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VISHWA THULASI: A Classic Film

by

Dir. SUMATHY RAM

A Film-Study on Cultural Perspectives and Narrative Techniques

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Starring well-known Indian actors Mammooty and Nandita Das, a Tamil film, *VISHWA THULASI*, was launched worldwide in 2004 and won the Tamil Nadu State awards for Second-Best Film and Best Choreography-2004. The film also won the prestigious Gold Remi Award for Best Musical Composition, and the Gold Special Jury Award for Best First Feature at the 38th Worldfest-Houston International Film Festival in Texas, USA. The film, *Vishwa Thulasi*, holds a special place in this author's heart because of its exceptional music and choreography, as well as the dazzling freshness of the debut director's signature scenes. This classic film has been a source of enchantment to her for nearly 20 years. According to this author, the film is a masterpiece, and she had already written an article about it and published it in the JETIR Journal, Volume 6, June 2019. Recently, this research paper has been spotted by Dir. Sumathy Ram, an Indian American film director of *Vishwa Thulasi* who lives in Texas and is lauded as a filmmaker, screenwriter, poet, lyricist, and music producer.

Dir. Sumathy Ram reached out to this author to show her appreciation. In their lively discussion about the film, they displayed their enthusiasm for Tamil literature, even though they studied English literature for their higher studies. Their conversations led the author to realize that filmmaking is a complex artistic skill that employs subtle storytelling elements to evoke subconscious enchantment in viewers. Furthermore, the author is captivated by the director's explanation of her approach, realizing that the most significant scenes in the movie are supported by many cultural facts and artifacts present in the setting. This paper is designed to unravel the cinematic elegance that encapsulates the nuances of iconic scenes with cultural elements and examine the narrative layers of emotional power that are presented in the film, *Vishwa Thulasi*, written and directed by Dir. Sumathy Ram.



1.1 The Poster of the Film *Vishwa Thulasi*

The film has greatly influenced a host of film enthusiasts and critics. The film has been ardently adored by senior journalist, V. Ramjee. In his endearing article on *Makkalkural* titled “Why Not Offer a Red-Carpet Welcome to Sumathy Ram?” published immediately after the release of the film showered encomiums on the film and the film maker. This author is delighted to quote a brief summary of the plot from the English translated version of the article that was originally published in Tamil.

The story of the period film *Vishwa Thulasi* (spans the two decades from the early 1940s to the early 1960s) can be conveyed in just seven words. The beautiful Nandita Das is expected to marry her cousin Siva played by actor Manoj K Jayan). Meanwhile, as a schoolgirl, Nandita Das is infatuated and later falls in love with ‘Azhagan’ Mammooty. Destiny, however, takes each of them in different directions. Twenty years later, Nandita Das comes to the same village, Sundharapuri, as a teacher. She is pleasantly surprised to see her childhood love Mammooty, the landlord of the village, who still continues to live as a confirmed bachelor. Mammooty’s mother, (played by actress Sukumari) hears that Nandita Das too is a virgin despite having been married. She feels that Nandita Das needs a life companion and hence persuades her son Mammooty to marry her. In the meanwhile, destiny once again enters the village; this time in the form of Manoj K Jayan.

Manoj sustains brain damage due to an accident and is wandering like a mad person. However, in another accident, he regains his former state. The wedding of Mammooty and Nandita Das is to take place on a hill temple. Elaborate arrangements are scheduled to take place at dawn. Both of them get ready for the wedding ceremony the next day. Manoj Jayan emerges from his state of being confined, like an arrow that has been released from the bow. He sees Nandita Das and Mammooty as the bride and groom and something changes in him. He removes the axle pin from the wheel of the cart and plunges it into Nandita Das’s abdomen. She sustains fatal injuries. A shocked Mammooty is filled with thoughts of revenge against Manoj, who has turned a happy occasion into a nightmare. (*Makkalkural*)

