

CINEMATIC NARRATIVES OF FRACTURED SELVES: IDENTITY FORMATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA, AND DEFENSE MECHANISMS IN 'TAMASHA', 'THE GREAT INDIAN KITCHEN' AND 'FANDRY'

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Abstract

This article examines the intricate interplay of psychological trauma, identity formation, and defense mechanisms in three contemporary Indian films: *Tamasha* (2015, Hindi), *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2021, Malayalam), and *Fandry* (2013, Marathi). Adopting a triangulated, mixed-methods approach that integrates psychoanalytic close reading, sociocultural critique, and visual semiotic analysis, the study investigates how cinematic narratives function as cultural texts that mirror and contest hegemonic structures such as patriarchy, caste hierarchy, and neoliberal individuation. The central research question guiding this inquiry is: How do these films depict psychological defense mechanisms in response to sociocultural trauma, and how do they challenge dominant identity narratives through formal and thematic choices? Grounded in the psychoanalytic frameworks of Sigmund Freud (structural model of the psyche; defense mechanisms such as repression and sublimation), Anna Freud (developmental schema of defenses), and Jacques Lacan (the Symbolic, the Imaginary, the Real; the fragmented subject), the analysis also draws from Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory of identity crisis, Frantz Fanon's theory of racial alienation and "epidermalization," and Homi Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and hybridity. Judith Butler's theory of performativity also lends critical insight into the gendered dimensions of trauma and resistance. In *Tamasha*, the protagonist's fractured identity is read through Lacan's notion of "lack" and Freudian sublimation, illuminating the conflict between societal conformity and authentic creativity. *The Great Indian Kitchen* employs spatial repetition and silence to depict gendered trauma and domestic oppression, analyzed via feminist psychoanalysis and Butler's performativity. *Fandry* foregrounds caste-based humiliation and resistance through Fanon's framework of internalized oppression and Erikson's identity-stage conflict. The study contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship in postcolonial film studies, identity politics, and trauma theory by examining how these films aesthetically and psychologically negotiate trauma. It argues that cinema not only narrativizes personal suffering but also performs acts of cultural and political subversion, affirming that the personal is political and that trauma narratives are integral to reimagining selfhood in postcolonial societies.

Keywords: Psychological Trauma, Defense Mechanisms, Identity Formation, Postcolonial Cinema, Psychoanalytic Film Theory, Cultural Oppression

Introduction

In the evolving landscape of Indian cinema, narratives increasingly engage with the psychological and sociopolitical fissures embedded in everyday life. Contemporary films are not merely aesthetic expressions but cultural texts that reflect and interrogate the psychic and structural oppressions faced by individuals situated within systems of caste, patriarchy, neoliberal capitalism, and tradition. As Robert Stam (2000) contends, cinema is a potent semiotic apparatus where repressed desires and conflicted identities are dramatized and reconfigured. This study draws on that insight to examine how psychological trauma and identity crises are cinematically mediated and symbolically negotiated in three critically

acclaimed Indian films: *Tamasha* (2015, Hindi), *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2021, Malayalam), and *Fandry* (2013, Marathi).

The primary objective of this study is to investigate how these films represent psychological trauma and identify formation about sociocultural oppression, as well as how they illustrate the use of unconscious defense mechanisms as strategies of psychic survival and resistance.

The research questions are:

- How do contemporary Indian films narrativize the interplay between psychological trauma, defense mechanisms, and identity formation in the face of caste-based, gendered, and cultural subjugation?
- What psychoanalytic and socio-theoretical models best explain the cinematic articulation of trauma and psychic survival?
- In what ways do these films resist dominant identity narratives, and what formal strategies support this resistance?

The study posits the following hypotheses:

1. Cinematic representations of trauma reflect more profound postcolonial anxieties and psychic fragmentation caused by systemic marginalization.
2. Characters' engagement with unconscious defense mechanisms functions as a psychological resolution and a critique of hegemonic structures.
3. Trauma in these films is not solely destructive but a generative force facilitating identity reconstitution and sociopolitical resistance.

The selection of *Tamasha*, *The Great Indian Kitchen*, and *Fandry* is strategic and illustrative. These films represent a spectrum of linguistic, regional, and thematic concerns within Indian cinema. *Tamasha* interrogates the alienation of the neoliberal subject through urban psychological dissonance; *The Great Indian Kitchen* explores gendered trauma embedded in patriarchal domesticity; and *Fandry* visibilizes caste humiliation and embodied rage in rural India. This diversity enables a triangulated comparative framework across class, gender, and caste—central axes of identity formation and trauma in postcolonial India.

