PhD

Cinema and Wild Meaning:
Phenomenology, Classical Indian Theories and Embodiment in Cinema

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<u>Dedication</u>

Prof. Asish Kumar Basu

Who Taught Me to Love Theories

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In the end, I would like to dedicate this work to my teacher, Prof. Asish Kumar Basu. It is said that teachers can transform the lives of their students. I am lucky that Prof. Basu has been one such source of light in my life. However, while the inspiration to undertake academic pursuits has always been his, the responsibility for interpreting and applying these theoris to cinema, with all its blemishes, remains entirely mine.

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<u>Abstract</u>

The aim of this project has been to explore the possibility of applying Phenomenology and Classical Indian Theories to cinema with the hope that their systematic application would generate new insights in a deeper understanding of cinema. This need has been felt in the context of the existing film discourse having reached a stage of stagnation, even a "crisis", in recent times. The reason for this moribund state of contemporary film discourse has been analyzed in my thesis as due to the failure of the existing film theories to incorporate film audiences' ordinary experiences of cinema, viz. the romance, the thrills, and the emotions which motivate them to come to the cinema halls all over the world. The film theories have failed to acknowledge the importance of this phenomenon which is built on the audiences' embodied experiences of the world and their socio-cultural practices that have grown on top of them which together form, at the very basic level, what constitutes the audiences' ordinary response to cinema. It has been argued in this thesis that, while this very basic response of the audiences to cinema has been entirely by-passed by the existing film theories, they have concentrated instead on how the audiences should *ideally* respond to cinema. As a result, the film theories present a sanitized version of the audience experiences that entirely miss the 'gut-feelings' that cinema generates among them.

It is unfortunate that film theorization has progressively moved away from this experience. Thus, while the schools of realism and montage, which together constitute the two contrary branches of classical film theory, deal with the nature of reality underlying the surface reality of cinema, contemporary film theory, based on the notion of disembodied vision, render the audiences into passive viewers manipulated by a subversive ideology operated by a schemeing bourgeoisie and cognitive film theory considers the audiences to be transparently intelligent entities, who, like an ideal buyer, infer the film narrative by optimally using the clues provided by the film and respond appropriately. It has been argued in this work that none of these theories acknowledge the film audiences' normal response to cinema, thereby missing the very starting point from where theorizations should have started in the first place. When phenomenology and classical Indian theories are applied to cinema, they do not assign extraordinary powers

of perception to the audiences who, by dint of it, should *tear asunder* the 'fake' reality presented on screen; rather, they help to understand how normal processes of perception operate producing identifications and their corresponding affective states among the audiences that keep them glued to cinema all over the world.

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and Nyāya theory are similar in revealing how the audiences' perception generates meanings and emotions on the basis of their embodied experiences of the world and the socio-cultural practices built up around them. In this connection, both Nyāya and Merleau-Ponty's notion of *synaesthetic experiences* make the audio-visual images to be so much richer than has been acknowledged so far. Further, Nyāya, by positing that the perception of things is a product of their *mode of appearance* and *mode of presentation*, offers a rare insight into how the perceptual process works under normal circumstances. Nyāya offers a further insight into the perceptual process by holding that, at the most basic level, the perceiver constructs an *integrated whole* of the elements occurring within view in order to ensure that the organism offers an unique response to whatever is confronting it essential for the survival of the organism. Since this *integration* occurs in terms of the organism's embodied and socio-cultural practices of life, it represents a process of *narrative integration of a scene which remains in-built in the human psyche*. This aspect assumes crucial importance in case of cinema.

Bharata's theory of aesthetic pleasure or *rasa* delineates how various levels of identification develop between an artwork and its audiences which, in turn, evoke their corresponding affective states among them that enable them to relive a scene portrayed in the work. A question which had defied a satisfactory solution for a long time, why do the audiences *enjoy* tragedies, Abhinavagupta offers the solution that this happens because the audiences identify with the fictional mode of the artwork even before they have set their foot in the auditorium. By removing the audiences from their practical life, it has the effect of *generalizing* the audiences' future experiences in relation to the artwork. In this state, aesthetic experiences produce what has been called "ownerless" emotions among the audiences which are "tasted" from outside rather than personally "suffered" by them. Bharata's theory also anticipates Merleau-Ponty's notion of the *chiasm* involving

subjective-objective alterations between subjects and objects in an artwork generating a much more enriching experience among the audiences.

Ānadavardhana's theory of *dhvani* or suggestion conveys to the audiences the *sense* of a scene to the audiences that inheres beyond the *meaning* that occurs on the surface. Thus, the expression "The village is *on* the river Ganges" not only conveys a sense of 'coolness' and 'serenity' associated with a river, but also connotes 'piety' and 'holiness' to a section of people for whom Ganges happens to be a holy river. In a larger sense, this process, *dhvani* theory gives voice to certain experiences by human beings which they cannot express normally due to reaons such as social repression, existential crisis, or erasure of memory all of which keep influencing their actions on the surface. By helping human beings to confront what remains supressed within them, *dhvani* seeks to restore full subjectivity to human beings. In this sense, *dhvani* becomes one of the most potent instruments of understanding the deeper relevance that cinema has for the audiences.

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Preface

When I had started studying cinema in an informal course organized by Chitrabani, a Jesuit School of Social Communication, in Kolkata in 1989, its director, Fr. Gaston Roberge, had, with a missionary zeal, imbibed in us the need for studying Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, a classical Indian treatise on drama, in the context of studying cinema. He questioned if Aristotle's *Poetics* could still be useful for cinema, why could not his near contemporary Bharata's detailed compendium on drama, which is still practiced in India, be useful for cinema as well? The idea caught hold of my imagination which had not permitted me to 'rest' since then. Since it was also the time of *glasnost*, which questioned existing thoughts, and *perestroika*, which called for new constructions in its place, it represented a time when conventional barriers were crumbling down all over the world. I asked myself why not new thoughts be infused into cinema at this moment of significant change occurring in the world? The charge that was ignited by Fr. Roberge at Chitrabani stayed throughout the period I taught film studies at St. Xavier's College, Kolkata thereafter, finally resulting in the present research work.

However, it takes more than mere good faith to show that phenomenology and classical Indian theoris, some of the latter going back millenniums in India, are indeed applicable to a modern art-form like cinema. The six interviews that I took of eminent scholars and artists in Kolkata helped me to transform my long-cherished belief into firm conviction. Since these interviews occupy a central position in my whole research work, their import is being briefly mentioned below.

Dr. Moinak Biswas, film scholar and filmmaker, who, while appreciating the new initiative, warned me that the existing film theories remain useful despite some of their purported gaps noticed in recent times. His advice that the new findings should not only be communicable to ordinary people but also should enrich their experiences of cinema has guided my efforts throughout this work.

Prof. Amita Chatterjee, the Nyāya scholar, pointed out certain striking parallels between the Nyāya theory and the results of contemporary research in cognitive sciences. Her unequivocal mention that I was the first to apply Nyāya theory of perception may

meaningfully form the basis for aesthetic theorizations undertaken by Bharata and Ānandavardhana later on. This provided a scientific basis for uniting classical philosophy with the aesthetic field which had remained separate so far in the modern writings on Indian theories of art.

The theatre director and filmmaker, Suman Mukhopadhyaya's practical insights as to how Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* makes sense in the theatres being staged even today and how its extension into cinema makes a lot of sense has been a revelation for me. His comparison between Greek and Indian drama and his demonstration of how he applies Bharata's insights to his own theatres and films, which are well-known for their innovative themes and sophisticated renderings, convinced me that, indeed, Bharata, like Aristotle, has a lot to contribute to cinema.

A balancing factor for Mukhopadhyaya's advocacy has been the left art critic, Samik Bandyopadhyaya's insightful and, often relentless, exposé of the gaps in Bharata's theory when compared to Greek and Shakespearean drama. He argues that there is no historical proof that theatres were indeed staged in accordance with Bharata's ideas in ancient India. In contrast, concrete details of the staging of Greek and Shakespearean drama are available which helped a reading of these plays in their historical context. His timely warnings have put me on guard against any facile theorization throughout my research.

Dr. Ashish Avikunthaka, Filmmaking Faculty at the Rhodes Island University, New York, USA, and an Experimental Filmmaker in his own right, repeatedly drew my attention to the often neglected ontological aspects of classical Indian theories in contrast to their much emphasized epistemic sphere. He argues that this unfortunate bias is a legacy of Renaissance which has considerably distorted our reading of Indian theories. As an example, he cites the neglect of the Tantrik base of Kashmir Śaivism, whose greatest practitioner, Abhinavagupta, is of immense value in studying artworks. His advise to had energized me to pay due attention to Abhinavagupta which he richly deserves.

Finally, interviewing the iconic actor and dramatist, Soumitra Chatterjee, who appears in as many as sixteen films of Satyajit Ray, has been an eye-opener as to where the Bengali film industry stood before the advent of Ray and the new outlook it incorporated after *Pather Panchali* (The Song of the Little Road, 1955). His insight has helped me to perceive the works of masters like Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, and Mrinal Sen in a new light.

In this connection, I sincerely thank the camerapersons Basab Mullik and Minarul for their patient video-taping of all the interviews and Minarul for diligently digitizing the voluminous material.

The above interviews have been enclosed as Annexures 2 to 7 to this work. They may also be accessed directly from me at gmullik@hotmail.com. In this context, if "alternate methodology", consisting of "piecemeal theories" and "local solutions", paves the way for a greater understanding of cinema, I will consider my efforts to have been amply rewarded.

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__Introduction__

The first lines in Richard Allen and Murray Smith's "Introduction" in their edited book *Film Theory and Philosophy* occur as follows:

> It is widely recognized that the field of film studies is in a state of flux, or even crisis or impasse…it is during such periods of relative intellectual insecurity that new connections and alliances may be forged, new perspectives discovered, and old questions recast in fresh and dynamic ways.[1]

What is the nature of the "crisis" that the authors are talking about? David Bordwell and Noël Carroll have subsequently devoted a whole book, *Post-Theory: Restructuring Film Studies*,[2] in tackling this problem. These authors hold that this "crisis" has primarily been caused by the existing film theories' deliberate suppression of ordinary film audiences' normal responses to cinema, a position which has been reinforced by my research here. Thus, the production of perception with its attendant levels of identification, affective states, and suggestive modes that generate the normal understanding of a scene among the audiences leading to the generation of different aesthetic experiences among them have generally been by-passed in favor of an 'intellectualization" of the cinematic process by the film theories which sought to educate the audiences of how they *should* experience cinema rather than how they *actually* experience cinema.

The basic tool of analysis employed by the existing film theories is *disembodied vision* which ignores the audiences' embodied experiences and their day-to-day socio-cultural practices of life built around them which determine their most basic engagement with cinema. This excessive "intellectualization" of the cinematic process has created the "crisis" that has produced the "impasse" in film discourse in our times.

In the above context, this research seeks to construct an 'alternate' methodology involving basic levels of *perception*, *identification*, *affect*, and *aesthetic pleasure*

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[1] Richard Allen and Murray Smith, "Introduction", in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, Ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): 1-35, 1

[2] David Bordwell and Noël Carroll, Ed. *Post-Theory: Restructuring Film Studies* (Wisconsin, Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1995)

involving film experiences based on the *audiences' embodied experiences of the world and their socio-cultural practices based on them* in order to recover what may be called *normal aspects* of the film viewing experience by the audiences. In this process, my research concerning cinema uses the theory of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and classical Indian theories in the following manner. First, it highlights the *embodied aspects* of the audiences' experiences of the world by applying the tenets of two philosophical schools involving Merleau-Ponty's theory of existential phenomenology and classical Indian theory of Nyāya. These theories, despite being born in different times and cultural environs, show remarkable affinity in holding that *the body* plays a crucial role in the human understanding of the world. A basic change that Merleau-Pontian phenomenology and Nyāya theory bring is that both *mind and reason are embodied*, which demolishes the idea that they represent centers of transparent intelligence or *à priori* center of "categories of understanding" that function beyond the body. *The revolutionary change that embodiment entails is to shift focus from an objective, 'out there' understanding of the world to a subjective, 'lived' there experience of the world*. This line of thinking, which is being increasingly supported by findings in cognitive research, has the potential to sweep away in one stroke much of the cherished pillars of Western thought as well as significantly alter the way much of Indian philosophy has been understood so far.

Secondly, while both theories consider "consciousness" to be an *effect* of the bodys' interactions with the world appearing in the shape of *body-memory*, Nyāya additionally holds that human beings have an inherent urge to *narratively integrate* the elements occurring within human perceptual field into a *perceptual whole* and that perception is a product of "mode of appearance" of the integrated whole and its "mode of presentation" to the perceiver.

Thirdly, based on the platform provided by the Nyāya theory, Bharata's theory of *rasa* or aesthetic pleasure analyzes various levels of *identification* that the audiences develop with artworks and the differing *aesthetic experiences* that they produce among them. Bharata also makes a seminal contribution in theorizing the production of an *affective state* among the audiences which makes their consciousness and their 'unconscious' bodies *relive* a situation together.

Fourthly, Ānandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* or aesthetic suggestion builds-up on Nyāya and Bharata's theory to argue that art's basic purpose is to restore 'full' word to individuals whose voice has been silenced due to reasons such as social repression, existential condition or erasure of archetypal experiences from their conscious memory. In this way, art helps individuals to regain their 'lost' subjectivity. These aspects are expected to yield phenomenally rich dividends in understanding cinema.

In my research, another important aspect comes to the fore. While there are remarkable affinities between Merleau-Pontian phenomenology and Nyāya theory, their underlying differences generate a number of insights about how cinema is experienced by the audiences. A significant difference between them, symbolic of the Western and Indian modes of thinking in general, is that while classical Indian theories analyze phenomena from a predominantly subjective *hearer's point of view*, the Western theories represent the more objectively inclined *speaker's point of view* to the reciever. The differential insight that Nyāya theory of perception generates in the process vis-à-vis the Merleau-Pontian theory may be briefly mentioned here to establish the point. Despite Nyāya being an arch realist school which holds that whatever one perceives are real in some form or the other, the reality, when analyzed from the *perceiver's point of view* presents a structured view of the percept as a product of the "mode of appearance" of the referent as its "mode of presentation" to the perceiver. The resulting reality is given by Nyāya in the following formula:

Perceptual Knowledge = Mode of Appearance of Referent + It's Mode of Presentation

While significant progress has been made in applying Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology to cinema by film theoreticians Vivian Sobchack, Laura Marks, etc, discussed in detail in chapter 2, it is my contention that there has been no such *systematic effort* in applying classical Indian theories to cinema. In view of the enormous diversity of classical Indian theories (see 'Genealogy of Classical Indian Schools' in chapter 3), which often presents an almost insurmountable difficulty for any researcher to negotiate them, my purpose is to construct a workable 'primer' which would *systematically* 'lead' us to the Indian aesthetic theories and the philosophical schools that underlie them. These aspects and

their implications for cinema would be explained in detail in chapter 3, 4, and 5 dealing with Nyāya theory of perception, Bharata's theory of *rasa*, and Ānandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* respectively.

It may be pointed out that, while constructing phenomenological and classical Indian theories as "piecemeal" theories that offer 'local' solutions, their application has been restricted to the most basic level of the audiences' understanding of cinema. Depending on the belief that only when this basic level is understood, does its political interpretation start making sense, care has been taken not to enter into the 'politics' of such practices not only to restrict the scope of this research but also the argument that this primary level can serve the purpose of acting as the *feeder grade* for the existing film theories making them more 'efficient' in understanding cinema.

As far as the aesthetic field is concerned, the importance of ordinary experiences of the audiences in relation to cinema would be highlighted in terms of an important issue which had defied a satisfactory solution and which the existing film theories had 'ignored': even though artworks create narrative situations modeled on real life experiences, emotions generated by artworks appear to be 'pleasurable' in contrast to many of the emotions being 'painful' in real life. Seeking an answer to the following question has, therefore, been the primary concern of aestheticians: "Despite being fictional in nature, how do artworks generate emotions among the audiences?" Called the "paradox of fiction"[3] or the "paradox of junk fiction" as it has been recently called,[4] it forms an essential part of the film audiences' ordinary experiences of cinema. The above question may be more precisely rephrased as follows: "Why do the audiences *enjoy* tragedies even when tragic sentiments are personally painful to them?" Since my research shows that existing film theories have either ignored or are unable to tackle this basic question, I will make it the central issue around which my whole research will evolve. In the process, I will seek to expose the limitations of the traditional aesthetic theories in the West as well as the contemporary film discourse. While the above limitations will be

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[3] For "paradox of fiction", see Deborah Knight, "*Aristotelians on Speed*: *Paradoxes of Genre in the Context of Cinema*", in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, 343-65

[4] Noël Carroll, "The Paradox of Junk Fiction", *Philosophy and Literature*, 18 No. 2 (Oct 1994): 225-41, quoted in Deborah Knight, "*Aristotelians on Speed*", 343

discussed in sections of this Introduction and chapter 1, in chapters 2 and 3, I will discuss how Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and classical Indian theory of Nyāya provide an effective platform for the aesthetic theories of Bharata's *rasa* and Ānandavardhana's *dhvani* theory, to be discussed in chapters 4 and 5, to make a useful contribution in unraveling the above question including the generation of an in-depth understanding of the processes of cinema. In chapter 6, I will sum up the "piece-meal" processes discussed so far with Conclusion indicating the *reorientation* in meaning that the determining concepts of the world like "the self", "consciousness", "the body", "causality", "rationality", "meaning", and "truth" undego in the hands of the embodied theories of Merleau-Ponty and Nyāya.

In seeking a solution to the above paradox, I will start with the Western aesthetic theories like Aristotle's theory of purgation or *catharsis*, Kant's idea of *disinterested observer*, and Bullough's concept of *psychic distance* or *Distance* which will then be compared with the existing film theories for an indication as to where a gap occurs in our understanding of cinema.

Aristotle (384-322 BCE) thought that tragedies act as instruments of purgation (*katharsis*) of the sentiments of pity and fear from the audience psyche.[5] In this connection, Aristotle's use of the word 'purgation" has been deeply puzzling. According to Filliozat, the Greek belief system is similar to the Indian belief system in the sense that acts of transgression are considered to pollute (*miasma*) not only the protagonists but also the people around them.[6] Arguably, Aristotle held that, by identifying with the good and hating the bad in a tragic play, the audiences' reasons for pitying the protagonists and fearing the consequences of wrong-doings by them are both purged from their psyche, thereby providing a psychic relief among them.[7] While Aristotle, thus, provides an answer to the question "how do the audiences *enjoy* tragedies?" it raises a fresh question about his position concerning other art-forms, like comedy, etc: what is purged from the

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[5] Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 23, quoted in Bharat Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts: Greek and Indian: A Study of the Poetics and the Nāṭyaśāstra*, 3rd Imp. (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 2006): 255-56

[6] Filliozat says "That is why there are between Indian and Greek medicines, so very particular and precise similarities that are not easy to ascribe to chance." See J. Filliozat, *The Classical Doctrine of Indian Medicine* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1964), quoted in Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts*, 61

[7] Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts*, 258

audiences' psyche in these cases? Since Aristotle is silent on them, his theory remains unclear about the basic purpose of arts: is it meant to be a vehicle for providing *psychic relief* to the audiences by *educating* them about the social conditions prevailing in the society, or to *entertain* the audiences with a make-believe world which would take them away, even if temporarily, from their day-to-day worries of life?

Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804 CE) holds that, bracketing human beings' practical concerns while contemplating art represents the "aesthetic attitude" of a "disinterested" observer which *generalizes* their "taste".[8] Devoid of selfish interests, such an experience, according to Kant, becomes 'pleasurable' for the viewers concerned.[9] However, in this theory, "disinterestedness" merely means the removal of the audiences' practical concerns of life during their contemplation of artworks. In this sense, it merely signifies a negative process; it does not offer anything positive as to why the audiences would engage in such a process at all while contemplating art. The crucial question is why would they feel compelled make the effort of bracketing their practical concerns during such a process? Clearly, a piece is still missing in this puzzle.

The gap in Kant's theorization has been identified by Edward Bullough (1880-1934) in his article on the "Psychical Distance" or "Distance", published in 1912, instantly hailed as a seminal paper in this area.[10] While following Kant's lead in holding that the audiences' personal concerns need to be removed during their art experiences, Bullough draws attention to the important problem that Kant's idea does not fully answer why are the audiences drawn to artworks at all? Bullough points out that, unless there is a basic concordance between the play and the audiences, they would not be drawn to it at all.[11] In other words, mere "disinterestedness" while contemplating art is not enough; something like a "willing suspension of disbelief", where the audiences "willingly" engage with the fiction of artworks necessary for them to engage with artworks at all.

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[8] Sebastian Gardner, "Aesthetics", in *The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy*, Eds. Nicholas Bunin and E. P. Tsui-James (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996): 231-56, 233

[9] Gardner, "Aesthetics", 233

[10] Edward Bullough, "'Psychical Distance' as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle", *British Journal of Psychology*, 5 No. 2 (June 1912): 87-118, quoted in Wallace Dace, "The Concept of 'Rasa' in Sanskrit Dramatic Theory", *Educational Theatre Journal*, 15 No. 3 (October 1963): 249-254, 252-3

[11] Dace, "The Concept of 'Rasa'", 253

This is a crucial idea which has been anticipated by the Indian aesthetes, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka (c. 9th CE) and Abhinavagupta (c. 10th CE) in the Indian tradition. In considering Bharata's (c. early 1st millennium CE) seminal theory of aesthetic pleasure or *rasa*, which holds that the audiences invariably experience *pleasure* while engaging with artworks, including tragedies, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka holds that its reason lies in the fact that artworks *generalize* i.e. *universalize* audience experiences which do not affect them personally. Building on Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's insight, Abhinavagupta holds that the above *generalization* occurs due to *the audiences willing identification with the fictional mode of the artwork* which makes them enjoy all artworks including tragedies. Dace notes the similarities between Bullough and Abhinava's ideas as follows:

> "Consent of the heart" is a key phrase in Abhinavagupta's dramatic theory and seems to anticipate Coleridge's idea of "that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith" in the theatre. This idea is not fully grasped in some quarters even today. There are still those who would agree with Samuel Johnson when he attacked the unity of place by arguing that it doesn't matter if Act I is laid in Athens and Act II in Rome, because we, in the theatre, know that we are neither in Athens nor in Rome anyway.[12]

The fact of the matter is that the audiences *willingly identify with the fictional mode of the play* which makes them *willingly suspend their disbelief* that they are not in Athens or Rome during the play resulting in their experience as if they are indeed in Athens or Rome during the play!

Above pre-modern thoughts set the stage for a meaningful discussion of the emergence and branching out of the film theories during the 20th century. Developments in Psychology and Marxism during the 19th and early 20th century led to the idea that both human psyche and intelligence could be conditioned by forces beyond individual's conscious control. Thus, for Freud, repressed desires significantly motivate conscious human actions on the surface.[13] Similarly, for Marx, the means of social production not

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[12] Dace, "The Concept of 'Rasa'", 252

[13] Refer to Sigmund Freud's seminal work in 1905 *Interpretation of Dreams* (English translation published by London: MacMillan, 1913) among his other works all of which are based on this insight

only conditions human psyche but also significantly circumscribes human freedom of action, which, when used by oppressive social systems, become instruments of repression for the individuals concerned.[14] Conditions for human freedom have subsequently been sought in the solutions prescribed by these two theories, viz. Freud's theory of sublimation where repressions are brought to the conscious level and dealt with and Marx's theory of social revolution where human beings own all means of social production which sets them free from repressive conditions.

When these theories were in their prime during the first half of the 20th century, cinema starts registering its presence in the world. In this context, the first significant film theory to emerge is the *theory of montage* formulated by the early Soviet filmmakers, like Lev Kuleshov, Psevolod Pudovkin, Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov during the 1920s and 30s, followed by the *theory of realism* formulated by the French film critic André Bazin and the German film historian Siegfried Kracauer during the 1940s and 50s. For both these theories, educating the masses about the conditions of freedom become their primary aim, though their modes of execution differ significantly.

With the Russian revolution fresh in their minds, the Soviet filmmakers devised *montage practices in cinema* which opposed the conditioning process unleashed by the bourgeoisie. Thus, film montage juxtaposes discontinuous pieces of social reality to *de-naturalize* the audience's conditioning effects. Eisenstein takes a step forward by advocating "collision montage" where montage pieces *collide* to generate radical new 'meanings' among the audiences. For these filmmakers, *medium specificity of the editing process* becomes the ideal means for serving their purpose. In their zeal to educate the masses, these filmmakers disregarded the audiences' normal embodied experiences of the world and their socio-cultural practices on the ground that these meanings and emotions have been conditioned by bourgeois values which they are seeking to purge from the audience minds.

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[14] Karl Marxs' seminal works are *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Das Kapital* (1867-94), both of which have been translated and published many times in the English language

The *realist theory of cinema*, in contrast, points towards human beings' natural relationship with Nature and the world which generates their 'lived' experiences of life among them. Cinema, by virtue of its ability to record reality as it is, is capable of presenting an un-manipulated reality in front of the audiences which makes them *naturally* partake in them. In this sense, the realists celebrate the *medium specificity of the camera* which has the unique ability to reproduce surface reality like a fingerprint of nature. While critiquing the editing process for its manipulative practices that interfere with reality, Bazin recommends the use of *depth of field* and *long take* as ideal forms of representation that respect the integrity of time and space for the audiences which generate an unmanipulated experience of the world among them.[15]

Since both theories aim to educate the masses about the true nature of reality, they have no interest in dealing with the audiences' normal experiences of cinema on the surface. Naturally, questions like "why do the audiences *enjoy* tragedies?" hold no meaning for these theories. Bordwell critiques *medium specific* theories of both montage and realism on the ground that "no film lies any closer to the essence of the medium than others".[16]

During the 1950s and 60s, development of three distinct thought processes, e.g., Saussurian linguistics influenced by Sanskrit and Buddhist language studies,[17] Lacanian

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[15] Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell, *Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 250

[16] Bordwell, "Historical Poetics of Cinema", 374

[17] Saussure's linguistic theory is hugely influenced by Sanskrit and Buddhist linguistics. When Saussure had started studying linguistics at the University of Leipzig in 1876, most of his teachers, like Georg Curtius (1820-85), August Leskien (1840-1916), Karl Brugmann (1849-1919), etc, were all Sanskrit scholars teaching Indo-European languages in the university. The only two works that Saussure ultimately published in his own name are his PhD thesis titled *Genitive Case Study in Sanskrit* and a work on Sanskrit poetics called *The Concept of Kavi*. He then taught Sanskrit and Buddhist Linguistics, Indo-European Languages, and General Linguistics at Sorbonne and the University of Geneva from 1881 till his death in 1913. His work *Course in General Linguistics* was compiled by his students Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye from the notes taken in his class from 1906 to 1911 and published posthumously in 1916. It is likely that if Saussure was alive during the book's publication, he would have acknowledged his Sanskrit and Buddhist debt. In this connection, Saussure's notion that there are no positive meanings of words as relating to specific 'objects' and that such meanings only arise through a difference between 'concepts' of those 'objects' occurring at the intersection of syntagmatic (order of words) and paradigmatic (choice of words) is influenced by the Buddhist theory of momentarily existing *ultimates* that totally subverts the idea of the stability of existence, including 'objects', and the notion of the *tokens* and the *types* as the basis of meanings in Sanskrit and Buddhist linguistics with Buddhist linguistics ultimately leading to the

reading of Freud, and Althusserian reading of Marx motivated the formation of *Contemporary Film Theory* in the late '60s. Bordwell has categorized it as "subject-position" theory which is solely geared towards analyzing how the audiences are conditioned or 'fixed' by cinema, both psychologically and intellectually. On the question of the subject being fixed by cinema, Bordwell notes that for the new theory the subject is an empty signifier entirely constructed by the cinema:

> The subject is neither the individual person nor an immediate sense of one's identity or self. It is rather a category of knowing defined by its relation to objects and other subjects. Subjectivity is…unavoidably social. It is not a pre-given consciousness, it is acquired. Subjectivity is constructed through representational systems.[18]

Bordwell mentions that this is the first "Grand Theory" to emerge in the domain of cinema in the sense that it brings psychology, social ideology, and communication together in the form of a unified theory.[19] Contemporary film theory which holds that cinema is symptomatic of the larger conditioning process operating in the society.[20] Cinema reconfigures human subject's drives in terms of mental representations which are either repressed or channelized into social patterns acceptable to the bourgeoisie.[21] The unity of the subject position constructed by the society is primarily based on Lacan's theory where the unity of human consciousness enables a person to speak from a coherent position. This unity is conditioned by two factors in the psychological register: an *Imaginary*, in which the subject is represented as a mental and bodily unity by the other, metaphorically represented as the "Mirror Stage" constituted by the Care-givers of the child and the *Symbolic*, in which the patriarchal society *governs* its subjects according to

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conclusion that conceptual understanding of things is an intellectual process that is non-veridical in nature. Indeed Indian influence on Saussure was so pervasive that, in his later life, he was often called a 'Hindoo'!

[18] Bordwell, "Contemporary Film Studies and the Vicissitudes of Grand Theory", in *Post-Theory*, 3-36, 6

[19] Ibid, 3

[20] Ibid

[21] Ibid, 6-7

social laws formulated "In the Name of the Father" where the "Father" symbolically remains the patriarchy which acts as the fountainhead of all wisdom in the society.[22]

Althusser notes that the "Mirror" and "Symbolic" stages represent the "Ideological State Apparatus" constituted by 'values' enshrined in social institutions such as family, religion, education, etc. These institutions "hail" the individual by a name and a position bestowed on him by the social hierarchy which the individual accepts 'voluntarily' due to social conditioning.[23] Lacan and Althusser hold that, in the above process the social subject is "split" psychologically and intellectually from his real self right from his birth.[24] Saussurian linguistics contributes to the process by pointing out that *meaning* arises through differences occurring within a closed structure of such social signifiers.[25] This idea replaces the notion of a homogenous society which generates meaning through social differences that is duly passed off as the "natural" order of the society. Cinema aids and abets this process by generating meaning along these given lines and channelizing audience responses accordingly.

Bordwell notes that, since contemporary film theory leaves "no room for 'agency' where ideological representations so thoroughly determine subjectivity", it is not clear how individuals could ever be made to resist ideology.[26] In this dismal picture propagated by contemporary film theory, *Cultural Studies* introduces socio-cultural variations as a factor that has the potential to subvert the above all-consuming process:

> Culture is a site of struggle and contestation among different groups. A culture is conceived as a network of institutions, representations, and practices which produce differences of race, ethnic heritage, class, gender/sexual preferences and the like. These differences are centrally involved in the production of meaning.[27]

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22 Bordwell, "Film Studies and Grand Theory", 7
23 Ibid
24 Ibid
25 Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, Trans. and Introduced by Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1916)
26 Bordwell, "Film Studies and Grand Theory", 8, modified
27 Ibid, 10

In the form of new identifications and alignments, *cultural studies* shift focus from *film as a text* to its *reception* by the audiences. However, Bordwell has shown through an exhaustive analysis that contemporary film theory and cultural study of cinema intersect in the following areas: human institutions and social practices are socially constructed in all significant respects; theory of subjectivity is required to understand viewers' engagement with cinema; spectators' response to cinema depends upon processes of identification theorized by contemporary film theory; and linguistics provides the model for understanding how film images generate meaning among the audiences.[28] In other words, according to Bordwell, even *cultural studies* continued to understand cinema in terms of the very same unitary paradigm provided by the contemporary film theory!

Since contemporary film theory is considered to be a grand theory that purportedly 'fits' all situations, Bordwell notes that "By the mid-1980s, subject-position theory had become sterile through repetition".[29] For example, in the subject-position theory, aesthetic questions like "why do the audiences *enjoy* tragedies?" are ultimately rendered irrelevant since they are ultimately ideologically constructed by the capitalist-bourgeois society.

Dissatisfaction with contemporary film theory signaled the emergence of *Cognitive Film Theory* during the 1980s. Reacting against the notion that the film audiences are the ultimate constructs of cinema who passively consume ideology, cognitive film theory holds that viewers interact with cinema in the same conscious, rational way as they do in the real world.[30] Ultimately, cognitive film theory is an out and out intellectual theory of meanings where emotions arise only from expectations and their interrupted or delayed fulfillment in the world.[31]

In the above sense, neither depth psychology nor the body form part of this theory. In this sense, cognitive film theory's empowerment of the subject remains an intellectual empowerment. Critics have since held this theory to be a prototype of the economic

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[28] Bordwell, "Film Studies and Grand Theory", 13-8
[29] 12
[30] Kuhn and Westwell, "Cognitivism (cognitive film theory)", in *Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies*, 86
[31] Ibid

model where buyers optimize their choice in a market place by undertaking a rational cost-benefit analysis.[32] Nowell-Smith notes:

> As a general model for aesthetic perception, it [cognitive film theory] is deficient…I would not deny that inference plays a role in aesthetic appreciation, in understanding a Bach partia or a Jimmy Hendrix guitar solo…or making sense of the hero's behavior in *Hamlet*…but there is more to it than that. There is more to films than is allowed for in the theory of narration, and more to mind than is allowed for in even the most sophisticated cognitivist model.[33]

The intellectual bias of the cognitive film theory, where the audiences *infer* the plot of the film intellectually by piecing together clues given in the film as a detective surveying a crime scene, makes it ill-equipped to deal with aesthetic questions depth psychological issues like "why do the audiences *enjoy* tragedies?"

While dealing with the limitations of film theories in chapter 1, I show how both Eisenstein and Bazin deal at length with the ideas of embodiment and film sensuality initially which they later abandon in favor of generating mathematically calculable audience responses. Eisensteins' ideas have since been rediscovered by André Gaudreault and Tom Gunning in their theorization of *Early Cinema* as a means of *monstration* or "showing" producing emotions and affects in the form of awe among the audiences, an aspect which is increasingly becoming important in the context of "awe-inspiring" digital effects of contemporary block-buster movies. I build on this insight of *Early Cinema* to show how conventional film histories and film studies have neglected the embodied sensual aspects of cinema and the socio-cultural practices built around them in favor of the narrative properties of cinema advocated by both contemporary and cognitive film theories.

The primary resources consulted regarding Classical Film Theory have been Sergei Eisenstein's collected works on montage and André Bazin's collected articles on

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[32] Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "How films mean, or, from aesthetics to semiotics and half-way back again", in *Reinventing Film Studies*, 8-17, 14
[33] Ibid

realism in cinema.[34] For a critique of both their theories, I depend on Brian Henderson's classic work on the respective roles that montage and realism play in understanding cinema.[35] Regarding Contemporary Film Theory, the basic sources have been the original works of Jacques Lacan, Louis Althusser, and Ferdinand de Saussure.[36] While the main secondary source has been Anthony Easthope's work, a critic of contemporary film theory has been variously culled from the works of David Bordwell and Noël Carroll, Richard Allen and Murray Smith, and Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams.[37] The primary source for Cognitive Film Theory has been the detailed elaboration of its parameters in David Bordwell's work on narration in fiction films and its critic by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Bill Nichols.[38] For an insight into *Early Cinema*, my primary source has been the writings of André Gaudreault and Tom Gunning including their critique of the existing film history which I have accessed through Wanda Strauven's edited work.[39] For a general critic of film studies, I have depended on Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams' edited work as well as on Bordwell, Carroll, Allen and Smith's works mentioned above.[40] As an overview of film discourse, Thomas Wertenberg and

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[34] S. M. Eisenstein, *Eisenstein Writings,* Vols. 1, 2 & 3, Ed. Richard Taylor (London: BFI, 1988, 1994 and 1996); André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, Vol. 1 & 2 , Ed. Hugh Gray (Berkeley, California: California University Press, 1967 & 19710

[35] Brian Henderson, *A Critique of Film Theory* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1980)

[36] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. A. Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977); Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971); Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. and introduced by Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1916)

[37] Anthony Easthope, *Contemporary Film Theory* (Harlow: Longman, 1993); David Bordwell and Noël Carroll, Eds., *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (Madison, Wisconsin: The Wisconsin University Press, 1996); Richard Allen and Murray Smith, Eds., *Film Theory and Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Noël Carroll, *Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams, Eds. *Reinventing Film Studies* (London: Arnold, 2000)

[38] David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (London: Routledge, 1985); Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "How films mean", and Bill Nichols, "Film Theory and the Revolt against Master Narratives", both *in Reinventing Film Studies*, Eds. Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (London: Arnold, 2000), 8-17 and 34-52 respectively

[39] André Gaudreault and Tom Gunning, "Early Cinema as a Challenge to Film History" and Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde", both in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, Ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 365-80 and 381-88 respectively

[40] Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams, *Reinventing Film Studies* (London: Arnold, 2000)

Angela Curran's edited work has proved to be useful in terms of the basic texts they incorporate and the informed analysis they undertake there.[41]

Since *disembodied vision* has been central to film theories which, arguably, has made normal response of the film audiences irrelevant to these theories, it becomes necessary to explore new areas of thought for incorporating the body and the film sensations it generates among the audiences. The two areas chosen in this paper are western theories of phenomenology and classical Indian theory of Nyāya, both of which are dominated by the role of the body and the attendant socio-cultural practices in terms of which cognitions and emotions are generated among human beings in these theories in the course of their *normal* interactions with the world.

The *phenomenological line* starts with Kant who introduces *à priori* "categories of understanding" in human *consciousness*,[42] like understanding space & time, causality, etc, elements which are purportedly based on the Newtonian worldview, which are imposed on reality (*phenomena*) for its understanding rather than understanding it in terms of things-in-themselves (*noumena*). Matilal notes the implication of this process:

> For realism, the familiar physical object not only exists but also exists *independently*. This crucial expression "independently" means that if by chance all the sentient creatures were annihilated, our familiar world would still continue to exist in the same way. Phenomenalism disputes this claim: the familiar objects exist but not independently of any sentient creature's being aware of them. If all "minds" were annihilated, it would be false to claim that a certain set of entities existed.[43]

By signifying a basic difference between the objective and subjective experiences and their interpretations, between crude data passively received and their construction

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[41] Thomas Wertenburg and Angela Curran, Eds. *The Philosophy of Film: Introductory Text and Readings*, 2nd ed (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2007)

[42] Kant's use of the word "consciousness" is deliberate since he wanted to differentiate his notion of the human "mind" which contained *à priori* "categories of understanding" in human beings from the Cartesian notion of the human "mind" which acted as the repository of a transparent intelligence accessibkle by all human beings

[43] Matilal, *Perception*, 15

into an understandable structure, the Kantian process raises certain questions regarding limits of knowledge.[44] In this sense, "experience" means how the world *appears* to the subject rather than how it really is in itself. Matilal notes the paradoxicality of this situation:

> Empiricists try to make experience the "building blocks" of our knowledge, but if those building blocks are given in terms of appearances only, then the edifice of knowledge will show only *appearance* and not *reality*…[In this sense], we can at best talk about our knowledge of the *appearances.*[45]

One can, thus, have a causal theory of appearances, as given in human experiences, but certainly not one of reality. A. J. Ayer calls this "the existence of an *unbridgeable gap* between the conclusion we desire to reach and the premises from which we set out".[46]

In sum, Kant's revolution in epistemology shifts focus from an objective understanding of the world, a 'scientific' process from which human subjects are debarred, to a subjective understanding of the world in which pure objectivity of reality is no more available to human beings. However, since Kant never denies the existence of objective reality 'out there', his account may be considered as a *subjective-objective* account of the world. Thus, for example, an "object" *out there* is 'perceived' in its three-dimensional form in terms of the spatial "categories of understanding" imposed on the "object" by the perceiver. This new mode of experiencing has important ramifications for understanding audience response to cinema.