A movie should have a prompt setting to achieve visual excellence. To achieve this setting is very important for a filmmaker. The setting, also known as the story-world or the cinematic universe, can set the main backdrop for the narrative, including time, geographical location, and mood. The revelation of *Vishwa Thulasi*’s setting

occurs when the prime credits appear on the screen during the title sequence. Dir. Sumathy Ram has meticulously planned and established the main background for the film. The two locations, Sundharapuri and Palakkarai, where the actions take place are vividly reflective of the world of the story. It is a huge responsibility for a filmmaker to create an environment that accurately reflects the story's mood. Dir. Satyajit Ray, the pioneer of Indian Cinema, emphasizes the importance of setting:

...my main preoccupation as a filmmaker ... has been to find out ways of investing a story with organic cohesion, and filling it with detailed and truthful observation of human behaviour and relationships in a given milieu and a given set of events, avoiding stereotypes and stock situations, and sustaining interest visually, aurally and emotionally by a judicious use of the human and technical resources...

The very edifice of the story is the milieu. The milieu sets the stage for the scene of action, The milieu of *Vishwa Thulasi* is bucolic or idyllic, depicting the pleasing aspects of country life and settings.



1.2 Palakkarai



1.3 Sundharapuri

Setting not only refers to the ambience but also to the period or era during which the events unfold. *Vishwa Thulasi* travels between 1940s and 1960s and interestingly between pre-independence and post-independence India. The plot swings between the present and the past in a serene pace. Kalyani Giri in her article. *Vishwa Thulasi Premières at Worldfest* notes: “..... She (Dir. Sumathy Ram) could envision an enduring love story defying time, demographics time and circumstance. In her mind, the story revealed itself in astonishing clarity of emotion, scene and location. “A movie review of Hindu.com by Malathi Rangarajan states “in a film scenario where sexy gyrations and obscene overtones are a norm, Sumathy, who is new to cinema, shows real guts in coming out with a clean film that moves quite slowly, of course, with veterans who deliver the goods with ease.”

The film commences with Thulasi's entry into Sundharapuri. Using the 'in medias res' technique, Thulasi's arrival sequence sets the tone for the narrative. The use of flashbacks (analepsis) and dreamy flashforwards (prolepsis) interwind seamlessly to bring the lead characters to the beginning and to the future of the story. Each scene in the film holds layers of meanings. The young Vishwam presents a manimalai (a garland of pearls) to Thulasi as a token of pure love. Thulasi gladly accepts it. Siva barges in and tears the string to their shock. Vishwam and Thulasi start collecting the scattered pearls. "Engu Piranthadhu?", the song that accompanies this scene takes it to a level of pure magic.

This scene stands out from Siva's snide remarks and warnings, "Collect and string these pearls leisurely. I will come and tear them again." This particular incident forewarns the viewers that Siva surely would wreak havoc in their lives. One could encounter such occurrences in one of the finest tragedies of Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, wherein the characters inadvertently reveal the impending danger. Siva's hatred comes to fruition bitterly, just like a curse at the end. The brutal killing of Thulasi by Siva leads to a tragedy.

Very few plays by Shakespeare probably have as many repeated references the element of time as *Macbeth*. The phobic state of mind and its perilous consequences are the main focus of *Macbeth*, along with the temporariness of human life. The play constantly evokes imaginary fears of the mind, while the present seems to exist as a thin tissue in the middle. As a matter of fact, when Lady Macbeth receives her husband's letters in Act 1, she ponders over the issue of time in the play precisely:

Thy letters have transported me beyond

This ignorant present, and I feel now

The future in the instant. (Act I Scene V- 1055)

Upon her arrival, Thulasi displays a secret note of love by drawing an Oonjal Kolam, and Vishwam is surprised to sense Thulasi's presence and search for her. A MacGuffin-based narrative technique is used to introduce the scene, highlighting the rekindling of the secret love between the two protagonists. However, tension remains due to their missed glimpses of each other. Despite being close, they feel disconnected due to their refusal to be open and truthful about their feelings of love, but they are connected to each other through their thoughts. The use of a stringed musical instrument, Mandolin showcases its part in both present and flashback scenes. Future scenes will also feature the Mandolin and its music.