The significance of this inquiry lies in its contribution to interdisciplinary discourses in trauma studies, postcolonial theory, and film studies. It positions Indian cinema as a critical apparatus through which psychic trauma is not merely represented but actively worked through. By exploring how cinematic characters embody and resist psychological and cultural subjugation, the study affirms that trauma narratives in film are integral to both personal healing and sociopolitical critique. It aligns with current scholarly emphasis on the narrative, affective, and therapeutic dimensions of visual culture in postcolonial societies.

This research adopts a triangulated mixed-methods approach that integrates:

- Psychoanalytic close reading, using frameworks by Sigmund Freud (1937), Anna Freud (1936), and Jacques Lacan (1977),
- Sociocultural and feminist critique, drawing from Frantz Fanon (1967), Homi Bhabha (1994), Judith Butler (1990), and Erik Erikson (1959),
- Visual semiotic analysis interprets the surroundings, silence, repetition, color, and framing to access the unconscious grammar of cinematic trauma.

This triangulation enables a multilayered exploration of how internal psychic processes are entangled with and shaped by larger sociopolitical contexts.

- Freud's structural model of the psyche (Id, Ego, Superego) and his theory of defense mechanisms (repression, denial, sublimation) underscore how unresolved conflicts manifest in symbolic actions and neurotic patterns.
- Anna Freud's developmental theory extends this framework by categorizing defense strategies employed to preserve the self under duress.
- Lacan's triadic schema (Imaginary, Symbolic, Real), particularly the "mirror stage" and the concept of the fragmented subject, enables a reading of identity fissures and their cinematic representation.
- Fanon's notion of "epidermalization" and Bhabha's theorization of mimicry and hybridity provide tools for analyzing caste and postcolonial subaltern identity in *Fandry*.
- Butler's theory of gender performativity informs the analysis of resistance in *The Great Indian Kitchen*, where silence and routine are transformed into acts of subversion.
- Erikson's psychosocial theory, particularly the crisis of "identity vs. role confusion," anchors the protagonists' internal dislocations within broader stages of self-development.

By synthesizing these conceptual frameworks, the study argues that Indian cinema is a mirror to trauma and an active site of its narrative working-through. Through cinematic language and performative structures, trauma is rendered legible, identity is reimagined, and resistance is initiated from the locus of the self.

Literature Review

1. Psychoanalytic Approaches to Identity Formation and Trauma:

Psychoanalytic theory provides a foundational lens to interrogate the intersection of unconscious conflict, trauma, and identity construction. Freud's structural model of the psyche (1923), comprising the Id, Ego, and Superego, elucidates how individuals manage instinctual drives in negotiation with societal norms. His taxonomy of defense mechanisms—repression, denial, displacement, sublimation—remains pivotal in analyzing how characters psychically endure sociocultural violence (Freud, 1937). Anna Freud's (1936) elaboration emphasizes the developmental necessity of these mechanisms, particularly in contexts of psychic overload.

In *Tamasha*, the protagonist Ved, played by Ranbir Kapoor's bifurcated identity, reflects Freud's model—his creative Id is suppressed under the weight of normative Superego expectations until sublimation becomes his only path to authenticity. In *The Great Indian Kitchen*, defense mechanisms such as repression and denial are dramatized through ritualized domesticity, revealing the protagonist, played by Nimisha Sajayan's internalization of patriarchal norms. This psychoanalytic framing enables a critical reading of trauma not as individual pathology but as a culturally induced psychic disturbance, locating cinema where these conflicts become narrativized and resolved.

2. Object Relations and Developmental Trauma

Object Relations Theory advances the discussion by focusing on how early relational dynamics shape adult subjectivity. Melanie Klein (1952) and Donald Winnicott (1965) emphasize the enduring impact of caregiving figures and social expectations in forming the 'false self'—a defensive adaptation to external demands. These formulations resonate with

Erik Erikson's (1959) psychosocial stages, particularly "identity vs. role confusion," where failure to integrate societal roles results in emotional dislocation.

