

The Architecture of Forgotten Past: A Psychological and Literary Critique of Anterograde Amnesia in TAMIL film “Ghajini” (2005)

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Received: 15 Sep 2026; Received in revised form: 12 Oct 2026; Accepted: 16 Oct 2026; Available online: 20 Oct 2026

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Abstract— Literature and film studies often go hand in hand as they both are intertwined with each other. The integration of Psychology into film studies is an unavoidable topic. Psychology becomes a major discourse in both literature and film studies. This paper aims to study Anterograde amnesia through a Tamil film Ghajini 2005. The protagonist of this film leads a normal life like others but his life turns upside down after a severe injury in his head. He cannot lead a normal life like others. His memory wipes everything clean after every 15 minutes, he couldn't recognise people, events, things, incidents that have happened during this period. He barely remembers certain repeated faces and repeated events. He maintains everything in a record, through polaroid photographs and notes. This paper could further be explored as a study of trauma.



Keywords— Amnesia, Psychology, memory loss, mental trauma, cinema.

Introduction

Few domains of knowledge are as vast multifaceted and inherently interdisciplinary as literature far beyond being a mere expression of human life are repository of artistic and literary words, literature serves as a profound , intellectual space through which human experience emotions, cultures, Identities, Ideologies and social relations are explored and interpreted. Its expansive nature is further reflected in its inextricably interconnectedness, with diverse disciplines including Linguistics, Cultural studies, Psychology, translation studies, media studies and comparative literature. Thus, literature transcends disciplinary boundaries, continually engaging with multiple forms of knowledge to illuminate the complex relationship between language , society, culture,and the human condition. It is ironic that the celluloid world, initially a powerful medium for awakening political consciousness against colonial rule, gradually became a source of entertainment in independent India. As audiences became increasingly fanatical about cinema , psychology turned its attention to an entirely

different realm, the intricate workings of the human heart and mind, revealing an inner world of emotions, desires,motives,and conflicts that remained unexplored.

Exploration of psychology:

Psychology ventures beyond the visible manifestation of human behaviour to explore the seemingly miraculous and inexplicable dimensions of the human mind. It seeks to unravel the hidden forces underlying the individuals thoughts, emotions, perceptions and actions,thereby revealing the intricate psychological profile that lies beneath the surface of observable behaviour.hardly has any other films achieved such remarkable box office success , captivated millions and millions of viewers, and generated millions in revenue across linguistic boundaries as films that have primarily exposed amnesia a complex disorder of memory.

Amnesia is a neurological and psychological condition that causes significant and abnormal memory loss. Hardly does an individual suffering from amnesia or amnesic syndrome

retain a crystal clear reconstruction of facts, experiences, and previously acquired information. The disorder may impact the individual's ability to recall personal experiences, recognisable familiar information or even maintain a clear sense of identity. Nevertheless, amnesia does not invariably affect the capacity to acquire new memories, this depends largely on its type, cause, and severity. Moreover, amnesia need not be permanent as certain forms may occur as temporary episodes of memory loss and resolve partially or completely over time.

Amnesia is not in itself an inherent disease, rather it's a memory disorder that may arise from injury or damage to brain regions integral to memory processing. Once the underlying cause is accurately identified and appropriately treated therapeutic strategies may help recover, reinforce, or compensate for impaired memories, although the extent of recovery varies according to the nature and severity of the underlying condition. In some cases of short term memory, individuals may paradoxically preserve deeply ingrained remote memories while struggling to form new ones. They might effortlessly revive childhood recollections, recall historical names and even identify the current president, or recall daily routines like what they had for breakfast. This differential memory pattern highlights the complex neural distinctions between recent memory encoding, long standing consolidated memory traces. Hardly does amnesia impair a person's overall intelligence and awareness or well established learning skills.

Individuals may continue to perform familiar activities such as driving or playing musical instruments and may remain aware of their own memory impairment.

Anterograde Amnesia in Ghajini:

Anterograde amnesia is a type of amnesia in which a person cannot remember the events, faces, characters, incidents before the injury. In films this anterograde amnesia is a primary theme and it has often been portrayed through a great many characters. A famous tamil film *Ghajini* (2005) starring Surya, Asin, Nayanthara is focused mainly on this complex. The film begins with Chitra, a medical student who finds a case study of Sanjay Ramasamy who has been affected by amnesia; she further investigates him through her professor and shows an interest in his case. Her professor explains that this patient has a condition called anterograde amnesia in which he only remembers events or incidents that happen for fifteen minutes after which he forgets everything. His memory only retains information such as his daily activities, skills, hobbies, interests and the day when he met an accident and events related to that, Chitra is curious to know about this case but her professor warns as it involves a criminal case.

But out of curiosity she sets out to investigate on her own and comes to know that Sanjay Ramasamy is a wealthy business man once and followed by a serious head injury his memory wipes clean for every fifteen minutes. He keeps a track of things in the form of polaroid photographs and handwritten notes and permanent tattoos inked on his own body. At the same time inspector Ravi is in search of a culprit who is in charge of recent murders and finds that culprit is Sanjay Ramasamy. Chitra befriends Sanjay to know about his lifestyle and routine and even tries to visit his flat in his absence, she is shocked to know that inspector is being tied up there and get to know that Sanjay is a criminal who takes photographs of people and marks their pictures with a date (the date in which they are going to be killed by Sanjay). Chitra finds a photograph of Lakshman, owner of a pharmaceutical company, marked with a deadline. She warns Lakshman of the impending danger and his henchmen break through the flat of Sanjay, knock him unconscious and erase all the records including Sanjay's tattoos and phone numbers.

Chitra happened to come across a diary of Sanjay Ramasamy 2002 to 2003. Sanjay meets a girl named Kalpana, a growing ad film model and he falls in love with her without revealing his identity. She accepts his proposal and postpones their marriage due to her commitment.

One day he sets out for a business trip. Digging further on her Chitra pieces up the story of what has happened, Kalpana also sets out to Bombay for an ad film, while on her journey in train she finds out that 25 young girls have been smuggled to Mumbai and Kolkata and she stops and secures them. It is revealed that Lakshman is the ring leader of the smuggling group and kills 2 girls to disclose the matter. He hunts for Kalpana on her flat and kills her in front of Sanjay and Sanjay is brutally hit by an iron rod and thus causes his amnesia.

Chitra helps Sanjay to track Lakshman and he fights with Lakshman as well as with his twin Ram who tries to safeguard his brother from Sanjay. Eventually both the villains meet their ends in the hands of Sanjay.

CONCLUSION

This film is inspired by Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000). This became a major commercial hit in 2005 and it was later remade into Hindi in 2005 by the same director Murugadoss starring Akshay Khan, Asin. This film also leads to trauma studies as the trauma of losing his beloved haunts him in the present and turns him into a criminal.

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