Alfred Hitchcock used the term MacGuffin to describe a plot device where a character pursues an object, but its actual nature is not crucial to the story. If the characters treated another object with the same importance, it would work just as well. The Necklace of the Heart of the Ocean in *Titanic* is a good illustration of a MacGuffin. The spirit of Jack and Rose is connected to the necklace, which is featured throughout the film. Rose is saying goodbye to her lover by releasing the necklace into the ocean. The Mandolin that Thulasi gives Vishwam as a gift in *Vishwa Thulasi* is an example of the MacGuffin object.

The film features poetic musical scenes that occur during poignant moments where emotions are expressed through haiku-style songs. The initial scene in which Thulasi sees Vishwam after twenty years is created through a combination of magical realism and a real-world setting that possesses a spiritual touch, including local customs and imaginary beliefs. Thulasi's gaze is graceful and not straight, symbolizing her love's purity through light. The aura of the sequence is enhanced by a haiku 'Jyothi nee' sung by Smt. Vani Jairam, a recipient of Padma Bhushan. The meaning of Jyothi is fire. In Hindu mythology, fire is associated with purity and prosperity. Of the five elements of nature, fire is unique for plenty of reasons. Fire illumines spiritually and vanquishes all the impurities without changing its nature. Agni always burns in the upward direction no matter in whichever position it is held. The *Pavamana Mantra* from the *Brhadaranyaka* Upanishad glorifies the power of light in the

following sloka:

Asatoma Sad-Gamaya

Tamaso Maa Jyotir-Gamaya

Mrytyor-Maa Amritam Gamaya

Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantihi

When translated into English, the sloka sounds like this:

Lead me from the untruth to the truth.

Lead me from darkness to light.

Lead me from death to immortality

To Thulasi, Vishwam is the light of all lights. She has returned to her light after years of lamentations and torments. He has been a beacon that kept her alive from far away. She is like Andal, the girl who became a deity. Sri Andal is widely recognized for her poetry and her unwavering love and desire to marry the Lord Vishnu. Similarly, Vishwam's sight is a source of elixir for Thulasi. The mere thought of his very being fills her with ecstasy. As Keats in his *Endymion, A Poetic Romance* wonders:

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:

Its loveliness increases; it will never

Pass into nothingness; but still will keep

A bower quiet for us, and a sleep

Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

Vishwam is the panacea for all the longings of Thulasi. Even during the devastating times, thoughts about him have supported her as sounding board. Vishwam's charm is a constant presence in Thulasi's life, as he provides her with compassion and comfort during her thoughts and dreams, helping her cope with the trauma of her past forced wedding ritual. After Thulasi's ecstasy in the rainy day of Chitra Pournami, the sight of Champaka flowers force her to experience agonizing moments because she exchanged Champaka garlands with Siva as a mark of marriage. The trauma from the incident instigates her to dream about her saviour in an intimate way and feel secure and calm in the *Kanavilavadhu* song sequence that is soul-stirring. The post scene journey Vishwam and Thulasi take to Pattabhi's family function in a twin-bullock cart is both intimate and profound. Vishwam's long-hidden emotions towards Thulasi are symbolized by thirst, which is expressed in a subtle way when he sends the cart-wallah off to fetch more water and spend some time alone with Thulasi.

Another aesthetic sequence is the feast scene in which Thulasi draws a beautiful Kolam to welcome her soul-mate and cooks Akkaradisil, used to offer as prasadam to Maha Vishnu in the month of Margazhi as referenced in Natchiyar Thirumozhi, an exquisite blend of rice and moong dal cooked with milk, jaggery, ghee, cardamoms, edible camphor, cashew nuts, and raisins. A soulful rendition of Thirumangaiazhwar's PeriyaThirumozhi, marks the prelude to the feast scene and this scene exemplifies the local culture in the French concept style, Joie de vivre, as Thulasi begins her day with the readiness to welcome her love of life with such pure joy.



1.4 Thulasi's Ecstasy in The Rain

கூவாய் பூங்குயிலே! குளிர்மாரி தடுத்து உகந்த

மாலுய் கீண்ட மணிவண்ணனை வரக் கூவாய் பூங்குயிலே! (1944)

When translated into English, the song sounds like this:

Oh, flower-cuckoo-bird, sweetly sing and call him! He has a blue hue--

He averted the storm by carrying the hill! Invite him to come over, bird!