In *The Great Indian Kitchen*, the protagonist's passive compliance and eventual rupture mirror the suppression of the "true self" in favor of a culturally conditioned role. In *Fandry*, Jabya, a Dalit teenager in rural Maharashtra, whose love for an upper-caste girl exposes the brutal caste barriers he faces. The film traces his longing, fantasy, and eventual outburst of defiance, painting a powerful picture of caste-based trauma and identity conflict. The protagonist's longing for belonging and love operates within the framework of internalized rejection, shaped by early societal interactions.

These frameworks offer a robust developmental model to map the origins of fragmented identity and trauma-induced behavior. They shift the analytic focus from symptomatic display to formative psychic processes. The approach provides explanatory power for understanding the long-term psychosocial impact of casteism, patriarchy, and cultural conditioning, offering a layered reading of character behavior in Indian cinema.

3. Postcolonial Theories of Subjectivity and Resistance

Postcolonial theory introduces a sociohistorical dimension to psychoanalysis. Frantz Fanon's (1967) concept of the "epidermalization of inferiority" captures how systemic dehumanization is psychically internalized, leading to ruptured subjectivities and expressions of rage. Homi Bhabha's (1994) notions of mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence articulate colonial/postcolonial identity construction instability.

In *Fandry*, Jabya embodies Fanon's theorization; his yearning for social mobility is undercut by the persistent denial of caste-based humanity, resulting in explosive, symbolic violence. *Tamasha* resonates with Bhabha's ideas—Ved's mimicry of a socially acceptable self unravels into performative ambivalence, challenging the illusion of coherent identity.

Postcolonial frameworks situate trauma within systems of epistemic violence, offering insight into the structural origins of psychological fragmentation. These films expose the violence of cultural hegemonies and represent resistance as an act of psychic decolonization. Such readings advance the understanding of Indian cinema as a mirror and a counter-discourse to casteist and colonial legacies, extending psychoanalytic insights into sociopolitical critique.

4. Feminist Psychoanalysis and Gender Performativity

Judith Butler's (1990) theory of gender performativity reframes gender as a reiterated cultural script rather than a biological given. The subversion of normative roles by disrupting performative acts becomes a site of agency. Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1988) critiques essentialist feminist readings and advocates for a culturally nuanced understanding of third-world women's resistance. *The Great Indian Kitchen* operationalizes Butler's framework through the protagonist's silent refusal of patriarchal rituals. Her rebellion emerges through embodied gestures and withdrawal from compulsory domesticity. Mohanty's emphasis on cultural embeddedness clarifies this context's unique contours of gendered subjugation.

These frameworks decode how gendered trauma is not simply psychological but infrastructurally encoded in ritual, space, and language. The protagonist's transformation becomes a radical re-signification of selfhood within the domestic sphere. Feminist psychoanalysis bridges affective experience with systemic critique, enabling the reading of

gendered resistance as psychic and political. These insights are indispensable for decoding the gendered grammar of trauma and transformation in Indian cinema.

5. Cinema as a Medium of Psychological and Cultural Discourse

As a visual narrative medium, cinema externalizes psychological states while reflecting and shaping collective consciousness. Laura Mulvey's (1975) theory of the male gaze critiques cinematic objectification and the spectator's alignment with patriarchal desire. Her insights are sharpened in realist and regional cinema, where stylistic austerity often resists voyeuristic pleasure. *The Great Indian Kitchen* reverses the logic of the gaze through the static camera and mundane repetition subvert cinematic pleasure, turning the viewer into a witness to gendered labor and psychic erasure. *Fandry* and *Tamasha* likewise deploy visual symbolism to represent psychological crisis and resistance.

Indian cinema scholars like E. Ann Kaplan (1997), Madhava Prasad, and Aswin Punathambekar argue that films are cultural texts embedded within regional politics and national discourses. They foreground cinema's potential to mediate class, caste, and gender anxieties while offering subversive potential. The cinematic medium allows for dramatizing trauma beyond linguistic articulation. It provides a space for non-verbal resistance, emotional resonance, and aesthetic disruption, critical for representing identities that have been historically silenced.

Across psychoanalytic, postcolonial, feminist, and cinematic frameworks, a unifying concern emerges: the fragmentation of selfhood under systemic oppression, and the use of psychic defense and cinematic representation as means of survival and resistance. These frameworks, applied dialectically, enable a multi-dimensional interpretation of Indian cinema as a narrative therapy space, where subjectivity is deconstructed, challenged, and reconstituted.