The phenomenological theory, starting with Husserl, which originally owes its allegiance to Kant, however, also signifies a shift from him. Husserl moves away from Kant's "categories of understanding", which are *given à prioris* in human consciousness not directly involved with the body to human beings' 'lived" experiences of the world where the body plays a significant role. He holds that "objects" are perceived through the imposition of archetypal elements of structure, called "eidos", formed in human

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[44] Matilal, *Perception*, 24
[45] Ibid
[46] A. J. Ayer, *The Central Questions of Philosophy* (London: Penguin Books, 1973): 63, quoted in Matilal, *Perception*, 24, emphasis added

consciousness during their embodied and socio-cultural living in the world. Thus, even though an "object" is actually perceived in 2-diemsions, the archetypal forms contained within human consciousness are imposed on the percept to make it appear as a 3-dimensional entity. While this sounds similar to the Kantian theory of "categories of understanding", Husserl's theory is different in the sense that he imposes "categories of experience" on reality in terms of human beings' 'lived' experiences of the world. Husserl further holds that, in human perception, "objects" get related to other "objects" *subjectively* through the imposition of a functional relationship between them in terms of the perceivers' embodied and socio-cultural experiences of life called "motivational causality" by him.

Coming next in the phenomenological line is Heidegger who expands the mode of human experience of the world by more explicitly including the human body within it. He holds that human beings deal with the world on the basis of their "tools" which both consciously and bodily orient them in particular ways towards the world. It is this orientation which acts as the basis for human understanding of the world. Heidegger's notion of "dasein" potentially represents all the relationships that human beings thus forge while being-in-the-world.

While the notion of human consciousness remains present in both Husserl and Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty makes human being's embodied understanding of the world fundamental to his phenomenological theory. Thus, Merleau-Ponty holds that human beings' primordial experiences of living and responding to nature have already oriented their bodies in a certain way towards the world. Called "operational intentionality", the body, in this sense, already knows how to react to things of nature, like trees, mountains, rivers, etc, which Merleau-Ponty calls *wild meaning* that remains as the innermost core of human understanding of the world on which all cognitive meanings are ultimately based:

> In a sense the whole of philosophy…consists in restoring a power to signify, a birth of meaning, or a *wild meaning*, an expression of experience by experience, which in particular clarifies the special domain of language. And in a sense…this

language is everything, since it is the voice of no one, since it is the voice of the things, the waves, the forests.[47]

Moreover, since the world is continuously being shaped and reshaped by human agency, the human body keeps reorienting itself in terms of human interventions in nature, a process which forms a second layer of instrumentality vis-à-vis the world which Merleau-Ponty calls "bodily intentionality". Since human beings understand the world in terms of these two bodily functions, Merleau-Ponty dispenses with the notion of human consciousness in his phenomenology.

A striking example of the bodily processes is evident in Merleau-Ponty's notion of the *synesthetic* experience. Since vision and touch deal with the same area of reality, embodied experiences ultimately generate a *synesthetic* experience among the perceivers, like ice being perceived as *cold*, etc, an aspect which has significant implications for cinema detailed in chapter 2. Merleau-Ponty also develops his idea of *chiasmic* interaction where a perceiver subjectively alters his position of being a subject and object frequently which, according to Merleau-Ponty, forms the basis for *inter-subjectivity* among human beings. This aspect has been detailed in chapter 2.

While the primary sources of phenomenological theories occur in the works of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty,[48] for secondary sources, I primarily depend on the two compendiums of phenomenology edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus & Mark A. Wrathall, and Sebastian Luft & Søren Overgaard, both of which are invaluable for understanding the intricacies of phenomenological theories and their evolution in time.[49] For a modern interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's thoughts on vision-touch equivalence which leads to *synesthetic* perception and his notion of the

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[47] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Trans. Alphonso Lingis, Ed. Claude Lefort (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968): 155, emphasis added

[48] Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Phenomenology*, Trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1931); Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Trans. J. Stambaugh (New York: State University of New York, 1996); Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962)

[49] Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, Eds., *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2006); Sebastian Luft and Søren Overgaard, Eds., *The Routledge Companion to Phenomenolgy* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012)

chiasm that deal with the phenomenon of subject-object alteration, I have depended on Daniel Rycroft's article in his edited work.[50] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson point out that Merleau-Ponty's notion of the embodiment of mind has the potential to subvert most of the conventional tenets of Western thought. Since some of their findings find support from contemporary cognitive research, they gain added potency.[51] While the first work that explores the embodied aspects of cinema belongs to Linda William, application of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology to cinema has systematically taken off since Vivian Sobchack's work in 1992 followed by the works of Laura Marks in 2000 and 2002, both of them I have consulted extensively.[52] For phenomenological explanations of film examples, I have primarily dependent on Hunter Vaughan's phenomenological analysis of Resnais and Godard and Nariman Skakov's detailed analysis of Tarkovsky's films.[53] In analyzing a particularly rich phenomenological sequence from Ray's *Pather Panchali*, I have critiqued both Geeta Kapur[54] and her critic by Ravi Vasudevan[55] as missing the real essence of the film which also portrays a significant difference in the way the East and the West perceive the ebb and flow of life in society.

In chapter 3 dealing with "Nyāya theory of Perception", it has been shown that a perceiver subjectively forms an *integrated whole* of the elements occurring within her perceptual field for generating her unified response to the view. This integration occurs in terms of the perceiver's embodied experiences and socio-cultural practices of life. The

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[50] Daniel J. Rycroft, "Coexistence and Art Historical Apprehensions", in *World Art and the Legacies of Colonial Violence*, Ed. (Surray: Ashgate, 2013): 231-47

[51] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999) and *Metaphors We Live By* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003)

[52] Linda Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the Frenzy of the Visible* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1989); Vivian Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992) and *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2004); Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2000)

[53] Hunter Vaughan, *Where Film Meets Philosophy: Godard, Resnais, and Experiments in Cinematic Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Nariman Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky: Labyrinths of Space and Time* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012)

[54] Geeta Kapur, Ed. *When Was Modernism: Essays On…Contemporary Cultural practices in India*, Paperback (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2000)

[55] Ravi Vasudevan, *The Melodramatic Public: Film Form and Spectatorship in Indian Cinema* (Ranikhet, India: Permanent Black, 2010)

"knowledge" necessary for the survival of an organism in the world ultimately means the formation of an "invariable sequence" between elements which serves the purpose of 'integrating' them within view.[56] Thus, both 'fire burns' and 'fire cooks' are "knowledge" produced from the formation of "invariable sequences" between 'fire' and bodily 'pain' on the one hand and 'fire' and 'food' on the other signifying the formation of socio-cultural practices built around fire in human society. In contrast to Western theories, there is nothing *à priori* in classical Indian theories in general and the Nyāya theory in particular,[57] the whole process being an embodied process occurring at the deppest level of one's existence and the socio-cultural practices around them. In this sense, classical Indian theory of Nyāya holds that even abstract thoughts, like inference, hypothesis, etc, are ultimately based on observing such "invariable sequences" occurring in one's experience. Part 1 of chapter 3 deals with the production of Nyāya theory of perception including the production of emotions. Here I have added a section on 'Perception and the Compositional Principles of Indian Art' to show the close affinity between the two. Part 2 illustrates the principles explained in Part 1 with the help of visual images. It specifically deals with instances of how meanings and emotions are formed by images in art-forms including cinema.

Ideally one should use original sources like basic philosophical treatises, while dealing with classical Indian theories like the Nyāya theory. However, this is likely to prove counter-productive in the Indian case, particularly in case of a modern art-form like cinema. This is an important point which needs clarification. Dasgupta notes:

> The systematic treatises were written in short and pregnant half-sentences (*sūtras*) which did not elaborate the subject, but served only to revive in the reader the lost threads of memory of elaborate disquisitions with which he was already

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[56] Patañjali, the Grammarian and, arguably, the most famous exponent of the Yoga School, holds that even the 'naming' process of things is based on this basic idea of "knowledge": the creative faculty (*vikalpa*) of "the self" consists in the imposition of a fictitious relationship in the forms of a "name" between an entity and a concept. See Anand Chandra Sukla, "Rasa, Dhvani and Rasa-Dhvani: *Ontology and Epistemology of Emotion in Literary Discourse*", in *Indian Art: Form, Concerns and Development in Historical Perspective*, Vol. VI Part 3, Ed. B. N. Goswamy in association with Kavita Singh, *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, Gen. Ed. D. P. Chattopadhyaya, Reprint (New Delhi: Centre for Studies in Civilizations, 2005): 183-201, 187

[57] Buddhism is a phenomenological theory *par excellence* in the Indian tradition

thoroughly acquainted. It seems, therefore, that these pithy half-sentences were like lecture hints, intended for those who already had direct elaborate oral instructions on the subject.[58]

As time passed, these half-sentences needed to be elaborated not only because their original import was getting lost but also because questions were being raised on them by rival theories. Thus, the age of "commentaries" and "commentaries on commentaries" started. As far as Nyāya is concerned, its original source is attributed to Gautama, also called Akṣapāda, who composed the *Nyāyasūtra* in circa 2nd century CE. The earliest commentary on it was written by the Naiyāyika, Vātsyāyana, called the *Vātsyāyana-bhāṣya* (c. 4th CE). This work was heavily criticized by the Buddhist theoretician Diṅnāga, in answering which the Naiyāyika, Uddyotkara, wrote a commentary on Vātsyāyana's commentary, called the *Bhāṣya-vārtikka* (c. 7th CE). As fresh questions appeared, the Naiyāyika, Vācaspati Miśra, wrote a commentary on Uddyotkara's commentary, called the *Vārttika-tātparyaṭīkā* (c. 9th CE). As questions still kept coming from the Buddhists and other rival theorists, the Naiyāyika, Udayana, wrote a commentary on Miśra's *Vārttika*, called the *Nyāya-tātparyaṭīkā-pariśuddhi* (c. 10th CE). In turn, the new commentary generated a further commentary, called *Nyāya-nibandha-prakāśa* (c. 14th CE), and so on till almost the end of the 17th century CE.[59] This surfeit of material, compounded by the changing meaning of the technical terms used by the commentators, makes it a forbiddingly complex process to be used meaningfully for a work which does not have philosophy as its core discourse. In general, Dasgupta suggests adopting the following course of action:

> System in the sūtras is weak and shapeless like a new born baby, but if we take it along with its developments down to the beginning of the 17th century, the theory appears as a fully formed entity, strong and harmonious in all its limbs. It is, therefore, necessary that each system should be studied and interpreted in all the growth that it has acquired in its conflicts with the rival systems as one whole.[60]

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[58] S. N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 1, 1st Indian ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975): 62
[59] Ibid, 63; Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 155-56
[60] Dasgupta, *A History*, 64, modified

I have heeded Dasgupta's advice and used the latest and the most rational (not 'spiritual') interpretations provided by modern philosophers of classical Indian theories, like S. N. Dasgupta, Mysore Hiriyanna, S. Radhakrishnan, V. Raghavan, K. Krishnamoorty, Bimal Krishna Matilal, J. N. Mohanty, etc. They have preferred to write in English for a greater reach across the world despite their acknowledged expertise in Sanskrit. On the other hand, it must be mentioned that I have also always appreciated Western interpreters of Indian classical theories for the reason that they bring with them a different set of rational sensibilities to their work. We, thus, have Western experts like Daniel Ingalls, Karl Potter, Gerald Larson, Edwin Gerow, Sheldon Pollock, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, etc, whose understanding and critique of Indian theories are extremely valuable in that respect. Thus, in the context of classical Indian theories, Indian scholars trained in Western thought and Western scholars trained in Indian thought complement each other beautifully in bringing us closer to the truth. While the continued study of Sanskrit as one of the mother languages of the world can never be underestimated, meaningful translations of all the salient texts in English have now reached a critical mass where Indian philosophy can now be studied in English alone for all works except for more dense research works. I believe a similar situation prevails now in the study of the ancient Greek philosophy or Marxism – while the knowledge of Greek or German may still be preferable, they are not essential for the pursuit of these studies any more.

The primary source of the Nyāya School is Gautama's *Nyāyasūtra* (c. 2nd CE). However, as already discussed, since the original source belongs to 2nd century CE, real import of the terms needed to be understood in the modern context, particularly since they are intended to be applied to a modern art-form like cinema.[61] Bimal Krishna Matilal's two books, *The Navyanyāya Doctrine of Negation* and *Perception* have proved to be invaluable for my work.[62] It may be acknowledged that without modern clarifications provided by Matilal of Nyāya concepts of perception, this thesis could not have been written. Matilal's other books have clarified various other points which would

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[61] Gautama, *Nyāyasūtra*, Trans. and Elucidated by Phanibhusan Tarkavagisha (Kolkata: West Bengal State Book Board, 1981)

[62] Bimal Krishna Matilal, *The Navya-Nyāya Doctrine of Negation: The Semantics and Ontology of Negative Statements in Navya-Nyāya Philosophy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968) and *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986)

have otherwise remained vague.[63] Another modern Indian philosopher without whose brilliant analysis this work would have suffered immeasurably is Jiten Mohanty, whose classic works *Classical Indian Philosophy* and *Gaṅgeśa's Theory of Truth*, have been repeatedly consulted to provide clarity to the ongoing research.[64] Mohanty's expertise in Phenomenology has been an added advantage for this work. Two persons who are carrying on the good work of Matilal and Mohanty are Jonardon Ganeri and Amita Chatterjee, both of whom have been extensively consulted by me.[65] My personal interactions with Chatterjee, including the valuable interview she gave me (see Annexure 3), have helped me to get into the spirit of Nyāya thinking essential for this work. For Nyāya theory of vision-touch equivalence, apart from accessing Matilals' works, I have also consulted Diana L. Eck's celebrated work on Indian theory of *darśana*.[66] No classical Indian theory can be discussed with authority without consulting the series on Indian philosophy, edited and published by Karl H. Potter.[67] Similarly, though a bit dated, yet S. N. Dasgupta's five volume history of Indian philosophy is full of insights which a researcher can ill-afford to miss. As far as my area of research is concerned, volume 1 of the series has proved to be of real value to me.[68] In interpreting meanings of images, Christopher Pinney's photographs taken during and after the colonial period[69] and Jyotindra Jain's interpretation of folk and ritual art in terms of traditional Indian

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[63] Bimal Krishna Matilal, *Epistemology, Logic, and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis*, Ed. Jonardon Ganeri (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), *The Word and the World: India's Contribution to the Study of Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), *The Character of Logic in India*, Eds. Jonardon Ganeri and Heeramon Tiwari (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998)

[64] J. N. Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000) and *Gaṅgeśa's Theory of Truth* (Shantiniketan: Viswa Bharati Publications, 1954)

[65] Jonardon Ganeri, *Artha: Meaning* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006) and *The Lost Age of Reason: Philosophy in Early Modern India 1450 – 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Amita Chatterjee, "Embodiment and Nyāya Philosophy", Seminar Paper, The University of Calcutta, 2011, "Navya-Nyāya Language as a Medium of Sciences" (unpublished), and "Perception" (unpublished)

[66] Diana L. Eck, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998)

[67] Karl H. Potter, Ed. *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. II: The Tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika upto Gaṅgeśa (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977)

[68] S. N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 1, 1st Indian ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1975)

[69] Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social life of Indian Photographs* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), *The Coming of Photography in India* (London: British Library, 2008), *Photography and Antropology* (London: Reaktion Books and New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011)

painting[70] has been extremely useful in understanding Indian social life and its manifestation in the domain of artconsulted.

In conclusion, it must be acknowledged that, while applying Nyāya concepts to cinema, I have extended them in several places, all the time ensuring that the spirit of Nyāya does not suffer in the process.

While the Nyāya theory of perception is a philosophical theory, the next two theories discussed in chapters 4 and 5 are full-fledged Indian aesthetic theories involving Bharata's theory of *rasa* or aesthetic pleasure and Ānandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* or aesthetic suggestion. One notes a significant difference here with the Western trend: while, in the West, all major philosophers have acted as aestheticians too, in India, the practitioners in the two domains have largely remained separate. Thus, while one may note a continuous line of philosopher-aesthetes from Aristotle to Kant to Merleau-Ponty, the sole exception in India is provided by Abhinavagupta who happened to be a polyvalent genius in many fields.

Bharata's (c. early 1st millennium CE) theory of *rasa* or aesthetic pleasure is based on Bharata's well-known treatise on drama, called the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. I argue that Bharata uses Nyāya theory of perception to build up his aesthetic theory. Based on the "knowledge" of "invariable sequences" that appear as *integrated wholes* within view in the Nyāya theory and human response to it, Bharata builds up a theory involving four different states of "identification" (*sama bhāva*) occurring between the audiences and the artworks and the evocation of corresponding "affective states" (*sthayī bhāva*) among them. The latter, though implied in the Nyāya theory has not been theorized by them. In this sense, it remains a seminal 'discovery' of Bharata which help the audiences to bridge the gap between their consciousness and their unconscious bodies in order to respond to a scene as one unified organism. Bharata's most celebrated discovery, however, occurs when he holds that the emotions produced as a result are invariably 'pleasurable' for the

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[70] Jyotindra Jain, *Ganga Devi: Tradition and Expression in Mithila Painting* (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 1997), *Kalighat Painting: Images from a Changing World* (New Delhi: Crafts Museum and The Handicrafts and Handloom Exports Corporation of India, 1998)

audiences, called the *rasa*, irrespective of whether these emotions are 'pleasuable' or 'painful' in real life.

However, despite his path-breaking work, Bharata is unable to offer a satisfactory explanation of the question "why do the audiences *enjoy* tragedies?" A satisfactory answer to this basic paradox is eventually found by the philosopher-aesthetes, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka (c. 9th CE) and Abhinavagupta (c. 10th CE), the latter also being the commentator of Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. While Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka developed the idea that artworks have the effect of *generalizing* audience's experiences because such works are fictional in nature and hence removed from practical life, Abhinava finally answered the question by saying that it is due to a basic level of *identification occurring between the audiences and the fictional mode of the artwork*. Since the audiences identified with the fictional mode of artworks, they "willingly" engaged with such works. This preliminary level of identification with an artwork, *generalizes* all their future responses to the artwork, ensuring, in th process, that emotions are not personally 'suffered' by the audiences as in case of their real life. In this sense, these emotions have been called "ownerless emotions" or "generalized emotions" which remain ever 'pleasurable' for the audiences.[71] It is this experience which has been called *rasa* or aesthetic pleasure by Bharata which, together with the inputs given by Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and Abhinavagupta, as early as 10th CE had offered a satisfactory solution to the "paradox of junk fiction" in India.

Bharata's theory of *identification*, *affective state*, and *aesthetic pleasure* has been elaborated in chapter 4. The primary source is Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* with Abhinavagupta's (c. 10th CE) valuable commentary thereon.[72] A classic rendering of Abhinava's aesthetic thoughts has been provided by Raniero Gnoli which acts as an indispensable guide for the purpose.[73] For a modern rendering of Bharatas' concepts,

[71] Edwin Gerow, "Notes", in S. K. De, *Sanskrit Poetics as a Study of Aesthetics with Notes by Edwin Gerow* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1963): 81-112, 87-8

[72] Bharata, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Trans. and Ed. Board of Scholars (New Delhi: Satguru Publications, year of publication not mentioned); Abhinavagupta, *Abhinava Bhārati*, 3 Volumes, Trans. and Ed. M. M. Ghosh (Delhi: New Bharatiya Book Corporation, 2006)

[73] Raniero Gnoli, *Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1985)

valuable secondary sources have been Edwin Gerows' works on Indian aesthetics.[74] Bharat Gupt's work, which compares the dramatic concepts of Greek and Indian theatres, is also an essential study on the subject.[75] Similarly, the works of Maria Christopher Byrski's and Christopher Lane's PhD work on Indian drama, which analyzes various stages of an unfolding drama, has proved to be invaluable for me.[76] In comparing Bharata's thoughts with the crucial discovery of "mirror neurons" in cognitive science, I have used the pioneering work of Giacomo Rizzolatti and Corrado Sinigaglia on the subject.[77] In rendering Bharata's concepts of aesthetic experience into cinema, I have used Sergei Eisenstein's writings, published in three volumes by BFI, and referred to André Bazin's articles, published in two volumes by California University.[78] For discussing examples form suspense films, I have consulted Hitchcock's interviews by François Truffaut as well as Noël Carroll's work on horror films.[79]

Ānandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* or suggestion (c. 9th CE) deals with the basic modes of artistic expression that help generate the *suggestive sense* of an artwork. In this sense, *dhvani* (lit., 'echo') theory represents a crucial aspect of artworks where they express that which cannot be directly communicated by individuals in normal life due to various reasons like social repression, existential conditions, or erasure of significant memory, all of which, however, keep influencing individual behavior on the surface. It is argued that by using *dhvani* as a means the above three types of unexpressed experiences n be brought to the surface. In this process, the *dhvani* theory uses the following three

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[74] Edwin Gerow, *A glossary of Indian Figures of Speech* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971); "Notes", in *Sanskrit Poetics as a Study of Aesthetics with Notes by Edwin Gerow*, S. K. De (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1963): 81-112; Gerow's chapter on "Indian aesthetics" in Jan Gonda, Jr. *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. V Fasc. 3 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1977)

[75] Bharat Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts Greek and Indian: A Study of Poetics and Nāṭyaśāstra*, 3rd Imp. (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 2006)

[76] Christopher Maria Byrski, *Concept of Ancient Indian Theatre* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1974); Margaret Lynn Lane, *The Theory of Plot Structure in Sanskrit Drama and Its Application to the "Uttararamacarita"*, PhD Thesis (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983)

[77] Giacomo Rizzolatti and Corrado Siniglalia, *Mirror in the Brain: How Our Minds Share Actions and Emotions*, Trans. Frances Anderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

[78] S. M. Eisenstein, *Eisenstein Writings*, 3 vols., Trans. & Ed. Richard Taylor (Londin: BFI, 1988, 1994 and 1996); André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 2 vols., Trans & Ed. Hugh Gray (Berkeley, California: California University Press, 1967 and 1971)

[79] François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, rev. ed. (London: Simon and Schuster, 1986); Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror: or Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990)

suggestive means: *suggestion through realistic modes of expression*, *suggestion through formal modes of expression*, and a *suggestive mode that directly evokes aesthetic experiences among the audiences*. By giving 'voice' to the 'voiceless', *dhvani theory helps restore 'full' subjectivity to suffering individuals*.

All the above *dhvani* modes have been profusely illustrated with examples from world cinema, including Bollywood cinema. The continuing relevance of Ānanda's *dhvani* theory, including the valuable commentary made on it by Abhinavagupta, is emphasized when Lacan profusely acknowledges his indebtedness to their ideas in the course of firming up his own ideas on post-structural theory.

Ānanda's original work, *Dhvanyāloka* (c. 9th CE), with Abhinavagupta's commentary *Locana* (c. 10th CE), has been rendered into English by Daniel Ingalls, M. V. Patwardhan, and Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, with extensive critical notes by Daniel Ingalls. This authentic compendium, published by Harvard University, which has become a classic in its own right, is being used here as the primary source.[80] As secondary sources, various elucidations of Ānanda's *dhvani* theory by the following writers have been used: Mukund Madhava Sharma, Mysore Hiriyanna, and K. Krishnamoorthy.[81] Since Ānanda's theory primarily deals with literary theories, I have used Edward Dimock Jr.'s introduction to Indian literature, especially the portion dealing with Indian aesthetic theories written by Edwin Gerow. Dimock's introduction and Gerow's insight have offered me valuable clarifications on the theories prevailing in Ānanda's time which he had successfully challenged.[82] For an in-depth understanding of the critical comments made by Abhinavagupta, I have found the two works of Harsha V. Dehejia to be extremely useful.[83] For rendering the important concept of "darśan" in modern terms, I

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[80] Ānandavardhana, *The Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana with Locana of Abhinavagupta*, Trans. Daniel H. H. Ingalls, Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, and M. V. Patwardhan, Ed., Daniel H. H. Ingalls (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990)

[81] Mukunda Madhava Sharma, *The Dhvani Theory in Sanskrit Poetics* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1968); Mysore Hiriyanna, *Art Experience* (Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1954); K. Krishnamoorthy, *Dhanyaloka and Its Critics* (Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1968)

[82] Edward C. Dimock, Jr., Ed., *The Literatures of India: An Introduction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974)

[83] Harsha V. Dehejia, *The Advaita of Art* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996) and *Pārvatīdarpaṇa: An Exposition of Kashmir Śaivism through the Images of Śiva and Pārvatī* (Delhi: Motial Banarsidass, 1997)

have used Diana L. Eck, Jan Gonda, and Stella Kramrisch as my guide.[84] For comparing Ānanda's thoughts with Jacques Lacan's post-structural thoughts, I have used Lacan's original writings in *Écrits: A Selection* (1989).[85] For understanding some of the abstruse concepts in the practices of Tantra which Abhinava uses in his analysis, I have relied on Philip Rawson's important work on Tantra[86] and SenSharma's book on Kashmir Śaivism.[87] Sheldon Pollock's article "The Social Aesthetic and Sanskrit Literary Theory" has been a revelation in terms of social prohibitions and their transgression by artworks in the Indian society.[88] Rachel Dwyer's works have given me an extremely useful insight into how narrative construction and other processes operate in Bollywood cinema.[89] An important topical work on Indian cinema is Ashish Rajadhyaksha's *Indian Cinema in the Time of Celluloid*.[90] His opening lines "any researcher who produces an account of something, by definition, also 'produces' the object of the account" acts as the basis for his important effort at writing Indian cinema's account of *itself*, its self-description.[91] However, since Rajadhyaksha uses narrative contents as the means for industrial self-legitimacy of Indian cinema where the film's 'public' address system meant for the Censors acts as a possible third mode for guiding spectatorial action, etc,[92] *ideally* an exploration into his ideas has to come after the basics of a 'primitive' understanding of film images have been dealt with in my present research.

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[84] Diana L. Eck, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Jan Gonda, *Eye and Gaze in the Veda* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1969); Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 2 vols., Reprint (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1946) and *Manifestations of Śiva* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1981)

[85] Jacques Lacan, *Écrit: A Selection*, Trans. Alan Sheridan, Reprint (London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1989)

[86] Philip Rawson, *The Art of Tantra* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988)

[87] Debabrata SenSharma, *An Introduction to the Advaita Śaiva Philosophy* (Varanasi: Indica Books, 2009)

[88] Sheldon Pollock, "The Social Aesthetic and Sanskrit Literary Theory", *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 29 No. 1-2 (April, 2001): 197-229

[89] Rachel Dwyer and Divia Patel, *Cinema India: The Visual Culture of Hindi Film* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002); Rachel Dwyer and Christopher Pinney, Eds., *Pleasure and the Nation: The History, Politics and Consumption of Public Culture in India*, 4th Imp (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011)

[90] Ashish Rajadhyaksha, *Indian Cinema in the Time of Celluloid: From Bollywood to Emergency* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2009)

[91] Rajadhyksha, "A Theory of Cinema that can Account for Indian Cinema", in *Indian Cinema in the Time of Celluloid*, 3-43, 3

[92] Ibid, 4

One must acknowledge that while applying *dhvani* theory to cinema, I have consciously extended Ānanda and Abhinava's thoughts, but always remaining within the bounds set by the authors themselves.

The "piecemeal" theories being represented in this work, which generally signify "middle level" research as Carroll and Bordwell have said,[93] have been summarized in chapter 6 titled "Cinema and Alternate Methodology: A Case of 'Piecemeal' Theorizing". They occur as part of an "alternate methodology" that aims to deal with areas left untouched by the existing film theories. The distinct advantage that these "piecemeal" theories provide is their ability to deal with the audiences' normal responses to cinema which have been suppressed in the contemporary film discourse. The primary task of the "alternate methodology" is to uncover meanings and processes that remain as *wild meanings* below the threshold of existing film theories. My research is aimed at uncovering these meanings for which the main motivation has come from the "piecemeal theorizing" undertaken by David Bordwell and Noël Carroll in their writings on the issue.[94]

In the concluding section of my thesis, I have tried to clarify what "alternate methodology" means by the determining concepts of "the self", "consciousness", "the body", "reason", "causality", "meaning", and "truth" in the two philosophical schools of Merleau-Ponty and Nyāya, which make *the body* central to their theories. Since these crucial concepts not only underlie the way human beings relate to the world but also the manner in which the audiences experience cinema, a competent comprehension of the difference between an embodied and a disembodied analysis of phenomena becomes essential for this work.

The general "methodology" I have followed in my work concurs with Bordwell's understanding of the term: "In film studies, as in its literary counterpart, 'method' has been largely synonymous with 'interpretative school'."[95] This "interpretation" occurs in

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[93] Bordwell and Carroll, "State of the Art", in *Post-Theory*, 1-2

[94] Bordwell and Carroll, *Post-Theory*; Noël Carroll, *Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988)

[95] Bordwell, "Historical Poetics of Cinema", 370

terms of a *semantic field* involving theoretical concepts that seek to generate 'meaning' from the field, a set of *inferential procedures* employed for the purpose of moving from point A to point B in the field, a *conceptual map* that determines the path of progression from A to B within the field, and a *rhetorical practice* that organizes arguments in order to reach the final "interpretation" or conclusion.[96] The process delineated by Bordwell is duly supported by classical Indian theories which hold that the "method" of knowing something "starts with an initial doubt (*saṃśaya*) that sets in motion a process of investigation aimed at reaching certitude, resulting in a conclusion that finally generates conviction (*nirṇaya*)" in the enquirer.[97] In adopting this process, the Indian method banks on resolving the doubts of a hypothetical party, called the *madhyastha* or "the person in the middle" who is *neutral* to the outcome, in order to resolve his/her doubts about the conclusion.[98]

While the above arguments hint at a broad convergence between Western and Indian ideas concerning "methodology", there are, however, significant differences between the two. As far as contemporary Western thought is concerned, it broadly believes that *method may be separated from metaphysical reality* which, when applied to reality from outside, is capable of reaching an objective and accurate conclusion about the state of reality. This idea is broadly based on the evolution of some of the following assumptions about "method" in Western thought: Descartes' notion of transparent reason, which often appeared as common sense, is based on the underlying assumption that a "transparent intelligence" exists among human beings; Kant and Bertrand Russel held that there exists a world of abstractions lying beyond empirical phenomena which, based on the underlying assumption that certain *à priori* "categories of understanding" exist among human beings, may be used in combination with mathematical logic to reach certitude; or Wittgenstein held that one can simply appeal to the ordinary usage of language to discover solutions relating to philosophical problems.[99] Potter notes:

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[96] Bordwell, "Historical Poetics of Cinema", 370

[97] Matilal, *Perception*, 70, modified

[98] Ibid

[99] Karl H. Potter, *Presuppositions of Indian Philosophies* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991): 51

All these views shares a common assumption, which might be called the assumption that there can be method without metaphysics, i.e. methodological decisions can be arrived at…independently of any testing of the method in its application to philosophical problems.[100]

This bifurcation between ontology and epistemology in Western thought is clearly due to the upheavals that the West had undergone during the 20th century including the two world wars. It had led to an enthusiastic support for such ideas as existentialism, etc,[101] ultimately resulted in a conflating of meanings between "reason" and "transparent intelligence" which not only became synonymous but also existed independently of empirical reality.[102]

In contrast, in India, *theory* and *practice* have always been considered together which makes *methodology* and *reality* remaining inalienably integrated with each other. Thus, "methods" of knowing reality, called the *pramāṇas* (lit., 'proof'), which are defined as that "by means of which true cognitions are arrived at" (*pramīyate anena*),[103] have a dual character: in causing cognitions to arise in the right sort of way, the *pramāṇa* mode serves the twin purpose of being *knowledge* as well as its *proof* simultaneoulsy. Matilal notes: "A *pramāṇa* is regarded as the 'most effective' causal factor that gives rise to a particular cognitive episode; the theory of *pramāṇas* in this way becomes a theory of justification as well."[104] He gives an example from perception to clarify the point: "Any means of seeing a table is a *pramāṇa* of what I see to be there. The same means is also called a *pramāṇa*, an 'authority' for my assertion of what I see."[105] Thus, seeing an object as a *pramāṇa* automatically represents certain "proofs" like the fulfillment of certain other conditions like the availability of optimum light, distance, etc, or else the whole

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[100] Potter, *Presuppositions of Indian Philosophies*, 51

[101] Ibid

[102] "Reason" is "the intellectuall faculty by which conclusions are drawn from premises" and "intellect" is "the faculty of reasoning, knowing, and thinking as distinct from feeling [experience]" (OERD). Clearly, this is circular reasoning based on the assumption that these intruements, based on the underlying notion of the "transparency of intelligence", can independently *know* reality without being a part of it.

[103] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 16

[104] Matilal, *Perception*, 35, modified

[105] Ibid, 36, modified

process would be considered as vitiated. A "method" or *pramāṇa* is, thus, both a means of acquiring "knowledge" as well as the "proof" of that knowledge.[106] Mohanty notes:

> It is a peculiar feature of Indian epistemologies that the causal meaning of *pramāṇa* is also taken to imply a legitimizing sense so that cognition is true only when it has been brought about by a legitimate *pramāṇa*.[107]

Largely classified by the Nyāya school, *pramāṇas* are primarily based on human beings embodied experiences and their common socio-cultural practices which gradually get internalized within them due to conditioning, thereby making "knowledge" and its "proof" appear together. In this process, there is no scope for the existence of *à priori* "categories of understanding" existing in human consciousness, all "experiences" and their "interpretations" being *à posteriori*, primarily based on the self's *lived* experiences of the world.

However, a cautionary note needs to be introduced here. While an appropriate methodology is necessary for reaching certitude about phenomena, in case of humanities, it becomes more a case of forming one's conviction by circumstantial evidence rather than proof beyond doubt. This is because disciplines in the Humanities generate an "understanding (*verstehen*)" of the subject more based on 'preponderance of probability' than conclusive proof, invariably resulting in "a degree of *tentativeness* about conclusions".[108] In order to reduce such "tentativeness" generated by artworks in general and cinema in particular, I have decided to adopt the following criteria for analyzing artworks and the meanings and emotions they generate for the audiences:

i)   They should represent *identifiable processes*,

ii) There should be an *identifiable product* at the end of these processes,

iii) There should be *repeatability of the processes* under similar circumstances,

iv) The processes should be *verifiable* and *falsifiable* in case wrongly applied

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[106] Matilal, *Perception*, 36

[107] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 16, modified

[108] Bordwell, "Historical Poetics of Cinema", 387, emphasis added

Since the above criteria are generally identified with processes involving 'pure science', I may be misunderstood as conflating arts with science in my research. It is, thus, necessary that I make my position clear here.

The word "science", which originated from the Latin word "scientia" meaning "to know" or "knowledge gained by study" (Bloomsburg Dictionary of Word Origins), has now come to mean "a branch of knowledge conducted on objective principles of systematized observation and experimentation with phenomena" (OERD). In this sense, the experession "science" may be said to represent the adoption of a *rational process* in a *systematic study of phenomenon*. For Arsitotle, "science" meant not only the study of the objective 'quantities' of a phenomenon, but also its subjective 'qualities', like love, hate, etc, which it evoked among human beings. In the ensuing developments, the objective was split from the subjective by Galileo who declared that, henceforth, "science" would deal with only those things which could be empirically measured, i.e. 'quantities' alone. The modern connection of 'science" with the technical and the mathematical, or, broadly, the "non-arts" clearly belongs to the Galilean category. This is indeed an unfortunate development since we lack an alternate expression in English that has the same import for humanities viz. *a mode of rational enquiry based on systematic observation of data and drawing conclusions therefrom*. Thus, disciplines like the 'social sciences' and the 'arts', which continue to be as rigorous and as observant of worldly phenomena as possible, suffered in the process. In the absence of an equivalent word, I feel time has come to reclaim the word "scientific" for humanities as well, further justifications for which are provided below.

The 'social sciences' gather painstaking details of the socio-cultural practices of communities and collate them to reach conclusions about the value-laden behavior of those societies. This process is not only *repeatable* but also *verifiable* and *falsifiable* in case analysis diverges from reality. The importance of 'social sciences' lie in the fact that, in contemporary times, different governments base their social and economic policies on the conclusions reached by them in the practical field.

The 'arts' employ equally meticulous observations to understand the effects that an artwork has on its audiences, an aspect on which the entire art industry depends for its survival. Take, for instance, Bharata's formula for generating *rasa* or aesthetic pleasure among the audiences. He notes that when the audiences are made to witness 'goal-directed activities' undertaken by characters in a determining situation, it produces a similar *affective state* among the audiences which enable them to *relive* the scene both in terms of their cognition of the scene and their 'unconscious' body together. This formula is eminently *repeatable* and hence *verifiable* and *falsifiable* in case audience responses are not as per the expected result.

Even though all three disciplines viz. 'pure sciences', 'social sciences', and 'arts' undertake *systematic study* and *rational analysis* of phenomena, their differences must, however, be factored in for reaching effective results. Thus, while 'pure sciences' entirely deal with objective factors independent of human experiences, the latter two are primarily based on human beings' subjective *lived* experiences of the world. Their basic difference may be demonstrated through the following example: *a person looks with nostalgia at a chair where his father used to sit and enjoy his morning cup of tea*. 'Pure science' would tell us *what* the physical intensity of the person's mental experiences are by measuring neuronal firings occurring within his brain; through a systematic study of the socio-cultural norms and the family practices surrounding the individual's community, 'social science' would tell us *why* the individual is feeling nostalgic about his father; finally, through a creative re-presentation of the situation, 'arts' would make the audiences feel *how* the individual is responding to the situation. In Tarkovsky's terms, cinema re-creates a *subjective time pressure* surrounding the chair which would be *felt* by all those who watch the scene. In this sense, while the 'pure sciences' and the 'social sciences' are *symptomatic* processes of learning a state from its outside symptoms, an artistic process makes the audiences actually *experience* the scene from within themselves. Thus, despite their qualitative differences, each of these processes has every right to be called "scientific" because of the rational and systematic study they bring to their respective processes.