The ancient scriptures and epics of India emphasize the importance of hospitality, and the guests are considered a representation of the divine, and it is believed that by serving them with love and care, one earns blessings and good karma. This concept is deeply ingrained in Indian society and is practiced across all communities and regions. For Thulasi, Vishwam is her Atithi Deva (guest) and Ishta Deva (beloved).



1.5 Kanavilavadhu Song Scene



1.6 The Feast Scene



1.7 Starving Siva

The feast scene is succeeded by the starving Siva snatching food from a little girl and gorging it on with hunger. Having no care to maintain his health or sanity, he even kills a tender chick by slaying it on the Trident, the weapon of Siva (Trishula of Mahadev). The Macabre element in this scene unequivocally reveals the lurking disaster. A dramatic irony has arisen because what is meant for Siva has been given to Vishwam instead, resulting in a stark difference between what is expected and what has really happened

There are four types of ironies: Cosmic, Poetic, Verbal, and Dramatic. When fate forces an action that is entirely opposite to what was expected, cosmic irony occurs. For instance, Shiva's arrival unexpectedly made to the right place at the wrong time. *Kanniponnu* scene demonstrates poetic irony between the concept of good and superstition. Siva's disappearance is mentioned in Pattabhi's talk, but Siva reappears in the subsequent scene, revealing the paradoxical or verbal irony. It's a dramatic irony that the audience has more knowledge than the characters. During the elephant attack preceding the climax, Vishwam saves Siva and orders to initiate an herbal treatment that aids his recovery from the shock and the fall. Eventually, Vishwam's kindness results in repercussions, unfortunately.

A rich cultural perspective can be glimpsed through an intriguing sequence with a textual echo. Neelamani, Vishwam's niece attains puberty at their palatial bungalow. She is pampered by everyone in the family. Her widowed mother is the younger sister of the Zamindar, Vishwam. One could see a lot of parallelism and textual echoes between Neelamani's puberty ceremony and Thulasi's puberty ceremony. For instance, Thulasi realizes her love for young Vishwam and blushes in front of him during the ceremonial bath at her 'Nalungu' function. On the other hand, Vishwam, after the revelations about her past following the astrologer's episode, opens up a little and starts seeing her with pure love strengthened by a guiltless conscience. "A textual echo is a pair or series of passages, moments, or scenes that the author invites us to connect. By inviting us to compare and contrast these passages, moments, or scenes, textual echoes help us think about the characters and the story in fresh ways."

Though there have been several differences between the two ceremonies (Neelamani's puberty ceremony and Thulasi's puberty ceremony), the hitherto unsolved questions are resolved in Neelamani's function like, Thulasi's marital status, her lonely past etc. through the astrologer's episode. When Neelamani attains puberty, Thulasi is the first person to notice the stains. According to Tamil tradition 'that' person should be a Sumangali, a married woman. The astrologer of Vishwam's family asks about Thulasi's marital status, and a visibly upset Thulasi goes away sobbing pathetically.



1.8 Thulasi Meets Vishwam's Mother



1.9 Thulasi and Aachi

Thulasi's past has been revealed to everyone in the family by an elderly woman. A twenty years ago, Thulasi's maternal uncle, her guardian, in his death bed had requested his mother to ask Thulasi to exchange garland with his son, Siva, as a mark of marriage. Thulasi agreed to her grandmother's order because she wanted to show gratitude to her uncle, but Siva disappeared after the marriage and there was no indication of his whereabouts.

Another intriguing technique employed here is ‘epiphany’- the revelation.

Epiphany is when a character has a sudden realization with which they gain insight into the deeper meaning of something relating to the story. Almost anything could trigger a character’s epiphany including objects, dialogue, action, etc. to bring the character who experiences it greater clarity or awareness as they start to see a certain issue or event in a new light.