This interdisciplinary synthesis not only enriches the critical vocabulary for reading Indian films but also highlights their cultural function in bearing witness to the trauma of caste, gender, and existential dislocation. The review thus positions cinema as an epistemic and therapeutic tool in the postcolonial Indian context.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, interpretative, and interdisciplinary methodological framework to investigate how *identity formation*, *psychological trauma*, and *defense mechanisms* are cinematically represented in three contemporary Indian films: *Tamasha* (2015), *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2021), and *Fandry* (2013). Drawing from psychoanalytic literary criticism, postcolonial theory, and feminist film studies, the research incorporates a triangulated approach combining textual-visual analysis, thematic coding, and comparative sociocultural interpretation to enhance analytical depth, validity, and Reflexivity.

1. Research Design and Objectives

The research adopts a mixed-method qualitative design to explore cinematic texts as both aesthetic forms and cultural-political artifacts. The central objective is to analyze how cinematic representations of subjectivity negotiate between intrapsychic structures (e.g., the unconscious, ego conflict, repression) and external sociopolitical forces (e.g., patriarchy, caste, neoliberalism).

Films are purposively selected based on their narrative alignment with three thematic axes:

- Urban identity and capitalist estrangement (*Tamasha*)
- Patriarchal domesticity and gendered resistance (*The Great Indian Kitchen*)
- Caste trauma and postcolonial marginality (*Fandry*)

Each film is approached as a textual site of psychological inscription and discursive resistance, echoing Hall's (1997) conceptualization of media as a terrain for ideological contestation and identity negotiation.

2. Textual and Visual Analysis

This analysis phase closely reads visual and narrative elements across all three films. Each cinematic work is treated as a polysemic narrative, wherein mise-en-scène, framing, camera movement, color palette, and spatial organization serve as visual metaphors for internal psychological states.

Using Mulvey's (1975) concept of the "male gaze", the analysis of *The Great Indian Kitchen* focuses on how domestic labor and ritual function as gendered surveillance and resistance. Barthes' (1977) semiotics decodes visual signs and cultural myths—such as symbolic kitchen spaces or caste-marked bodily gestures—that reveal latent ideological structures.

Psychoanalytic film theory (Kaplan, 1997; Metz, 1982) informs how visual composition externalizes invisible psychic tensions, such as ego fragmentation in *Tamasha*, or internalized humiliation in *Fandry*.

3. Thematic Coding and Theoretical Application

Following a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006), thematic categories are inductively developed from the film texts. Salient motifs—such as mirrors, rituals, isolation, and emotional outbursts—are coded and mapped against psychoanalytic and postcolonial-feminist theories. These are not imposed a priori but emerge in iterative cycles of interpretation.

The core analytical frameworks include:

- Freud's (1937) defense mechanisms (repression, denial, projection, sublimation)
- Lacanian (1977) registers (Imaginary, Symbolic, Real) and the mirror stage
- Winnicott's (1965) "false self" and maternal mirroring
- Erikson's (1959) psychosocial stages, especially identity vs. role confusion
- Fanon's (1967) concept of "epidermalization of inferiority" and psychic disintegration
- Bhabha's (1994) notions of mimicry, ambivalence, and cultural hybridity
- Butler's (1990) theory of gender performativity
- Mohanty (1988) and Spivak's (1988) critiques of postcolonial patriarchy

Each framework is applied in context, enabling a multi-dimensional reading of how trauma and identity are dramatized in the films. For example, in *Tamasha*, Ved's scripted behavior in corporate life is read through Bhabha's mimicry and Erikson's identity confusion, while in *Fandry*, Jabya's shame and fantasies are analyzed using Fanon's racialized trauma and Lacan's mirror stage.

4. Comparative and Contextual Matrix

The final phase utilizes a comparative analytical matrix to chart convergences and divergences among the films. While all three narratives center on identity disintegration under structural oppression, each reflects distinct sociocultural paradigms:

- *Tamasha* foregrounds the psychic toll of neoliberal performance culture and suppressed creativity, marked by a fractured ego and commodified self.
- *The Great Indian Kitchen* reveals domestic rituals as instruments of gendered control, where resistance is enacted through silent disruption and bodily withdrawal.

- *Fandry* interrogates caste-based humiliation and adolescent desire in a postcolonial rural setting, dramatizing psychic implosion and deferred agency.