Finally, in this work, ideas have been illustrated with a number of film examples. Bordwell warns that often only those examples are cited which best support the arguments while ignoring counter-examples that might challenge its premises.[109] He points out that such examples denote "enumerative inductivism" which remains "vacuous because any number of hypotheses can be supported by a set of such instances".[110] Bordwell points out that the ideal solution lies in "eliminative inductivism" explained as follows:

> No conjecture about the world is in and of itself confirmed by evidence. It is always evaluated relative to some rival. The degree of its acceptance is simply the extent to which, at any particular time, it is considered better than its comparable rivals.[111]

It is hoped that the film examples chosen here would meet Bordwell's criteria.

In sum, what "piecemeal" theories of phenomenology and classical Indian theories and the "local solutions" they provide aim to achieve is to bring back the audiences' embodied and socio-cultural practices, which together constitute what may be called their *normal response* to cinema, into reckoning of contemporary film discourse, a process from which they have been progressively eliminated in the course of history of cinema. This happened even after promising starts were made by the early film theories formulated by Vachel Lindsay and Hugo Münsterberg.[112] In place of teaching how the audiences *should* experience cinema, the "alternate methodology" shows us how they *actually* experience cinema which provides us with the necessary platform to identify the ideological drives operating within cinema, the domain of existing film theories.

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[109] Marshall Edelson, *Hypothesis and Evidence in Psychoanalysis*, quoted in Frederick Crews, *Skeptical Engagements* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986): 80; quoted in Bordwell, "Historical Poetics", 387-88

[110] Bordwell, "Historical Poetics", 387-88

[111] Gerow, "Notes", 86-7

[112] See Vachel Lindsay *The Art of Moving Picture* (New York: Macmillan, 1915), Republished by Moden Library, New York in 2000, and Hugo Münsterberg, *The Photoplay A Psychological Study* (New York: D. Appleton, 1916), Republished as *The Photoplay – A Psychological Study and Other Writings,* Ed. Allan Langdale (New York: Routledge, 2002)

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Chapter 1

Cinema and Sensuality
Limitation of the Existing Film Discourse and New Possibilities

New modes of theorizing are necessary. We must start again.

--------- Noël Carroll

Existing film discourse is limited due to the following two reasons: first, its failure to incorporate the audiences' embodied and socio-cultural experiences of life and, secondly, despite cinema being a world-wide phenomenon, its failure to incorporate non-Western theories due to a predominant Eurocentric point of view. The present work identifies the root-causes of of the above failures as the existing film discourse's exclusion of *the body* and the *film sensations* that it generates among the audiences which predominantly determine their normal response to cinema all over the world. The present chapter further explores the possibility whether phenomenological and classical Indian theories, in which *the body* plays a determining role, offer a more meaningful solution to the problems posed in understanding cinema today.

The points being made in this chapter are briefly summarized as under. After making a promising start of dealing with film sensations along phenomenological lines in their theories, both Eisenstein and Bazin become busy in containing film sensations within measurable control. While early Soviet filmmakers during the '20s and '30s remain busy in juxtaposing various 'montage' pieces to generate new 'meanings' from cinema signifying the essentially constructed nature of social reality,[113] realists like Bazin and Kracauer, who championed in their early phase during the '40s that 'unedited' pieces of reality recorded by camera signify a phenomenological response to reality as representing the *natural* way in which human beings interacted with the world,[114] later

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[113] Montage reaches its final form in Eisenstein: "In my view montage is…an idea that DERIVES from the collision between two shots that are independent of one another (the "dramatic" principle)". See Eisenstein, "The Dramaturgy of Film Form (1929)", in *Eisenstein Writings Volume 1,* 161-180, 163, italics and bold in the original

[114] For montage theory in cinema, see seminal works of Lev Kuleshov, *Kuleshov on Film: Writings* (California: University of California Press, 1974) and Sergei Eisenstein, *Selected Works*, 3 vols., trans. & ed.

sought to 'contain' these responses within measurable processes. In both these incarnations, the ultimate thrust of the classical film theory remains on 'measuring' film sensations on which film theories could be securely founded, a requirement that both groups thought was necessary for securing the epithet of 'art' for cinema, in those early days of film history.

As classical film theory starts to decline during the late '50s, contemporary film theory emerges on the scene during the '60s.[115] It was heavily influenced by the structuralist-semiotic paradigm of Sausssurian linguistics, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and Althusserian reading of Marx, all of which signified that meanings are not naturally *given* in reality but are artificially constructed through manipulative practices to safeguard vested interests. In seeking to identify the causes of such distortions, contemporary film theory earmarked film narration as the piece which leads a largely unsuspecting passive audience into 'meanings' and 'emotions' which are manipulated for them by the bourgeoisie. In this process, the theory excludes film sensations as being too 'untamed' for effective theoretical purposes.

When cognitive film theory arose as a reaction against contemporary film theory during the mid '80s, it held that the audiences, instead of being passive observers, are active agents who consciously construct film narratives from the clues given in cinema.[116] However, since for cognitive film theory the crucial function of the audiences remained the construction of a film narrative by them – its only difference with contemporary film theory being a conscious piecing together of cues given in a film as against their passive manipulation in the latter – it also has no room for uncontrolled film sensations within its repertoire.

Richard Taylor (London: BFI, 1988, 1991, & 1996); for realism in cinema, see André Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, 2 Vols., Trans. & Ed. Hugh Gray (California: University of California Press, 1967 & 1971) and Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997)

[115] For an excellent introduction to contemporary film theory, see *Contemporary Film Theory*, Ed. Anthony Easthope (Harlow: Longman Publishing, 1993

[116] The seminal work on cognitive film theory is by David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (London: Routledge, 1985)

Significant writing of film history, which only starts during the late '50s, is influenced by contemporary film theory, the reigning theory from the late '50s to '80s, to focus on the evolution of film narration as the prime motif in cinema. In the process, film histories primarily concentrate on those techniques and technologies of the filmmaking process which aid this process. Similarly, when new film studies departments are instituted in Euro-American universities during the '50s and '60s, they start searching for a "scientific" criterion that would explain both the diversity and the world-wide popularity of cinema. Influenced by contemporary film theory and the existing film histories, they also identify film narration as the crucial piece that makes cinema a universal language.

In this sense, the film discourse that came into being as a result of this process, constitute an essential part of the audience's pleasurable experiences of cinema. The body, thus, came to be relegated to the background by the discourse. In this scenario, two new possibilities hold promise. *Phenomenology*, primarily developed through the theories of Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, progressively bring *the body* back into theoretical reckoning.[117] A second line of development concerns *classical Indian theories*, where the school of Nyāya not only anticipate many of phenomenology's engagements with the body but also transcend them in significant ways, offer a significant new line of entry into film theorization from a non-Western perspective. It is argued here that the incorporation of the body in Indian aesthetic theories generate new insights when applied to cinema.

Limitation of Film Theories: *Inability to Comprehend Film Sensations*

For the first time in Western thought, one comes across the words "sensuous knowledge" (*cognitio sensitiva*) in Alexander Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* (1750) which makes

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[117] Seminal works on phenomenology are by Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, Trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1931) and *Cartesian Mediatations*, Trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960); Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Trans. J. Stambaugh (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996); Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962) and *The Visible and the Invisible*, Trans. Alfonso Lingis, Ed., Claude Lefort, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968)

"aesthetics" a new discipline of study.[118] There he contrasts "clear and distinct knowledge" of conceptual understanding with "confused knowledge" of sensations.[119] Apparently because of its basic 'untamed' nature, sensations are generally considered to be disruptive of conceptual knowledge. Due to this difficulty, efforts at theorizing embodied sensations have been few and far between. I will discuss below few such attempts at theorizing film sensations and the reasons for their progressive devaluation in the history of cinema.

Classsical Film Theory: *Need for 'Calculable' Film Sensations*

The principle of montage, held sacrosanct by Soviet filmmakers, signify an *expressive reconstruction of reality* through editing of shots that generate new meanings for the audiences, which basically challenge the notion held by Hollywood cinema that meanings are *given* in the shots themselves. Arguably, Eisenstein's initial interest in film sensuality must have been aroused due to its disruptive role vis-à-vis bourgeois thought. Using the term "attraction" for the first time in the history of performing arts, Eisenstein notes in the context of theatre:

> An "attraction" (in our diagnosis of theatre) is any aggressive moment in theatre i.e. any element of it that subjects audiences to emotional or psychological influence, verified by experience and mathematically calculated to produce specific emotional shocks in the spectator in their proper order within the whole.[120]

Clearly, immediately after recognizing its disruptive force that generates emotional shocks among the audiences by disrupting the narrative flow of the play, he seeks to 'measure' the process that brings it about.[121] While Eisenstein's formulation of "collision montage", where ideas collide with ideas to generate new ideas in an eminently calculable measure, is a prime example of disrupting the narrative, Bollywood song and

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[118] Eivind Røssaak, "Figures of Sensation: Between Still and Moving Images", in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, Ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006): 321-336, 321

[119] Martin Steel, *Aesthetics of Appearing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005): 29, quoted in Røssaak, "Figures of Sensation", 321

[120] S. M. Eisenstein, "Montage of Attraction (1923)", in *Eisenstein Writings Volume 1 1922 -1934*, Trans. and Ed. Richard Taylor (London: BFI, 1988): 33-38, 34

[121] Ibid

dance sequences may be cited as an interesting example of narrative disruption which could not be measured in the same way.[122] Irrespective of whether film sensations as "attractions" can be measured or not, Eisenstein crucially notes that it is not always necessary that film sensations should invariably be subversive of the narrative. He cites the example of Chaplin films where "attractions" are made to coexist with narrative cinema: "The lyrical effect of a whole series of Chaplin scenes is inseparable from the attractional quality of the *specific mechanics of his movements*".[123] In a wonderful essay, Lesley Stern describes how, for Eisenstein, the bodily somersault, which may be seen as an extension of Chaplin's body movements, is used as a trope to establish a relation between cinema and the body of the audiences.[124] Peter Wollen notes that, inspired by the Symbolist movement, Eisenstein spent the latter part of his career investigating "synchronization of the senses" and "synaesthesia" along this line.[125]

However, despite such brilliant thoughts, it is but strange that Eisensteins' ideas on film sensuality remained confined to his random musings alone. One of the basic reasons for this departure may be his idea that film viewing has to be an intellectual exercise rather than a bodily one, a basic requirement of making a performative process as 'art' in those days:

> My artistic principle was therefore, and still is, not intuitive creativity but the rational constructive composition of affective elements; the most important thing is that the affect must be calculated and analyzed in advance.[126]

Thus, despite a young Marx having warned that Western tradition privileges the intellect over the senses by proclaiming that "man is affirmed in the objective world not only in the act of thinking but with *all* his senses",[127] Eisenstein cannot get away from his

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[122] See Lalitha Gopalan, *Cinema of Interruptions: Action Genres in Contemporary Indian Cinema* (London: BFI, 2002)

[123] Eisenstein, "The Montage of Attractions (1923)", 34, also quoted in Donald Crafton, "Pie and Chase: Gag, Spectacle and Narrative in Slapstick Comedy", in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, 355-364, 358

[124] Lesley Stern, "I think Sebastian, Therefore…I somersault: Film and the Uncanny", *Para*doxa*, 3 Nos. 3-4 (1997): 361

[125] Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969): 57, 59

[126] Richard Taylor, "Introduction", in *Eisenstein Writings Volume 1*, 1-26, 12

[127] Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Trans. M. Milligan (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1987): 108

intellectual bias of containing film sensuality within mathematically calculable "units of impression".[128]

In contrast, the realistic theories of André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer champion an *objective re-presentation of reality* based on camera's ability to mechanically reproduce natural surfaces that have close affinity with human beings' normal response to the world, Bazin mentions "The photograph as such and the object in itself share a common being, after the fashion of a *fingerprint*"[129] which "affects us like a phenomenon in nature, like a flower or a snowflakes".[130] This is clearly a promising phenomenological line. He even celebrates those moments of film sensuality which disrupt the narrative flow of a film. For example, his analysis of the final scene in Jean Renoir's *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux* (Boudu Saved from Drowning, 1932) revels in the tactile response of the audiences:

> The water is no longer "water" but more specifically the water of the Marne in August, yellow and glaucous…an extraordinary slow 360º pan…picks up a bit of grass where, in close-up, one can see distinctly the white dust that the heat and wind have lifted from the past. One can almost feel it between one's fingers.[131]

Bazin criticizes the montage theory by noting that it "reinforces the meaning of one image by association with another image not necessarily part of the same episode",[132] signifying thereby that montage "did not show us the event; it (merely) alluded to it".[133] Similarly, his contemporary realist, Siegfried Kracauer, also has phenomenological aspirations. Vivian Sobchack mentions that Kracauer understands the spectator as a "human being with skin and hair" and that "the material elements that present themselves in films directly stimulate the *material layers* of the human being: his nerves, his senses,

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[128] S. M. Eisenstein, *Eisenstein Writings Volume 2: Towards a Theory of Montage*, Trans. Michael Glenny, Ed. Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor, new ed. (London: BFI, 1994): 384

[129] André Bazin, "The Ontology of Photographic Image", in *What is Cinema?*, Vol. 1, Trans. & Ed. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967): 9-16, 15

[130] Ibid, 13

[131] Bazin, *Jean Renoir* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1974): 85-6, quoted in Tiago Magalhães de Luca's PhD Thesis, *Realism of the Senses: A Tendency in Contemporary World Cinema* (Leeds University, 2011): 15-6

[132] Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema", in *What is Cinema?*, Vol. 1, 23-40, 25, modified

[133] Ibid

his entire *physiological substance*".[134] Despite such phenomenological proclamations, none of the realist theorists develop their phenomenological ideas any further which merit comment.

As far as Bazin is concerned, the legacy of linear perspective from the Renaissance underlies his notion of the *window* which seeks to 'stabilize' vision along a static mathematical grid in front of the viewer.[135] It militates against the idea that tactility of the film image is ultimately dependent on the audience's embodied experiences of the world by reinforcing the view that the whole process ultimately belongs to a static, disembodied vision from the *window*.[136] Thus, one surprisingly notes that, even while dealing with film sensuality in very different ways, both Eisenstein and Bazin ultimately end up containing it within a mathematically calculable grid which represented a pre-determined cinematic space for the audiences!

Brian Henderson points out an important limitation of the above theories.[137] Based on their need for the measurability of audience response to artworks, both Eisenstein and Bazin's primary goal is to determine whether cinema can claim the status of being an art-form like that of literature or theatre. In the tradition of Aristotle, they attempted to identify a unique feature of cinema that would establish such a claim. While, for the Soviet formalists, this unique feature was editing, for the realists, it was camera which sought to reproduce *reality as it is*. Since, for both these theories, the starting points remain "reality", it is necessary to understand what each means by the term "real" and "art". Henderson notes: "For Eisenstein, as for Pudovkin, pieces of unedited films are no more than mechanical reproductions of reality…Only when these pieces are arranged in montage patterns, does film become art".[138] Arguing against such manipulative practices of montage that dissolves "the event" by substituting for it a synthetic reality,[139] Bazin notes:

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[134] Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye*, 55, original emphasis
[135] Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 5
[136] Ibid
[137] See Brian Henderson's classic work *A Critique of Film Theory* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1980)
[138] Ibid, 18
[139] Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema", 25, quoted in Henderson, *A Critique*, 22

> The photograph and object in itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it…shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it is the *model*.[140]

Thus, for Bazin, film art is fully achieved in the shot itself: "if the shot stands in proper relation to the real, it is already art".[141] Henderson notes that, on this ground, Bazin only allows a simple linkage between shots in cinema: "if the individual shot exhibits fidelity to the real, then it follows that a series of such shots, merely linked, must be faithful to the real also".[142] In the above context, Henderson sums up the limitation of both these theories:

> The sequence is as far as either theorist gets to in his discussion of cinematic form. The film theory of each is in fact a *theory of the film sequence*…The problem of the formal organization of the whole film is not taken up by either. This is the most serious limitation of both theories.[143]

At the most basic level, extended narration remains an anethma to both theorists. Noting that whenever such discussions come up both veered off into literary theories, Henderson comments: "Their solutions in terms of literary models are a failure to take up the problem at all".[144]

The phenomenology of the audiences' bodily experiences, initially inherent in Eisenstein and Bazins' thoughts, however, declined with the establishment of Film Studies Departments in many Western universities since the '50s. In seeking to find that one "scientific" criterion which would explain cinema's appeal across the globe, their search had led ultimately led them to cinema's narrative, "story-telling" value. The theoretical basis for this new criterion they found in the contemporary film theory.[145] As contours of this new theory started emerging during the late '60s, film studies departments, in order

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[140] Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image", 14, quoted in Henderson, *A Critique*, 21, original emphasis

[141] Henderson, *A Critique*, 26-7

[142] Ibid, 27

[143] Ibid, 23, original emphasis

[144] Ibid, 24

[145] Thomas E. Wartenberg and Angela Curran, "General Introduction", in *The Philosophy of Film: Introductory Text and Readings*, Eds., 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007): 2-3

to differentiate current efforts from the past, branded all earlier efforts at film theorizing as "classical film theory" retroactively. It is thus that, despite representing two entirely contrary trends of formalism and realism in them, theories of Eisenstein and Bazin come to be lumped together under the same banner in film history!

Contemporary Film Theory: *Need to 'Shun' Film Sensations*

In the new dispensation since the late '60s, the study of cinema starts being organized around one of Saussure's major linguistic findings: individual words have no meanings in themselves; rather, meanings arise *differentially* from the choice and arrangement of words within a sentential structure in which individual elements of a structure merely play their assigned parts. When these linguistic ideas, which ultimately form the basis for Western theories of structuralism and semiotics, are translated into cinema, they lead to the idea that 'meanings' are not *given* in the film shots as Hollywood claims but are the result of the way the film is structured for the audiences. This idea shifts the focal point of film analysis to the selection and inter-se arrangement of characters and situations within a film.[146]

In this "linguistic turn" of contemporary film theory, the key word becomes "concept": the choice of words and their inter-se arrangement represent concepts which generate meaning for the receivers. In this sense, whatever can be *conceptualized* forms part of this theory, whatever cannot is debarred from the theory.[147] Since sensuous experiences are normally disruptive of concepts, they automatically get banished from the domain of contemporary film theory. This debarment is further accentuated by the Marxist turn of contemporary film theory. Influenced by the May '68 events in France, contemporary film theorists sought to find an ideological binary between a privileged and exploitative bourgeois class and a manipulated and exploited proletariat class in the narrative structures of cinema. Films are, then, classified as "progressive" and "regressive" or "reactionary" depending on which class they belonged to. Under this dispensation, commercial cinema comes to be branded as "bourgeois cinema" since it

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[146] For the formulation of semiotic theory, see Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero* (London: Cape, 1967); *Mythologies* (London: Cape, 1972) and *S/Z* (London: Cape, 1975)
[147] See Anthony Easthope, *Contemporary Film Theory* (Harlow: Longman, 1993)

seeks to reinforce the conventional structure of the society. On the question why, then, ordinary citizens continue to frequent commercial cinema even though it manipulates them, two powerful theoretical tools, formulated by Louis Althusser and Jacques Lacan, are pressed into service by contemporary film theorists as explanations of this phenomenon.

Louis Althusser, on the basis of his re-reading of Marx, explains "ideology" as the very process through which individuals are constituted as subjects.[148] He mentions that this process works because "man is an ideological animal by nature",[149] which also, thereby, signifies that "man is by nature a subject".[150] Althusser's idea, thus, involves a double process of there being no ideology without subjects and no subjects without ideology: "The category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology in so far as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects."[151] In the above sense, "individuals are always-already subjects".[152] Althusser holds that all social formations require ideology because it must be involved in a continuous reproduction of subjects who would thereafter be 'willing' members for the bourgeoisie.[153]

Thus, according to Althusser, the primary role that ideology plays in the bourgeois society is to construct *subjects* for capitalist consumption who would not have to be forced into submission but accept their position 'voluntarily'. This purpose is served by conventional institutions such as the family, education, religion, etc, called the "Ideological State Apparatus" or *ISA* by Althusser which constitutes subjects for bourgeois consumption. In case *ISA* fails, "Repressive State Apparatus" or *RSA*, consisting of the police, the army, etc, are to be pressed into service. In *ISA*, the subject constitution occurs by naming a person and offering her a role in the society. When the social institutions now 'hail' her, she responds in a certain way. Carroll notes "the subject

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[148] Louis Althusser, "Ideology Interpellates Individuals as Subjects", *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971): 170-77, 170
[149] Ibid
[150] Ibid, Footnote 15, 170
[151] Ibid, 171
[152] Ibid, 176
[153] Carrol, *Mystifying Movies*, 59

is thereby constituted by or in the discourse, or to be positioned by or in the discourse".[154] Carroll emphasizes the underlying assumption of the theory: "Discourse addresses the individual as a unified subject, and the individual mistakes the *seeming* intelligibility, unity, and coherence of the discourse and its address as his own unity as an autonomous 'I'."[155] Althusser calls this the process of *interpellation of the subject psyche*.[156] Carroll clarifies that this Althusserian notion of interpellation has ultimately been extended to pervade all aspects of society:

> Under the sway of semiotic, these researchers have a rather expansive view of discourse. Almost every aspect of civilized life – from sentences to clothing – has an address or a discursive component. So, virtually every element in the culture is participating in the construction of subjects in an ideologically significant way.[157]

For Althusser, the situation being such, beliefs of individual autonomy are *imaginary*, being instances of *misrecognition* by the individuals concerned: "relation of these roles and values to the real conditions of the social formation is imaginary".[158] Thus, even when a subject considers herself to be autonomous, free, and unified, it is actually mis-recognition since she has already been constituted as a subject by the system.

Lacanian psychoanalysis provides Althusser with the psychic mechanism necessary for an individual's misrecognition of himself or herself as a unified subject.[159] Along with Freud, Lacan feels that the human subject is constructed in several ways. While being in the womb signifies a state of plenitude for the child, birth means alienation and separation from the state of plenitude referred to as *lack* by Lacan. During the child's first six to eighteen months, the child feels this *lack* more acutely due to the absence of motor coordination within its own body. Against this background, the child's first desire is to acquire wholeness, i.e. a unified sense of identity. The faculty that bestows this subjecthood on the child is called *The Imaginary*, whereby the society

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[154] Carrol, *Mystifying Movies*, 60
[155] Ibid, 61
[156] Althusser, "Ideology Interpellates Individuals as Subjects", 170-77
[157] Carrol, *Mystifying Movies*, 60, emphasis added
[158] Ibid, 57
[159] Ibid, 61

bestows an identity on it, metaphorically represented as the "Mirror Stage": when the child looks at its own image in a mirror, it 'represents' a sense of wholeness to the child which is not real but generated by its faculty of imagination.[160] Lacan mentions:

> This form would have to be called the Ideal-I…But the important point is that this form situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction which will always remain irreducible for the individual…[161]

Carroll notes two points of importance in relation to the "mirror stage". First, *the child's sense of unity and autonomy both come from outside in the form of representations*.[162] Lacan holds that *The Imaginary* operates as a psychic mechanism throughout one's life instilling in him or her illusions of subjecthood or unity through representations or discourse.[163] Secondly, this process of representation or, misrepresentation, is brought about by the *other*, the care-givers like the parents, the society, etc, the mirror standing as a metaphor for the way they constitue the child by "hailing" it in specific ways. Carroll notes: "This sets forth what might be regarded as a continuing contradiction. We believe that we are unified, autonomous subjects, but this is based upon an extrapolation from the other."[164] This is the psychic mechanism that Althusser was looking for in his theory: the psychology of the "mirror stage" interpellates the subject's psyche to constitute it in a particular way.

For Lacan, *The Imaginary* carries forth to operate in other developmental stages of the child as well. In the *Symbolic Stage*, roughly equivalent to what the Freudians call the "Oedipal Stage", the child gets *culturally* constructed by the society.[165] Carroll notes:

> It is the period in which the male child, putatively fearing castration by the father, leaves the quest for mother to emulate the father in a process called *introjection*.

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[160] Carrol, *Mystifying Movies*, 63

[161] Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience", in *Écrits: A Selection*, Trans. Alan Sheridan, Reprint (London: Routledge, 1989): 1-7, 2

[162] Ibid, 2

[163] Carroll, *Mystifying Movies*, 64

[164] Ibid, 64

[165] For both Freud and Lacan, the child considered is a male child

That is, the boy child introjects the father which means that he attempts to take on the values, rules, and behavior of the father.[166]

In other words, the father is now introjected in the child's social being resulting in the child now being sexed as "male" which is not merely a matter of biology, but also a cultural matter.[167] The Freudians hold that culture reproduces itself through this process which forms the basis for Althusser's notion of social construction of individuals as subjects by the capitalist-bourgeois society.

However, Lacan's theory soon moves beyond the above position. He re-reads Freud in holding that it is also the point in which the child enters the *language*. Lacan links up language with the Oedipus complex in terms of what is sanctioned and what is not taboo for marriages in tribal societies. Lacan considers social taboo to depend on *how one is named* i.e. positioned in a tribal network, with "the name of the father" acting as its anchor.[168] Carroll notes that this leads the Lacanians to see social laws – called "The Law" by them – as a system, which uses "the name of the father" as its fulcrum, also called the "phallus", the whole process signifying the centrality of the patriarch in the tribal organization represented by "The Law".[169] Carroll specifically points out why Lacan thinks that *language* is identical with "The Law". By combining Saussurian linguistics and Lévi Strauss's laws of tribal society with his psychoanalytical theory, Lacan arrives at the following conclusion: "the meaning of the sign in a language is diacritical or differential, i.e. the meaning of the terms is not defined in isolation but in relation to other terms in virtue of their differences".[170] Thus, with the help of the *Imaginary* on the one hand, which projects an individual's unity and wholeness in terms of representations, and the *Symbolic* on the other, which operates on the basis of "The Law" of differences, the subject is 'fixed' into a pre-determined hierarchy of cultural positions in the society in the same way *language* functions in the semiotic system.[171]

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[166] Carrol, *Mystifying Movies*, 67
[167] Lacan, "The Mirror Stage", 6
[168] Carroll, *Mystifying Movies*, 68
[169] Ibid, 68-9
[170] Ibid, 69
[171] Ibid, 72-3

On the basis of Lacan, contemporary film theorists come to hold that mis-identification of one's real self for one's 'constructed' self is a *psychologically given* state for all individuals.[172] By virtue of this psychological trajectory, an individual 'voluntarily' accepts the hierarchical bourgeois order as the *given* order of the world of which she is a 'natural' part. Contemporary film theorists hold that by projecting this unconscious aspect of their belief on the film screen – called "ideal projection" by Lacan – commercial cinema construct a 'natural' order of things for the audiences.

Since film sensuality, with its untamed affects, is likely to be disruptive of this 'naturalizing' process, it has no place in the contemporary film theory. Instead, film sensations are castigated as being "excess" to narrative cinema. In reply to the persisting question why, then, do sensuality get represented in commercial cinema at all, which, after all, is a bourgeois instrument of manipulation, the theorists hold that its sensuous titillations primarily serve the purpose of bringing the audiences to the cinemas.

In this kind of development, attention shifts from what makes cinema a unique art-form, like *montage* or *reproduction of reality*, to an analysis of the generic binary structure inherent within a film narrative. Carroll notes the consequences of this shift of emphasis for cinema:

i) It makes all films – or at least all films that employ certain generic structures – ideological, and

ii) It makes them ideological in the same way [173]

The overriding ideological preoccupation of film theorists during this period is well reflected in the slogan of the '60s & '70s: *everything is political*. This tendency eventually leads to detecting ideology not only in the film narrative as such but also in all other aspects of cinema as well like characters, situations, filmmaking practices, and, even, in the filmmaking apparatus itself. Thus, for example, the monocular perspective of camera comes in for some sharp criticism on the notion that it ideologically instills in the viewer the illusion of being a unified and autonomous subject who is able to exercise full

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[172] Lacan, "The Mirror Stage", 6
[173] Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 231

control over the scene which engages her. Carroll critiques the above notion of "ideology" as being too broad: "By identifying ideology with subject construction, the concept has become roughly coextensive with that of culture, thereby losing its pejorative force".[174]

Cognitive Film Theory: *Need to 'Relegate' Film Sensations*

Even during its heyday, contemporary film theory was not free from murmurs of discontent. Feminist and other marginal groups found its idea of a unitary "subject position" biased in favor of the dominant male ideology. They further found that neither structuralism nor psychoanalysis leaves much space for an alternate gaze to challenge the male gaze. Newly instituted Cultural Theory departments in Euro-American universities also called for a rethink on the ground that spectators have cultural differences which influence their understanding of cinema in major ways. All these developments militated against contemporary film theory's notion of a largely 'passive' audience becoming a subject for manipulation by the bourgeoisie. In response to such objections, a new line of thinking emerged which considered the audiences to be conscious subjects who are capable of critically responding to cinema.[175] Called Perceptual-Cognitive Film Theory or, simply, Cognitive Film Theory, it was constructed by David Bordwell, Noël Carroll, Kristin Thompson, and others during the mid 1980s. Its basic premise is elaborated by Bordwell in his book *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985) as follows:[176]

  i) A spectator is a *rational agent* who, based on her own experiences of living in the world, is capable of constructing a meaningful narrative on the basis of schemata of how objects occur and events unfold in the real world.[177]

  ii) A spectator *infers* the narrative on the basis of clues provided in the film.[178]

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[174] Carroll, *Mystifying Movies*, 73
[175] Wartenburg and Curran, "General Introduction", in *The Philosophy of Film*, 3
[176] Bordwell, *Narration*, 5
[177] Bordwell notes: "I adopt the term 'viewer' or 'spectator' to name a hypothetical entity executing the operations relevant to constructing a story out of the film's representation. My spectator, then, acts according to the protocols of story comprehension." *Narration*, 30
[178] Bordwell says: "In all these activities, whether we call them perceptual or cognitive ['a constructivist

iii)   Since perception and cognition are considered to be "goal-directed" processes, audiences invariably search for a "closure" in them.[179]

iv)   Since perceptual-cognitive theory primarily deals with the conscious level, the only form of psychology it uses is descriptive or folk psychology where *emotions* and *affects* result from immediate, interrupted, or delayed fulfillment of desires. According to Bordwell, for understanding deeper *emotions* and *affects*, one is required to refer to psychoanalytic theories of Freud and Lacan.[180]

Needless to say that all the above elements in the cognitive film theory make it exclusively focus on the unfolding of the story element within a film. Calling it a Copernican revolution in its simplicity, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith notes that Bordwell replaces the entire semiotic apparatus of contemporary film theory with a single principle called film narration *actively* cognized by the audiences.[181] Nowell-Smith, however, cautions against the *inferential model* employed by Bordwell in his perceptual-cognitive theory:

> The cognitivist model imagines the mind as an inferring machine. It asks the question "how can I get from point A to point B?"…it assumes that our minds work when watching a film as they do in a crossword puzzle or as policemen's mind do in detective stories.[182]

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theory permits on easy separation between perception and cognition', *Narration*, 31], organized clusters of knowledge guide our hypothesis making. These are called *schemata*." *Narration*, 31

[179] Bordwell notes: "According to constructivist theory, perceiving and thinking are active, goal-oriented processes… Sensory stimuli alone cannot determine a percept, since they are incomplete and ambiguous. …Inference-making is a central notion in constructivist psychology. In some cases, an inference proceeds from the 'bottom-up' [such as] color perception…Other processes, such as the recognition of a familiar face, operate from 'top-down'. Here the organization of sensory data is primarily determined by expectation, background knowledge, problem-solving processes and other cognitive operations." *Narration*, 33-4

[180] Bordwell mentions: "As a perceptual-cognitive account, this theory doesn't address affective features of film viewing. This is…because I am concerned with the aspects of viewing that lead to constructing the story and its world. I am assuming that a spectator's comprehension of the film's narrative is theoretically separable from his emotional response. (I suspect that psychoanalytic models may be well suited for explaining emotional aspects of film viewing)." *Narration*, 30

[181] Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "How films mean, or, from aesthetics to semiotics and half-way back again", in *Reinventing Film Studies*, 8-17, 13

[182] Ibid, 14

Noting further that this theory is hamstrung by the intellectualization of the spectating process, he notes that Bordwell's "rational agents" act as ideal consumers in the market place who optimize their choice by testing various alternatives. However, since there is more to cinema than a mere optimization of one's choices, Nowell-Smith notes that cognitive film theory is deficient as an aesthetic theory:

> *Finding meaning* has become an academic exercise in both good and bad senses of the phrase…films *mean*. But they do not just mean. Because they can be described with the aid of language, we can be led to think that description can substitute for the film. This is the perennial temptation of what I have called the linguistic analogy. But films also work…as painting or music does…partly in ways that have linguistic equivalence and partly in ways that do not.[183]

With intellectualization as its basis, where "concepts" or "words" generate meaning, cognitive film theory has no place either for *the body* or the film sensations that it generates as well. Arguably, it is concept-laden positions like these which make Deleuze revolt in the course of his theorization of *movement-images* and *time-images*: how can one possibly explain in linguistic terms such phenomena as movements and affects in cinema?

While castigating the intellectualization of the theory in no uncertain terms, Bill Nichols notes its other perverse socio-political consequences:

> Analytic philosophy and cognitive psychology cling to the same assumptions of abstract rationality and democratic equality that leads to a politics of consensus (based on a denial of bodily, material difference) and the repression of a politics of identity…Cognitive psychology and analytic philosophy, in fact, themselves exemplify a conceptual framework radically incommensurate with a politics of multiculturalism and social representation.[184]

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[183] Nowell-Smith, "How films mean", 16, original emphasis

[184] Bill Nichols, "Film Theory and the Revolt against Master Narratives", in *Reinventing Film Studies*, 34 – 52, 41

One would like to sum up theoretical developments taking place in film discourse since the '50s. Since the notion of a *disembodied vision* – a kind of vision that 'refuses' to acknowledge that the body has an important role to play in one's engagement with reality - ultimately underlies the notion of monocular perspective, it is necessary to understand its anti-sensuous nature here. In the field of painting, the Renaissance perspective involves a monocular viewing process first constructed by Alberti based on the idea that light rays travel in straight lines to the retina of the eye, forming an inverted visual pyramid of the source there. A cross-section of this view can, then, be converted into a picture plane that permits objects to be drawn in terms of pre-determined spatial calculations in relation to human beings' normal vision. Since the human retina is, however, curved, Leonardo subsequently incorporated foreshortening in all three dimensions of the picture plane. Together these ideas make the visible space of an artwork not only *static* but also *quantifiable* in a mathematical sense. Bordwell notes its consequences:

> With scientific perspective, the painting represented the spectator as a single eye, literally a point of view. *What scientific perspective creates, then, is not only an imaginary scene but a fixed, imaginary witness.*'[185]

He goes onto explain what the process does in terms of cinematic space:

> We witness the birth of a theatrical scenography of painting. *Space is autonomous*, a grid or checkerboard or stage preexisting any arrangement of objects upon it…in the Albertian perspective, the scene exists as a three-dimensional event staged for a spectator whose eye is the picture's point of intelligibility but whose place is closed off from the event witnessed.[186]

This process represents the disembodied and fixed Renaissance eye which underlies psychoanalytic film theory's notion of the "mastering gaze" of voyeurism in cinema. Standing in opposition to the body and the resulting sensations, it presumes a distanced, de-corporealized, monocular eye which masters all that it surveys without getting

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[185] Bordwell, *Narration*, 5, original emphasis
[186] Ibid

physically involved in its vision.[187] Linda Williams quotes Christian Metz's striking description of the disembodied nature of this vision: "spectator-fish taking in everything with their eyes, nothing with their *bodies*: the institution of the cinema requires a silent, motionless spectator, a *vacant* spectator".[188] Vivian Sobchack informs that in the film theories thereafter, the notion of this "mastering gaze" and the view which it encloses becomes the explanatory model for analyzing film spaces in cinema.[189] Naturally, in this disembodied schema of the mastering gaze, the sense of embodiment that film sensations generate is ideologically debarred from entry!

Rediscovering Film Sensations in *Early Cinema*

While theorizing *Early Cinema* during the '80s, André Gaudreault and Tom Gunning revive ideas of film sensuality enshrined in Eisenstein's notion of "film attractions". In the course of their research, they find that, at least till 1906, cinema predominantly performed in the *mode of exhibition* which foregrounds sensual experiences that disrupt a film's narrative line, its primary aim being to generate shock and awe among the audiences. This contrasts with the *mode of narration* progressively adopted since 1906 where all pro-filmic elements are generally integrated within a cohesive and causal narrative structure.[190] By re-defining "attraction" as being "dedicated to presenting discontinuous visual attractions, moments of spectacle rather than narrative",[191] Gunning says that, in contrast to the voyeuristic aspects of narrative cinema which wants to *tell* something to the audiences, *cinema of attractions* wants to *show* something to them.[192] He elaborates his stand by saying that while *Actuality Films* personify exhibitionist

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[187] Linda Williams quoted in Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2004): 59

[188] Christian Metz quoted in Linda Williams, "Introduction", in *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film*, Ed. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers, 1997): 1-20, 2, original emphasis

[189] Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts*, 59

[190] André Gaudreault and Tom Gunning, "Le Cinéma des Premiers Temps: Un Défi à L'Histoire du Cinéma", in *Histoire du Cinéma: Nouvelles Approaches,* Eds. Jacques Aumont, André Gaudreault, and Michel Marie (Paris: Sorbonne, 1989): 49-63, subsequently translated for the first time as "Early Cinema as a Challenge to Film History" in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, 365-380, 370

[191] Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde", in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, 384; definition of "attractions" given by Tom Gunning in *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, Ed. Richard Abel (London: Routledge, 2005): 124

[192] Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions", 384

cinema, even non-actuality films of this period exhibit similar tendencies.[193] In this context, Gunning quotes Méliès as follows: "I can state that the scenario constructed in this manner has *no* importance, since I use it merely as a pretext for the 'stage effects', the 'tricks', or for a nicely arranged tableau".[194] More importantly, however, like Eisenstein, Gunning also mentions that "attractions" exhibited by film sensuality and film narratives aren't fundamentally opposed to each other:

> Although different from the storytelling exploited by the cinema from the time of Griffith, it is not necessarily opposed to it. In fact, the *cinema of attraction* doesn't disappear with the dominance of the narrative, but rather goes underground, both in certain avant-garde practices and as a component of narrative films, more evident in some genres (e.g. the musical) than in others.[195]

However, the existing film discourse, with its pronounced bias towards film theories that generally shun the body and its associated film sensations, had remained oblivious to this development until recently.