1.10 Preparing for the Function



1.11 Neelamani’s Function

Neelmani’s puberty ceremony features several significant moments that reflect the rural cultural ethos. The ten-day function comprises a plethora of cultural rudiments like ‘Seekalithal’ (removing dhristhi-evil eye) ‘Uppuharathi’ (salt is an auspicious abode of Goddess Lakshmi), Vannathimattu’, (gifting the stained dress to the washerwoman), ‘Kucchu’ (A thatched roof space of confinement), indulging in local games like ‘Thayam’, and ‘Pallankuzhi’ (traditional Mancala games) etc. The epitome is when he sings a song Aayakalaigal that describes Thulasi's beauty in a way that is appropriate for the function. The song is akin to Aadhi Shankara’s *Soundariyalahiri*, a poem that is divine and encapsulates the feminine beauty of the goddess Parvathy.

Bringing the characters to life with their skills and charm is an impressive feat for the actors, and the actors’ performances on screen are a delight for the audience. Dir. Sumathy Ram has meticulously chosen actors, both experienced and new, who are appropriate for the story's setting of *Vishwa Thulasi*. Her acumen for choice of actors is unparalleled. Mohit (young Vishwam) and Mammooty stand as classic examples.

The renowned Japanese film maker Akira Kurosawa, the maker of classics like *Rashomon* and *Seven Samurai* believes that typesetting actors confines them. He further states in his book, *Something Like an Autobiography* as advice to young people considering a career in filmmaking:

A sad truth in the film business is that when an actor succeeds in a particular role there is a tendency to keep casting him in similar roles. This stems, of course, from the convenience and advantage of those who use him, but for actor himself there is no greater misfortune. There are three very important things I learned from [Kajiro Yamamoto] about actors. The first is that people do not know themselves. They can’t look objectively at their own speech and movement habits. The second is that when a movement is made consciously, it will be the consciousness rather than the movement that draws attention on the screen. The third is that when you explain to an actor what he should do, you must also make him

understand why he should do it that way – that is, what the internal motivations in the role and the actor are. (169)

It always amazes this author as to how much great efforts Dir. Sumathy Ram must have put into make the lead actors to imbibe the characters. As a matter of fact, all of them are non-Tamil actors. Mr. M.P. Udayasuriyan in his article which was originally published in Tamil on *Pudhiyaparvai* titled “A Haiku on Love” substantiates the same idea. Here is a part of the version that is translated in English:

Whatever happens after this is sheer poetry on celluloid. Mammooty and Nandita Das are a perfect combination. They look as if they were born to enact this particular story, as they live their roles. Eloquent glances, wonderful expressions, and dignified body language—all this is in abundance—and keeps the viewer spellbound. In one scene, as Mammooty gets up to wash his hands after a meal, he meets Nandita. Who happens to be directly opposite him... she offers him the pallu of her sari to wipe his hands... this scene could well be a haiku on love... Scenes such as the one where Mammooty gives Nandita Das a basket full of Pavazha malli flowers, or the one where Das silently glances at him are scenes redolent with the fragrance of love? There are plenty of such scenes sprinkled throughout the film.

A separate research paper could be written on the music of the film. The music scored by the doyens of Tamil film industry, Mellisai Mannar M.S. Viswanathan and Maestro Ilayaraaja is similar to the nectar-soaked divine drink of Somarasa. Music maestro M.S. Viswanathan’s music enhances the sublimity and grandeur of a mature and mellow love story. Music legend Ilayarajaa’s background score evocatively captures the story’s myriad moods and is one of the major strengths of the film. By writing all the songs masterfully, Maestro Ilayaraaja and Dir. Sumathy Ram have achieved an impressive feat. In his review article, V. Ramjee expresses his deep love for earnest music of *Vishwa Thulasi* and praises the film’s songs and lyrics for their masterful content, particularly on the Gazal-type song titled Kannamma, “The poignancy and lyricism Dir. Sumathy Ram infused in the lyrics, tug at the heartstrings”.

By adding many literary terms to the song, the Gazal presentation style has been enhanced. The use of emotion in the following lines involves using the term 'imagery' to create mental images of a scene using descriptive words and human senses. In these lines, emotions are expressed by 'hyperbole', exaggerating feelings such as love and longing. Furthermore, employing the term 'overstatement' to express his emotions of love and loss. Emotions are expressed in these lines using 'metaphors', which evoke imagination by figurative language.