These insights are contextualized within Indian cinematic discourse (Gopal & Moorti, 2008; Nair, 2021; Rangan, 2016), framing film as entertainment and a site of socio-psychological inquiry and resistance.

This triangulated and interdisciplinary approach offers psychological depth through psychoanalytic analysis of individual subjectivity, Cultural specificity via postcolonial and feminist contextualization, Theoretical richness from integrating classical and contemporary frameworks, and Reflexivity by situating the researcher's interpretative stance within theoretical traditions. The methodology allows a nuanced understanding of how Indian cinema portrays fragmented identities, gendered resistance, social trauma, and how these representations resonate with broader cultural and psychological discourses.

Discussion and Analysis

Contemporary Indian cinema has emerged as a significant cultural site for interrogating the entangled dynamics of trauma, identity, and systemic oppression. Films such as *Tamasha* (2015), *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2021), and *Fandry* (2013)—currently available on streaming platforms such as Prime Video and ZEE5—offer rich textual terrains for examining how psychological defense mechanisms operate within casteist, patriarchal, and neoliberal frameworks. Drawing on psychoanalytic theory (Freud, Lacan, Anna Freud), postcolonial criticism (Fanon, Bhabha, Spivak), and feminist film theory (Butler, Kristeva, Chodorow), this section undertakes a triangulated analysis of these cinematic texts, situating trauma as socially mediated and identity as an adaptive construct.

1. *Tamasha* (2015): Urban Dislocation and the Fragmented Subject

Imtiaz Ali's *Tamasha*—a coming-of-age romance streaming on Prime Video—foregrounds the psychological cost of capitalist conformity and scripted success. The protagonist, Ved, experiences a dissociative rupture between his socially acceptable self and his authentic, imaginative persona. This internal division resonates with Lacan's (1977) model of the psyche, where the Symbolic order (language, law, society) suppresses the Imaginary (creative play, fantasy), causing psychic dissonance.

Ved's transformation in Corsica represents a momentary withdrawal from the Symbolic into the Imaginary. However, upon re-entry into the workaday world, the Superego imposes normative expectations, triggering repression (Freud, 1937). The iconic mirror scene, in which Ved rehearses his performative identity, encapsulates Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical metaphor of self-presentation. The public breakdown and subsequent return to theatrical storytelling symbolize *sublimation*, a Freudian defense in which repressed desires find expression in culturally sanctioned forms (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973). From an Eriksonian lens (1968), Ved undergoes a resolution of identity foreclosure, choosing authentic individuation over compliance.

2. *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2021): Domestic Space as the Theatre of Repression

Jeo Baby's *The Great Indian Kitchen* also on Prime Video depicts the invisible trauma embedded in the gendered architecture of domesticity. Through monotonous sequences of cooking, cleaning, and silent endurance, the film renders visible the cyclical performance of normative femininity. The unnamed protagonist's compliance aligns with Butler's (1990)

notion of *gender performativity*, wherein gender is constituted through repetitive acts under the surveillance of patriarchy.

The relentless repetition of domestic labor evokes Freud's (1920) theory of *repetition compulsion*, suggesting the unconscious reenactment of trauma. The symbolic overflow of the kitchen tap signals the disruption of domestic order and foreshadows the protagonist's eventual emancipation. This act of departure not only dramatizes a Kristevan (1982) abjection—the expulsion of the oppressive Other—but also enacts a feminist reclamation of selfhood akin to Chodorow's (1978) psychoanalytic reconstitution of the maternal subject. The film's muted aesthetic and narrative economy emphasize that resistance can be gestural, even non-verbal, challenging the hegemony of patriarchal silence (Spivak, 1988).

3. *Fandry* (2013): Casteed Subjectivity and the Psychic Residue of Exclusion

Nagraj Manjule's *Fandry*, streaming on ZEE5, explores caste trauma through the eyes of Jabya, a Dalit boy navigating his romantic longing for an upper-caste girl. His desire to transcend his social positioning is manifested through mimicry changes in dress, posture, and speech illustrating Bhabha's (1994) idea of colonial mimicry: "almost the same, but not quite." Jabya's internalization of casteist values exemplifies Fanon's (1967) theory of *epidermalization*, whereby the colonized subject imbibes the dominant gaze.