In sum, the occurrence of film sensuality may be mapped along a sliding scale constituting three basic forces in cinema: film sensations that 'disrupt' the narrative, like non-integrated song and dance sequences in Indian commercial cinema; sensations that are in 'excess' of the narrative, like scenes depicting gory violence in 'excess' of the narrative requirement as in Hollywood cinema; and sensations that are fully 'integrated' with the narrative, like Chaplin's walk in his films. Despite their various forms, film sensations invariably occur as pure forms of sensual energy in cinema which film theories utterly fail to engage with.

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[193] Since Lumière films generally represent documentary footages, they are called "actuality films" which are often contrasted with the "non-actuality films" of Méliès
[194] Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions", 384, original emphasis
[195] Ibid

Limitation of Film Histories and Film Studies

Absence of Film Sensations

When one asks film history how it relates to film sensations, one comes up with the same disappointing answer: they form no part of their discussion. This situation becomes understandable when one considers that film histories have invariably been influenced by the dominant film theory or the theories predominant in its time. Since narrative cinema had become the center of analysis in film theories since the late '50s, the time when significant film histories start being written, they have generally been engaged in presenting 'evolutionary' accounts of how film narration come to be 'perfected' in cinema. Expectedly film sensuality finds no place in such historic accounts. In their critique, Gaudreault and Gunning point out how film histories ultimately become a catalogue of various techniques and technologies of the filmmaking process which are progressively moving towards an ever greater realization of the narrative potential of cinema. The authors argue that these historians assume that an *ideal* "film language" for narrative cinema already *exist* the "codes" of which only need to be 'discovered' one by one for the institution of cinema to realize its full potential.[196]

The emergence of Griffith as the 'code' manufacturer *par excellence* of narrative cinema generally occurs as the starting point for these histories of cinema. Under this spell, these historians brand *Early Cinema*, which, in its early phase, professed an exhibitionist mode generally subversive of the narrative, as "primitive cinema".[197] However, Gaudrault and Gunning note that since the category formation for *Early Cinema* hadn't yet happened, how could these historians lump the whole body of *Early Cinema* together and brand it "primitive" cinema as a whole? Even though, there have been other histories of cinema, like the history of the evolution of film technologies, like 3-D, etc, historians have generally focused on the fact how technological developments bring narratives ever closer to optimization in cinema. Despite his championing of realism in cinema, this happens even in the case of such a perceptive film critic as Bazin. Luca notes:

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[196] Gaudreault and Gunning, "Early Cinema as a Challenge to Film History", 370
[197] Ibid

Bazin's thought is traditionally associated with the long take, yet his defense is only tangential to it…the sequence shot in Bazinian terms is the direct consequence of another technique – depth of field – which, as Wollen notes, is in turn subordinated to dramaturgic efficiency. For example, expounding on William Wyler's *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1948), Bazin justifies its lengthy shots with the fact that they are "necessary to convey the narrative clearly".[198]

In this context, based on the Russian Formalist Tynianov's theory, Gaudreault and Gunning argue in favor of setting up a new criterion of writing film history where substitution of one system by another would be based on the changes in the formal functions that particular film elements are called upon to perform in particular systems, 'evolution' ultimately meaning a "substitution" of systems.[199] Thus, if cinema is required to generate wonderment and awe among the audiences through spectacular showings, it would be one kind of cinema while narrative story-telling would call forth another kind of cinema. Under the circumstances, a close-up or a mid-shot in *Early Cinema* and a close-up or a mid-shot in narrative cinema would have two completely different functions.[200] For example, the function of the mid-shot used in Edwin Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) is entirely different from the function of a mid-shot used in contemporary cinema. In Porter's film, it is used as a means of *monstration*, i.e. showing an "attraction" to the audiences. There is nothing "primitive" about this particular use at the time.[201] In this context, these authors emphasize that while there is 'progression' in the modes of cinema, there is necessarily no 'progress' which stipulates that cinema should 'naturally' evolves to the stage of film narration from a stage of "film attraction".[202] Clearly, a new film history needs to be written which would especially keep in view the functions that cinema is called upon to perform in different

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[198] Tiago Magalhães de Luca, *Realism of the Senses*, 21; quotes are from Peter Wollen, "Citizen Kane", *Orson Welles's Citizen Kane: A Casebook*, Ed. James Naremore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 252, and from Bazin, *Bazin at Work: Major Essays from the Forties and Fifties*, Ed. Bert Cardullo, Paperback (London: Routledge, 1991): 11
[199] Gaudreault and Gunning, "Early Cinema as a Challenge to Film History", 372, emphasis added
[200] Ibid, 376
[201] "Monstration" is a term primarily used by Gaudreault in "Early Cinema as a Challenge to Film History"
[202] Mitry quoted in Gaudreault and Gunning, "Early Cinema", 371

circumstances for its audiences. It is expected that such an account would do full justice to the role film sensuality has played in the history of cinema!

As far as film studies is concerned, it is increasingly being felt that the existing discourse involving disembodied, culture-neutral theories and ideas, have resulted in a biased one-sided view of cinema. Gledhill and Williams advocate a reinvention of film studies as follows:

> Film studies' suspicion of the mass-ness of cinema rested to a large degree on the perception of dominance – by ideology, by complicit formal structures, by an underlying psychic substructure to which all differences would be reduced. Dominance locked film studies into an unproductive binarism of progressive versus reactionary text. The political point of analysis was to separate the progressive from the ideologically contaminated or the retrogressively nostalgic.[203]

In this context, Gledhill and Williams recommend the inclusion of the body as a key factor in reformulating film studies:

> Reinsertion of the body and the affective into film re-conceives the social, cultural, and aesthetic as equally significant but distinct factors, mutually determining but not reducible to one another.[204]

However, to make a largely "passive" body "active" again, a major reconfiguration is required. This is where significant insights from body-centric theories discussed below can provide an alternative framework, which, even if "piece-meal" for the time being, can help us deepen our understanding of cinema in radically new ways.

New Possibilities: Presenting "Piecemeal" Theories

It is interesting to note that foregrounding of film sensuality during the early phase of *Early Cinema* during the period 1895-1906 and the latest phase of commercial blockbusters in the late 20th and early 21st century show remarkable affinity with Tom

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[203] Gledhill and Williams, "Introduction", in *Reinventing Film Studies*, 1-4, 2
[204] Ibid, 2

Gunning saying: "the two ends of the twentieth-century hail each other like long lost twins"![205] In the same vein, Vivian Sobchack notes:

> Certainly, the "cinema of narrative integration" that superceeded (by subtending and subordinating) the historical "cinema of attractions" has largely disintegrated. The plots and stories of most popular feature films today have become pretexts or alibis for a series of autonomous and spectacularly kinetic "monstrations" of various kinds of thrilling sequences and apparatical special effects – elements that characterized the early cinema of attractions.[206]

There is no doubt that a striking recurrence and continuity of film sensuality is happening all over the world today! Much more seems to be at stake here than merely shock values that sensuality originally packed for the early film audiences. Embodiment, which is the missing link of film theories discussed so far, appear to form an important plank for understanding the new significations generated by cinema. In this context, two promising lines of research have opened. One of them is based on the audiences' phenomenological response to cinema based on Merleau-Ponty's notion of *existential phenomenology*, which is being pursued by contemporary film researchers, like Vivian Sobchack, Laura Marks, Jennifer Barker and others.[207] The other line examines the applicability of classical Indian theory of Nyāya to cinema, which not only anticipates but also significantly exceeds many of the phenomenological principles visualized by Merleau-Ponty. Both these processes, which foreground the role of *the body* in generating cognitions and their attendant emotions and affects among the audiences, hint at new possibilities of understanding cinema at a much deeper level than it has happened so far.

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[205] Gunning, "Re-Newing Old Technologies: Astonishment, Second Nature, and the Uncanny in Technology from the Previous Turn-of-the-Century", in *Rethinking Media Change*: *The Aesthetics of Transition*, Eds. David Thornburn and Henry Jenkins (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004): 39-60, 51

[206] Sobchack, "'Cutting to the Quick': *Techne, Physis,* and *Poiesis* and the Attractions of Slow Motion", in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, 337-351, 339

[207] Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye* and *Carnal Thoughts*; Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film* and *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Jennifer M. Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009)

Phenomenology

While the influence of phenomenology on cinema will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter 2, the basic idea of why phenomenology is at all important for cinema is briefly explained here. Western thought is still largely dominated by Cartesian duality which, while separating mind from the body, makes the former the seat of all experiences and understanding.[208] Since such reasoning mostly works on the basis of mental concepts, emotions and affects occur merely as their side-effects in the Cartesian system.[209] Called the "theory of ideas", it works on the scientific notion that raw stimuli, received through various sense organs, are synthesized into ideas or concepts by one's mind which makes them 'meaningful' for the human organisms. One of the reasons for which Descartes distrusted the body is that it generates false representations of their referents, like the perception of diminished height of a person at a distance. In contrast, mental idea of the person suffers no such distortions.

The phenomenologists, however, radically differ from this scientific "theory of ideas". Maurice Merleau-Ponty holds that, rather than the mind, it is the *lived body* of a person that generates primary meanings of the world for him or her. In disputing Descartes, he holds that "there is no ego, transcendental or otherwise, standing behind it [the body] as a more fundamental subject" generating "meanings" for us.[210] Rather, being always enclosed within their bodies, human beings experience the world invariably from a particular perspective as being "close", "far", "to the left", "to the right", etc, representations which determine their specific responses to the world. Merleau-Ponty further points out that the perception of a box lying on the table doesn't depend on isolated bits of data being synthesized by the mind, but is based on human being's bodily memory of such sensations, a process in which the body not only presents the box's position on the table, but also the knowledge of its heaviness, coolness, etc to the perceiver. If the box is not made of steel but of wood or glass, appropriate changes in its

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[208] For one of the most penetrating discussion on this still dominant influence in Western thought, see David Ray Griffin, *Unsnarling the World-Knot: Consciousness, Freedom and the Mind-Body Problem* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998)

[209] Galileo had separated "quantity" from Aristotle's "quality" which involved human emotions and Feelings, like love, hate, etc, declaring that, henceforth, "qualities" would be banished from science!

[210] Walter Hopp, "Perception", in *The Routledge Companion to Phenomenology*, Eds. Sebastian Luft and Søren Overgaard (Oxon: Routledge, 2012): 146-157, 152

tactility would become noticeable to the body *directly* and *immediately*.[211] This bodily knowledge is best revealed in our motor intentionality or motility manifest in our skillful activities, like noticing, walking, reading, typing, etc, in which one doesn't consciously think of what to do next, but *the body* responds automatically. In fact, if a person becomes too intellectually conscious of a habitual act, it starts interfering with her performance. In other words, experiential knowledge of the world is already within our bodies.[212] In this sense, for Merleau-Ponty, one generally learns skills based first on his/her corporeality, and only then intellectually, which makes it incumbent for him/her to be aware of the body's possibilities and limitations, every perceived object having a particular motor significance for human beings. Hopp notes:

> Being skilled in the use of a cane does not involve interpreting sensations of pressure on one's hands, but in perceiving *with* the stick. With this skill, the perceived world expands. 'Once the stick has become a familiar instrument, the world of feeble things recedes and now begins, not at the outer skin of the hand, but at the end of the stick'.[213]

What Merleau-Ponty is trying to say is that the material body is endowed with an inherent power to discrimate other material entities. In the above context, the phenomenological notion of the intentionality of consciousness and orientation of one's body vis-à-vis other material bodies becomes extremely important. For example, when our body intends to move towards an object, it already knows what to expect and under what circumstances. Mohanty notes:

> As one's hand moves to grasp a tumbler of water, it is *not* that there is first a thought about raising and stretching one's arm and then this thought causes a mechanical bodily motion. It is the bodily movement that directs itself towards the object, and this movement has its own *sui generis* intentionality.[214]

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[211] Hopp, "Perception", 153

[212] Ibid, 152

[213] Ibid, 152; quotes from Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Trans. C. Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962): 175-76

[214] Mohanty, "Intentionality", in *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*, 68–77, 75

This point is clarified by Sobchack in the context of cinema: "film experience is that cinematic 'language' [which] is grounded in the more original pragmatic language of embodied existence whose general structures are common to the filmmaker, the film, and the viewer".[215]

In the above sense, phenomenological experience involves an evolutionary mode, where a particular aspect of the world, as and when incorporated in one's bodily experiences, becomes part of his or her expanded mode of perception. Clearly, this notion has tremendous implications for an image-saturated world: as we become more and more skilled in responding to audio-visual images, it tends to become incorporated as part of our body-language, which, in turn, influences our understanding of the world. The job of phenomenological research into cinema, then, becomes the unearthing of the "body language" operating both within cinema and among the audiences without which nothing would become intelligible to them. Mertens notes:

> The most important idea in Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's revision of the phenomenological account of subjectivity is the idea that the fundamental character of our existence is not found in the theoretical and cognitive capacities of a rational being, but rather in our capacities as essentially practically interested and engaged subjects or existences.[216]

In sum, what phenomenology makes clear is the fact that the viewer's body generates a richer and more fundamental experience for the audiences at a fundamental level of their existence than a disembodied experience of the mind that film discourse has been advocating so far. These aspects will be elaborated in chapter 2.

Classical Indian Theories

Since there has been no systematic effort at applying classical Indian theories to cinema, it is necessary that specific areas are identified in which these theories can prove to be useful in analyzing cinema. In the present work, the areas identified by me are as follows: analyzing Nyāya theory of perception as forming the cognitive basis for what one

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[215] Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye*, 20
[216] Karl Mertens, "The Subject and the Self", in *The Routledge Companion*, 168-79, 176-77

perceives on the stage or on screen and the roles that audience embodiment and their socio-cultural practices play in constructing it; taking Nyāya perceptual level as the basis, constructing Bharata's theory of *rasa* or aesthetic pleasure which analyzes various levels of *identification* that the audiences have with an artwork together with the evocation of their corresponding *affective states* among them which enable them to *relive* the scenes both in terms of their intellect and their bodies; and, finally, taking Bharata's theory as the basis, developing Ānandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* or aesthetic suggestion as the basis for generating suggestions that bring to the surface unexpressed experiences of human beings which not only generate various aesthetic experience among the audiences but also restores them their 'lost' subjectivity, the latter function considered to be the highest function of art in Indian theories.

In classical Indian thought, conceptual understanding has been classified as "six ways of knowing" consisting of perception, inference, word, comparison, postulation, and absence.[217] While these "six ways" have the primary task of narrowing down and pinpointing 'meaning' for human beings which is expectd to help them reach certitude in their interactions with the world, Indian aesthetes soon realized that, in the artistic processes, cognition of a thing or an object has an expansive mode of understanding which goes beyond its immediate utilitarian values. In this sense, in artworks, the cognitive process necessarily goes in the opposite direction than the practical way, i.e. their main purpose is to broaden the scope of human experiences in the world rather than limiting them to pinpointed 'scientific' accuracy. In this connection, Indian aesthetic principles are based on the operation of certain concentric circles of meaning generation, each contained within the next bigger circle, operating within artworks:

i) Living organisms as models of growth, decay, and renewal act as the basic motif in Indian arts;

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[217] Not all classical Indian theories subscribe to all of them; "six ways" represent the maximum range of the "ways of knowing" prescribed in Indian thought; some of these "ways" are considered to be identical to certain other processes and accordingly merged in some of the theories, like Nyāya merges "postulation" with "inference", etc

ii) Though space, time, and movement operate as linear progressions within Indian arts, they are invariably circumscribed within the regenerative model of a living organism represented by a cycle;

iii) The whole operation is further circumscribed within an overarching equivalence between the inner drives operating within a microcosm and those occurring in the macrocosm with the principles of growth, decay, and renewal in the microcosm in being a mirror reproduction of the principle of evolution, existence, and involution operating in the macrocosm.

In the Western artistic tradition, space and time is singular, viz. it exists in one plane alone, is linear, and is continuous, the same model manifesting in both sequential and simultaneous occurrences. In this progression, time occurs in each moment as a loop through which the past and the future can be perceived as representing a linear and continuous chain representing causal change. In this schema, each moment acts like a moment of "becoming" where a particular space-time moment in a linear chain remains empty till it is filled by an unfolding action. In this sense, the space-time moments represent separable moments which, when linked up causally, form a continuos chain.

In contrast, the best way to understand classical Indian thought is in terms of the functioning of a living organism. The Indian artists do not conceive immaterial passing moments, but identify the *pivotal point* of a living organism which is its 'navel' (*nābhi*) in terms of which the passing moments act as a unity representing the process of renewal, growth and decay of whole system. The Indian system holds the navel to be the centre from which such developments occur both horizontally and vertically.

Thus, a tree cyclically sheds old leaves and sprouts new ones, grows horizontally in terms of its trunk and expands vertically in terms of its branches, all of which are not only circumscribed within the cyclical limits prescribed by the growth, decay, and renewal of this microcosmic organism, but is also further circumscribed within a model of evolution, existence, and involution of the whole macrocosm or the universe conceived

by the orthodox Indian theories or the Hindu theories.[218] Since, in the above sense, the centre of the wheel signifies the point where action is potentiality concentrated and from where it springs into manifest action, it is conceived as the seed (*bīja*) from which all actions sprout.[219] Vatsyayana mentions:

> The chariot wheel (*cakra*) is the term of reference for power and movement in the Buddhist and Hindu conceptions. It denotes order (*ṛta*), [both] spatial and temporal, and symbolizes the ceaseless movement of time in *cyclicity*. The centre holds the circumference and vice versa.[220]

The center ultimately represents the conjunction of two potential forces, the *static force of being* and the *dynamic force of becoming* contained within a dimensionless point (*bindu*, 'drop') that eventually "spreads and flows".

In the above sense, the Indian process may be said to represent the *systems view of an event* where a *moment* remains much more loaded than the representation of an empty moment operating in a conveyor-belt system. While depicting a figure, the Indian artist, thus, abstracts the pivotal static state from its concrete flow of motions. The depiction of the *Naṭarāja* as the dancing figure of Lord *Śiva* signifies such a static center in midst of creativity. Dasgupta notes:

> It may be remembered that, according to Indian mythology, the whole universe was regarded as having emanated from the rhythmic dance of Lord Narayana on the waves of the great ocean at the beginning of creation. Thus, the movement of dance in itself represents the rhythmic motion leading to creation and the opposite rhythm of dissolution. From this point of view, the whole universe may be regarded as congealed or sliced off states of motion.[221]

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[218] Kapila Vatsyayana, "Metaphors of the Indian Arts", in *Indian Art: Forms, Concerns and Development in Historical Perspective*, VI Part 3, Ed. B. N. Goswami in association with Kavita Singh, in the series *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, Gen. Ed. D. P. Chattopadhyaya, Reprint (New Delhi: Centre for Studies in Civilizations, 2005): 247-77; specially see her portion on "Navel"
[219] Ibid, 258
[220] Ibid, 248
[221] S. N. Dasgupta, *Fundamentals of Indian Art*, 2nd ed. (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, 1960): 71-2, modified

Bharata's theory of drama represents the above artistic process where the sequence of actions (*itivṛtta*, 'thus it happened', loosely translated as 'plot') has been conceived in concentric circles of expanding cyclicality. The above idea, which generates the notion of being present at all instants simultaneously rather than sequentially, leads to the Indian view of *modularity*, in which, at each moment, elements relating to past and future keep impinging on the present. It is no wonder that, in both the Indian epics of *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, the future is foretold at the very beginning of these narrations signifying that each present moment is not only loaded with the knowledge of what has gone before but also with the knowledge of what is to come in future. It leads to one of the most abiding articles of faith in Indian thought: *action recoiling upon itself*. Richard Lannoy notes:

> The "continuous narrative" of the Ajanta frescos is cyclical and non-sequential. Similarly, the dramatized structure of a Sanskrit play is cyclical. Various devices are used, such as the dream, the trance, the premonition, and the flashback, to disrupt the linearity of time which enables *action to recoil upon itself*.[222]

One may cite Indian classical music as an example which has a modular structure where an unmoving center signifying the seed (*bīja*) manifests in the form of a drop (*bindu*) from where developments start. The center of this compositional system is the navel (*nābhi*) from which cyclical 'growth' and 'dissolution' follow in the form of a wheel (*cakra*) within a fixed circumference (*vṛtta*). Within the limits set by the frame, there are near infinite possibilities of permutations and combinations allowed to the musician as long as s/he comes back to the center from time to time. This is similar to the basic designs (*yantras*) followed by Indian architecture and sculpture, as well as in Bharata's theory of drama.[223] This concept of freedom within a fixed form is unique to the Indian artistic tradition.

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[222] Richard Lannoy, *The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), modified, emphasis added
[223] Vatsyayana, "Metaphors of the Indian Arts", 276

In this context, highlighting the significance of the straight line and the circle in Indian arts, Alice Boner makes the following perceptive comments on the compositional principles underlying Indian artworks:

> A given space or surface may be divided and subdivided indefinitiely by straight lines without ever becoming an organic whole. But as soon as a point is placed in the center of a given space or surface, the amorphous extension becomes transformed into an organized structure. The center is a point of reference towards which all parts converge, and, therefore, the whole structure becomes "concentrated".[224]

Noting that "the substratum of these compositions is a circular field around a central point" which acts as the source for all emanations,[225] she notes how the above structure creates a composition which is analogous to an organic whole:

> The existence of the center creates a hierarchy of values, in which the parts cease to be equivalent and assume different weights and importance…Between the center and the outer parts, between the interior and the exterior, there is a polarity that creates tension as well as organic coalescence. The center is the source and fountainhead of this organic whole and the position of all outer parts are determined with reference to the center.[226]

Since, according to Boner, elements in Indian arts invariably tend towards full development and fulfillment, she notes that while a straight line has the potential for an infinite linear extension, curved lines gather them into contained forces:

> Every curve is part of a circle and has the tendency to close into a full circle. In plastic representations, such a curve collects and rounds up movements and,

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[224] Alice Boner, "Introduction", in *Principles of Composition in Hindu Sculpture: Cave Temple Period* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990): 1-50, 18
[225] Ibid
[226] Ibid

thereby, creates an element of rest without stress. It gathers up movements as a pool gathers up the inflowing waters.[227]

Noting that, in the above sense, the circle is always the fundamental determining factor of Indian arts, she says:

> Between the center and the circumference of the circle, there is the indissoluble cohesion of polarity from which nothing can escape. The movements thrown out by the center are collected by the circumference and reversed towards the center, or, an unending movement may arise and flow around the circumference.[228]

In comparing the compositional principles of Western and Indian sculptures, she notes the uniquenesss of the Indian principle thus: "None of the other methods of composition, except for the Gothic to an extent, is concentric space organization of such primary and exclusive consideration".[229]

The Indian aesthetic concept signifies the tension harbored in the potentiality of an organism striving for expression which is confronted with the tension born of binary opposites in perennial conflict with each other in a mechanical system. Dasgupta describes the basis of Indian arts as follows:

> In India, man is regarded as part of nature. If man is a part of nature, like a flower in a creeper or the green foliage of the trees, the spirit of both must be so realized that one may not be in conflict with the other.[230]

Doniger O'Flaherty clarifies the above basis as follows:

> One must avoid seeing a contradiction or paradox where the Hindu merely sees an opposition in the Indian sense – *correlative opposites* that act as interchangeable identities in essential relationships.[231]

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[227] Boner, "Introduction", 45-6, modified
[228] Ibid, 50, modified
[229] Ibid, 9-10
[230] Dasgupta, *Fundamentals of Indian Art*, 20-1, modified
[231] Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Śiva: The Erotic Ascetic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973): 35, original emphasis

She notes that the contrast between the erotic and the ascetic tradition in the character of *Śiva* is not the kind of "conjunction of opposites" with which it is generally confused. Desire (*kāma*) and Asceticism (*tapas*) are not diametrically opposed to each other like black and white; rather, they are like two forms of heat where *tapas* is the heat of destruction and *kāma* is the desire for creation.[232] The Soviet Sculptor Ernst Neizvestny's following description ideally fits the process followed by the Indian artists:

> Two sculptors are carving a sphere out of stone. One of them wants to achieve the most perfect form of a sphere. The other wants to convey the inner tension of the sphere filled to the bursting point. The first will be the work of a craftsman, the second that of an artist.[233]

The above idea of man as a harmonious part of nature rather than struggling with it for domination follows from the Vedic principle of an equivalence of the principles operating with a microcosm and macrocosm, symbolized in the 'great saying' (*mahāvākya*) of "you are that" (*tat twam asi*), signaling that the inner principle which drives the self (*atmā*) is similar to the inner principle that drives the cosmos (*Brahmana*). Boner notes that Indian compositions may be considered as cosmic symbols where the center or the *bindu* represents the *Brahman*, the surrounding circle its manifestation and the space within the circle its field (*kṣetra*) of action.[234] These thoughts have significant implications for all artworks including cinema.

In sum, only certain brief ideas have been given above about the way embodied principles work in phenomenology and classical Indian theories and what happens when they are applied to the field of arts. While the phenomenological principles of Merleau-Ponty are extensively being applied to artworks, particularly cinema, in the West, the application of classical Indian theories to art-forms including cinema is still largely unknown to the existing academic discourse in general and film discourse in particular. A redressal has been attempted in the ensuing chapters.

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232 O'Flaherty, *Śiva*, 35

233 Ernst Neizvestny, unknown quote

234 Boner, *Principles of Composition*, 29-30

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Chapter 2

Cinema and Embodiment
Merleau-Ponty's Theory of *Existential Phenomenology*

Philosophy consists in restoring a power to signify, a birth of meaning, *a wild meaning*, *an expression of an experience by an experience*...the *voice of no one*, since it is the *voice of things, the waves, the forests…*

------- Maurice Merleau-Ponty

This chapter moves from the phenomenological theories of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger to Merleau-Ponty's theory of existential phenomenology, the latter implying that human beings' embodied experiences of the world form the underlying basis for the formation of all cognitive and signifying systems in this world. Merleau-Ponty calls this "an expression of experience by experience"[235] which signifies that understanding of the world is formed on the basis of *lived* experiences of the world to which the human body had adapted over millenniums. Since these expressions remain internalized within the body, they are understood by all human bodies. In this sense, bodily expressions form a rich language informing human beings of their interactions with the material world. However, since this 'language' has not yet been formalized, it has remained below the threshold of human 'knowledge'. Merleau-Ponty departs from Husserl and Heidegger to hold that *the body* is the center of all human experiences and hence forms the underlying basis for all human cognitions of the world. By seeking to reverse the Cartesian privileging of mind over the body, phenomenological thought in general and Merleau-Ponty in particular demarcates a new analytical model of understanding phenomena which is likely to have a profound influence on the way we theorize about cinema.

Phenomenology is a study of the world as experienced by human beings living in the world. The theoretical component of this development evolved in three stages. Husserl held that, in contrast to the Cartesian notion of a transparent transcendental intelligence which 'understood' what it came in 'touch' with on the basis of

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[235] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Trans. Alphonso Lingis, Ed. Claude Lefort (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968): 155

internalization of the lived experiences of the world, the departure from the concept of Cartesian "mind" involving "transparent intelligence" to Kantian "consciousness" involving "categories of understanding" to Husserlian "consciousness" which includes "categories of lived experience" has been quite remarkable in Western thought. In place of Kantian *à priori* "categories of understanding", Husserl notes that human consciousness carries *à priori* embodied components, called structural archetypes or *eidos*, on the basis of human beings 'understand', like filling up the third dimension to form 'objects' and 'things' in perception where physically only two dimensions can be perceived. Heidegger holds that, since human beings have learnt to interact with the world through the 'tools' they have manufactured for the purpose, these 'tools' become exteneded parts of human interactions, making human beings *tool-wielding social agents* of the world. Merleau-Ponty literally dispenses with the notion of the human "consciousness" by holding it it merely the 'effect' of the body's interactions with the world which remains stored as the body memory. In other words, he replaces "ego" underlying Husserl and Heidegger's theories to hold that the 'human body", by virtue of having internalized all the *lived experiences* of the world, is the sole cognitive instrument and agency of the world.

While Part 1 discusses the above phenomenological journey, ending up with a summing up of its serious implications for human pursuit of "knowledge" noted by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Part 2 discusses phenomenology's application to cinema by contemporary film theoreticians like Vivian Sobchack, Laura Marks and others.

llustration 1: The Phenomenolgical Concepts

Subjective-Objective Experiential Mode – Human beings neither experience the world in objective materiality independent of them as "science" holds nor through a subjective imposition of "Categories of Understanding" on the world as Kant holds, but as a *subjectively experienced world in terms of human beings' embodied and socio-cultural practices of life*.

Edmund Husserl

Intentional Consciousness: Certain repetitive experiences of human experiences of the world are internalized in "consciousness" as archetypal forms or structures (*eidos*) which creates our *normal* experiences of the world in perception called "horizon of expectations". In this sense, human "consciousness" is *intentional* in nature:

1. **Perceiving an "Object": A 3-Dimensional *Intentional* Construction**

   By applying three-dimensional structural pieces or "eidos" to sense "Particulars", Human Consciousness *intends* to complete an "Object" in one's Perception.

2. **Perceiving "Relation between Objects":** *Motivational Causality*

   Intentional Consciousness generates a Relationship of Mutual Dependence between "Objects" in terms of Human Beings' Subjective Experiences of Living-in-the-World.

Martin Heidegger

Dasein: In the course of human beings' experiences of the world, they have become Tool-Wielding Social Agents of the World. *Dasein* signifies *being-in-the-world* which represents all human relations with the world. *Dasein* is thus not only *intentional* but also *inter-subjective* in nature, circumscribed by human beings' "Totalities of Relevance" in a Socio-Cultural World.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Intentionality of the Body: Merleau-Ponty replaces Intentional Consciousness with *Bodily Intentionality* which forms an "Intentional Arc" that forms the basis for *Inter-Subjectivity* among human beings. It leads to the following sense experiences:

a) Vision and touch sensations are equivalent in referring to the same material zone of experiences which generates a *Synesthetic Experience* among Human Beings.

b) Subjective-objective alterations in human communication are internalized by the Body called the *Chiasm*

Part 1

The Phenomenological Journey from Husserl to Merleau-Ponty

Since the word "phenomenology" has a confused existence in history, it has resulted in a plethora of meanings, like "description of appearances", "subjectivity of consciousness", "descriptive psychology", "objective correlates of subjectivity", "experiential aspects of living in the world", etc.[236] With its roots traceable to Plato and Aristotle, it is evident that there is an "openness and indefiniteness of the term 'phenomenology' in its historical use".[237] Broadly speaking, its early phase till Merleau-Ponty may be said to deal with the *science of consciousness which has internalized certain archetypal lived experiences of the world by human beings*.[238] In other words, this phase of phenomenology, from Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) to Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), becomes a study of human beings' *lived* experiences of the world which condition their "consciousness",[239] ultimately conceived as merely being an effect of *the body*.

Phenomenology's Departure from the Objective Mode of Analysis

In Western thought, till Kant (1724-1804), reality was generally dealt with as an objective factor independent of human existence. Sinari notes:

> The most basic assumption of science is that objective knowledge is the only valid knowledge, for it is definitive, exact, unambiguous, and mathematically computable…in order to know phenomenon reliably, it must be reached objectively, i.e. it must be posited by mind outside itself.[240]

In his *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant, for the first time in Western thought, argues that an understanding of the world is reached only on the basis of certain *à priori*

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[236] See Karl Schuhmann, "'PHENOMENOLOGY': A reflection on the history of the term", in *The Routledge Companion to Phenomenology*, Eds. Sebastian Luft and Søren Overgaard (London: Routledge, 2012): 657-88

[237] Ibid, 659

[238] Ibid, 663

[239] Ibid, 670

[240] Ramakant Sinari, "The Real and the Constructed: Śaṇkara and Husserl", *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, XXIX No. 2 & 3 (2002): 277-89, 278

"categories of understanding" *given* in human "consciousness".[241] Thus, human beings experience the world in a subjective way (*phenomena*) by imposing "categories" imposed on reality, a process which forever debars them from knowing things-in-themselves (*noumena*). For Kant, the process signifies an epistemic enclosure marking the limits of human understanding:

> An object within consciousness…as distinguished from a thing in itself, must receive its character not from anything lying beyond the circle of consciousness, but from something within consciousness itself.[242]

Kant questions the foundations of classical epistemology of Descartes (1596-1650), which has even permeated scientific thoughts of our times, that holds that "objects" exist "out there" independent of human consciousness of them which, however, are capable of being known by them *objectively* by applying "thoughts" and "ideas" to them by a transparent human intelligence called "the mind". Kant essentially reverses this model by advocating what may be called a *subjective-objective mode of enquiry* which doesn't deny reality to be "out there", but denies the possibility of it ever being understood in its absolute objective terms. Husserl, who first undertook a systematic and rigorous exposition of the phenomenological method in his voluminous writings starting with *Philosophy of Arithmetic* ([1891], 2003), signaled a further shift along the subjective line of thought by replacing Kant's *à priori* "categories of understanding" with what may be called "categories of archetypal experiences" that are internalized by human "consciousness" that determine human perception of reality.

Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology

The following sections illustrate Husserl's notion of the formation of "objects" and "relation between objects" in human perception.

Husserl's Notion of "Object" Perception: *Intentionality of Consciousness*

While wrestling with the question how do "objects" get individuated in human perception from flux of sensations hitting them at each moment, Husserl agrees with his teacher

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[241] Kant starts using the word "consciousness", consisting of certain *à priori* givens, in place of the conventional "mind" representing transparent intelligence existing *ab inition* within human beings

[242] Sinari, "The Real and the Constructed", 279

Franz Brentano (1838-1917) that it happens because human consciousness "intends" them to be so.[243] The question is from where does this *intentionality* arise in human consciousness? Husserl considered that repetitive human experiences of the world are internalized in human consciousness as architectures of embodied experiences, called the "eidos", in terms of which human beings 'understand' the world. Thus, in contrast to conceiving "consciousness" as a form of transparent intelligence as Descartes had done, or as filled with certain *à priori* "categories of understanding" as Kant had thought, Husserl considered it to be filled with day-to-day phenomenological experiences of the world. Thus, even when an "object" is physically perceived in 2-dimensions, human consciousness 'fills it up' with its third dimesion on the basis of the archetypal "eidos" internalized within consciousness. Mohanty notes the significance of this idea:

> When Husserl regards consciousness as constituting nature, he analyzes even "transcendentally purified" consciousness into the hyletic sensory components and the noetic act of meaning-giving or interpretation. In this sense, consciousness is not a disembodied pure spirit; rather, it is embodied, being located in the *lived body*, i.e. *lieb*, whose innermost core is *kinesthesia*. The structure "lived body", "kinesthesia", "motility", and "sensory continuum" characterizes consciousness's world-constituting role.[244]

Husserl argues that consciousness's intentional "anticipations" are deeper than one's normal anticipations since they have grown in tandem with human evolution in nature and the socio-cultural practices built around them. In this sense, *eidos* are "taken over from culture and never thought about".[245] Husserl notes that, since the intentionality of one's consciousness invariably adds the missing dimension of experience to one's perception, "our 'anticipations' always go beyond what 'meets the eye' (or our other

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[243] Charles Siewert, "Philosophy of Mind", in *The Routledge Companion,* 394-405, 398

[244] J. N. Mohanty, "Consciousness: Mundane and Transcendental", in *Philosophy and Science: An Exploratory Approach to Consciousness* (Kolkata: The Ramakrishna Institute of Culture, 2003): 41-52, 47, modified, emphasis added

[245] Dagfinn Føllesdale, "Husserl's Reductions and the Role they Play in his Phenomenology", in *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism,* Eds. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall (Oxford: Blackwell Publications, 2006): 105-114, 107

senses); the 'object' goes beyond anything that we ever anticipate."[246] Thus, "objects" appear as *ideal* entities in our consciousness, limited by a "horizon of expectations" dictated by human beings' *lived experiences* of the world.

While Husserl's notion of "object" formation is relevant for cinema, his notion of "space" formation in human consciousness is equally important. Husserl and, later, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, hold "space" to be not simply a *locatory space* where objects and things are kept, as conceived by Aristotle, but an *experiential space* signifying the bodily experiences of living in a particular space. In contrast to Kant's understanding of the three-dimensional space as an *abstract* entity, Husserl posits a three-dimensional *lived* space where the human body and the "lived space" or "place" becomes co-determinants for each other. Casey notes:

> Phenomenology suggests that ties between the animated body and lived space are as thick as the flesh that connects them…place is not just something seen – as visuo-centric models would imply – but something felt, sensed, undergone.[247]

In this bodily sense, a "lived space" is experienced in the following two ways: it is relative to its surrounding landscape which demarcates a space in terms of human movement (Husserl uses the terms "near" and "far"), and it is relative to the scale of the human body as a measure of action that happens within it (Merleau-Ponty uses the terms "height", "size", and "shape").[248]

Similarly, Husserl discusses "time" in terms of *experiential time*, i.e. "felt time" experienced by a subject. Husserl dissociates this experience from the notion of scientific time which is uniform and measurable, based on the linearity of Newtonian concept of uniform and absolute time. Instead, Husserl concentrates on the *intentionality* that underlies a subject's consciousness of time. Since it is in relation to an "object" or an "action" that one *experiences* time, present time is not empty but is laden with subject's memories of the past and anticipations of the future in relation to the "event" that she encounters. Such an experience of time is never uniform; rather, it is most uneven in

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[246] Føllesdale, "Husserl's Reductions", 107, modified

[247] Edward S. Casey, "Space", in *The Routledge Companion,* 202-10, 208, modified

[248] Ibid

terms of one's embodied experiences of living in the world. In this sense, Husserl notes that temporal notions of the past, present, and future should not be treated as detached experiences but should be considered as coalescing into an integrated whole within one's consciousness. Thus, a melody does not appear as a mere "disharmonious tangle of sound" to a listener; [249] instead, Husserl claims that the piece's "musicality" lies in the listener's integration of an ongoing "now" with "impressions" of the past and "anticipations" of the future.[250] In other words, a musical piece invariably reflects how time is *intended* to be experienced in the listener's consciousness which makes it experientially greater than the sum of its parts.