Here is a part of the song that is translated in English:

Why not bring the spring to me, dear, with your words? Has Kuyil stopped singing or is your voice not being heard? I haven't seen your face in quite some time... Hasn't the jasmine flower bloomed? Your footprint has not left a mark, nor has anyone drawn a rangoli on the ground! Is your love not enough? Does the world have ceased to spin?

S.P.B. 55 (Film Music-Special-Tribute – Tamil Deepavali Malar 2020 – The Hindu) The original four-page article by V. Chandra Mohan and V. Ravi Kumar is a special tribute front feature on the Tamil edition Diwali Malar 2020 of The Hindu publications to commemorate SPB's outstanding contribution to Indian Film music. This article cited and rated "Kannamma Kanavillaiya" as one of the 10 best songs of SPB from the decade 2000. Kannamma is an imaginary muse of Mahakavi Bharathiyar.



1.12 Mayakkama Song Scene



1.13. Mayakkama Song Scene

Mayakkama, another melody number has been done in a boisterous setting with Raja Ravi Varma's painting of Hamsa Damayanti as reference, and the song scene depicts the lovers' dream life together in magical realism. Describing events in a real-world setting but with magical trappings, often incorporating local customs and invented beliefs, is called Magical realism.

Diction and the tone employed by the characters in the film is astounding. No character in the film uses obnoxious words or unruly tone. Siva's outburst of rude words is an exception to this rule, as his words reveal his hidden sick mind. Aachi, the elderly woman who offers shelter to Thulasi is always full of appreciation and gratitude. Even though there is no separate comedy track, Pattabhi's malapropism and Neelmani's tweaks evoke a smile on the audience's face. The director is also a poetess and that has been exhibited aesthetically in many dialogues.

The leading characters' dialogues are both brief and exquisite. Vishwam inquires Thulasi whether it is a barrier or connection that exists between them, and he states that he thinks it's a bridge instead of a wall. He continues to inquire about her thoughts and is curious if she shares her affirmations in accordance with him. As he leaves, Thulasi monologues in a sentimental way about how we pray silently because we believe God is listening to our desires. Similarly, it is essential for lovers to comprehend their partners' desires without voicing them, isn't it? At the Hill temple, Thulasi plays the Veena and all the end notes sound Sa Ri Sa Ri which is actually her affirmative response to Vishwam's proposal (Sari/Sari meaning Yes-Yes).

The climax of *Vishwa Thulasi* bears testimony to Chekov's gun. Gifting a basket of fresh Pavalamalli flowers, which Vishwam had taken from Thulasi a long time ago and promising to return the basket with flowers at the right time.

The concept was popularized by Russian playwright and author Anton Chekhov, who frequently illustrated the principle by using a gun as an example of an essential element. In 1889 he wrote: "One

must never place a loaded rifle on the stage if it isn't going to go off. It's wrong to make promises you don't mean to keep." Because a rifle is an attention-grabbing element that elicits a certain expectation—i.e., going off—its presence as a stage prop becomes a “promise” to the audience. The writer keeps that promise by using the element, the gun in this case, to contribute to the story.

In addition, the literary term 'backstory' is employed to reflect on events that took place prior to the main story telling, which gives a perspective of what is currently taking place.

The mood of characters is reflected by non-human objects surrounding them, which is known as pathetic fallacy. Weather is typically used to indicate a character's mindset at a specific moment in the story. Siva's anger and sadness have been depicted and conveyed through violent thunderstorms and rain as a mark of fitting denouement. The falling action's emotional appeal, which is emphasized with pathos, is used to generate pity and intensify the level of sorrow. It's enlightening to discover the traces of divine nature that manifest through the character traits of fictional characters.

Pathos can be an emotional appeal that can cause pity or sorrow towards a character, leading to unnecessary tragedy. The triangular symbolism associated with the hero's character resembles the god, Vishnu. The *Padma Purana* states that Lord Vishnu is a unique deity with three distinct qualities: creation, preservation, and destruction. The personality of Lord Vishnu is not characterized by impatience or passion, as is also the personality of Vishwam. However, in the climax sequence Vishwam transforms into a slayer mode. He couldn't tolerate the stabbing of Thulasi.

