man whose brutal fate is decided by a voice he can't hear. A thriller set almost entirely within the walls of a television studio. The film is a never-ending whirlwind about a newsman's struggle to regain control in a battle of wits with not only a caller threatening to devastate Seoul with bombs and destruction, but also the other players bosses, detectives, and government officials who are all attempting to turn him into a puppet. The journalist Yoon Young-hwa (Ha Jung-woo), a jaded, recently divorced hack working as a radio talk-show host after being fired from his high-flying job, saw his agency gradually eroded by this vast corporate-state complex. As the film begins, Yoon's life appears to be picking up: having managed to contact and then conduct a running conversation with a man who has just blown up one of Seoul's main bridges, Yoon is thrust before the camera once more by his ex-boss in order to beat other TV stations in their coverage of the bombing. Notably, the terrorist on the line, whose means could be argued to be at least justified in terms of demanding the government compensate and apologize to families of construction workers who died on the site of an official mega-project due to official negligence, is more of a catalyst serving to unlock the moral corruption of terror in the midst.

Madras Café:

The film released in 2013 begins with betrayal, power, and greed leading to ethnic violence in Sri Lanka. Thousands of Tamil leaders became terrorists after refusing to surrender to Sri Lankan forces and demanding a separate Tamil homeland. It resulted endless deaths due to the Tamil genocide where citizens of Sri Lanka sought refuge in India. Thus, the film focuses on Indo-Lankan relations. Indian government expressed concern and decided to intervene. The Indian Prime Minister is shown discussing about 'Peace Accord' which was an important political decision signed with Sri Lankan government. The purpose was to bring back the normalcy in Sri Lanka. But it was rejected by Anna by Liberation of Tamil Fronts (LTF, most ferocious Terrorist group) which was joined by the victimized Tamilians. The Indian Army began an operation to apprehend Anna. Unfortunately, many Indian soldiers were killed because Anna was aware of the operation. The film then shifts to the local guerilla war between the peace force and Anna. After nearly a year, the Indian government stated that military action will not suffice and that the issue is a national threat. The main aim of Indian PM is to successfully execute the provincial elections in Sri Lanka. The Army officer cum R&AW agent assigned to complete this task by tackling with the LTF is Major Vikram (John Abraham who meets a war journalist Jaya (Anita Pratap, who first interviewed LTTE chief Prabhakaran and the series of terrorism incidents reported). When appreciated about her reporting by Major Vikram, she quotes, "I am not anti-national because I criticize our national policies." She is a journalist from India who works in London. Both arrive in Sri Lanka and discover that innocent civilians are the first to suffer because of the devastation. In a nutshell, the story depicts the true nature of war.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the research questions, it was observed that movies or web series which are adapted from a non-fiction writing including memoir have presented the plot in a smooth narrative structure with real emotions. None of the replicas had tried making the movie or webseries a complete fictional work. Moreover, the gender representation of women is more overall based on the screen time. This includes She Said, Scoop, and Endangered. However, the remaining movies such as Lost, Terror Live and Madras Café are purely a work of fiction and had tried to connect root cause violent issues like murder, politics or terrorism but involves a popular actor or actress in it. Lastly, the storylines of She Said, Scoop, and Endangered are way more well-presented than Lost, Terror Live and Madras Café. She Said is about sexual assault dealt by women at large in workplace while Scoop is how a crime journalist is accused falsely in the murder of another prominent crime reporter who was related to coverage of an underworld done. Endangered on the other hand reflects the real challenges journalists of various countries associated with electronic or print media are bound to go through socially and mentally while covering news stories.

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