Husserlian Notion of "Relation between Objects": *Motivational Causality*

Husserl completes his phenomenological understanding of the world by holding that an "object" gets related to another "object" in terms of one's lived experience of the world. He clarifies that this linkage is not in the nature of being a *necessary* causality, as prevails between fire and smoke, but a "motivational causality" where one's experiences of living in the world makes him/her "anticipate" a certain relation of mutual dependence between them. Due to the commonality of human experiences, such imputations are inter-subjective to the core, generating a "natural attitude" among human beings to anticipate certain interactions which are commonly experienced in the world. Christensen notes:

> The natural attitude understood as a stance or a confidence – a general trust – concerns the belief that each perceptual experience entails, as part of its very existence or identity, a particular spatio-temporal order exists in the world.[251]

This attitude is so strong that even when a particular perception proves to be false, it doesn't shake one's belief in the world one has 'constructed' with the help of *eidos* and *relations of mutual dependence* that one knows. Thus, even when a person mistakes a rope for a snake, the falsity of this perception can only be proved against the firm belief

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[249] John B. Brough and William Blattner, "Temporality", in *A Companion*, 127-34, 129; Husserl quote from *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917)*, Trans. J. B. Brough, in *Collected Works*, Vol. 4 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991): 11

[250] Ibid

[251] Carleton B. Christensen, "The World", in *The Routledge Companion*, 211-21, 214

that both these objects exist in the world.[252] In Husserlian theory, it is the commonality of such human experience forms the basis for *inter-subjectivity* in the world.[253]

Since 'things' are known on the basis of *eidos* existing in one's consciousness in Husserl, does it mean, like in Kant, that things-in-themselves remain unknown to the perceiver in terms of their bare objectivity? Husserl holds that an *intuitive power* of grasping material entities emanates from "pure consciousness" occurring on the basis of an eido-filled consciousness.[254] This intuitive process, called Husserlian *epoché* or "phenomenological reduction", it consists in putting out of practice, i.e. 'bracketing' relations arising out of one's empirical experiences of living in the world. Husserl holds that, deprived of contingent and motivational "relations", an object's essential ground of being, i.e. its eidetic structure comes to be directly grasped by a person. Called *eidetic seeing*, Husserl notes that in this state, an inquirer's mind is gripped by certainty of knowledge, a state Husserl calls *apodeitic self-evidence*.[255]

In the context of cinema, one may note that, far from representing a process of disembodied vision, as advocated by film theories, film perception seems to be thriving with audiences' embodied "anticipations" of "objects" and "object relations" as claimed by Husserl. Turvey comments: "Unlike theories of the natural universe, film theories concern *what human beings already know and do based on their own experiences of living in the world*".[256]

Husserl's phenomenology is strikingly similar to Nyāya theory of perception: Husserl's notion of human perception of "objects" and "relation between objects" are essentially similar to Nyāya's notion of "relational universals" representing the imposition of

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[252] Steven Crowell, "Husserlian Phenomenology", in *A Companion*, 9-30, 20, modified
[253] I. Kerns and E. Marbach, "Understanding the Representational Minds: A Prerequisite for Intersubjectivity Proper", in *Between Ourselves: Second Person Issues in the Study of Consciousness*, Ed. Evan Thompson (Toronto: York University Press, Canada, 2001): 69-82, 77-9
[254] Karl Mertens, "The Subject and the Self", in *The Routledge Companion*, 168-179, 169; this is incidentally similar to classical Indian theory's conception of 'non-conceptual' perception (*nirvikalpa pratyakṣa*) which the Buddhists consider to be the only true form of veridical perception
[255] Sinari, "The Real and the Constructed", 285
[256] Turvey, "Can Scientific Models of Theorizing Help Film Theory?", in *The Philosophy of Film: Introductory Text and Readings*, Eds. Thomas E. Wartenberg and Angela Curan, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007): 21-32, 25, emphasis added

functional relationships to form an "object" and the formation of a "relation between objects" strictly in terms of the perceiver' embodied and socio-cultural practices of life.

Martin Heidegger's Phenomenology

Martin Heideggar's contribution lies in more firmly moving phenomenology from the confines of individual consciousness to that of human beings' *socio-cultural* consciousness.

Human Beings as Tool-Wielding Social Agents

Martin Heidegger gives Husserl's idea of "intentionality of consciousness" a new direction. He reasons that there must be something in the constitution of human "consciousness" itself which makes it manifest its *intentionality* towards things outside itself. In this respect, Heidegger introduces the important notion of "Dasein" (*sein* means 'being' and *da* means 'there') which essentially means a process of "being-in-the-world". In Heidegger's evolutionary theory of society and culture, a human being is the culmination of all his lived relations in the world: 'being-in-the-world includes *in itself* relation of existence to being in the whole [*Sein im Ganzen*]'.[257] Heideggar reasons that it is this very nature of relatedness of human beings to the world lie Dasein's *intentionality*. Dastur notes:

> There is an essential disclosedness (*erschlossenheit*) of *being* which comes from the fact *Dasein* bears in its innermost being the character of not being closed…Heidegger notes: "Through disclosedness, this *Da-sein* of the self is there for itself *together* with the *Da-sein* of the world".[258]

According to Heidegger, the original condition of human beings is to be "always already with other beings". For him, therefore, Dasein is not simply the "consciousness" of an

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[257] Heideggers' marginal notes in *Being and Time*, Trans. J. Stambaugh (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, [1927] 1996): 10; quoted in François Dastur, "Dasein", in *The Routledge Companion*, 318-26, 320, original emphasis

[258] Dastur, "Dasein", 320; Heidegger's quotes from *Being and Time*, Trans. J. Stambaugh, 34, modified, original emphasis

isolated individual but is that of a specific social agent who always *intends* to be equal to her social position in relation to all the other human beings of the world.[259]

In the above sense, for Heidegger, a human being is a "tool-using" social agent, the very use of the "tool" used by a human being orienting her to the material world in a particular way, which also includes an anticipation of others' the behavior towards her. Thus, being a carpenter is to know how to handle hammer and nails while being-in-the-world with the possibility of learning new technologies as and when they come. In this way, 'evolution' of "tools" since primordial times reflects the evolution of humn society till the present times. Heidegger, thus, replaces Husserl's "horizon of anticipations" with his notion of "totalities of relevance" of human beings operating as social agents within the world. Svenaeus notes:

> A chair never appears in isolation; it always appears within a horizon of human projects where it is used in a variety of activities. The meaningfulness of the chair, its being *as* a chair, can only be understood if we focus on its place in a context of practices. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes such contexts as "totalities of relevance" – as settings in which objects assume the role of tools (*zeuge*) used to attain specific goals…all bound together by what Heidegger calls "the world"'.[260]

Clearly, this is an extremely important development in phenomenological thought: Heidegger's phenomenology doesn't pertain to a world of nature but to a *world of culture*. Christensen notes the significance of Dasein's social process: since, in order to be relevant, a tool-using entity invariably presupposes the existence of other tool-using entities in the world, it leads to the inevitable conclusion that being-a-self typically means being-with-the-others at the same time. In other words, *subjectivity inevitably entails inter-subjectivity* in Heideggerian thought.[261] Cinema, as a techno-cultural tool, has a deep affinity with Heidegger in this respect.

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[259] Brough and Blattner, "Temporality", 132

[260] Fredrik Svenaeus, "Medicine", in *A Companion*, 412-424, 414; Heidegger quotes from *Being and Time*, Trans. J. Stambaugh, 66, 72

[261] Christensen, "The World", 219

There is a similarity between Heidegger's notion of "tools" and Nyāya notion of arte-factual "universals", to be discussed in chapter 3. Nyāya holds that the formation of "objects" in human perception occurs in terms of their *basis for use* (*pravrtti nimitta*) by human beings in the course of their living in the world.[262]

Merleau-Ponty's Existential Phenomenology

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology moves away from the notion of "consciousness" in Husserl and Heidegger to that of "the body" alone in his thought process discussed below.

Embodiment as the Basis of Cognition

While for both Husserl and Heidegger, "the body" is subsumed by the notion of a transcendental consciousness in which are internalized the body's orientation towards the world, Merleau-Ponty replaces the notion of human "consciousness" as being independent of the body with that of "the body" producing "consciousness" as its effect in his theory of existential phenomenology. For Merleau-Ponty, "the body", which replaces both human "consciousness" and "ego", exercises two specific functions while being-in-the-world. First, it generates an "operational intentionality" where the body's primordial experiences of living in nature are internalized as bodily memory, and, secondly, "bodily intentionality" which adopts the body to the way the world is being drastically reshaped by human interventions in nature, also internalized as body memory, with the former producing the foundational basis for the latter to be built-up as part of human "consciousness". In other words, while primordial experiences of nature constitute the body's "operational intentionality" at the most basic level of human existence, "bodily intentionality" adopts the body to the arte-factual world.[263] According to Merleau-Ponty, these two intentionalities together help us to understand even thought-processes involving abstractions and idealizations, like "He is walking", etc.[264]

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[262] See the chapter "Pravṛtti-nimitta: The Basis for Linguistic Practice" in Jonardon Ganeri's *Artha: Meaning* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006): 129-158, 129-132

[263] Mohanty, "Intentionality", in *A Companion*, 68-77, 76

[264] Ibid

Merleau-Ponty makes the further point that since my body is "my point of view to the world", the body's situatedness in the world is ingrained in us.[265] Merlaeu-Ponty's idea of perception, laid out in his masterwork *Phenomenology of Perception* ([1948], 1962), is heavily influenced by the Gestalt theory of the Berlin School which flourished in the beginning of the 20th century. Holding that objectivity in perception is inseparable from subjectivity of perception, the Gestalts argue that all sense stimuli are ultimately perceptions of 'completed' forms in terms of internalized human experiences of the world. Merleau-Ponty reorients Husserl's theory by holding that *eidos* do not occur in human consciousness but are internalized as bodily memory with *intentionally* converting free-flowing sense-datum into coherent "objective" wholes in the world. For Merleau-Ponty, the bodily memory of internalized experiences appears as human "consciousness" with *intentions* to complete "objects". In this sense, both for him and the Gestalts before him, perceptual fields are places where the objective and the subjective world of embodied consciousness 'complete' each other. Transcending Cartesian dualism in which subjects are closed-off from their objects of perception, Merleau-Ponty, like Heidegger, says: "We are through and through compounded of relationships with the world".[266]

Merleau-Ponty farther holds that, during the formation of "objects" through subjective-objective interactions, the internalized bodily experiences form "relation between objects" i.e. relational wholes in perception. More importantly, the 'meanings' of such relational wholes remain influenced by the bodily perspective from which they are being perceived. Thus, a mountain which appears 'tall' in relation to other objects from a particular point of view may not appear to be so from a height. This idea has the following implication for cinema: different shots of the same scene taken from different angles are expected to generate different bodily experiences among the audiences. Apart from the arbitrariness of the contingent nature of spatial relations experienced by the body, since the phenomenal world is also ever changing in terms of color, lighting, etc, Merleau-Ponty also holds that the very *nature of human perception is arbitrary* in the sense that it forever remains "unfinished" and "precarious" within the perceptual field. In this sense, Merleau-Ponty challenges the logic of certitude of knowledge central to

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[265] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 137
[266] Ibid, XIII

classical Western philosophy. Instead, Merleau-Ponty holds that "the subject-object correlation transpires within incompletion, non-coincidence, and penumbra".[267] In other words, he replaces Cartesian dualism of "I think" related to a transcendental consciousness with "I perceive" related to the sensations being received by the body which, being arbitrary, forever remains incomplete in relation to the world. Crucially, because of the interrelatedness of the body to other bodies, Merleau-Ponty farther holds that the body internalizes both the memories of being a perceiving subject as well as being an object of perception from other's point of view: "I consider my body, which is my point of view on the world, as one of the objects of this world".[268]

Merleau-Ponty also advances Heidegger's notion of human beings being tool-wielding social agents. Since the memory of the typing skill resides in the body, one's effort at intellectually understanding the operation of its keys is bound to fail. Similarly, a blind man invariably experiences the world at the end of his stick which becomes an extension of his body.[269] In other words, human interventions in the world eventually become internalized as part of the human body.[270]

Carel sums up Merleau-Ponty's idea of the body being the locus of pre-reflective knowledge as follows:[271]

i) <u>Habitual Body</u>

Merleau-Ponty holds that bodily habituation forms an important part of our pre-reflexive knowledge about the world. Normally, however, we aren't aware of it. Only when something breaks down and our habit is disturbed, we become aware of what Sartre calls "taken for granted-ness" of our body.

ii) <u>Body's Motor Intentionality or Motility</u>
In order to achieve a physical task, the body always gets oriented in a particular manner unconsciously. Merleau-Ponty holds that human motility is what is generally known as human "consciousness": "Consciousness is being-towards-

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[267] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 17-8, modified
[268] Ibid, 85
[269] Hopp, "Perception", in *The Routledge Companion*, 152
[270] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 175-76
[271] Havi Carel, "Nursing and Medicine", in *The Routledge Companion*, 623-32, 626-27

the-thing through the intermediary of the body…to move one's body is to aim at things through it".[272]

iii) Intentional Arc

In the same vein as that of Husserl's "horizon of anticipations" and Heidegger's "totalities of relevance", Merleau-Ponty uses the overarching term "intentional arc" to describe one's relationship to the world involving temporal structures, human situations, and moral conditions which signify existential conditions resulting in the belief that if something hurts me it would hurt other human beings as well. This idea captures Merleau-Ponty's thoughts on the ultimate embedded-ness of human beings in the cultural and moral world.[273] It is this "intentional arc" – one's existential relationship to the world – which goes 'limp' in pathological cases.

This completes the phenomenological journey from Husserl's notion of "transcendental consciousness" filled up with experiential archetypes or *eidos* to Heidegger's notion of human beings as "tool-wielding" social agents to Merleau-Ponty's notion of "the body" as the center of all human experiences with "consciousness" appearing as its effect in the world.

Lakoff and Johnson's Analysis of Merleau-Pontian Phenomenology

It is a remarkable journey from the point of view of Western thought. Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the body as the center of all cognitions and experiences, which is duly supported by some of the current findings of cognitive science, has the subversive potential to overthrow many of the cherished notions of Western thought. Lakoff and Johnson catalogue their findings in their remarkable work *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*.[274] In the first three sentences of the book, the authors summarize their position as follows:

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[272] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 138-39

[273] Ibid, 136

[274] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and the Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999)

The mind is inherently embodied;

Thought is mostly Unconscious; and

Abstract Concepts are largely Metaphorical

The concept of "reason", which represents the human capacity to think *transparently*, based on the assumption that an underlying transcendental consciousness lies within human beings, an article of faith in Western thought since the Greeks, becomes a matter of serious dispute. Summed up by Lakoff and Johnson, it leads to the following conclusions regarding "reason":[275]

i)   Since it goes beyond saying that we need a body to experience the world, "human reason is embodied reason, a reason inextricably tied to our bodies and the peculiarities of our brains".[276] Thus, "reason" is not *disembodied*, but arises from our embodied experiences.

ii)   Reason is not universal in the sense of being a transcendental entity; rather it is 'universal' in the sense of being common to human beings.

iii)   Even abstract reason is based on animal nature, arising from human embodied experiences of the world and its naturalization in terms of socio-cultural practices of the world.

iv)   Since the body is unconscious, only capable of reacting to the world in terms of 'pain'and 'pleasure' which it internalizes as body memory, reason is both *unconscious* and *emotionally engaged*.

v)   The body being unconscious, it 'understands' the world in terms of similar experiences from the past, the experience being internalized in its memory as "invariable sequence" of occurrences in the world. In this sense, reason is basically metaphorical and imaginative in nature which can only be loosly represented in language.

Explaining their conclusions, Lakoff and Johnson note that, since reason is embodied with the body being unconscious, there is no *real* understanding by human beings of what

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[275] These conclusions are culled from a book review of *Philosophy in the Flesh*, The New York Times on the Web, accessed online in June, 2016

[276] Review of Lakoff & Johnsons' *Philosophy in the Flesh*, Web accessed in June, 2016

is happening in the world; rather it is an unconscious mechanical process where an 'understanding' is reached through comparison with other embodied experiences in the past. Mentioning that the process is metaphorical in nature where "the essence of metaphor is one's understanding through experience of one kind of thing in terms of another", Lakoff and Johnson note "the human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined".[277] The latest research in Neural Theory of Language has shown *an inalienable connection between bodily behavior and human concepts*, like "above" and "in", etc. The researcher Srini Narayanan has shown that patterns of one's bodily motions underlie our understanding of metaphors, such as "France *falls* into a recession", etc.[278] Interestingly, Lakoff and Johnson analyze the metaphor "Argument is War" as a product of a combination of sentences such as 'Your position is *indefensible*', 'I *demolished* his argument', 'Ok, *shoot*!', etc.[279]

The following film example illustrates the way the body gets represented to us in cinema. In Satyajit Ray's *Nayak* (The Hero, 1966), the journalist Aditi (Sharmila Tagore) is interviewing the matinee idol Arindam Mukherjee (Uttam Kumar) in the dining car of a moving train. At a particular point in the scene, the camera technique changes from cut-to-cut shots between their faces to a smooth panning shot linking the two. While the position of the two characters does not visibly change neither do the tenor of their dialogue delivery, the change in the camerawork represents a body 'movement' for the audiences that conveys the *metaphorical sense* to the audiences that Aditi's attitude has changed from being a cut-throat journalist to that of being *sympathetic* towards him. As a confirmation of the audiences' embodied understanding of the scene, Aditi tears all her notes in the climactic scene, announcing that she will keep them in her mind rather than publish them.

The extent of revolution that Merleau-Ponty signifies in Western thought may be summed up as follows: there is *no Cartesian dualism* where a person has a thinking

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[277] Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 5-6, modified; OERD defines "metaphor" as "The application of a name or a descriptive term or phrase to an object or an action to which it is imaginatively but not literally applicable".
[278] Accessed "Review of Lakoff & Johnson" from the Web, June 2016
[279] Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 4

"mind" separate from an inert "body"; *no Kantian autonomous person* with absolute freedom to dictate what is moral; *no utilitarian person* with a free consciousness dictating economic rationality; *no Husserlian person* who, through phenomenological reduction, can get to the bare particulars of reality; *no Lacanian person* who is entirely constructed by the others since the body, to a large extent, is already constituted by the material world; *no poststructuralist person* in the sense of being a completely decentered subject for whom all meanings are totally arbitrary, relative, and historically contingent because our minds are already steeped in embodied experiences which are common to human beings in general; and, finally, there is *no Fregean person* for whom thought is excluded from the body as proposed by analytical philosophy because there can be no meaning without embodiment, truth being relative in the sense of being mediated by embodied understanding and imagination.[280] Needless to say, these new parameters of thinking signify momentous changes in the conventional mode of Western thinking so far.

There are some *striking* similarities as well as some *significant* differences between Merleau-Pontian thought and Nyāya theory of perception. The similarities are as follows: all experiences are embodied experiences, 'understood' in terms of other experiences; consciousness arises only contingently, arguably as an effect of the body's interactions with matter; reason is embodied including abstract reason like inference, etc; all knowledge arises from experience, there being nothing *à priori* in Indian thought; all knowledge is metaphorical in nature, arising from an 'unintelligent' comparison between experiences read as 'invariable sequences' occurring in reality, etc. As far as differences are concerned, they would be discussed in greater detail as part of the Nyāya epistemological discourse in chapter 3. Needless to point out that these thought processes and the principles they formulate have profound influence in the way we experience and understand cinema.

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[280] Summed up from a Review of *Philosophy in the Flesh*, New York Times on the Web, accessed in June 2016

Is Merleau-Ponty a "Theorist"?

Before we proceed to Part 2 where Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology will be applied to cinema, it is necessary to address the question often raised in relation to Buddha and Merleau-Ponty: can they be called "theorists" at all?[281]

The above question is legitimate in the sense that the basic aim of both Buddha and Merleau-Ponty has been to deconstruct existing theories rather than to construct new ones. In the above sense, their stance may be more appropriately described as establishing "anti-foundationalist" positions rather than starting new ones. However, in the present work, they are still being called "theorists" not only because any position that contradicts an existing position on the basis of a coherent system of thought becomes a 'theory" in itself, but also for certain deeper considerations being explained below.

Anti-foundationalism is guided by a critical spirit of not resting with a priviledged set of ideas. The argument is that foundationalism priviledges certain *givens* which ultimately signify a commitment to a *metaphysics of presence*.[282] The anti-foundationalists' denial of a *given* form goes with the denial of a form-giver as well. However, phenomenology holds that consciousness is not a denial of all given conditions, but a meaningful intending of objects because of consciousness's inherent intentional structure. Thus, while sensations are organized into "objects" and "objects" into the "world", impulses and desires get converted into 'goal-directed' activities for human beings.[283] In this connection, Mohanty critiques the denial of a *self* or an *ego* by both Buddha and Merleau-Ponty in the following specific sense:

> To say that felt experiences are unified by an ego, a self, or a subject is to say no more than that these principles and categories constitute experiences as an

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[281] "Theory" is defined as "a supposition or a system of ideas based on general principles which are independent of the things it explains" (OERD); etymologically, the word "theory" comes from the Greek "Theōría" which is derivative of "Theōrós" meaning "spectator" which only secondarily developed via the Latin word "Theōria" meaning "mental contemplation" (Bloomsburg Dictionary of Word Origin).

[282] Mohanty, *Theory and Practice*, Lectures at Jadavpur University (Kolkata: Allied Publishers and Jadavpur University, 1994): 1-63, 26

[283] ibid, 28

organism develops. The putative ego is a unity as a result of the modes of synthesis inherent in the conscious life.[284]

The anti-foundationalist rejects the priviledged *given* by positing temporality as a universal feature of change of all worldly things which not only undermine their unity as "things" but also their unified "meanings". In this sense, the anti-foundationalists critiques the notion of "meaning" itself: since the unity of a perceptual object is forever in the process of being constituted, its "meaning" as a finished product is implicated in an endless process of deferral.[285]

However, this raises questions about the nature of the *discontinuities* themselves: how *radical* can the *radical discontinuities* be? Mohanty points out their limits:

> If seamless recapitulation is not possible, radical rupture is not intelligible either…truly, radical ruptures would lead to the metaphysical thesis that there is not one time but a plurality of times.[286]

In fact, Mohanty points out that the anti-foundationalists fall back upon the same dogmatic view of the self as the foundationalists do:

> In order to deny ideal-objective meanings, the anti-foundationalist denies the possibility of undertstanding the *other* which means that one understands, if at all, only itself. One is, thus, back with the familiar Cartesian thesis or something close to it.[287]

Since it appears that, in the above sense, the anti-foundationalists are as dogmatic in using certain ideas as the foundationalists are in using their's, no violence would be done to the spirit of both Buddha and Merleau-Ponty if they are called "theorists" within the explanatory context mentioned above.

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[284] Mohanty, *Theory and Practice*, 28, modified
[285] Ibid, 30-1
[286] Ibid, 29
[287] Ibid

Part 2

Applying Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology to Cinema

Based on Merleau-Ponty's theory of existential phenomenology, a group of contemporary film researchers like Vivian Sobchack, Laura Marks, and others have held that *embodied experience* forms a crucial part of audience's meaningful engagement with cinema. Although Linda Williams is the pioneer of inserting "the body" in film discourse through her work on pornographic cinema, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the Frenzy of the Visible* (1989),[288] the present trend of applying Merleau-Ponty to cinema can be said to have truly started with Sobchack's largely polemical work *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (1992).[289] The contemporary researchers base themselves on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's argument that, since both animate and inanimate entities have grown in tandem with nature, they have been transformed into effective vehicles of experience and response to the world at large. Calling such correspondences and communications *wild meaning*, Merleau-Ponty holds that, at the embodied level, there is a fundamental intelligibility of the world for all of us.[290] Thus, when we see something in nature, like a tree for instance, it makes sense to us at a deeper level of our being, which is only subsequently conceptualized as a 'tree'. Sobchack makes the important point that such *originary* signification of the world acts as the *enabling structure* for all secondary significations, like verbal language, etc, which normally constitute our on the surface 'undersatnding' of cinema.[291]

Embodiment has another important effect on viewers. Merleau-Ponty had held that, by virtue of realizing that they are bodily grounded, human beings also realize that other embodied beings are similarly grounded too. Thus, while from a viewer's perspective, others appear as objects to the viewer, the viewer simultaneously realizes

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[288] Linda Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the Frenzy of the Visible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989)

[289] Kuhn and Westwell, "Phenomenology and Film (Film-Phenomenology)", *Oxford Dictionary of Film*, 309-10

[290] Sobchack holds that Merleau-Ponty's notion of *wild meaning* is embodied meaning; see *The Address of the Eye*, 14

[291] Sobchack borrows the idea of "enabling structure" from Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978): 230, mentioned in *The Address of the Eye,* 14

that, from their perspective, she appears as an object to them as well. Such experiences lead to Merleau-Ponty's theory of *reversibility of perception and expression* which he considers to be the basic plank of social communication in the world: based on the experiences of one's body acting as the ground level or degree zero of interacting with the world, the perceiver gets a hint of others' intentions by observing the way their bodies are poised in particular situations and respond accodingly. Film theorists have so far brushed aside this fundamental aspect of cinema.

Since cinema is a mechanical or an electronic reproduction of the material surface of the world, Sobchack claims, on the basis of Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology, that there is a *fundamental intelligibility of the film experience* shared by the filmmaker, the viewer, and the film together.[292] In this sense, cinema is a process of "double signification": while, at the fundamental level, it generates a *direct experience* for the audiences at their embodied level, at the secondary level, it generates *mediated experience* through other signifying systems like film narration, etc. When a natural entity is perceived in a film, like the hills or the trees, they already "mean" something at the level of human being's embodied living in the world, called "operational intentionality" by Merleau-Ponty. On the basis of such a primordial understanding, the filmmaker constructs an artificial world where the "bodily intentionality" of the actors become a vehicle of expression for the audiences at their own embodied level. In Merleau-Ponty's words, the bodily gestures of the actors represent *an expression of an experience by an experience* where the actors' embodied behavior generates an embodied experience for the audiences.[293] While silent cinema is a prime example of such embodied understanding, sound cinema tacitly depends on it to build up its narration.

In the ensuing sections, Merleau-Ponty's ideas will be applied to cinema under the following heads: *embodied sense* in cinema, phenomenological *construction of space and time* in cinema, vision-touch equivalence generating a *synaesthetic experience* in cinema, and subjective-objective alterations involving a *chiasmic interaction* in cinema.

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[292] Sobchack, *The Address of the Eye*, 6
[293] Ibid, 11

The *Embodied Phenomenological Sense* of a Scene

How embodiment influences one's understanding of cinema is illustrated through the following film sequence:

Train Sequence in Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Little Road, 1955)

In a phenomenologically rich sequence, we observe young Apu (Subir Banerjee) and Durga (Uma Dasgupta) running through 'kash bon' (lean and tall plants with white flowers on their stems) in midst of pristine nature, an area which they have not seen before. They suddenly come across a telegraph pole. Durga presses her ears against the pole and hears a mechanical sound never heard before which enters her consciousness as a new phenomenological experience. As they trudge along, Durga falls but Apu keeps moving ultimately to come across a railway line. He has heard the mechanical clanking sound of trains passing his house but has never seen one before. As a goods train chugs along, Apu observes it with an awestruck expression. The whole scene is rich in phenomenological experiences which are totally alien to their lived experiences of rural life so far.

The art critic, Geeta Kapur has noted that Ray combined Tagore's romantic, lyrical tradition with modern Western traditions and presented it to the emerging middle class as a progress, together with its attendant morality, as a *natural* development in the modernizing discourse, a project intimately tied to the project of modern nationhood vigorously pursued by India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.[294] Kapur implies that, in pursuit of presenting this modernist project in an acceptable form, Ray has glossed over the traumatic history of India's emergence into the modern period.[295] As evidence, Kapur cites the train sequence in *Pather Pnachali* as Ray's efforts at a seamless integration of the signs of modernity, like the telegraph poles and the train, with the feudal landscape of Nischindipur village in the tradition of Tagore's romantic Shantiniketan painterly modes,[296] generating an impression that it has *organically* grown

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[294] Geeta Kapur, "Sovereign Subject: Ray's *Apu*", in *When Was Modernism: Essays on…Contemporary Cultural Practices in India*, Ed., Paperback (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2001): 201-32, mentioned by Ravi Vasudevan, *The Mlodramatic Public: Film Form and Spectatorship in Indian Cinema* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010): 164
[295] Vasudevan, *The Melodramatic Public*, 164
[296] Ibid, 170

out of India's own aesthetic traditions.[297] However, Vasudevan critiques this position by arguing that "the modernist dimension of Ray's work disturbs any straightforward organization of narrative material and spectatorial perspective".[298] Vasudevan notes the discontinuities and the jerks that Ray, a person steeped in the seamless mode of Hollywood editing, deliberately introduces into the scene:

> As if needing to work disruptive effects of sensations into filmic structures, Ray resorts to a rare discontinuity, a temporal gap in the abrupt cut that shows Apu entering the space around the telegraph pole after Durga has left it; the compulsion to repeat highlights the moment and the space as symbolically charged, as marked off from the seamless flow of previous time. When Apu asks Durga for an explanation of the mysterious sense impressions, she merely gestures him to silence, to listen.[299]

Vasudevan further highlights Ray's deliberate efforts at disrupting the scene. When billowing cloud of smoke emerges on the horizon, Ray foregrounds the audiences' look through a swiss pan, which goes entirely against the mode of narration so far, in order to jerk them out of their perspective of Apu:

> Our look here is dislocated from the smooth flow of character focalized narration. For we briefly lose our object, and, in the process, are alerted to the phenomenology of the moving camera at the very moment the character becomes aware of the moving train…The moment of dislocation is developed into a full jettisoning of the spectator's view from the framed character.[300]

In fact, rather than being an unequivocal votary of modernism, Ray, throughout his career, exhibits his characters' trepidations about the impinging modernity. Thus, apart from building disjunctions and fractures into the scene, Ray also captures a low angle perspective of Apu, in which the goods train appears like a huge mechanical contraption bearing down on him. This phenomenological sense interpenetrates his sense of

[297] Vasudevan, *The Melodramatic Public*, 164
[298] Ibid, 168
[299] Ibid, 171, modified
[300] Ibid, 172, modified

wonderment with a strong embodied sense of *fear* which would forever haunt Apu in his relationship with trains in future. Thus, whenever trains appear in the *Apu Trilogy*, they become harbingers of bad news for Apu. For example, in *Aparajito* (The Unvanquished, 1957), Apu comes to his native village by train only to find his mother dead and, in *Apur Sansar* (The World of Apu, 1959) Apu receives the tragic news of his wife's death at the station. Ray presents Apu as a true representative of the Indian psyche which, though welcoming human interventions in nature, always receives it with a certain caution as to whether these 'events' would eventually disturb the harmony of nature.

However, *Pather Panchali* calls for a deeper analysis in terms of human beings' phenomenological relations with their surroundings. The literary work on which the film is based was conceived by Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhyay as a chronicle of human beings' day-to-day living in a village caught in the midst of a socio-economic transformation. Even though Harihar (Kanu Bandyopadhyay) is losing out on his family occupation of priesthood due to these changes, Bibhutobhsan's writings do not give any impression that he considers these changes as anything but normal. In the Indian tradition, changes occurring due to human interventions in Nature are welcomed, with the wheel (*cakra*) considered as the quintessential symbol of such change, subject to the condition that it is in harmony with cycle represented by nature. *Pather Panchali* tells the story of a primordial phenomenological relationship of human beings living in Nature, represented by Merleau-Ponty's notion of "operational intentionality", within which arte-factual interventions of man get progressively inscribed, a change which the body adopts in terms of Merleau-Ponty's notion of "bodily intentionality". The important point to note is that, whether in Bibhutibhusan's work or in the film picturization, the larger phenomenological experience of Man in Nature is ever present as the underlying river-bed against which all its 'flows' are measured. That's why the day Apu sees the train, the same day he and his sister witness the death of the village grandma, the two events being treated as *coincidental events* in the film with life and death and change appearing as inalinable parts of the larger cycle of human existence in the world.

<u>Norman Bates discovers Marion Crane's Body in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960)</u>

While Marion Crane's bathtub murder is one of the most celebrated phenomenological sequences in world cinema, it is the scene that immediately follows would be the subject matter of study here. In this scene, Norman Bates runs towards Marion's room only to find her murdered in the bathroom there. Hitchcock has captured this whole scene in long and mid shots which cuts to a close-up only when Bates holds his anguished face in both his hands at the end of the scene. Arguably, the 'meaning' of this entire scene could also have been conveyed through a montage of shots involving Bates running down the stairs of his house in long shot *juxtaposed* with his running in the Motel corridor in mid shot *juxtaposed* with his shocked appearance in a close-up, the montage effect being enough to create an appropriate intellectual understanding of the scene among the audiences. However, Hitchcock prefers to reproduce the very physicality of this whole scene through long and lengthy shots, changing them only when action moves beyond a particular camera position. Through this process, Hitchcock aims to evoke the audiences' phenomenological experiences, which he further reinforces by showing cheap linens on windows of the Bates Motel prominently, thereby seeking to generate a tactile bodily experience among the audiences.

A legitimate question may be raised here: if Hitchcock desires to give his audiences a phenomenological experience, why then does he adopt a different approach in presenting the murder scene? One would recall that he presents this scene in a large number of extremely fast cuts (76 cuts approximately). The reason is that, in the murder scene, his intentions are not only to deliver maximum 'shock' and 'awe' to the audiences, but also *not to* disclose too much information about the murderer's facial profile in order to maintain the intrigue. It is for this reason that, even after the bathtub curtains are pulled, Hitchcock takes the cinematic liberty of keeping his face in darkness even though it would been exposed under realistic circumstances.

<u>Constructing *Phenomenological Space and Time* in Cinema</u>

Hunter Vaughan, who applies phenomenological concepts to films of Jean-Luc Godard and Alain Resnais, notes:

> There is what I will call the *phenomenological* notion: meaning lies in the interaction between the object and the subject of the image…I say "phenomenological" because, in this case, meaning lies neither solely in physical objects nor solely in the subjective apprehension of those objects but in the interactive flux that binds the former to the latter, what Merleau-Ponty sought as "the synthesis of the subjective and objective experiences of phenomena".[301]

In the context of subjective-objective interactions' requirement of 'completing' a perceptual event, Vaughan notes that "spatial perception is a structural phenomenon, not an essential natural aspect, and is understandable only to the extent it is founded in a particular subjectivity".[302] In other words, both space and time are phenomenological constructs of the mind in terms of human beings' lived experiences of the world.

Credit Sequence in Godard's *Contempt* (1963)

In film after film, Godard pointedly draws our attention not only to the fact that meaning is entirely constructed in cinema, but also to the fact that the subject and the object repeatedly change their respective positions in the viewer's perception. The celebrated credit sequence of Godard's *Contempt* (1963) provides a classic example in this regard. As the sequence starts unfolding, Francesca (Giorgia Moll) walks towards the camera while reading from a script. Godard's cinematographer Raoul Coutard tracks her as Godard read the credits in voice-over. While tracking, Coutard gradually comes to be within the perceptual field of the audiences when Godard quotes Bazin "cinema substitutes for our gaze a world in accord with our desires". Then, as the camera with Coutard behind it faces the audiences, Godard concludes "*Contempt* is the story of this world". The point of this opening sequence totally demolishes the objectivity of the image for the audiences. Coutard is being shown as the object through the same process through which he shows Francesca as the object. In subverting conventional codes of

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[301] Hunter Vaughan, *Where Film Meets Philosophy: Godard, Resnais, and Experiments in Cinematic Thinking* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013): 45, original emphasis; Merleau-Ponty quote from Richard L. Lanigan, *Speaking and Semiology: Maurice Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenological Theory of Existential Communication* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972): 30

[302] Vaughan, *Where Film Meets Philosophy*, 40

suture and other seamless editing devices, Godard entirely creates space and time for the audiences.[303]

Vision-Touch Equivalence in Cinema: The *Synesthetic Experience*

Merleau-Ponty indicates that organs of vision and touch are equivalent since they interact with the same space: "I can touch what I see and I can see what I touch".[304] By noting that "through others' eyes we are ourselves fully visible", Merleau-Ponty notes the deeper implications of this phenomenon:

> Since the same body sees and touches, visible and tangible belong to the same world…Every movement of my eyes – even more, every movement of my body – has its place in the same universe that I itemize and explore with them, as, conversely every vision takes place somewhere in the tactile space. There is a double and crossed situating of the visible in the tangible and the tangible in the visible; the two maps are complete and yet they do not merge into one. The two parts are total parts, and yet they are not super-imposable.[305]

Calling this deeper linkage between vision and touch as "Vision",[306] Merleau-Ponty holds that perceptual experience is essentially synesthetic in nature:

> A wooden wheel placed on the ground is not, *for sight*, the same thing as a wheel bearing a load since sight, in natural perception, carries references to what can also be discovered by the other senses. Synesthesia is the norm. The sighted do not share tactile and auditory sensations with the blind, since sight – or the lack of it – changes the whole structure of experience.[307]

Thus, the expression "I *see* a 'heavy' wheelbarrow" becomes a valid expression for Merleau-Ponty as are "I *see* 'cold' ice" and "I *see* 'fragile' glass". According to him, if a

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[303] Above analysis is influenced by Hunter Vaughan's analysis of the scene in *Where Film Meets Philosophy*, 185-86

[304] Merleau-Ponty quoted in Daniel J. Rycroft, "Co-existence and Art Historical Apprehensions", in *World Art and the Legacies of Colonial Violence*, Ed. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013): 231-47, 236

[305] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Trans. A. Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968): 134, quoted in Rycroft, "Co-existence", 236

[306] Ibid, 234

[307] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 261, original emphasis

person seeks to break down this synesthetic perception into parts in order to understand it analytically, s/he is essentially making the whole thing become "unstable" for the viewer.[308]

Sinking of the Ship in James Cameron's *Titanic* (1997)

When we apply Merleau-Ponty's *synesthetic experience* to the protagonists sinking in the icy cold waters of the Atlantic in James Cameron's *Titanic* (1997), it indicates that the audiences' experiences are much 'richer' than what the audio-visual mode of cinema is bringing to them. For example, while the protagonists sink, the audiences would also be able to *see*, i.e. "touch through vision" the severity of the 'cold' water as well as other touch sensations pertaining to the sea. Since, at the deepest level, the body reacts in terms of elements that are either 'pleasurable' or 'painful' for the body, the audiences would be experiencing an embodied sense of *fear* associated with sinking in the sea.