It's fascinating to observe how the narrative technique of Primal Hamartia is used at the climax to reveal the tragic flaw of Vishwam that leads to his devastating downfall. Vishwam who has been patient and composed in all these years takes on the role of Madhusudana, one of Vishnu's thousand names, who annihilated the demon Madhu in his attempt to kill Brahma. Undeniably, Siva's rage has always been one step ahead of Vishwam's but in the climax Vishwam surpasses Siva in anger and vanquishes him. Despite his uncharacteristic efforts, Vishwam fails to save Thulasi on time.



1.14 Siva in Grassland



1.15 Siva Basking in the Fire

The term Eucatastrophe was created by J.R.R. Tolkien in *The Lord of the Rings*, and it describes a climax situation where the protagonist appears to be experiencing a catastrophic change. Vishwam's dreams are shattered by the untimely intrusion of Siva. Death separates the love of his life eternally from him. The end song

“Thulasi” implies that he will keep his pleasant memories alive to endure the rest of his life. As Sri Andal residing in Lord Vishnu, Thulasi will remain alive in Vishwam's mind forever.

The article on *Makkalkural* highlights the same about the film:

Vishwa Thulasi belongs to the unforgettable black and white era of films on love. The film, however, is a splash of scenes that have been painted with the colors of the poetry of love. A feature film speaks the language of scenes. *Vishwa Thulasi* is a stellar example of this cinematic idiom in the world of modern films. Clear storyline, no-frills screenplay and apt dialogues are some lingering fragrances of the Thulasi plant that the debut film Dir. Sumathy Ram has sprinkled throughout her directorial initiative.

Makkalkural V. Ramjee has composed a special poem as a mark of tribute to the craftsmanship of Dir. Sumathy Ram, one of the finest directors Tamil film industry has enjoyed in this century.

Ode to *Vishwa Thulasi*

It is that time ... When flocks of birds

Fly in search for their nests in the trees.

It's that time... When one experiences the bliss of watching

The golden rays of the setting sun

Light up the evening landscape.

The golden glow of the rising sun

Illuminates the world ...

Bliss it is indeed

To watch in adoration

The Eastern sky

Lit up by the solar splendor.

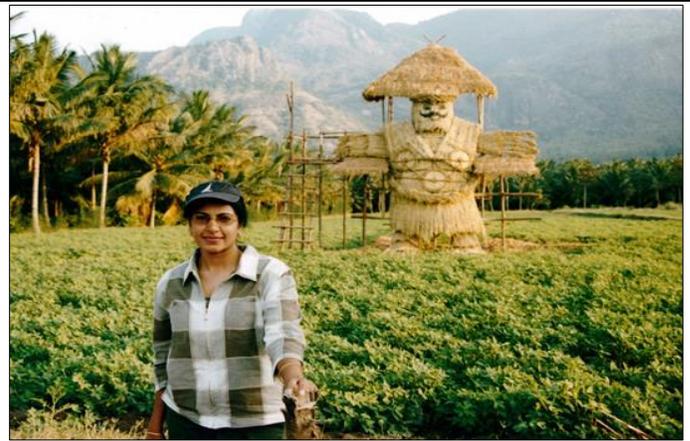
This author considers it a rare privilege to have been associated with a distinguished personality and a diligent artist, Dir. Sumathy Ram. In a significant discussion, this author asked about the motivation behind the artistic drive of her beloved filmmaker. Dir. Sumathy Ram's reply illuminates a new perspective:

Learning the craft and art of filmmaking has been a source of delight for Dir. Sumathy Ram, and the director used Leonardo da Vinci's quote that 'Learning is the only thing the mind never fears and never regrets' as her driving force. Dir. Sumathy Ram is currently devoted to her passion project in Hollywood and aims to create a masterpiece. In response to a question about her advice for any aspiring novice, Dir. Sumathy Ram said, “Dreaming is a precious gift given to us. To achieve your dreams, it is crucial to master the art of dreaming, express pride in them, and work tirelessly to make them a reality. If your dreams are meaningful and beautiful, they can come true!”