The pivotal moment in which Jabya is forced to chase pigs, his family's traditional caste-assigned task is a performative scene of *symbolic violence* (Bourdieu, 1990). His psychic rupture is externalized through stone-throwing an instance of displaced rage and incipient rebellion. Winnicott's (1965) theory of *mirroring* and Klein's (1946) notion of *splitting* help unpack Jabya's fractured subjectivity, highlighting the absence of affirming social structures as the cause of emotional disintegration. His final act functions as both catharsis and critique, a semiotic call for recognition and dignity in an exclusionary world.

Despite diverging in genre and aesthetic form, the three films share a structural logic: identity is shaped as a reactive formation to systemic violence. The protagonists employ various defense mechanisms like Ved's *sublimation*, the woman's *denial turned resistance*, and Jabya's *displacement* to negotiate their internal crises. These mechanisms function not only as psychological responses but as embedded cultural scripts, revealing that trauma is both intrapsychic and socially inscribed (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973; LaCapra, 2001).

Each film uses spatial metaphors such as Ved's office cubicle and theatre, the protagonist's kitchen, Jabya's rural fields as topographies of trauma, materializing the psychic battles marginalized selves face. Furthermore, by integrating psychoanalytic, postcolonial, and feminist methodologies, this study demonstrates that cinema is both an archive of collective suffering and a therapeutic space for articulating repressed voices.

Conclusion

This study examined *Tamasha* (2015), *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2021), and *Fandry* (2013) through a triangulated theoretical framework such as psychoanalysis, postcolonial theory, and feminist criticism to trace how psychological trauma and defense mechanisms are represented within socially stratified Indian contexts. Each film becomes a visual palimpsest of internal conflict and external oppression, constructing identity as a defensive adaptation rather than a static essence.

1. Filmic Psyches and Sociopolitical Trauma

In *Tamasha*, Ved's neurosis stems from the disjunction between his creative unconscious and a conformist symbolic order. The repression of artistic desire under the gaze of a capitalist superego exemplifies Freud's (1923) structural model and Lacan's (1977) symbolic entrapment. His therapeutic sublimation through performance dramatizes Eriksonian identity foreclosure (Erikson, 1968), resolved through self-actualization.

The Great Indian Kitchen stages gender as a site of silent violence. The protagonist's invisible and performative labor is naturalized through patriarchal scripting (Butler, 1990). Her refusal to comply marks a moment of epistemic rupture, echoing Spivak's (1988) subaltern resistance through non-verbal agency. The kitchen becomes a metaphoric battlefield where routine rituals mask deep psychological scars, aligned with Freud's (1920) theory of repetition compulsion.

Fandry delves into caste-inflicted trauma. Jabya's aspirational mimicry aligns with Fanon's (1967) theory of the racialized inferiority complex and Bhabha's (1994) mimicry-as-mockery. His final act of resistance channels repressed rage into symbolic confrontation. Winnicott's (1965) insight into environmental failure illuminates Jabya's fragmented identity—denied mirroring, he externalizes psychic injury as political expression.

2. Comparative Insight: Identity as a Dynamic Defense

Across all three films, identity is framed as a defensive structure—formed through repression (*Tamasha*), denial and defiance (*The Great Indian Kitchen*), and projection and displacement (*Fandry*). These mechanisms function not in isolation but as responses to hierarchical power structures—neoliberalism, patriarchy, or caste. Such cinematic narratives validate Laplanche and Pontalis's (1973) assertion that defense mechanisms are culturally inscribed psychic strategies for survival. The visual medium thereby becomes a site of both symptom and critique, encoding trauma within aesthetic form.

3. Implications and Future Trajectories

This research opens avenues for expanded inquiry. Future studies may incorporate:

- Transnational frameworks, examining identity and trauma in diasporic or borderland cinemas where cultural hybridity reshapes psychic negotiations.
- Neuro-psychoanalytic models, integrating trauma studies and embodiment (van der Kolk, 2014), to examine the sensorium of suffering.
- Intersections with queer and disability studies, illuminating under-theorized modalities of repression, marginality, and resilience in cinematic discourse.

These approaches can offer a deeper understanding of how cinema reflects trauma and actively participates in its narration, refiguration, and potential healing.

Ultimately, *Tamasha*, *The Great Indian Kitchen*, and *Fandry* transcend their narrative frames to function as cultural archives, recording how psychic wounds are shaped by, and respond to, systemic violence. Indian cinema thus emerges not merely as entertainment, but as a crucial hermeneutic space where subjectivity, resistance, and healing are cinematically staged and socially negotiated.

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