Nyāya theory fully anticipates Merleau-Ponty's theory of vision-touch equivalence among the subjects. Since the material world one sees can also be touched by a person, Nyāya, like Merleau-Ponty, holds that touch is *given* in vision and vice-versa. Nyāya, however, goes beyond Merleau-Ponty in grafting proximal sensations, like smell, sound and taste to the vision-touch equivalence as well through revived memory operating around the visual nucleus of the scene which generates an experience of *visual synesthesia* among the audiences. Thus, for Nyāya, expressions, like "I *see* a 'fragrant' flower" or "I *see* the 'honking' of a car", are also valid in this theory. This aspect of Nyāya will be explored in much greater detail in the next chapter.

Explaining *Haptic Visuality* in terms of Vision-Touch Equivalence in Cinema

Merleau-Ponty's theory of vision-touch equivalence underlies the contemporary notion of *haptic visuality* in film discourse. Advocated by Laura Marks, haptic vision is a tactile form of perception where "the eyes function like organs of touch".[309] The film critic Donato Totaro comments:

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[308] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 62

[309] Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000): 162

As Marks explains, in optical visuality, the eye perceives objects from a distance to isolate them as forms of space. *Haptic visuality* is a closer form of looking, which tends to "move over the surface of its object rather than plunge into illusionist depth, not to distinguish form so much as to discern texture".[310]

Signifying *haptic visuality* as an experience of the surface rather than depth, as an indication rather than representation, as closeness rather than separation, Marks' professed aim is to "restore a flow between the haptic and the optical that our culture is currently lacking".[311]

Marks has been influenced in her thinking by two currents of thought: Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology as elaborated by Vivian Sobchack in the domain of cinema and Bergsonian ideas of space, time and identity elaborated in the Deleuzian writings on cinema. Deleuze follows Bergson to hold that "meaning" is on the outside or surface of things, which the perceiver's body 'touches' to know. In this sense, the "image" of the thing and the "thing" becomes indistinguishable for the perceiver, leading Deleuze to hold Image = Movement, signifying, thereby, that the current 'appearance' of the thing-image is the thing itself and not a *sign* of the thing.[312] This is a kind of "Appearing" where there is "not even an eye" to discern what it is from a distance.[313] Deleuze terms the infinite presence of such images in cinema as the "plane of immanence" whose very 'touch' through vision generate meaning among the audiences as some kind of a *wild meaning* (to borrow a Merleau-Pontian term) and not as a disembodied, intellectual 'understanding' of the images. These images are *cinephilic* and *tautological* in the sense that they do not represent anything but pure 'movement' or 'appearance'.[314] More importantly, Deleuze has devised many types of images which do not translate into narrative action, but generates meanings and affects simply through their being. Thus, the falling of a lock of hair on an actor's face may not advance the

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[310] Donato Totaro, "Deleuzian Film Analysis: The Skin of the Film", *Off-Screen*, Vol. 6 Issue 6 (June 2002), accessed online in June 2016

[311] Laura U. Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002): XIII, quoted in Claire Perkins, "This Time it is Personal", Book Review, *Senses of Cinema*, Issue 33 (October 2004), accessed online on June, 2016

[312] Perkins, "This Time it is Personal"

[313] Marks, *Touch*, 2, quoted in Perkins, "This Time it is Personal"

[314] Perkins, "This Time it is Personal"

narrative as such but may generate a lot of visceral effect among the audiences. Called "opsigns" or "affection-images" by Deleuze, which form a part of a huge list of images that he classified, these images move from the optic to the haptic, interrupting the narrative flow of the film where the viewer's gaze does not symbolically identify the image in order to master it but creates a tactile space of a gradually evolving experience through the process of 'touching' the image.[315] Unlike the Lacanian subject which can only represent a lack or a void, the haptic subject does have an embodied phenomenal center.[316]

What is the deeper implication of *haptic visuality* in cinema? Marks holds that filmmakers use it to revive memories that are suppressed by the dominant discourse or the 'official history' where vision and hearing or *optic visuality*, which master symbolic forms from a distance, are privileged over proximal senses or *haptic visuality* like touch and smell, which are literally experienced by "touching" a thing.[317] Marks delves into Bergson to hold that, while "habitual memory" primarily depends on the audio-visual senses that serve pragmatic needs, "pure memory", which occur in unhabituated forms in which the mind generally makes connections laterally between completely unrelated things, are normally revived by non-optical triggers.[318] Bergson also refers to a third kind of "unsolicited" independent memory, called "involuntary" memory, like the one which occur in Marcel Proust's celebrated work *The Remembrance of Things Past* in which a person is flooded with completely unsolicited images that overwhelm his sensibilities.[319] These images, which may include the memory of certain traumatic events in personal or collective memory, are more liberating for the audiences in terms of their experiences. Marks cites experimental filmmakers from non-Western cultures to evoke experiences involving proximal senses which still remain priviledged depite inroads made by industrialization in these cultures in contrast to the oculo-centrism of the Western culture. Examples of such experiences occur in the films of Andrei Tarkovsky. Thus, Tarkovsky

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[315] Perkins, "This Time it is Personal"
[316] Ibid
[317] David M. Lowe mentions the 'hierarchy of sensing" in *The History of Bourgeois Perception* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982): 2, quoted in Totaro, "Deleuzian Film Analysis"
[318] Totaro, "Deleuzian Film Analysis"
[319] Ibid

employs perpendicular overhead tracking shots over pools of water in *Stalkır* (Stalker, 1979) and *Nostalghia* (Nostalgia, 1982) which are filled with items that are associated with deeply affective memories of the past.[320] Similarly, narration in *Nostalgia* is often interrupted by an apparently unrelated shot of a person sitting with a dog close to a pool of water, a shot which liberates overwhelming affects for reasons unknown to the audiences. Torato also gives the example of Abbas Kiarostami's film *The Wind Will Carry Us* (2001) where a series of characters, while remaining unknown visually, become known to the audiences through other senses, an apt case of haptic visuality. More importantly, in Majid Majidi's film *Children of Paradise* (1999), where Majidi uses extreme colors and natural beauty to make the spectator experience how a blind boy experiences reality through his proximal senses.[321] Totaro quotes Abbas Kiarostami "I want to create the type of cinema that shows by not showing" to sum up such film experiences.

Subjective-Objective Transformation: Notion of the *Chiasm*

Subjective-objective alteration, which results in the frequent change of a subject's phenomenological realization that while it exists as a subject in relation to an object it perceives, it simultaneously also appears as an object for the perceived object, is an important insight of Merleau-Ponty's thought. He holds that since such experiences alternate in perception, it is never able to fully isolate a thing in its concrete objectivity; it is invariably a product of the subjective-objective interactions occurring within the perceptual field.[322] The plane of immanence, where subjects and objects have no rigid boundaries in interaction, is called *chiasm* by Merleau-Ponty: "there is a body of the mind and a mind of the body and a *chiasm* between them".[323] According to him, this chiasmic plane of immanence is a structure of mediation characterized by fluid reversibility and circularity of the *chiasmus* which operates at different levels of duality. Rycroft notes:

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[320] Totaro, "Deleuzian Film Analysis"
[321] Ibid
[322] Vaughan, *Where Film Meets Philosophy*, 17-8
[323] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 259, quoted in Ted Toadvine, "Chiasm", in *The Routledge Companion*, 336-47, 339

[H]e defined a new philosophical engagement with human bodies, senses, and spaces that rejected, in a modernist manoeuvre, the western intellectual binaries of the subject and the object, the self and the other, and the mind and the body.[324]

Arguably, Merleau-Ponty's theory had influenced the formation of Lacan's notion of the *gaze* – the power of the gaze of the other to formulate and legitimize the subject.[325] Fuery comments:

> The subject, then, becomes a ('mirror') image for itself, how it positions itself in the world and how the world ('the symbolic order') positions it. Here we witness one of Lacan's fundamental premises: the subject's formation of the self via the image is due to an interaction of the gaze from the subject and the subject being positioned by the gaze of the other…it is the gaze itself that becomes both part of the other and an object of desire for the subject.[326]

Noting that "The gaze I encounter…is not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the other",[327] Lacan goes to say that subjectivity is then "much more than simply having the capacity to see – it is part of the legitimizing of the subject to itself and to the other…to be recognized by the gaze of the other is to have a sense of [my] presence".[328] The moment when we become aware of our own gaze, the gaze of the other on us, and the effects of this interplay in our perception, it forms the self-reflexive moment of the gaze for Lacan called "anamorphosis" by him.[329]

Merleau-Ponty argues that, while the *chiasm* signifies a process of 'encroachment' between the subjective and objective modes, their individualities are never fully erased. Toadvine notes that this *chiasmic* 'synopsis' of encroaching into each other's territory involves no sublation of the opposites as in the Hegelian form, but is

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[324] Rycroft, "Co-existence", 232
[325] Patrick Fuery, *New Developments in Film Theory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000): 27
[326] Ibid
[327] Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Trans. A. Sheridan (Hammondsworth Penguin, 1986): 84
[328] Fuery, *New Developments*, 27
[329] Ibid, 29

achieved with the sense of subjectivity remaining intact.[330] In the above context, three characteristics of the *chiasm* as conceived by Merleau-Ponty may be summed up as follows:

      i)   It 'opens' the body to the world

      ii)   It involves reversibility of roles between a subject and an object

      iii)   Despite frequent encroachments, there occurs a gap between the subject and the object since whenever a particular mode of experience is changed, i.e. whenever a subject becomes an object and vice versa, one immediately becomes bodily aware of this change.[331]

What is important in the above context is the fact that the body is conditioned to expect such alterations happening constantly. Since this expectation or anticipation is, thus, in-built into one's bodily memory, it makes such frequent transitions both bodily and psychologically acceptable to a subject.

Explaining *Shot-Reverse Shot* as a Subjective-Objective Alteration in the Viewer

Merleau-Ponty's notion of the subjective-objective alteration may be effectively used in explaining the popularity of the *shot-counter shot* technique in cinema.[332] Shot-counter shot or shot-reverse-shot has been defined as "an editing technique widely used in dialogue sequences in which characters exchange looks: one character is shown looking (often off-screen) at another character, and in the next shot the second character is shown apparently looking back at the first".[333] On the surface, it is based on the idea that "since the characters are shown facing in opposite directions, the viewer assumes that they are looking at each other".[334] While analyzing the shot-counter-shot technique, Bordwell first discounts Pudovkin's idea that it mirrors the "natural" way of looking at a thing viz. the device "must be subject to the same conditions as those of the eyes of the observer",[335] by

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[330] Toadvine, "Chiasm", 341; Merleau-Ponty quote from *The Visible and the Invisible*, 264

[331] Toadvine, "Chiasm", 340-1, emphasis added

[332] See Bordwell's detailed analysis in his *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 110-13

[333] Kuhn and Westwell, "Shot-countershot", in *Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies*, 373-74

[334] Ibid, 374

[335] V. I. Pudovkin, *Film Technique*, Reprint (New York: Evergreen, 1970), 70, quoted in David Bordwell, "Convention, Construction, and Cinematic Vision", in *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies*, Eds. David Bordwell and Noël Carroll (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 87-107, 88

pointing out that "the shot-reverse-shot device is *unfaithful to ordinary vision* because it not only changes the camera position to favor ¾ views" but also "when we watch a face-to-face interaction, we are not perceptually capable of shifting our angle of view as drastically as is normal in shot/reverse-shot cutting".[336] Bordwell mentions that Pudovkin was ultimately forced to change his stance to acknowledge the presence of an "ideal" omnipresent observer in this mode of viewing.[337]

Having discounted the "natural" position, Bordwell next takes up Jean-Pierre Oudart's theory of "suture", i.e. "the filmic processes by which the spectator is continuously 'sewn' into the series of shots and spaces playing out on the cinema screen".[338] Oudart holds that the first *shot* entails an off-screen space which represents "a pure field of absence" for the perceiver. The *counter shot* then reveals to the audiences that something occupies that off-screen space.[339] While the first *shot* raises a question, the *counter shot* answers it which the audiences then *stitch* together to make the whole. Bordwell notes that Oudart's process works on the basis of two conditions: camera angles of the two shots must be oblique and not occupy the subjects' 'optical' positions, and secondly, the same portion of space must be shown both in the visual field and in the off-screen space.[340] Oudart has commented that his idea works on the following basis: "the appearance of a *lack* perceived as the absent one is followed by its abolition by someone or something placed within the same field".[341] Noting that Oudart claims this suture movement helps the audiences to construct a narrative space around a semantic meaning, a "signifying sum",[342] Bordwell criticizes it on the ground that, in this process, the audiences must build everything up from the ground level each time the shots change. That is, the process of "stitching" has to be repeated again and again signifying that the audiences have 'learnt' nothing from the previous processes.[343]

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[336] Bordwell, , "Convention, Construction, and Cinematic Vision", 88
[337] Ibid, 89
[338] Kuhn and Westwell, *Oxford Film Dictionary*, "Suture", 417
[339] Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 111
[340] Ibid
[341] Ibid, modified
[342] Ibid
[343] Ibid, 111-12

In its place, Bordwell offers a "constructivist" account where the audiences "come to the image already 'tuned', prepared to test a spatial, temporal, and logical scheme against what the shot presents":[344]

> In this sense, the "signifying sum" often *precedes*, as a hypothesis, the perception of the object…Contrary to Oudart, the viewer checks the shot against what he or she expected to see and adjusts hypotheses accordingly. By using conventional schemata to produce and test hypotheses about a string of shots, the viewer often knows each shot's salient spatial information *before* it appears.[345]

For Bordwell, the audiences read the cues contained within the shots or the editing practices to expect what is being presented in the scene. In this sense, imputing a separate explanation for this conventional process, as done by Oudart, becomes superfluous.

While Bordwell's explanation appears to be satisfactory, it still does not explain reasons for the popularity of what must be a very disorienting technique for the audiences involving, as it does, rapid shift of view points. Bordwell is aware of this problem. A further exploration brings him to the interesting concept of the "contingent universal" which signifies a process of *naturalization of certain repetitive embodied and socio-cultural practices* involving human communication among viewers. Bordwell notes that, given certain uniformities in the environment across cultures, human beings have devised certain ways of dealing with similar phenomena in the society.[346] Bordwell notes: "Neither wholly 'natural' nor wholly 'cultural', these sorts of *contingent universals* are good candidates for being at least partly responsible for the 'naturalness' of artistic conventions."[347] Holding that "face-to-face personal interaction is a solid candidate for a cross-cultural universal", Bordwell says that shot-reverse-shot represents one such "contingent universal":[348]

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[344] Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 112
[345] Ibid, 111
[346] Bordwell, "Convention, Construction, and Cinematic Vision", 91
[347] Ibid, 91, emphasis added
[348] Ibid, 94; the idea of the "universal" is solidly anticipated in both Nyāya theory of perception, where it is called "relational universal", and in Bharata's theory of drama, which deals with "narrative universals" and "action-universals"

As for the instantaneous change of view which is said to create the "ubiquitous" or "ideal" observer: this would seem to be a special case of the immediate leap in time or space caused by any cut, of any sort. And once spectators, presumably from a very young age, have acquired the skill of taking a cut to signal such a shift in orientation, the other cues present in shot/reverse-shot may suffice to motivate the distinct changes of angle.[349]

However, Bordwell's above explanation still seems to be unsatisfactory in the following sense: despite the device's artificiality that assaults the audiences' embodied experiences, how has it managed to become so popular among the audiences? It is felt that a more viable explanation lies in Merleau-Ponty's theory of *chiasm*, where the subjective-objective alteration is *naturally* expected by the body and hence psychologically anticipated by the viewer. Farther research needs to be done in this area to reach a definitive conclusion.

Subjective-Objective Alterations in Tarkovsky's *Zerkalo* (Mirror, 1974)

Merleau-Ponty's notion of *chiasm* would be illustrated through Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Zerkalo* (Mirror, 1974) which presents numerous examples of subjective-objective alterations in cinema.

Tarkovsky replaces narrative logic by an alternate mode of expression in his films: "I am seeking a principle of montage, which would permit me to show the subjective logic – the thought, the dream, the memory – instead of the logic of the subject. Show things that aren't necessarily linked logically."[350] In this connection, Tarkovsky's *Zerkalo* (Mirror, 1974) furnishes one of the most potent examples. It is a semi-autographical film which dwells upon three generations of the Tarkovskys. Their memories are woven within a subjective structure of Tarkovsky's own memories and dreams which are set in three distinct historical periods: 1935-6, when Tarkovsky is three to four years old (having been born in 1932 in the village of Zavrazhye on the river

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[349] Bordwell, "Convention, Construction, and Cinematic Vision", 98

[348] Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky*, 135

Volga), presented mostly through adult Alexei's dreams (probably heard from his mother or father as he must have been too young to remember); the World War II period, when Tarkovsky is a teenager, which primarily occur in the form of his own recollections of these times; and an unidentified present (most probably the 1970s), the vantage point from which Tarkovsky the narrator is moving freely backwards and forwards in time. These memories are interspersed with a newsreel footage that depicts history sweeping through Soviet Union during 1930s to 1950s.[351]

This extremely complex structure of *Mirror* is held together by the narrative voice-over of Tarkovsky, which itself is multi-layered, sometimes reflecting the subjective viewpoint of his mother, sometimes of his own child and adulthood, and sometimes of the collective memory of the historical times in which he lived. Tarkovsky's voice-overs are interspersed with the voice-over recitation by his father, Arseny Tarkovsky, of his own poems. As is clear, these multi-layered narrations set up multiple subjective positions whereby subjects and objects keep interchanging their positions. These are totally different from classical narrations in films in which the unity of a single subject position is always preserved.

The question is when does a subjective image change into an objective one and back again in Tarkovskys' films and what are the signifiers within the images that signal such a change? The following sequence from Tarkovsky's *Mirror* analyzes this process as an intermingling of memory, dream, imagination, and reality in his films.

1. Lady Sitting on the Fence Sequence in *Zerkalo* (Mirror, 1974)

In this sequence, camera tracks slowly to a young woman (Margarita Terekhova) sitting on a fence looking towards a lush green field which is lit by the golden glow of a setting sun. A voice-over starts narrating that this was "our summer place before the war" and continues to wonder whether the man walking up the field is his father. Clearly this is Tarkovsky's voice-over since his poet father, Arseny Tarkovsky, had left the house around 1935-6 never to return again to the family (he having married twice since). However, since Tarkovsky was too young to remember the scene – a brief cutaway

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[351] Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky*, 135

shows an objective view of Tarkovsky and his sister as children sleeping in a hammock - it is obviously the memory of his mother, the lady who is sitting on the fence. The man walking up towards her from the fields is a doctor (Anatoly Solonitsyn) who enquires for direction, flirts with her briefly, and then leaves. While he starts crossing the field, a powerful gust of wind catches him midway. As he looks back and meets the woman's eye, an even more powerful gust roots him to his spot. Finally the doctor leaves as we catch a desiring look in the woman's eyes indicating her loneliness.

Noting that Tarkovsky's childhood *dacha* in this sequence becomes a fountainhead for memories for the narrator Andrei,[352] Skakov notes that the unnatural gusts of wind act as the trigger for Tarkovsky to dramatize and transform the scene from its mundane daily-ness to a realm of mystery.[353] This effect is further accentuated by a treadmill shot involving simultaneous zooming-in and tracking-out that literally deny the viewers a firm ground from where to view the scene. As the mother starts walking towards the house, we hear his father, Arseny Tarkovsky's recitation of his own poem 'First Meetings' which celebrates joys of love and sexual passion.

2. <u>Young Tarkovsky's Imagination Sequence in *Zerkalo* (Mirror, 1974)</u>

As camera tracks past the mother to a window overlooking a garden having a table with rains falling like a solid sheet, a voice recites:

> In the world everything was transfigured, even
>
> Simple things – the basin, the jug – when
>
> Between us stood, as if on watch,
>
> Stratified and solid water

Just as love transforms everyday reality in the poem, so does memory bathe everyday items like the basin, the vase, the pitcher, the rains, and so on. Camera cuts to a close-up of the mother gently wiping her tears. The poem echos the violent historical setting of the times:

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[352] Totaro, "Deleuzian Film Analysis", Accessed Online in June 2016
[353] Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky,* 139, modified

When fate followed behind us on the trail,

Like a madman with a razor in his hand[354]

In this whole sequence, the viewpoint is unusual since it is built up not only of a direct experience (however faint it might be) of what Tarkovsky was told, of what he dreams, and what he imagines (unusual gusts of wind), but also the collective memory of what a whole generation of people in that time think and feel (summer-time dachas were a common occurrence in pre-war Soviet Union).[355]

Jean-Pierre Jeancolas has pointed out that *Mirror*, both in its overall structure and in its frequent movement between past and present, dream and reality, memory and hallucination, voice-over narrations and subjective use of documentary footages have a close analogy with Alain Resnais's film *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) in the latter's continuous panning shots which show a character in several incompatible positions as we have seen in young Tarkovsky's dream sequence above.[356]

Opening Sequence in *L'Anné Dernière à Marienbad* (Last Year at Marienbad, 1961)

Alain Resnais's *Last Year at Marienbad* opens with long tracking shots – signature shots of Resnais – that glide over the luxurious gilded frescoes of Marienbad chateau. In the aural field, two sound tracks are fighting for our attention, an organ and a male voice. They take turns in overpowering each other in a system of ebb and flow. In generating a calculated inconvenience, this organization of images is aimed at destabilizing any stable point of reference for the audiences.[357] In the sequence where the memory of a lady, called A ((Delphine Seyrig), is invoked by a male character, called X (Giorgio Albertazzi), we are confronted with a struggle between the male and the female character

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[354] Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky*, 110-1; all translations of Arseny Tarkovsky's poems are by Alexander Nemser and Nariman Skakov

[355] Maya Turovskaya notes that the above scenario had "an illusive charm of recognition" for the generation born in the '30s who lived these summertime "semi-urban, semi-rural existence" outside of Moscow in the fragile pre-war days; refer Maya Turovskaya, *Tarkovsky: Cinema as Poetry* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989): 65

[356] It is surprising that Tarkovsky doesn't mention Resnais either in his book *Sculpting in Time* or in his *Diary*. However, Resnais's *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1960) and *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) appear to have exercised a significant influence on his filmmaking process; Tarkovsky, however, does mention Godard's *Breathless* and Resnais's *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1960) in the Gordon Interview, mentioned in Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky*, 27, 29

[357] Vaughan, *Where Film Meets Philosophy*, 127-8

as to what had actually happened or hadn't happened between them in the past. In this sense, these memories are more in the nature of "memory-suggestions" than memories of objective facts. The entire film is apparently an effort to convince Lady A through the voice-over narration by X of a reality that seems to have been created in the male character X's mind. In this sequence, while we find A wandering through an open hallway, X speaks off-screen of her clothes and her gestures occurring in a past event. In this sense, A's wanderings in those clothes clearly appears to be a subjective mental image of A held by X. This formal alteration immediately shifts the immanent plane from a subjective to an objective frame of reference. As the scene progresses, we find A trying to adjust herself according to the descriptions being given by X. What these images mean is that A is a memory of X where she is imagined to be in the past, in which A is directly responding to X's speech set in the present. These subjective-objective alterations "fully break the illusion necessary for a stable denotation either between the characters or between the film and the spectator".[358]

In terms of Merleau-Ponty's notion of the *chiasmus*, which signifies a subjective-objective free flow that encroaches upon each other's territory, the radical alterations of the subjective-objective positions in the above sequence, which would be extremely disorienting under normal circumstances, become acceptable at the embodied level of the audiences. However, while Merleau-Ponty's concept of the bodily alterations explains how the physical process is working in the scene, the sequence begs to be understood in deeper psychological terms as to why the characters are appearing to the other in the way they do in the film; Merleau-Ponty's *chiasm* merely explains the bodily processes of the viewers who are able to take the disorientations and disruptions in their stride, but not their deeper psychological affections on the basis of which either the characters exchange roles within the film or the way the characters respond within the scene.

In classical Indian thought, the notion of subjective-objective interaction goes back to the Vedas where it is held that a devotee is 'blessed' by a deity only when the deity *looks at* the devotee while the devotee being aware of it even though he doesn't

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[358] This analysis is influenced by Vaughan's understanding of the sequence in *Where Film Meets Philosophy*, 126-31

meet His eyes for fear of being singed by it. This process is called the *darśan* in Indian philosophy. In Indian art-forms, this process is given concrete shape through various depictions of subjective-objective alterations in Indian performative arts. For example, in Bharata's theory of drama, the 'stage-audience' barrier is broken down by making the audiences a part of the stage as well. While this aspect will be discussed in detail in chapter 4, one must point out that Merleau-Ponty's notion of "encroachment" or the circulating *chiasmus* within each other's space does not appear to have been anticipated by the Indian theoreticians. In the Indian case, subjects and objects neither "encroach" upon each other's space nor is there any mention of these interactions being internalized by the body.

In conclusion, phenomenology's ambitious project is to radically question and alter the very way Western foundation of knowledge is built up. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology shows that embodied understanding of the world is the only concrete foundation required for an effective understanding of the world. In this sense, embodiment acts as the *originary language* written on a "wall" with all other languages being subsequently inscribed on it. When phenomenological thoughts are applied to cinema, which may be considered as the medium par excellence of embodiment in the modern age, one may claim that it is the audiences' embodied senses which ultimately lend "meaning' to every element occurring within a film. While Merleau-Ponty's notion of vision-touch equivalence as the basis of *synesthetic perception* provides a satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon of *haptic visuality* in cinema, his notion of subject-object alterations or the *chiasm*, which not only conditions the viewer's body but also her psychological expectations, adequately explains the popularity of conventional film practices like the *shot-counter shot technique* as well as the Deleuzian *time-images* used by avant-garde filmmakers. In the above sense, incorporation of the body in film discourse is expected to throw light on a foundational aspect of film experience which has been brushed aside by the existing theorization of cinemae.

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Chapter 3

Cinema and Perception
Nyāya Theory of *Pratyakṣa*

He Atita, Tumi Hṛdaye Amar, Katha Kao, Katha Kao!

(O Past! I Beseech You, Speak to Me, Speak *in* My Heart!)

-------- Rabindranath Tagore

Perceptual awareness has no other awareness as its *causal condition par excellence*

--------- Gaṅgeśa Upadhyaya

Classical Indian theories are basically theories of knowledge whose most productive period, called the *Age of the Systems*, can be said to have occurred between 6th BCE to 5th CE with sporadic developments continuing to occur till the present. These philosophical systems, appropriately termed the *darśanas* or 'ways of seeing', construct distinct ontological and epistemological structures that make significant contributions in theorizing the way we experience and understand the world. While these structures have similarities with Western theories, they also have significant differences which indicate that there are some basic differences between the two systems of thought. Amartya Sen notes:

> There are many differences in reasoning within the West and the East, but it would be altogether fanciful to think of a united West confronting 'quintessentially eastern' priorities. It is my claim, rather, that similar - or closely linked – ideas have been pursued in many different parts of the world, which can expand the reach of arguments in Western literature and that the global presence of such reasoning is often overlooked or marginalized in the dominant traditions of contemporary Western discourse.[359]

Since the professed aim of both Eastern and Western systems is to understand reality, a study of their complementarity would be beneficial to each other. However, it is a fact that the contemporary understanding of the world, including cinema, has been dominated

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[359] Amartya Sen, "Preface", in *The Idea of Justice* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), VII – XIX, XIV, modified

by Western theories which make film theories, together with film histories and film studies generally based on them, Eurocentric in nature. As far as cinema is concerned, non-Western theories have either been incorporated in film discourse as "national cinemas" interpreted in terms of post-colonial studies or as "area studies" interpreted by ethnographic experts.[360] While not denying the important contributions made by Western thought in understanding the world, including arts and culture, from which non-Western cultures have borrowed heavily, it is, however, a matter of history that the West has significantly borrowed from non-Western theories as well, with some of them even forming the foundations of Western theories today. Unfortunately, these latter borrowings have generally remained below the threshold of common knowledge. In this work, I point out three such instances: Saussure's borrowings from Sanskrit and Buddhist linguistics to construct his structuralist thoughts, the influence of Ānandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* or suggestion and its elaboration by Abhinavagupta on the formation of Lacan's poststructuralist thought and the influence of the Yoga theory on Carl Gustav Jung's notion of the collective unconscious. It is perhaps time to break the *glass ceiling* formed by a core group of Western theories in order to reach a state where the whole world becomes a significant contributor to the advancement of knowledge and culture in a globalized world. In the context of cinema, its world-wide popularity has made the task even more urgent today.

It is rather surprising that the classical Indian theory of Nyāya signals a striking departure from conventional Indian thought in the same way as Merleau-Ponty does from Western thought. Like Merleau-Ponty, Nyāya also takes "the body" to be the sole arbiter of the world. While both hold that all knowledge is experiential knowledge gathered by "the body", their only difference lies in holding where this knowledge is finally stored: while both Merleau-Ponty and Nyāya are similar in holding that its primary source is "the body" itself, Nyāya conceives an additional entity called "the self" (*ātma*) where all mechanical interactions registered in "the body" finally get stored as "knowledge".

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[360] Kuhn and Westwell, "National Cinema", in *Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies*, 277-78, also "India, Film In", 224-26

Nyāya presents one of the most comprehensive and sophisticated analysis of perception in history. Its chief contribution to cinema lies in the following two areas: first, human beings have a *given* urge to integrate into a *narrative whole* all elements occurring within one's perceptual field and, secondly, perception is a product of the *mode of appearance* of the narratively integrated entity within view and its *mode of presentation* to the viewer.

Nyāya belongs to the *direct realist* school in perception, an expression which needs a brief explanation. While Nyāya considers material existenses to be real which are *objectively* cognized (as against some of the Buddhist schools with whom it had a running battle for ages), they lead to *subjective* experiences of "objects" and "relation between objects" in the perceiver (an aspect which physical sciences deny). Nyāya holds that all "knowledge" of the above kind are represented by the standard epistemic formula "qualifier + qualificand + relationship = unit of perception", where a 'property' *qualifies* a 'location' through a *functional relationship* to generate a unit of pereception in the perceiver. Nyāya holds that the formula gives the *mode of appearance* of an entity to the perceiver, like a "flower" or a "book", an *appearance* which occurs in terms of the perceiver's experiences of life in the world. Nyāya farther holds that the *mode of presentation* of this entity, given by the sense-object trajectory operating between the percept and the perceiver, generates an *embodied sense* in the perceiver. According to Nyāya, final perception is a product of the *mode of appearance* and the *mode of presentation* of an entity to the perceiver.

An important aspect of the Nyāya theory of perception is that the perceiver forever seeks to combine elements appearing within its perceptual field into an *integrated whole* which helps the organism to respond to the scene as a whole, a process essential for its survival. In this sense, perception is a "goal-directed" activity in the Nyāya theory that invariably seeks a "closure". An urge for *narrative construction of an "integrated whole" is, thus, in-built in human psyche*, an essential aspect on which Nyāya theory of perception is based. Since "Indian epistemologies are through and through causal

theories",[361] the narratives that are built in perception are *causal narratives* which inter-alia becomes a *given* condition of human psychology.

After a brief presentation of contemporary scientific thoughts on perception relevant for cinema in the first section, Nyāya theory of perception will be elaborated in the following two parts:

Part 1: Nyāya Theory of Perception

In the second section, after historically situating the Nyāya School in the context of classical Indian thought, Nyāya ontology will be briefly analyzed in terms of its constituting elements of "the self", "consciousness" and "the body".

In the third, and, by far the most important section, Nyāya epistemology will be analyzed in terms of the formation of the "mode of appearance" of an entity within a perceiver represented by the Nyāya epistemic formula, also called the Nyāya fundamental formula of perception, "qualifier + qualified + relationship = unit of perception". In the process, Nyāya notion of "causality", which underlies the above process, will be analyzed. In this connection, the formation of "invariable sequences", "universals" and "classes" as important concepts which, together, acts as the "limitor" of "knowledge" for a perceiver will be highlighted.

In the fourth, "mode of presentation", involving the sense-object trajectoey operating between the perceiver and her view will be analyzed.

In the fifth section, parallels will be drawn between principles of Nyāya perception and the compositional principles of Indian visual arts.

Part 2: Application of Nyāya Theory of Perception to Cinema

The sixth section will undertake a reading of visual images in order to highlight the roles that Nyāya perceptual tools play in generating audience perception and their associated emotions.

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[361] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 149

The seventh section will apply Nyāya theory of perception to the dominant film practices of *montage* and *continuity* in order to mark its superiority in explaining those "events" in relation to the existing film theories.

The eighth section will examine Nyāya theory of *absence*, which holds that *situational absences* are *directly* perceived by the viewers, in the context of cinema.

The ninth and the final section will examine Nyāya theory of vision-touch equivalence, termed *visual synesthesia*, which not only anticipates Merleau-Ponty's theory of *synaesthetic perception* but also exceeds it in certain respects.

Perception in Contemporary Science

Contemporary western thoughts on perception of a thing or a view is explained on the basis of a "lower order" *direct* perception advocated by J. J. Gibson and a "higher order" *representational* perception constructed by higher faculties.[362] Generally the "higher order" has been preferred over the "lower" resulting in the impoverishment of an in-depth understanding of the perceptual process, including that occurring in cinema.

While Gibson's theory is based on an ecologically driven *direct* and *immediate* understanding of what is occurring within view, in the theory of *indirect* or *mediated* perception where what one perceives is converted into mental representations to be read by "higher order" cognitive faculties.[363] Both these theories draw their sustenance from the German physicist Hermann von Helmholtz's "likelihood principle" formulated in 1850: *we perceive that which, in our normal life, are most likely to have produced the effective sensory stimulation we have received*.[364] In using the terms "normal life", Helmholtz had reasoned that "the sensory signals had meaning only in relation to

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[362] OERD defines "perception" as 'the ability of the mind to refer to sensory perception of an external object as its cause'

[363] Joseph and Barbara Anderson, "The Case for an Ecological Metatheory", in *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies*, Eds. David Bordwell and Noël Carroll (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996): 347-67, 353

[364] Helmholtz's rule is compressed and rephrased from his *Treatise on Physiological Optic*, Vol. 3, Trans. & Ed. J. P. C. Southall (Rochester, New York: The Optical Society of America, 1924-25): 4-13, quoted in Julian Hochberg and Virginia Brooks, "Movies in the Mind's Eye", in *Post-Theory*, 368-87, 373, original emphasis

associations built up by learning".[365] Helmholtzian "normal life", meaning culture rather than raw nature, forms the basis for both Gibson's ecologically-learnt direct perception and the representational theory of symbolic learning. The jury is still out on these issues.

Wrestling with the question how moving organisms adjust to changing patterns of light and other sensations in order to pinpoint the location and physical dimensions of an entity accurately, Gibson reasoned that certain information remain "invariant" for an organism in midst of the plethora of sensations being received by it all the time. In other words, in what Gibson calls an ecological approach, perception and action remain "tightly interlocked and mutually constraining".[366] On the question of how the *Ames Room*, which has tilted floors and walls that do not form square corners, produces the perceptual illusion of a 'normal' room when viewed through a peephole, Vilayanur Ramachandran and Stuart Anstis advance the above line of thought by proposing that visual systems make the following three "assumptions" in order to *stabilize* the perceived world: "objects" remain in continuous existence, "objects" are rigid making all their parts move together, and a moving "object" progressively covers and uncovers portions of its background.[367] Ramachandran and Anstis categorically state that all these assumptions operate *directly* at the "lower level" of perception in which no thoughts are involved:

> [Our experiments] were designed to eliminate the effects of high-level cognition; specifically, we flashed images at speeds too rapid to allow the brain to make thoughtful decisions about what it was seeing. Our results therefore suggest that low-level processes can, on their own, control the perception of apparent motion during the early stages of visual processing.[368]

Joseph and Barabara Anderson note:

> Information, then, consists of *patterns of actual relationships between objects in the real world*. It is not something added or deduced or inferred from raw data.

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[365] Anderson and Anderson, "Ecological Metatheory", 352-53

[366] Ibid, 349-50

[367] Ibid, 357

[368] Vilayanur S. Ramachandran and Stuart M. Anstis, "The Perception of Apparent Motion", *Scientific American*, 254 No. 6 (1986): 102-09, 109, quoted in Anderson and Anderson, "Ecological Metatheory", 359

The information contained in these patterns of light is encountered directly by the visual system and processed immediately and ongoingly without the necessity of high-level logical or linguistic constructions which only humans might be able to perform, for after all perception is not unique to humans – it began with the fish. This is what Gibson meant by "direct perception".[369]

In other words, perception becomes a process of selection of certain patterns based on perceptual schemata in order to 'see'. The Andersons note: "This is not to say, however, that we see only what we know. It is rather, in Neisser's words, 'we can see only that which we know how to look for'."[370] The Andersons farther observe that only when one moves from perceiving simple "objects" to other items of furniture, involving complex perception of "relation between objects", like a chest of drawers, etc., it requires a leap of abstraction needing "higher-level" faculties.[371] In the context of cinema, the Andersons persuasively argue that, while movies do go beyond basic-level categorization, yet it is this basic perceptual level of the film-viewing experience that allows intellectual and cultural abstractions to make sense on top of them. However, film theories generally priviledge higher-level processes at the cost of "low-level" perception.[372] Even though scientific research is continuously discovering how complex perceptual processes are, yet the Gibsonian idea that some basic assumptions are necessary to give stability to what one perceives has struck deep root.[373]

Even Hochberg and Brooks, who detail scientific discoveries that undercut common-sense beliefs about perception, favorably comment on Helmholtz's "normal life" criterion of his *likelihood principle* "That principle must surely be at least approximately true, or we could not survive",[374] hinting that perception is ultimately the result of a progressive learning of embodied and socio-cultural practices of the perceiver.