Visionaries and dreamers use their creative impulse to make mundane life meaningful. The most magnificent masterpieces produced by filmmakers with extraordinary dreams are those that enrich the complexity of human lives and stand the test of time. The success of masterpiece films is largely due to the combination of artistic craftsmanship with art, music, and the use of human drama as the primary highlights.

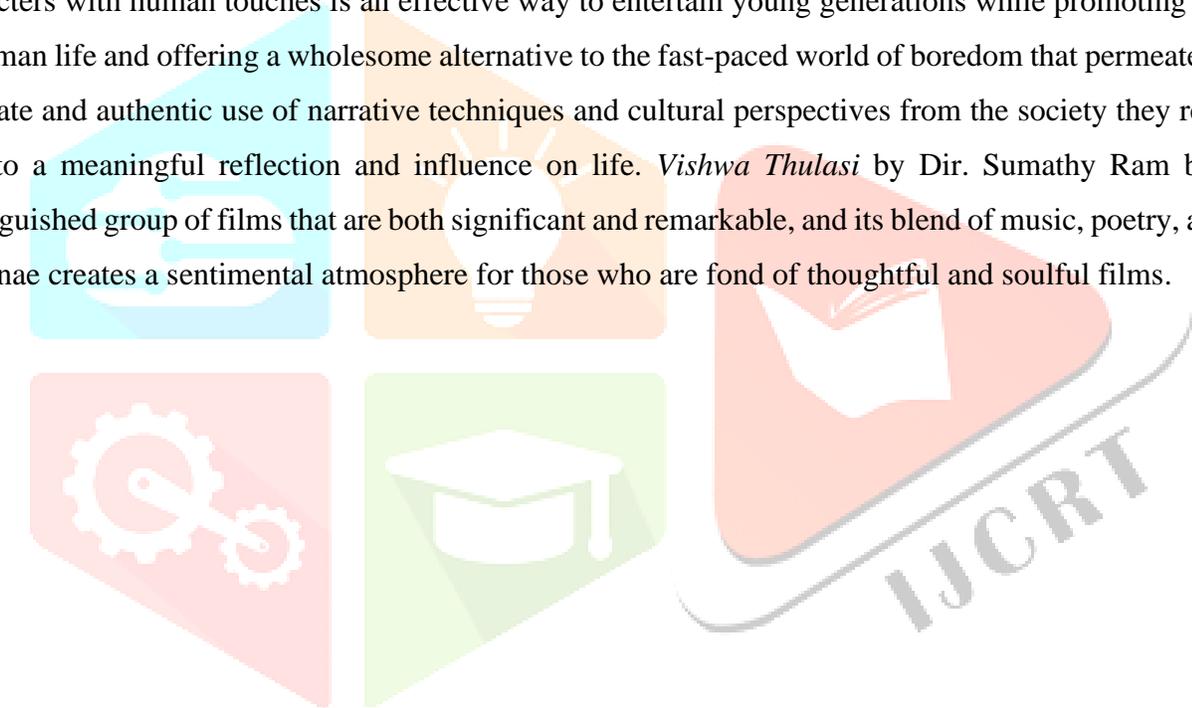


1.16. Dir. Sumathy Ram Discussing with Manoj. K. Jayan



1.17 Dir. Sumathy Ram at the Location Spot

The filmic power of exceptional dramatic art, music, and poetry is significant in providing comfort to others, inspiring mindfulness, soothing inner wounds, and presenting a new perspective on the world. Using dramatic characters with human touches is an effective way to entertain young generations while promoting good values of human life and offering a wholesome alternative to the fast-paced world of boredom that permeates them. The accurate and authentic use of narrative techniques and cultural perspectives from the society they represent can lead to a meaningful reflection and influence on life. *Vishwa Thulasi* by Dir. Sumathy Ram belongs to a distinguished group of films that are both significant and remarkable, and its blend of music, poetry, and dramatic personae creates a sentimental atmosphere for those who are fond of thoughtful and soulful films.



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