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[369] Anderson and Anderson, "Ecological Metatheory", 360-61

[370] Ulric Neisser, *Cognition and Reality* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1976): 20, quoted in Anderson and Anderson, "Ecological Metatheory", 362

[371] Anderson and Anderson, "Ecological Metatheory", 365

[372] Ibid, 365-66

[373] For a detailed description of the scientific discoveries, see Julian Hochberg and Virginia Brooks, "Movies in the Mind's Eye"

[374] Hochberg and Brooks, "Movies in the Mind's Eye", 373

Illustration 2: Concepts in Nyāya Theory of Perception

The Self: It is a transcendental 'substance', acting as a location for material properties generated by the body to accrue as "knowledge". Since the self belongs to a different existential plane, its connection with the body is illusory and the "knowledge" that accrues is accidental; the self within itself is devoid of all consciousness and agency.

The Body: "The body" acts on the basis of the following three factors: *sense organs and the mind* detect and classify sense data, its *purpose* being to maximize bodily experiences of maximizing 'pleasue', minimizing 'pain', and being 'indifferent' towards others.

Consciousness: There being no separate conception of "consciousness" in the Nyāya theory, it is apparently conceived as an *effect* of the body's interactions with the world. In this sense, it is an *intentional consciousness* which 'completes' "objects" and "relation between objects" within view on the basis of "the body's" interactions with the world which finally register as "knowledge" in "the self".

Perception: In the perceptual process, an undetermined "particular" sensed by the organs triggers the memory of a "universal" representing an "object", a "quality", or an "action" which is then linked to the "particular" through a functional "relationship" that constitutes its "mode of appearance" to the perceiver, given by the epistemic formula "Qualifier + Qualified + Relationship = Unit of Perception". The "mode of presentation" gives an embodied 'measure' of the 'event' to the perceiver. According to Nyāya, final perception is a product of the "mode of appearance" and "mode of presentation" of an entity to the perceiver resulting from the perceiver's embodied and socio-cultural practices of life.

1. **Perception of an "Object"**

    Ex: "Particular" + "Flower-Hood" + Functional "Relationship" → "This is a Flower"

2. **Perception of "Relation between Objects"**

    Ex: "Lady" + " Books" + "Study-hood" → "She is Studying"

Part 1

Ontology and Epistemology of Nyāya Theory of Perception

The present section will discuss the following issues: the *historical position of Nyāya* in classical Indian thought; *Nyāya ontology of perception*, involving the notions of "the self", "consciousness" and "the body" where the latter is a part of "matter" and "consciousness" is an *effect* of "the body's" interactions with the material world; and *Nyāya epistemology of perception* being a product of the formation of "mode of appearance" and "mode of presentation" within view based on the perceiver's embodied experiences of the world and his socio-cultural practices of life.

Historically Situating Nyāya

The most philosophically potent section of the Vedas (c. 2000 BCE) is the Upaniṣads (c. 1000-700 BCE) whose basic principle says that the inner drive that permeates the self (*ātma*) within each person is similar to the drive that permeatrs the universe (*Brahman*), the underlying source of all things. In other words, microcosm is equivalent to macrocosm expressed in what have been called the 'great sayings' (*mahāvākyas*), like *Brahman = ātma* or *tat twam asi* ('you are that'),[375] which opened a philosophical discourse on the subject in Indian thought.[376] This identity between the internal order (*ṛta*, 'cosmic law')[377] of the cosmos and the internal functioning (*ātma*, 'the self') of the sentient being is modeled on the principle of a living organism undergoing cyclical processes of growth, decay, and regeneration in case of the self and evolution, existence, and involution in case of the cosmos, an article of faith for orthodox "Hindu" theories.

Both in its defence and in opposition to this principle, a series of Indian theories emerged between 6th/5th century BCE and 5th century CE, a process which continued less extensively till almost the present times. Called the "Age of the Systems", it involved a major bifurcation of thought in Indian philosophy during the classical period between six

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[375] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy,* 2

[376] Ibid, 1

[377] Since *ṛta* is generally equated with the word *ritu* or the 'seasons', the internal order of the cosmos is often confused with the cyclical change of seasons; however, *ṛta* as the cosmic order has more to do with the principle of indestructibility of matter and force, with change representing a process of transformation of matter generally expressed in the form of the *law of karma*

orthodox "Hindu" theories owing their allegiance to the Vedas[378] and six heterodox theories opposing the Vedas (See Illustration 3: Genealogy of Classical Indian Schools). The "Hindu" theories are further subdivided between the "realist" schools of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsā on the one hand and the "dualist/idealist" schools of Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Advaita Vedānta, and Kashmir Śaivism on the other. The former group are called the "atomists" who hold that "matter' is constituted of "atoms" which, through various permutations and combinations, generate the material forms of the world; the other group are called the "substantialists" in which, while Sāṃkhya-Yoga held that existence consists of a dualism between "pure consciousness" (*puruṣa*) and "matter" (*prakṛti*), Advaita Vedānta and Kashmir Śaivism[379] held that existence is a monism where "pure consciousness" (*brahman*, *param śiva*) constitutes the whole universe, with "the self", empirical "consciousness", and "the body" being various moments of it. The heterodox theories of Buddhism, Jainism, and Materialism deny the authority of the Vedas. While for Buddhism, the whole universe is constituted of momentarily existing phenomenal "ultimates", called the *dharmas*, and for Materialism the universe is an epiphenomena of matter, Jainism seeks to synthesize in its ontology and epistemology the orthodox theories of being and the Buddhist theories of becoming or change. In almost an exact mirroring of the realism-dualism/monism divide in the orthodox theories, Buddhism is equally divided in four "realist" and "idealist" schools. The "Genealogy of Classical Indian Schools" is presented below for a better grasp.

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[378] It may be noted that not all orthodox theories abide by the *Brahman = ātma* doctrine; Thus, both Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya-Yoga are pluralistic doctrines which remain irreducible to monism which *Upaniṣads* imply

[379] Kashmir Śaivism is not a product of the Vedas but of the Tantras whose lineage is considered to be even older than the Vedas. The Tnatras advocate a more direct involvement with the material world, called the *agama* or the positive path, which is considered to be necessary for attaining control over "matter". In contrast, the Vedic line advocates the negative path of shunning the material world, called the *nigama*. However, in the course of its development, Kashmir Śaivism had become close to Advaiata Vedānta in many ways.

Illustration 3: Genealogy of Classical Indian Schools

Vedas

(Ṛg-veda, Sam-veda, Yajur-veda, Atharva-veda)

(c. 2000 BCE)

Mantras Brahmanas Aranyakas **Upaniṣads**

(c. 1000–700 BCE)

Tantras

(**Śaiva, Vaishnava** & **Śakti Schools** of **Tantra-Mantra**)

(Older than the Vedas)

⋮

Kashmir Śaivism

(c. 9th CE)

Non-Vedic Thought

Systematization of Heterodox Schools

(c. 6th BCE)

Jainism	Buddhism	Materialism
(Mahavira)	(Buddha)	(Cārvāka)
(540–468 BCE)	(563–483 BCE)	(Pre-Buddha)

Hīnayāna (c. 400 BCE) **Mahāyāna** (c. 400 BCE)

Systematization of Orthodox Schools

Sāṃkhya	Vaiśeṣika	Mīmāṃsā	Vedānata
(Kapila)	(Kanāda)	(Jaimini)	(Badarayana)
(c. 7th/6th BCE)	(c. 3rd BCE)	(c. 2nd BCE)	(c. 2nd BCE)

Yoga (Patañjali) (c. 2nd CE)

Nyāya (Gautama) (c. 2nd CE)

Kumārila (c. 8th CE) **Prabhākara** (c. 8th CE)

Advaita Vedānta (Śankarācārya) (788-820 CE)

Navya-Nyāya (Gaṅgeśa) (C. 13th CE)

Integral Yoga (Sri Aurobindo) (1872-1950)

Raghunātha Śiromaṇi (c. 16th CE)

Vaibhāṣika (Vasubandhu) (c. 1st CE)

Yogācāra (Asanga) (c. 1st CE)

Mādhyamika (Nāgārjuna) (c. 2nd CE)

Sautrāntika (Vasubandhu) (c. 5th CE)

Digñāga (c. 6th CE)

Dharmakīrti (c. 7th CE)

Nyāya Ontology

Orthodox Indian theories, called the "Hindu" theories, generally analyze existence in terms of the following three entities, "the self", "consciousness", "the body", the latter being part of "matter" or the material world. These aspects, which have been elaborated in Annexure 1, are briefly presented below.

In Nyāya, "the self" is an *unconscious* 'entity' which is totally *devoid of any kind of agency*. Whatever happens to it is due to its *'false' identification with matter*. Due to such identification, an idea which is common across all classical Indian theories, "the body's" interactions with the world accrue as "knowledge" in "the self" despite the two existing in two different existential planes. This has been made possible through "the self's" *illusory identification* with "the body" which makes "the self" acquire all the experiences that "the body" undergoes in relation to "matter" including inheriting all its propensities which drives "the body" in the material world. By, thus, acquiring an *agency*, "the self" continues to act through "the body" on the world till it is able to free itself from "the body" by attaining true knowledge resulting in its liberation (*mokṣa*). In liberation, "the self" regains its original nature of being an unconscious, agency-less entity as conceived by Nyāya. In this state, it is unable to cognize anything at all, thereby living a 'blind' existence for all practical purposes. This *passive* phase of "the self" is not important at all; rather, its *active* phase, representing its illusory identification with "the body", is crucial for us. In this phase, "the self" is entirely dependent on "the body" for any kind of experience at all. Chatterjee notes: "the self can never have knowledge in a disembodied state; it is only an embodied being that can have cognition".[380] She goes on to add: "Not only of cognition, but the body is the locus of all experiences"[381] for "the self". Since in this active phase, "the self" is synonymous with "the body" for all practical purposes, why does Nyāya feel compelled to conceive of "the self" as a separate entity at all? Larson and Bhattacharya offer a significant explanation.[382] Since the material processes of "the body" is ultimately an unconscious mechanical process which

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[380] Amita Chatterjee, "Embodiment and Nyāya Philosophy", Seminar on "The Philosophical Contributions of Professor Sibajiban Bhattacharya", University of Calcutta, December 12, 2011: 1-13, 5

[381] Ibid

[382] Gerald James Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, Eds. Sāṃkhya: A Dualist Tradition, in *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. IV, Gen. Ed. Karl H. Potter (Delhi: Motilal Banrasidass, 1987), 79

goes on endlessly till a system lasts, it has no *conscious content* which makes the world 'pointless' after all. In order to break this 'meaningless' cycle, "the self" has been conceived as a transcendental entity as an *absolute measure* of the activites going on in the world.[383] In this sense, "the self" acts as the absolute constant of the speed of light which provides the only true 'measure' in the relativity of the universe. In view of "the self's" amalgamation with "the body" in the world, the Nyāya ontological system may be appropriately conceived as *the self-body system*. The Neuroscientist António Damátio reaches similar conclusions when he says that every conscious event is invariably passed through the bodily loop before a final judgment is made by a person.[384] In other words, all decisions carry somatic marks, an aspect to be elaborated subsequently.

Arguably, Nyāya considers "consciousness" to be an *effect* of "the bodys'" interactions with the world. Since such material activities are ultimately based on "matter's" property of discrimination (*sattva*), incessant motion (*rajas*) and determinate material formations (*tamas*) – these properties of "matter", originally conceived by the Sāṃkhy school, has come to form the bedrock of all orthodox Indian theories – in Nyāya "consciousness" literally serves the purpose of bringing such activities within "the self's" domain. In this sense, "consciousness" appears to be *intentional* in the Nyāya theory.

The Nyāya notion of "the body", involving the sense organs and the mind, forms an autonomous, self-sustaining biomechanical system in the Indian theories. Schweitzer notes: "By including the mind in the realm of matter, mental events are granted causal efficacy, and are, therefore, able to directly initiate bodily actions".[385] In this way, Nyāya ensures that the process of mental causation follows physical conservation laws, held sacrosanct by both Eastern and Western theories, whose violation poses a major difficulty for the Cartesian *mind-body system*. However, despite this change, Schweitzer notes that the system is still unable to answer the following question: *how can an unconscious*

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[383] Larson and Bhattacharya, Sāṃkhya, 79

[384] António R. Damátio, *Descartes' Error: Emotions, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Putnam Publishers, 1994), 22

[385] Paul Schweitzer, "Mind/Consciousness Dualism in Sāṅkhya-Yoga Philosophy", in *Indian Philosophy: A Collection of Readings*, Vol. 3: Metaphysics, Ed. R. W. Perrett (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000): 327-41, 331

material process get represented in one's consciousness which occurs in a different existential plane? Schweitzer comments:

> The deep philosophical problem in case of human perception lies…in the fact that such *perceptual structures are imbued with consciousness*…It is consciousness, rather than content, which provides the most compelling reasons for dualism.[386]

In effect, thus, Nyāya merely shifts the Cartesian mind-body duality to consciousness-body or self-body duality which still begs for a satisfactory answer.

For a detailed analysis, see Annexure 1.

Nyāya Concept of "The Self-Body System"

The functions of "the self", "consciousness", and "the body" as delineated above in the Nyāya theory are summed up below:

1st Stage: Generation of Sense Awareness and its Classification by "The Body"

1. The sense organs *sense* an undefined "particular";

2. The mind, which acts as the *memory-bank* in Indian theories, *matches data* to earlier experiences of 'plasure', 'pain', or 'indifference' felt by "the body";

3. "The body" reflexively responds to the sensations in trying to maximize 'pleasure', minimize 'pain', and feel 'indifference' towards others.

2nd Stage: "Intentional Consciousness" generates "Awareness" in "The Self"

"Intentional consciousness", which arises contingently as an effect of "the body's" interactions with the world, makes "the self" *aware* of such interactions.

3rd Stage: Generation of "Knowledge" in "the Self"

Interactions of "the body" with matter accrue as "knowledge" in "the self" in the course of its illusory identification with "the body". It converts perceptual elements into an *integrated whole* for the organism to respond to the scene as a *whole*.

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[386] Schweitzer, "Mind/Consciousness Dualism", 334, emphasis added

Nyāya Epistemology of Perception

The word *pratyakṣa* or perception is etymologically made up of two elements *prati* meaning 'to, before, or near' and *akṣa* meaning 'sense organ' which together mean 'present to or before the sense organ' and hence called a *direct* or *immediate* experience.[387] *Nyāyasūtra* (c. 2nd CE), the original text of Nyāya by its founder Gautama, gives the following definition of "perception" (*pratyakṣa*):

> Perception is knowledge that arises from the contact of a sense with its object which is determinate, non-deviating, and non-verbal.[388]

The above qualifications serve the following purpose: eliminate doubt by being 'determinate' or certain (*vyavasāyātmaka*), eliminate false cognitions or illusions by being 'non-deviating' or non-promiscuous (*a-vyabhicārin*), and eliminate the influence of verbal knowledge by being direct or 'non-verbal' (*a-vyapadeśya*).[389] The Neo-Nyāya logician Gaṅgeśa Upadhyaya (c. 13th CE) gives another definition of perception from the point of view of its *immediacy* and *directness*:

> "Perceptual awareness has no other awareness as its *causal condition par excellence*".[390]

According to Gaṅgeśa, "causal condition par excellence" means a causal factor that has no mediating condition, called "operation" or *vyāpāra* in classical theories. In other words, it is not only *immediate* but also *direct*.[391]

The above two highly condensed definitions, however, assume the fulfillment of certain other internal and external conditions for perception to occur. One of the basic internal requirements is that the "sense-organs" must be in touch with the *object*, the "mind" must be in touch with the "sense organs", and "the self" must be in touch with the "mind" for perception to take place. What the above conditions imply is that the

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[387] D. M. Datta, *The Six Ways of Knowing: A Critical Study of the Advaita Theory of Knowledge* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1972): Footnote 1, 34

[388] *Nyāyasūtra*, 1.1.4, quoted in Matilal, *Perception*, 228

[389] Matilal, *Perception*, 228

[390] Karl Potter and Sibajiban Bhattacharyya, "Epistemology", in Vol. II: The Tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Up To Gaṅgeśa, in *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, (Delhi: Motilal Banrasidass, 1977): 53-67, 58, emphasis added

[391] Ibid, 59

perceiver must pay *attention* for perception to occur. Externally, three kinds of defects need elimination for an effective perception to occur: *envioronmental defects*, like haze, bad lighting, distance, etc; *pathological defects*, like myopia, etc; and *cognitive defects*, like a retarded capacity to know, etc.[392] Potter notes that among the full collection of factors (*kāraṇa-sāmagrī*) that provides sufficient condition for perception to occur as an effect,[393] while some may appear to be more prominent than the others, the presence of all "accessory" causes are ultimately for perception to occur.[394]

While the above definitions describe the nature of perception and the 'ideal' conditions under which it may occur, they do not describe either the *perceptual structure* of what is being perceived and how i.e. the content of perceptual knowledge or the *perceptual process* as a result of which perception occurs within the perceiver. These aspects are described below.

Perceptual Knowledge

Nyāya perception is a product of two experiential modes viz. the "mode of appearance", which constructs an "event" in perception, and the "mode of presentation", which gives a 'measure' of that "event" to the perceiver. These processes are briefly described below.

"Mode of Appearance" in Perception

The commonsense knowledge that not everything combines with everything else in the world may be represented as "A + B + Relation" where A and B only in a particular "mode of appearance" combine with each other. In the above sense, the role of "relation" becomes crucial: it signifies that only a particular functional "relationship" between A and B would make them combine in reality. Applying this insight to perception, Nyāya holds that while a plethora of sensations from the world keep being received by a person, not all of them combine to form perception. Only elements which appear in particular "modes of appearance" to the perceiver would combine through a particular functional relationship to generate perception within the perceiver. Noting that it is a common

[392] Jonardon Ganeri, *Semantic Powers: Meaning and the Means of Knowing in Classical Indian Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999): 69

[393] Potter, "Relations", Vol. II: The Tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Up To Gaṅgeśa, in *Encyclopedia*, 47-68, 55

[394] Ibid

human characteristic, Ganeri mentions: "We do not, in general, think of objects in general terms, but only in so far as the objects are presented to us in certain 'ways', 'modes', or 'guises'."[395]

Nyāya elaborates the perceptual process as follows: when an undetermined "particular" is sensed by the sense-organs, it triggers the memory of an "object", a "quality", or an "action" in the mind of the perceiver, which "the self", acting through "the body", proceeds to combine with the "particular" in terms of a functional "relationship" to form an "invariable sequence" in perception that results in the appearance of an "object", etc, to the perceiver. Such triggered memories are called "universals" (*sāmānya*) in Nyāya theory, an aspect which would be discussed in greater detail in a subsequent section. The important point is that these "universals" do not represent memories of "objects" in general, but only in their particular "modes of appearance". Thus, while a "flower" may appear in the "mode of appearance" of being a symbol of love to a suitor or a decorative piece to a lady, it may appear in the form of a plant-specimen to a scientist. In other words, the process of the imposition of the "flower-property" on the "particular" would differ depending on whether it is being perceivied as a *decorative piece* or as a *plant-specie*, the functional relationship that combines the "qualifier" with the "particular" being different in the two cases. Thus, even though all of them perceive the same "object" viz. "This is a flower", their individual understanding of the perceived "object" would be different in different cases. Nyāya captures this crucial insight in the following formula for perception:

Qualifier + Qualificand + Relationship = Unit of Perception

Matilal defines such an epistemic process as a *property-location event*: "A cognitive event is usually said to locate a property in a locus, the form being 'x has p' or 'p is in x" occurring in the Nyāya formula "qualifier + qualificand + relation".[396] The above formula, called the fundamental principle of knowledge in Nyāya, is significant since it not only represents the *structure of perception* viz. qualifier-qualified-relationship, but also the *internal process*, in which the qualifier acts as a property of the qualificand

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[395] Ganeri, *Semantic Powers*, 140, modified
[396] Matilal, *Logic, Language & Reality*, 115

related through a functional relationship which forms a particular "mode of appearance" for the perceiver. Mohanty notes that, even though Nyāya is a robust realist, it moves away from the notion that things are *directly perceived as they occur in reality* to a position where *things occur in a particular mode of appearance alone.*[397] In the above sense, Mohanty comments: "Analysis of cognition is not an analysis of the object in the *ontological mode*, but rather of the content in an *epistemological mode*".[398] The above idea leads to the "two-component theory" of knowledge by the Neo-Naiyāyika, Gadadhara Bhattacharya (c. 17th/18th CE):[399]

Meaning of a Perceptual Unit = Referent + Mode of Appearance

There is a marked difference between the Nyāya theory of perception and Western thoughts on the subject. It is now widely held in the West that any kind of thinking, including thinking arising from perception, is impossible without using language. However, according to Neo-Nyāya or Navya-Nyāya (c. 13th CE) theory, a logical extension of Nyāya, a word only refers to a 'neutral' concept of an object or a thing in its generalized form, but not to its specific "mode of appearance" which may only be deciphered by the receiver from the context in which the word is being used.[400] Thus, the world "flower" does not indicate whether it is being perceived in the "mode" of being a thing of beauty or as a plant specimen. Nyāya holds that since, there is no way of expressing such "modes of appearances" in conventional language, perception can not be *exactly* reproduced in common language.[401] For the exact representation of perception, Nyāya develops a technical language which need not detain us here.

It is quite clear that the "mode of appearance" (*paryāya*) of a thing to a perceiver is a matter of her embodied experiences of the world and her socio-cultural practices of life. Habituation to certain experiences in life leads to the formation of an "invariable

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[397] Matilal, *Perception*, 114

[398] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 148, emphasis added

[399] Ganeri, *Semantic Powers*, 5

[400] Sibajiban Bhattacharyya and Karl H. Potter, "Introduction", in *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. XIII: Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Philosophy from 1515 to 1660, Eds. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2011): 35-177, 98

[401] Karl H. Potter and Sibajiban Bhattacharyya, "Metaphysics", in *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. VI: Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika from Gaṅgeśa to Raghunātha Śiromaṇi, Eds. Reprint (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2001): 19-51, 26

sequence" in her perception. Thus, the triggered impression of a "flower" would not arise in a person who has never seen or heard about "flowers".

Mohanty holds that "Indian epistemologies are through and through causal theories".[402] The formation of an 'invariable sequence' between an undefined "particular" which triggers the memory of an "object" in a particular "mode of appearance" also represents a "causal" process. The question is what form of "causality" works in the Nyāya perceptual process? Classical Indian theories generally advocate two forms of "causality", one which brings about *real transformation* among the elements while the other only 'generates' an *apparent transformation* in the eyes of the perceiver. Leaving aside the huge debate that had ensued between these two positions in classical Indian thought, in case of perception, all theories appear to agree that it is only a case of an *apparent transformation* where the perceiver *narratively integrates a whole* from the elements occurring within view. Devoid of real transformation, it represents the operation of a "powerless causality" which the Buddhists prescribe in all cases while the other Indian schools follow primarily in case of perception alone.

The Notion of "Powerless Causality" in Nyāya Theory of Perception

For the Buddhists, the world is constituted of momentarily existing phenomenal "ultimates" or the *dharmas* which exhaust all their potentiality in coming into being alone.[403] Having no residual "power" left in them, an "ultimate" disappears immediately. In the absence of a real power to *cause* anything, the Buddhists explain "causality" as a coincidental coexistence of "ultimates" occurring in a series that give the *appearance* of stable objects and things on the surface. Since the Buddhists conceive the "ultimates" to be *experiential* entities which appear in five different forms, a certain series of them either alone or in combination gives the impression of *streams of consciousness* in terms of their *experiential contents*. In the above sense, Buddhist "causality" represents the formation of an "invariable sequence" constituted of a 'before' and an 'after' between different series of "ultimates" which produce in perception the false impression of being

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[402] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 149

[403] The Buddhist notion of being or existence (*sattva*) is the capacity of an "ultimate" to arise and exist for a moment. Since these "ultimates" constitute various experiences, a similar series of "ultimates" would generate a 'false' sense of continuity within the series. See Dasgupta, *A History*, 160

physically *related*. For the Buddhists, a *causal process* at the most basic level signifies the momentary existence of an "ultimate" that *does not obstruct* the emergence of another "ultimate" expressed in the formula "if *x* is, *y* happens". Hume has been influenced by this idea of coexistence of things forming an integrated whole in perception:

> Hume pointed out that, however many times we may observe that one event is followed by another, we can never observe any *power* or *necessity* that would make the effect follow from a cause. In the end, we have only two events, one of which is repeatedly observed to follow from another. Hume's stance is the basis for most latter thinking on causation, including contemporary probabilistic theories, according to which, we say that there is an extremely high probability that the second event will follow the first.[404]

However, despite being the basis for the formation of "invariable sequences" within perception, the Buddhist theory does not mean a 'free-for-all'. It holds that the space momentarily occupied by *x* would be 'conditioned' in a manner that only *y* would emerge there. The Buddhists explain their *karma* theory of "dependent origination" (*pratīya samutpāda*), involving a 12-fold link underlying 'existence' and 'change' in the phenomenal world, on the same basis.

Nyāya adopts this notion of "powerless causality" from the Buddhists and applies it in its theory of perception. Mohanty notes:

> The relation of "causality" – stripped of the notion of "power" – was analyzed into (a) a substance, a quality, or an action, and (b) the relation of "invariable temporal precedence" (*niyatapūrvavartitva*).[405]

Nyāya holds that "perceptual knowledge" is entirely constructed on the basis of two entities appearing in specific "modes of appearance" that form an "invariable sequence" in perception which produces the "object", etc, as an *integrated whole* for the perceiver. In this process, the causal power only *apparently* links the objects in perception in terms

[404] David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan, "Causality", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, Eds. (London: Routledge, 2005): 48-52, 48
[405] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 58

of the perceiver's embodied and socio-cultural practices of life without any *real transformation* occurring there.[406] In this sense, classical Indian theories are distinguished in analyzing an "event" from the *perceiver's point of view* in contrast to the more common Western mode of the *speaker's point of view.*[407]

In the following sections, the specific nature and implications that a "mode of appearance" has as a "universal" and as its sub-category of "class" in case of perception would be explained.

The Concept of the "Universal" in Nyāya Theory of Perception

The concept of the "universal" (*sāmānya*, 'general') is a seminal Nyāya contribution to the understanding of the perceptual process. It basically represents the "mode of appearance" of a perceptual element, e.g., an "object", "quality" or "action" which gets triggered by the sense-data interacting with an undetermined "particular" in the surrounding vicinity. Bhattacharya notes that an ideal way of understanding the Nyāya concept of the "universal" is to assume that a property or a set of properties is shared in common by all who belong to a general term. In other words, a common property becomes the ground for the application of a general term to a group of entities or individuals.[408] Thus, a lady with books in front may generate the cognition "She is studying" as a common term linking her with the books, provided the cues occurring in the scene trigger the underlying "universals" of the lady being a "student", the books being "study-material" and their functional relationship being "studying", all the "universals" being based on the perceivers' embodied and habitual experiences of socio-cultural life. The formation of these images in memory is rather 'loose' being triggered by even an indistinct cue acting as a "sign" for a particular "object" for the perceiver.

In contrast to 'simple perception' (*savikalpa jñāna*, *viśiṣṭa jñāna*) where the memory of an "object" *qualifies* a "particular" through a functional "relationship" in

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[406] Bhattacharyya and Potter, "Introduction", in *Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIII, 45

[407] Kalidas Bhattacharya, "Some Problems Concerning Meaning", in *Analytical Philosophy in Comparative Perspective: Exploratory Essays in Current Theories and Classical Indian Theories of Meaning and Reference*, Eds. B. K. Matilal and J. L. Shaw (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1985): 173 –187, 178

[408] S. Bhattacharya, "Abstraction, Analysis and Universals: The Navya-Nyāya Theory", in *Analytical Philosophy*, 189-202, 190

perception, in case of 'complex perception' or 'perception of a higher order' (*viśiṣṭa-vaiśiṣṭya jñāna*), one object acts as the *qualifier* i.e. property of the other object in terms of a functional relationship to forge an *integrated whole* which acts as the "universal" for the perceiver. Matilal clarifies that, in this process, such diverse physical materials as fire, smoke, water, a cup or a pot act both as "objects" and as "properties" when they are locatable in such loci as a mountain, ground, lake, a kitchen, and a plate.[409] He holds that the apparent oddity of treating "objects" as "properties" can be resolved *if one conceives that anything that has a location can also act as a property*. Both perceptual formations follow the same epistemic formula of "qualifier + qualificand + relationship". Thus, while "cup-ness" as a qualifier of a "particular" constitutes the object "cup", it, therafter, may act as a "property" of the table in the cognition the "Table with a cup".[410]

For Nyāya, each such functional *unit* is perceived as a single "object" signifying a 'concept' represented by a 'word' – commonly known as 'thought' - the "object" in perception, therby, becoming a *nameable* entity. Ganeri notes: "So, if 'Cyclops' is a singular term, then Cyclops is an 'object'" for the perceiver.[411] Crucially, in the above sense, 'object-hood' becomes the minimum unit of perception in the Nyāya theory represented in its principle of realism as follows: *whatever is is knowable and nameable* (*astitva jñeyatva abhidheyatva*).[412] In the above sense, the Nyāya theory consists of a *cognizable world of names* involving not only "objects", but "qualities" and "actions" as well, i.e. "states of affairs" in general and a *non-cognizable world of sensations* which, even though felt, remains un-cognized in one's perception. Since Nyāya accepts the production of new knowledge in the world – it accepts arte-factual objects produced through human interventions in nature,[413] like the "wheel" (*cakra*), etc, makes Nyāya theory of perception evolutionary in nature, involving a continuous sliding up from the un-cognized zone to the cognized zone and falling away due to disuse occasioned by changes in human history. Thus, when a flower-vase *qualifies* a table, what is important

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[409] Matilal, *The Character of Logic in India*, Eds. Jonardon Ganeri and Heeramon Tiwari (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): 145

[410] Ibid

[411] Jonardon Ganeri, *The Age of Lost Reason: Philosophy in Early Modern India 1450 – 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 169

[412] Potter, "Relations", in *Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, 47-68, 48

[413] Matilal, *Perception*, 382

in the Nyāya theory of perception is not the flower-vase's physical 'contact' (*saṃyoga*) with the table, but its subjective contact with the table as a 'decorative' piece perceived by the viewer in terms of her socio-cultural experiences of life. [414]

The Buddhists criticize Nyāya perception on the following ground: how can an "object" be perceived *directly* i.e. in its totality when all that a person ever sees is only one side of it? Citing the example of a tree, the Buddhists hold that, since a person can see only one side of a tree, perceiving the whole tree represents a case of inference by the perceiver, which is non-veridical in nature. Orthodox Indian theories, including Nyāya, offer an interesting solution to this problem. In contrast to Western thought and current scientific thinking that sensations come from the world outside to meet human sense organs, in orthodox Indian theories, the sense organs go out of human beings to meet the "objects". As these senses come back to the perceiver after 'enveloping' the "object", the perceiver, by experiencing the transformations or modifications (*vṛttis*) that the sensations have undergone in the process, not only experiences the "object" in its *totality* but also experiences it *directly* because the sensations are "owned" by the perceiver.[415] It is interesting to note that this notion acts as one of the foundations of Ānandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* where the readers or the audiences experience an artwork on the basis of *what comes back* to them in the form of an echo (*dhvani*) or a reverberation (*pratidhvani*).[416] This *direct* experience of the *whole* is only subsequently analytically subdivided into parts through "a process of constant and progressive extraction, comparison, analysis and abstraction" undertaken by the perceiver on the basis of her

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[414] Matilal, *Epistemology, Logic, and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis*, Ed. Jonardon Ganeri (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 57-8

[415] Since in the Western view of perception, stimuli come from outside, perception can only be a *representation*. It leads to the difficulty how stimuli coming from different parts of an "object" combine to form the whole. Its attempted solution has given rise to theories like associationism, fusion, colligation, etc, which, however, ignore 'the differences and uniqueness of the various grades of mental phenomena' as critiqued by William James. In order to get away from this 'accidental' colloquation of atoms or elements, alternative theories hold that a *synthesis* is done by an intelligent self (Descartes), *à priori* "categories of understanding" (Kant), etc. However, the Gestaltists hold that an "object" is not a subsequent construction from piece-meal sensations, but is given in experience as a whole – the existence of a gestalt *ab initio* – and it is only by a subsequent conceptual analysis that we arrive at its parts. This idea underlies the Phenomenologist notion that human beings perceive reality in terms of their *lived experiences of the world*. For a detailed analysis, see Datta, *The Six Ways of Knowing*, 65-68

[416] See Chapter 5, Footnote 665, p. 263

embodied and socio-cultural practices of life, the analytical process being called the *apoddhara* method by the Grammarian Bhartṛhari.[417]

In this context, Nyāya holds that, by virtue of an extraordinary mode of perception, called *sāmānyalakṣaṇa pratyāsatti* ('perception of universals'),[418] an individual perceives both the "particular" and the "universal" at the same time which are *combined* by her *self-body system* to form an *integrated whole* in terms of her *lived experiences of life*. In this process, the "particular" lends the "universal" a distinct individuality. The notion of the "individuator" (*viśeṣa*) which not only holds a special position in the Nyāya theory, more specifically in its Vaiśeṣika dispensation, but also gains its name from there, because it 'saves' Nyāya realism from getting into difficulties. Thus, while a 'quality', like, say, a white color, remains repeatable across "objects", in each such instantiation, a particular characterisitic of the white color surfaces which is not found in other cases. Contrasting this notion with the Western notion which holds that a 'quality' is essentially a repeatable property, Potter notes:

> In Nyāya, a particular white substance has a particular white *guṇa* which is different from the white *guṇas* of other white substances…Although this view of a 'quality' having a particular characteristic in a particular thing is found in Western thought, it is not common there.[419]

In the above sense, according to the Nyāya theory, even though the perceiver still *sees* a generalized "universal", it remains uniquely *individual* in human perception.

The "universal" discussed so far may either represent a rather loose, *non-essential*, occurrence of a qualifier in a qualificand or a location or represent a qualifier which *essentially* occurs within a qualificand. The latter is more appropriately called a "class" which occurs as a specific category of the "universal". Thus, while a "universal" representing a relation between a man and the cap he is wearing would be verbalized as

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[417] Matilal, *Perception*, 393

[418] Nyāya postulates three extra-ordinary modes of perception, e.g., *sāmānya-lakṣaṇa* ('perception of the universal'), *jñāna-lakṣaṇa* ('presentation through revived memory'), and *yogaja* ('yogic powers of extraordinary perception'), of which the first two being important for cinema, would be discussed in this chapter

[419] Potter, Vol. II: Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, in *Encyclopedia*, 112

the "Man with a cap", the relationship between a man and his 'big' nose would form a "class", generating the cognition "Man with the big nose". Hiriyanna distinguishes between a "universal" (*sāmānya*) and a "class" (*jāti*, 'genus', 'specie') as follows:

> It is necessary to caution against taking *sāmānya* as the equivalent of "genus". It stands for merely a feature or a property common to two or more things and not like the genus or a "class" of things exhibiting such a feature.[420]

In the examples cited above, "class" (*jāti*, 'genus', 'specie') would be perceived only in terms of *essential* qualities of being a 'man' or a 'nose', etc, while the 'cap' would form a "universal" constituted of *non-essential* properites.[421] On the basis of the flexibility or 'looseness' provided by the "universals", Navya-Nyāya propounds the principle: *everything may be combined with every thing else by some relation or the other*.[422] Potter notes that, as far as "universals" are concerned, such relations may be formed between natural and artificial kinds with the Vaiśeṣika commentator Śrīdhara (c. 950 - 1000 CE) "specially denying that 'universals' only characterize 'natural' kinds: as long as people conventionally treat two otherwise different items under the same rubric, that in itself is sufficient to warrant our recognizing a 'universal' to be present".[423] In this sense, Nyāya theory of "universals" and "classes" is an evolutionary one.

It should also be noted that, even though the lady is sitting in front of books, it is not necessary that she is actually studying books, a position which would be illustrated through visual examples in Part 2. It is only due to the coincidental coexistence of elements within a scene that an "invariable sequence" is formed between them for the perceiver. Moreover, the "normative values" constructed by the perceiver in relation to an

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[420] Hiriyanna, *Outlines*, 233, modified

[421] Since Nyāya concept of mind (*manas*) is atomic in nature, elements leave their "impressions" only individually. In this sense, the 'man' and his 'cap' would be recorded separately. However, once "the self" has integrated these elements into a *conscious whole*, they would, therafter, be remembered as a single unit by the mind

[417] Matilal, Perception, 402

[418] Ibid, 418

[419] Ibid

"event" in terms of his embodied and socio-cultural practices of life would also influence the perceiver's understanding of a scene. Thus, in a society where formal education does not exisit, the question of an understanding based on "studying" would not arise.

Since the Nyāya epistemic formula "qualifier + qualificand + relationship = unit of perception" also applies to the verbal languages as well, it would be interesting to compare and contrast it with Saussure's formula of the "signifier + signified = sign":

1. Signifier   +   Signified   =   Sign   **(Saussure)**
    (Audio/Visual Cue) (Representing a Concept)   (An "Object" for the Receiver)

2. Qualifier + Qualificand +   Relationship   =   "Object" (**Nyāya)**
    (Signifier) (Location)   (Functional Relationship) (Mode of Appearance)
                        (Between Signifier & Location) (For the Perceiver)

Despite Saussure being influenced by Sanskrit and Buddhist linguistics, he transforms the *perceiver's point of view* occurring in classical Indian theories to the Western *speaker's point of view* by eliminating the factor "functional relationship" from his formula. It may be recalled that it is on the basis of the "functional relationship" that the perceiver integrates the scene in the Nyāya theory in terms of his own experiences of the world. Thus, in the Nyāya theory, one cannot simply say "x *causes* y" where 'x' and 'y' stand for two general terms, but only when 'x' and 'y' appear under particular "modes of appearance" to the perceiver:[424]

<center>"X *as* F, *causes* Y *as* G"</center>

"Universals" acting as "Limitors" of Meaning in Nyāya Theory of Perception
The Nyāya "modes of appearance" also act as the "limitor" (*avacchedaka*, 'the slicer') of meaning for the viewer. Mohanty notes: "To say that *fire burns* is to regard fire as being limited by it's "fire-ness" (*vahnitvāvacchinnavahni*) as being the cause of burning and not fire as limited by its 'color-ness'."[425]

[424] Bhattacharyya and Potter, "Introduction", Vol. XIII, in *Encyclopedia*, 35
[425] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 75

The notion of a particular "mode of appearance" acting as a "limitor" of "meaning" is widely used in Indian arts. Matilal notes:

> According to Nyāya, "objecthood" has a two-way determination: it is determined, on the one hand, by *the object itself* and, on the other, by *the unique way the viewer cognizes it*. Generally, the two "objecthoods" are different with the second being determined by the Nyāya notion of the "delimitor" (*avacchedaka*).[426]

The following examples are from Indian sculptures:

Figure 1: Makara (Crocodile)
(c. 2nd BCE, Sandstone, Bharhut, Madya Pradesh, India)

What immediately strikes the viewer's eye is the most unusual and unrealistic coiled form of the crocodile. Clearly, the artist has wanted to convey through this "mode of appearance" the lethal nature of the animal as a "coiled menace" to the perceiver. This unusual "mode of appearance" of the crocodile acts as the "limitor" of the meaning for the perceiver.

The following sculptures provide some farther examples:

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[426] Matilal, *Perception*, 18

Fig 2: Pārvatī   **Fig 3: Chamunda**   **Fig 4: Chamunda**

c. 12th CE, Basalt   c. 10th CE, Basalt   (in relief, c. 10th CE)

(South Mohammadpur, Bangladesh)   (Bihar, India)   (Bihar, India)

While both are goddesses, *Pārvatī* is the goddess of love and good tidings and *Chamunda* is the goddess of bad tidings, disease and death. In the "mode of appearance" of being *Pārvatī*, the qualifiers are her highly polished texture, her youthful appearance, flowers, etc, which act as the "qualifiers" or the "signifiers" of good times; in contrast, for *Chamunda*, the "qualifiers" are her rough texture, aged appearance, the virus of disease in her stomach, skull in her headgear, etc, which act as the signifiers of bad times, disease and death.

These Indian sculptures remind us of the French Sculptor Auguste Rodin's (1840-1917) celebrated figure, "The Thinker" (1888). Through its "mode of appearance" involving the coarse texture and the physical form, the artist wants to convey the tortured soul of Alighieri Dante during his writing of the *Divine Comedy* (1308-20), contrasted with the highly polished texture of "The Kiss" representing a couple in the "mode of appearance" of a blissful ecstasy:

Fig 5: The Thinker

1888, Bronze

Fig 6: The Kiss

1889, Marble

Matilal emphasizes the decisive role that the "mode of appearance" plays in *qualifying* a scene which acts as the "limitor" in restricting the "meaning" of the scene for the perceiver:

> We need a prior grasping of the qualifiers or characteristics, but we need not have a prior acquaintance with the subject or the *dharmin* ('what holds'). For we can become acquainted with it at the same time we "construct the judgment"… Nyāya says that a prior awareness of the qualifiers is all that is logically needed for us to formulate a "qualificative" judgment.[427]

Matilal argues that seeing something from a distance we may speculate whether it is a 'man', a 'post', or a 'tree' only because we are already acquainted with the above qualifiers.[428] This is the "maypole" theory of judgment,[429] an aspect which is fully demonstrable in the case of cinema as will be shown in Part 2 of the present chapter.

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[427] Matilal, *Perception*, 351
[428] Ibid, 352
[429] Ganeri, *Semantic Powers*, 145

Formation of "Nominal" or "Bogus Universals" in Perception

On the question of "universals", the Naiyāyika, Udayana (c. 11th CE) makes a crucial distinction between a "real universal" (*sāmānya*) and a "nominal universal" (*upādhi*).[430] Etymologically the word *upādhi* means the following: *upa* means 'proximity' (*sāmīpya*, 'close') and *dhi* means 'attribution' (*āropya*, 'imposition').[431] Gangopadhyay notes: "The word *upādhi* means an object or a property which imparts or attributes its own characteristic or quality to an object proximate to it".[432] Thus, while, the former represents the actual occurrence of a feature in a thing, the "nominal universal" represents a qualifying feature that does not occur *objectively* in a thing, but is only *subjectively* experienced by the perceiver as occurring there. For example, a crystal lying close to a red flower would appear to be red to a perceiver, a property which is not objectively present in the crystal. Since "nominal universals" represent "conditional or subjectively imposed properties",[433] they are also called "bogus universals". Such subjective functionalities are generally called "relation-particulars" (*svarūpa-sambandha-viśeṣa*) that are "uniquely contrived for the occasion not ontologically distinguishable from the terms they connect".[434] In the above sense, "nominal or bogus universals" are basically heuristic devices used for understanding scenes or situations in terms of the perceiver's embodied and socio-cultural experiences of life.

The Naiyāyika, Uddyotkara (c. 500 CE) holds that, logically, only a 'basis for use' (*nimitta*) is required for applying "nominal universals" to a particular case. A special form of a "bogus universal" is an 'accidental appendage' (*upalakṣaṇa*), like a crow sitting on top of a house, would form a "bogus universal" for a perceiver "The house with the crow"![435] "Nominal or bogus universals" are crucial ingredients of film perception, an aspect which will be discussed in part 2 of this chapter.

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[430] Matilal, *Perception*, 418
[431] Mrinal Kanti Gangopadhyay, "The Concept of Upādhi in Nyāya Logic", *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, V 1 (1971): 146 - 66
[432] Ibid
[433] Matilal, *Pereption*, 418
[434] Ibid, 419
[435] Potter, "Relations", in *Encyclopedia*, Vol. II: Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, 47 – 68, 55

"Mode of Presentation" in Perception

The "mode of presentation" of a percept in a particular "mode of appearance" serves the primary function of locating the percept in a particular spatio-temporal context which gives a 'measure' to the perceiver based on her embodied and socio-cultural practices of life. Thus, in cinema, the "mode of appearance" may give the 'dominance' of a person in relation to another within a scene, the low angle "mode of presentation" of a character gives a 'measure' of his 'dominance' over others within the scene to the perceiver.

The basic factor that constitutes the "mode of presentation" is the sense-object connection (*sannikarṣa-bhāsya*, 'contact through a medium') between the referent and the perceiver:

Object + Sense-Object Trajectory (Connector) → Perceptual Cognition[436]

The sense-object trajectory (*sannikarṣa-bhāsya-samsarga*)[437] generates a particular *body perspective* of the scene for the viewer in terms of his lived experiences of life. Commenting on a particular verse in the Atharva Veda (c. 2000 BCE), Tagore celebrates the body's viewpoint of the world in a phenomenological vein:

> Our capacity to stand erect has given our body its freedom of posture, making it easy to turn on all sides and realize ourselves at the centre of all things. As one freedom leads to another, Man's eyesight also found a wider scope. From the higher vantage point of our physical watch-tower, we have gained our view – *not merely information about location of things but their inter-relation and their unity*.[438]

Tagore's insight leads to the conclusion that a view does not merely give information about a percept, like a "pot", but it also generates an embodied sense of the "pot" in

relation to us. In generating such a sense in us, the construction of space and time in relation to our particular *point of view* plays a decisive role.

"Embodied Sense": Construction of Space and Time of a Scene in Perception

Potter analyzes the construction of space and time in the Nyāya theory:

> Philosophical scholars sometimes divide *theories of space and time* into two main divisions: absolute and relational. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory is relational, though it might, at first glance, seem otherwise. Space and time are not viewed either as receptacles in which objects move over a continua of fixed points constituting extension. Rather, *they are inferred, or, for some Naiyāyikas, even perceived as the necessary relating principle among physical things such as being above and below, before and after, farther and nearer, etc.*[439]

In clarifying the concept of *relative* space (*dik*) and time (*kāla*), Nyāya says both become *perceptible* only as a *qualifier* of the percept within view. Thus, space *qualifies* a particular table as "The table is *here*". In this sense, perception of space represents "certain space relations" which occur between objects, like "far" and "near", etc.[440] Similarly, time (*kāla*) is also perceived only when it *qualifies* a perceptual event, like "I see the table *now*".[441]

However, since Nyāya also speaks of the indivisibility of space and time in the same breath, it leads to some confusion as to whether it holds space and time as absolute or relative. Potter clarifies that while the Nyāya's core concept of space and time remains *relative*, its mention of an *absolute* space and time is necessitated by the Nyāya requirement that any two entities anywhere in the universe are capable of being related in some sense or the other. If there were more than one space and time, then A in one space and time could not be connected to B in another space and time. A conceptual space-time

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[439] Potter, "Substance", Vol. II, in *Encyclopedia*, 91, emphasis added
[440] Kumar Kishore Mandal, *A Comparative Study of the Concepts of Space and Time in Indian Thought* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1968), 101, 104
[441] Potter, "Substance", 92

continuum in the form of an *absolute* space and time is, therefore, required to subsume the relative spaces and times.[442]

The particular location of the percept within view generates a 'measure' of the percept in the viewer which either appears as 'benign' or as a 'threat' in terms of the viewer's body based on her experiences of living in the world. According to classical Indian theories, embodied senses are entirely a product of three basic instinctual processes: the *survival instinct* of the organism, the *sexual instinct* based on a desire for continuity and propagation of the organism, and the *acquisitive instinct* in order to make the surroundings condusive for survival and propagation of the organism.[443] These instinctual drives find expression in the form of maximization of 'pleasure', avoidance of 'pain', and 'indifference' towards others in relation to embodied experiences of the world. Based on the repeatation of similar experiences over a long stretch of time, these bodily experiences are 'rationalized' in terms of certain 'dos' and 'donts' prescribed by the society which establishes a direct causal connection between an embodied 'intention' and the 'means' for its fulfillment. Thus, if X *causes* bodily pleasure and Y *controls* X, then, Y is held as a *means* for 'causing' pleasure. "The body" mechanically gets used to such experiences in terms of forming "invariable sequences" in its bodily memory leading to the formation of *integrated wholes* within one's view. Since such integrations enable an organism to uniquely respond to a situation confronting it, it becomes an essential part of its survival strategy. In this sense, *narrative integration* of elements within view is a *given* in the psyche of an organism.

Lakoff and Johnson note the importance of embodied senses in human beings' interactions with the world:

There is no fully autonomous faculty of reason separate from and independent of bodily capacities such as perception and movement. The evidence supports,

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[442] Potter, "Substance", Vol. II, in *Encyclopedia*, 93

[443] According to classical Indian theories, "instinct" is an activity internalized by the body due to its continuous repeatation;

instead, an evolutionary view in which reason uses and grows out of bodily capacities.[444]

The 'measure' given by a "mode of presentation" significantly influences the contextual meaning of a scene involving the percept, an aspect which would be demonstrated in part 2 of this chapter.

An Integrated Whole is a *New Product* in Nyāya Theory of Perception

In the Nyāya theory, the percept, born as a product of its "mode of appearance" and its "mode of presentation" to the perceiver, is a *cognitive whole* which represents properties independent of its parts. Matilal notes:

> The continued existence of the Nyāya *whole* is destroyed when it loses even its minutest parts with a new *whole* being created in its place…One, therefore, destroys the old shirt simply by taking out a thread from it…In other words, parts must stay in certain relations for the Naiyāyika *whole* to continue to exist.[445]

Thus, the perception "Lady is studying" generates meaning as a related whole through the functional relationship of 'studying', rather than a mere summation of the meanings of its parts, e.g., the lady, books, etc. in which the meaning of 'studying' do not automatically inhere. In view of the fact that a particular functional relationship relates two elements appearing in specific "modes of appearance" to the viewer, an aspect which is not available to the constituting elements seen separately, *perceptual wholes* are greater than their parts. More importantly, the same elements A and B may even combine differently to produce different integrated wholes for the same perceiver. For example, while a particular *combination* of threads may produce a particular cloth, another *combination* between them would produce another cloth. Thus, the "inherence-cause" (*samavāyikāraṇa*) represented by A and B remains 'detachable' from their "non-inherence-cause" (*asamavāyikāraṇa*) representing their various combinations within view.[446]

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[444] Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, 17, as quoted in Sowa, "Review"

[445] Matilal, *Perception*, 378

[446] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 74

More importantly, a percept, which manifests the same "mode of appearance" but presented through different "modes of presentation", would form different integrated wholes for the perceiver having different 'meanings' for her. Matilal notes that the above Nyāya concept of "non-substantial causality" where the 'meaning' of a scene changes with its "mode of presentation", has no parallels whether in the East or in the West.[447] Nyāya holds that even a minor alteration in the elements constituting a *whole* would lead to the formation of a *new whole* for the viewer generating new "knowledge" in him. In the above sense, the age-old puzzle of the *Ship of Theseus* has a strikingly different resolution in the Nyāya theory: when even a single plank of the ship is changed, it becomes a *new* ship for Nyāya![448] The above concept is particularly applicable to cinema where different shots of the same scene generate different "knowledge" among the audiences. Above conclusions may be summed up in terms of the following formula for perception:

Perceptual Knowledge = Mode of Appearance + Mode of Presentation

This aspect will be illustrated with visual images in Part 2 of this chapter.

Before concluding this section, it may be useful to distinguish the Nyāya notion of "knowledge" with that of Western thought. In Nyāya, "knowledge" (*jñāna*) is not natural to "the self", but appears as its accidental quality or property on the fulfillment of certain causal conditions operating within the world. This concept of "knowledge" as contingent and transitory in the Nyāya theory is distinct from the Western understanding of "knowledge" as a 'timeless' proposition. Potter notes:

> The reason is that, since qualities are transitory, "knowledge" as *jñāna* would arise and disappear as qualities in the knowing self leaving its traces in the mind. Thus, we shall have to speak of a "knowledge" which is transitory and hence to be distinguished from a lasting "knowledge" in the Western sense. In the above sense, *jñāna* is best translated as "judgment" signifying not a timeless proposition,

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447 Matilal, *Perception*, 285-86
448 Ibid, Footnote 27, 378

but the actual process of judging an act at the time of its performance by the knower.[449]

The Western notion of "knowledge" is perhaps better translated as *pramā* or "true knowledge" in terms of Indian philosophy.

This raises a question about the "truth-value" of human knowledge of the world. Classical Indian theories differentiate between different levels of knowledge. Thus, *jñāna* is 'unverifed knowledge', e.g., "There is a ghost in the house"; *pramā* is 'verified knowledge', e.g., "There is evidence that there is ghost in the house"; and *satya* is 'true knowledge', e.g., "The very idea of a ghost being false, there is no ghost in the house". The question of verification of knowledge assumes significance in Indian theories with different schools subscribing to different modes of such verification:

i)   Truth consists in its practical value   - Nyāya, Buddhism
      (Pragmatic Theory)

ii)   Truth as following the correct procedure for gathering knowledge
      (Correspondence Theory)   - Nyāya

iii) Truth as harmony   - Saṁvāda Group of Theories
       (Coherence Theory)

iv)   Truth as uncontradicted knowledge   - Vedānta Group of Theories
      (Consilience Theory)

Since even false knowledge may satisfy the first three criteria, like the early belief that the sun went round the earth had continued to satisfy human needs for a long time, the Vedānt theories hold that, in the ultimate sense, uncontradicted knowledge provides the real test of truth. However, since no body can be sure of having attained that state, there is a sense of incompleteness, like a 'work in progress' belief, in the Indian theories where 'knowledge' is taken as 'true' till it is proved otherwise.[450]

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[449] Potter, "Meaning and Truth", in in *Encyclopedia*, Vol. II: Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, 147 – 78, 147 – 48, modified
[450] Datta, *The Six Ways of Knowing*, 19 - 22

Formation of 'Higher' Thoughts in the Nyāya Theory

The importance of the formation of "invariable sequences" in perception in terms of the perceiver's embodied and socio-cultural practices of life, however, goes much beyond "perceptual knowledge" alone; it also forms an essential basis for the production of all abstract 'higher' thoughts in the Nyāya theory. Since film audiences understanding of a scene or a sequence not only involves *direct* perception but also *higher thought*, the process would be briefly discussed below.

According to classical Indian thought, in all there are "six ways of knowing" reality: perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), word (*śabda*), comparison (*upamāna*), postulation (*arthāpatti*), and absence (*anupalabhdhi*).[451] In this range, while perception represents an *immediate* and *direct* way of knowing, the rest are *mediate* and *indirect* processes which also, however, depend on the formation of "invariable sequences" for the enquirer.[452] Processes of inference, comparison, postulation, and absence are being demonstrated below as examples.

The observation that "the sun rises from the east every day" is an *inductive inference* based on the "invariable sequence" that the sun rises from the east everyday.

The celebrated Aristotelian syllogism representing *deductive inference* is as follows:

> Man is mortal,
>
> Socrates is man,
>
> (Hence) Socrates is mortal

Nyāya would explain it in terms of 'invariable sequences" as follows: by eliminating the common ground between the two "invariable sequences" involving "man is mortal" and "Socrates is man", one *deductively* gains the "knowledge" of a third "invariable sequence" that "Socrates is mortal". However, there is an important difference: while the Aristotelian deduction is ultimately a formal device where "Man is immortal, Socrates is

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[451] Not all classical Indian theories subscribe to all of them, holding some of the processes to be equivalent to inference.

[452] While Nyāya considers only 'inference', 'word', and 'comparison' as *indirect* modes of knowledge production, the rest being inference, it considers 'absence' as a *direct* process of perception

man, (Hence) Socrates is immortal" remains equally valid, Nyāya, being an arch realist, would not accept Man's immortality as a valid proposition.

The Nyāya model of *inference*, accepted by all classical Indian theories, is as follows:

> There is fire on the hill
> Because there is smoke
> Wherever there is smoke, there is fire, like in the kitchen, unlike in the lake
> This smoke is like that
> (Hence) There is fire on the hill

It is a *deductive-inductive inference*, commonly known as 'inference for others' ('inference for self' involves only the first three steps), whose very basis is perceptual viz. 'wherever there is smoke…' endorsed by habitual experiences of life. if the Aristotelian syllogism is put in the Nyāya model, it would appear as follows:

> There is mortality in the world
> Because there is man
> Wherever there is man, there is mortality, like in human societies
> Socrates is a man
> (Hence) Socrates is mortal

In Nyāya theory of *comparison*, taught aspects of learning is given prominence. Thus, when a person identifies an animal in real life on the basis of a description he has learnt earlier, it represents the same process of the formation of an "invariable sequence" as the basis of her knowledge.

Postulation or hypothesis, on which abductive inference is based, primarily employs the process of elimination to reach a conclusion. Thus, the observation "X is gaining weight while fasting during the day" leads to the hypothesis that "X must be eating during the night" based on the occurrence of an "invariable sequence" between one's weight and eating.

While all other Indian theories hold that a *situational absence* (*anupalabhdhi*) may generate "knowledge" negatively, Nyāya is alone in holding that *situational absences* (*abhāva*) are *directly perceived* by the viewers where the absence of an element habitually perceived in a place leads to the formation of an "invariable senquence" between the *location* and the *directly perceived absence* of the item which generates knowledge in the perceiver.[453] This aspect will be demonstrated in the section dealing with "Perceiving Absence", illustrated with suitable examples from cinema, in Part 2 of this chapter.

The Jaina Contribution to the Nyāya Theory of Perception

It is now time to say the final word about the formation of perception in a viewer in classical Indian theories. Building on previous insights and adding some of its own, the Jaina thinker Siddhasena Divākara (c. 450-500 CE) gives the following comprehensive definition of perception:

> The proper method of exposition of entities is based on substance (*dravya*), space (*kṣetra*), time (*kāla*), and state of existence (*bhāva*) on the one hand and mode of appearance (*paryāya*), aspect (*aṃśa*, *deśa*), relation (*saṃyoga*), and distinction (*bheda*) on the other.[454]

Based on the Nyāya theory, the Jainas also hold that even a minor change in any one of the above elements would involve the formation of a new cognitive whole for the perceiver, expressed in terms of the following two principles: "Every expression signifies a differentiation through conditioning factors",[455] and "Every expression functions with a restriction".[456] Extending Nyāya thought, the Jainas also develop the *idea of emphasis* (*arpaṇa*), which involves paying attention to certain sections of a scene depending on the intention of the perceiver and the narrative cues provided within a scene.[457]

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[453] Nyāya uses the expression *abhāva* in place of *anupalabhdhi* used by the others to distinguish the two processes

[454] Quoted in Piotr Balcerowicz and Karl Potter, "Introduction", in *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. XVII: Jaina Philosophy Part III, eds. (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 2014): 29-51, 29, modified

[455] Balcerowicz and Potter, "Introduction", in *Encyclopedia*, Vol. XVII: Jaina Philosophy Part III, 37

[456] Ibid, 34

[457] Ibid, 42

The Jaina theory seeks to synthesize the *Buddhist theory of continuous flux* with the *Hindu theory of continuity* by holding that, even while things undergo continuous change in their "modes of appearance" for a perceiver, their core remains unchanged.

Chaplin's Marching Sequence in *Modern Times* (1936)

In Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936), when Chaplin picks up a red flag that has accidentally fallen off a truck and starts walking holding it in his hand, quite unknown to him, he is seen as leading a procession of agitating workers marching behind him. Based on their appropriate "body orientation" within the scene, they *combine* to form an "invariable sequence" between the "agitators" and their "leader" functionally linked the imposition of the relational universal of "agitator-hood" between them in terms of the audiences' habitual experiences of socio-cultural life. It results in the cognition "Chaplin is leading marching workers" for the audiences. However, since the functionality of the scene only arises *accidentally*, being unknown to both Chaplin and the workers, the scene becomes comedic for the audiences.

Susan Alexander's Attempted Suicide in Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* (1941)

In the scene of Susan Alexander's (Dorothy Comingore) attempted suicide, she is seen breathing heavily lying on the bed with her face covered in darkness while, in the foreground, a bottle marked 'Poison' and an empty tumbler with a spoon stand prominently on her bedside table. The audiences construct a visual *whole* of the scene resulting in the cognition "She has *taken* poison". In a subsequent development, the door is flung open as Kane (Orson Welles) and another person rush in. Based on his body language, Kane would be perceived as *qualified* by a poisoned Susan resulting in the cognition "Kane is *worried* about her".

Jaina theory of "emphasis" (*arpaṇa*) holds that, based on narrative cues, the audiences are *unlikely* to notice the presence of a decorative flower plant by the side of the door flung open by Kane. In this sense, a literary principle given by Mīmāṃsā (c. 3rd BCE) is useful: only those elements flock together in perception which have mutual expectancy (*ākāṅkṣā*), contiguity (*sannidhi*), and compatibility (*yogyatā*) for each other.

Perception and Compositional Principles in Indian Art

While there is no scope for a fuller discussion here, the following is a brief indicator of how some of the processes operating in perception influence the compositional principles of Indian arts.

Indian aesthetes hold that processes of perception in real life and in the arts are similar, their only difference being a change in the attitude that the perceiver experiences in the two cases: while in the former a 'practical' attitude is adopted, in case of arts, a 'fictional' attitude prevails, the latter aspect having been fully theorized by Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and Abhinavagupta to be elaborated in the next chapter. In holding that "art is imitation", the Nyāya aesthete, Śrī Śaṅkuka (c. 9ᵗʰ CE) says: "It is similar to one when, seeing the life-like picture of a particular horse or a particular person, we formulate the judgment 'It is that horse or that person' (*citra-turaga-nyāya*, lit., 'painting-horse-like)".[458] Nyāya's idea finds support in Carroll: "Picture recognition is not a skill acquired over and above object recognition. Whatever features or cues we come to employ in object recognition, we also mobilize to recognize what pictures depict."[459] Even though the conclusions reached by Śrī Śaṅkuka and Carroll appear to be similar, the nature of "idealizations" in Western and Indian arts are essentially different: while Carroll represents the Western tradition where art "idealizes" by breaking surface reality in order to incorporate inner dynamics of a situation beyond human perception, Indian arts exceed reality in terms of "idealizations", where a "particular" trggers the memory of an *ideal* "object" which when connected with the former in terms of a functional relationship, generates a "universal" in perception in terms of human beings' embodied and socio-cultural living in the world. This process exercises a determining influence on the compositional principles in Indian arts. In Indian commercial cinema, the construction of characters, involving heroes, villains, mothers, friends, etc, are based on their *models* "idealized" in terms of embodied and socio-cultural practices of life in the Indian tradition.

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[458] Quoted in G. T. Deshpande, *Abhinavagupta*, Reprint (New Delhi: Sahitya Academi, 1992): 73
[459] Carroll, *Mystifying Movies*, 139

Analyzing photographic images, Christopher Pinney, the art historian of early photography in India, contrasts Bourdieu's analysis of ordinary people's response to photographs in the French village of Lesquire with the Indian response in the village of Bhatisuda:

> In the French village of Lesquire, the density of their local knowledge makes photography almost wholly redundant: "We have seen each other too many times already! Always the same faces all day. We know each other down to the last detail!" and, hence, concluding "…it's not worth it!" In Bhatisuda, conversely, photography never seems to merely duplicate the everyday world, but is, rather, prized for its capacity to make traces of persons endure, and *to construct the world in a more perfect way* than is possible to achieve in the hectic flow of everyday life.[460]

Marks of "idealization" reflecting the "normative values" of an "event" constructed by a perceiver in terms of her worldly experiences may be found in the early practice of 'filling out' of photographs taken of Indian subjects by painting the photographs based on "idealizations" that a particular subject *should* have as representing a 'model' in the Indian tradition. Pinney notes Judith Mara Gutman's path-breaking study of early Indian photography, *Through Indian Eyes*, in this matter:

> While European photographs also used paint, both to retouch negatives as well as to enhance color on the final print, for Indian photographs dating from 1860s, paint is much more than a supplement to the photographic image; rather the overlay of paint completely replaces the photographic image in such a way that the original is "obscured".[461]

Not only in the above respect but also in some others, Western critics feel perplexed while encountering Indian arts. Thus, Pinney quotes Guttman as complaining of her difficulty in negotiating Indian photographs:

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[460] Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997): 149, modified, emphasis added
[461] Ibid, 77-9

…with no "invitation" into the picture, my eyes did not know how or where to enter. So they leaped in and were surrounded by one group of women. Even, inside the picture, my eyes could not move around… There were no "leads" as you find in Western imagery.[462]

Alice Boner offers significant insights into the compositional principles of Indian arts. She refers to a very distinctive Indian compositional practice of constructing images in two broad forms of "quiescence" and "movement". The notion of "compositional quiescence" has its roots in the Indian theory of *darśan*, where "ideally" the eyes of the deity should fall on the devotee with the latter being aware of it signify that the deity has accepted the offering (*prāsāda*) and showered blessings on the devotee in return. This image presents a picture of perfect 'containment' exercised in terms of the subject and the object within the scene. In contrast "movement" compositions are those where "looks" move outwards from the compositional frame. Noting that *Indian compositions signify concentric circles representing force-fields* which overlap when the stresses are converging inwards as in "quiescent images" and diverge as in "movement images",[463] Boner notes the following distinctive features of Indian arts:

> The life of every composition depends not only on the counterplay of *movement* and *quiescence*, but also on the opposition of big and small form-elements, of rounded and straight movements, of sizable plains and aggregates of multiple smaller forms.[464]

Boner says that, in terms of cosmic symbols, Indian compositions represent the central *bindu* or the hub of the composition as the *Brahman*, the surrounding circle as the potentiality of manifestation (*garbha*), and the space within the circle as the manifested field (*kṣetra*) with the circle always the fundamental determining factor.[465]

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[462] Pinney, *Camera Indica*, 95; quote from "Women at Sipi Fair", c. 1905, in Guttman's *Through Indian Eyes,* 6

[463] Alice Boner, "Introduction", *Principles of Composition in Hindu Sculpture: Cave Temple Period* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990): 1-50, 49

[464] Ibid, emphasis added

[465] Boner, "Introduction", 29-30

The notion of "eyeline match" in cinema would represent "quiescent images" in Indian arts. Arguably, the "shot-counter shot" technique in cinema where the outward 'look' of a character is matched with the person being 'looked at' in the next shot would also be considered as a "quiescent image" in the Indian arts. All the rest, where images are not contained within the frames, would present "movement images" in the Indian tradition. While it is customary in the Western tradition to provide a 'lead' to the viewer to enter a "quiescent" scene, in the Indian arts, such scenes being modeled on the principle of *darśan*, is foreseen as disturbing the "event". Thus, Guttman finds no 'leads' to enter the scene in the example cited by her.

Part 2

Reading Visual Images

Let's apply Nyāya theory of perception to understand the following visual:

Image 1: Madhuri and Books – Normal Angle View

"Perceptual Knowledge" arising from the Scene

It has been established that perceptual knowledge is the product of the "mode of appearance" and the "mode of presentation" of a percept. The above scene has been analyzed on this basis.

"Mode of Appearance" within the Scene

1. "Mode of Appearance" of "Objects" *perceived* as "Universals" in Perception

Objective features relating to Madhuri, like her age, her general appearance, her countenance, etc, act as 'signs' which *qualify* her to be perceived as a 'student', resulting in the following cognition:

"She is a *student*"

Similarly, when 'signs' available within the scene, like old look, frayed sides, etc, *qualify* books appearing on Madhuri's table, it leads to the following cognition:

"Books are *study-material*"

2. "Mode of Appearance" of "Relation between Objects" *perceived* as a "Universal"

When books appearing as 'study material' *qualify* Madhuri appearing as a 'student', they form an "invariable sequence" for the perceiver who proceeds to *combine* them on the basis of the *functional relationship* of 'studying' imposed on them in terms of the perceiver's socio-cultural experiences of life. When these factors are put in the epistemic formula of perception "qualifier + qualificand + relationship = unit of perception", it leads to the formation of the following "universal" in perception:

"Madhuri is *studying*"

A point to note is that the perceptual process does not stop with the integration of the chief qualifying elements alone; rather, the process goes on with other elements getting progressively integrated as subsidiary qualifiers for the scene till, ideally, all the elements within a scene are exhausted. Thus, the pen-stand and the flower-vase would further qualify Madhuri's 'study'. In case certain elements fall beyond the purview of the audiences' mental attention or narrative concerns, they are likely to remain unintegrated within the scene.

"**Mode of Presentation" of the Scene**

3. Sense-Object Trajectory generating an "Embodied Sense" in Perception

The "mode of presentation" being a *normal angle viewpoint* here, the *sense-object trajectory* presents books at a 'normal' height to Madhuri, evoking an *embodied sense* in the viewer in terms of the her own *embodied* experiences of life. This *embodied sense* generates the cognition that the situation is 'benign' for Madhuri among the audiences:

"Books are under *control* of Madhuri"

Perceptual Knowledge = Mode of Appearance + Mode of Presentation

= Madhuri is *studying* + Books are under *control* of Madhuri

At the final stage, it produces the following "perceptual knowledge" in the viewer:

"Madhuri is *in control of* her studies"

"Emotion" generated by the Scene

Since books form a 'normal' relation with Madhuri, the viewer assumes that the experience is 'pleasurable' to her in terms of the viewer's own experiences of life. Consequently, the viewer associates an emotion of 'happiness' with her:

"Madhuri is *happy*"

Let's now analyze the same scene from a low angle camera viewpoint:

Image 2: Madhuri and Books – Low Angle View

"Mode of Appearance" of "Objects" within a Scene

1. "Mode of Appearance" of "Objects" *perceived* as "Universals"

Since the 'signs' remain the same, the "objects" constitute the same "universals":

"Madhuri is a *student*"
"Books are *study-material*"

2. "Mode of Appearance" of "Relation between Objects" *perceived* as a "Universal"

Despite being a *low angle viewpoint* signifying a different *cognitive whole* for the audiences, Madhuri and books still produce an "invariable sequence" for the viewer:

"Madhuri is *studying*"

"Mode of Presentation" of the Scene to the Viewer

3. The Sense-Object Trajectory evoking an Embodied Sense in the Viewer

In this *low angle viewpoint*, the *sense-object trajectory* makes the books appear 'taller' in relation to Madhuri. In terms of the viewer's own embodied experiences of life, it poses a 'threat' to Madhuri which results in their cognition:

"Books are posing a *threat* to Madhuri"

Perceptual Knowledge = Mode of Appearance + Mode of Presentation

= Madhuri is *studying* + Books are posing a *threat* to Madhuri

At the final stage, it produces the following "Perceptual Knowledge" in the viewer:

"Madhuri is *overloaded* with her studies"

"Emotion" generated by the Scene

Madhuri being perceived as 'overloaded' with her studies, the following cognition anxiety' with Madhuri resulting in the perception:

"Madhuri is *worried*"

Let's examine the scene involving Madhuri and books from a High Angle Viewpoint:
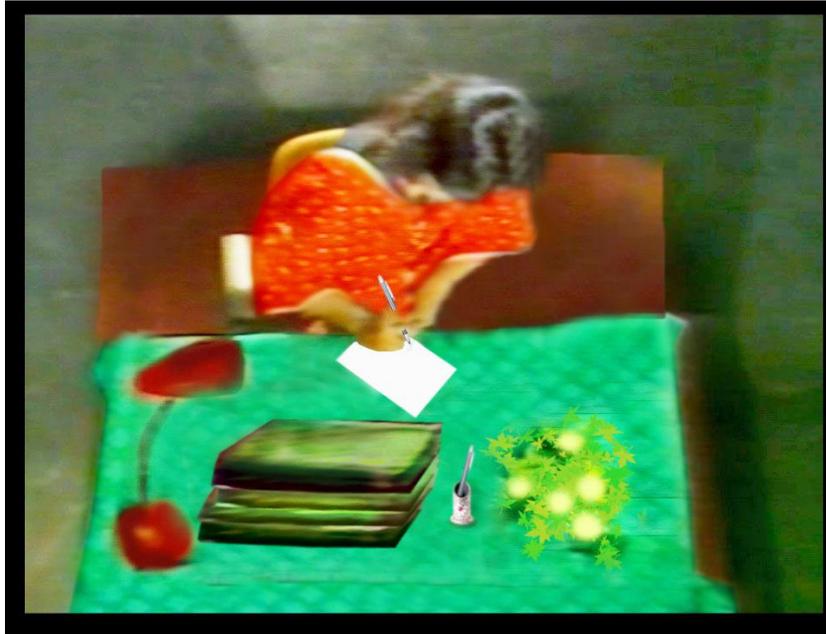
Image 3: Madhuri and Books – Top Angle View

From this high angle viewpoint, Madhuri does not seem to have anything to do with the books at all!

The question is which one of the above three viewpoints, all of which have the same content, represent truth? Since Nyāya is an arch realist school, it does not hold any particular viewpoint to be privileged in relation to others as long as the *pramāṅa*, i.e. the correct procedure for the arising of perception, like appropriate lighting, adequate distance, etc, have been followed. Since, in these cases, all such conditions have been satisfied, Nyāya would take all of them to be 'true' till they are found to be erroneous in the practical field. The literary critic Mammaṭa (c. 11th CE) offers nine extra-textual factors on th basis of which 'meaning' is deciphered by the audiences:

> Aesthetic suggestion…produces in sensitive readers the idea of something different by means of nine specific factors (*vaiśiṣṭya*): the speaker, the addressee,

the tone of voice, the syntagm of the sentence, the expressed sense, the presence of a third person, the context, the time, and the place.[466]

Ultimately, Nyāya judges the *success of particular 'meanings' in terms of the practical results they achieve in the field*. Mohanty notes:

> The only reason some contents are regarded as real is that they have not yet been contradicted. Replacing "truth" by "uncontradictedness", one can, at best, say "uncontradicted as far as experience up to this time goes". The idea of real existence or non-existence is here not of much worth. X is said to exist in case it is an object of a *pramāṇa* or veridical cognition…In that case, the cause should be defined simply as the *invariable antecedent*, entity or non-entity.[467]

In the empiricial world, therefore, there is no guarantee of an "event's" truth except in terms of its 'successful' functioning within a given situation.

"Normative Values" influence the "Knowledge" of a Scene

It is important to note how "normative values", which arise from the viewer's embodied and socio-cultural experiences of life, exercise a determining influence on perception. Thus, even though Freud's table contains more books than those of Madhuri, yet the perceptual 'meaning' generated among the perceivers here remains different.

Let's examine the following image:

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[466] Sheldon Pollock, "The Social Aesthetic of Sanskrit Literary Theory", *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 29, No. 1-2 (April, 2001): 197 – 229, 206
[467] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 142-43, modified

Image 4: Freud in his Study

The physically daunting huge stack of books on Freud's table, much larger than what Madhuri's table contains, does not generate an embodied sense of 'threat' for Freud in the viewer because of the "normative values" he holds in relation to Freud. Under the circumstances, the viewer would cognize the situation as *under control of* Freud.

Similarly, the following scene would hardly be cognized as "Tagore is under threat" even though the books stacked on his study table are much more than on Madhuri's table:
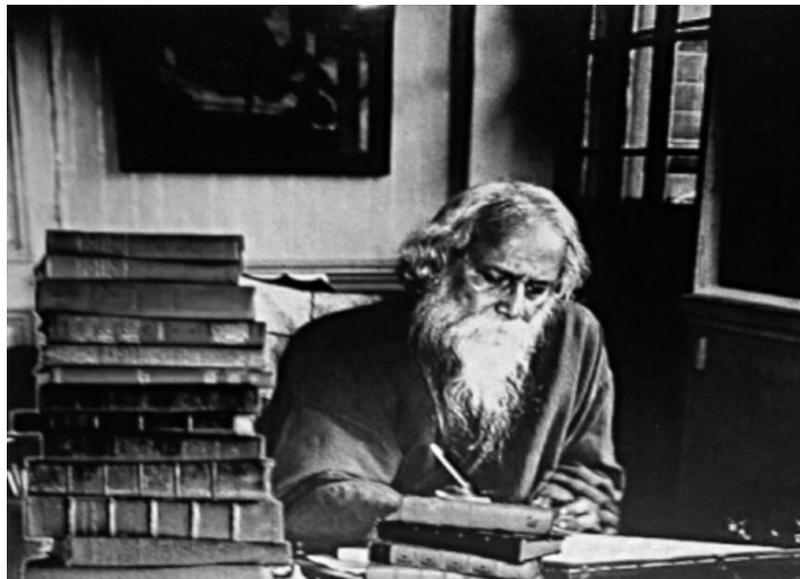
Image 5: Tagore in his Study

Applying Nyāya Theory of Perception to Cinema

In explaining the film process of linking the previous shot to the latter one in perception, Nyāya's theory of "connective-recollective cognition" (*pratisandhāna*) comes to the fore which Matilal defines as: "*Pratisandhāna* means an awareness that arises with regard to a different thing being linked with an awareness of a previous object."[468] On the basis of this principle, Nyāya would like to hold that both continuity and montage practices of cinema are instances of *direct perception* and not *mediated thought* in its theory.

Explaining Continuity & Montage Practices in Cinema

According to Nyāya, "continuity" and "montage" practices in cinema would be explained as follows.

Continuity in Cinema

Film continuity is much easily explained in terms of this Nyāya concept. Two consecutive shots of a person walking, one existing now and the immediately preceeding one revived from memory, are linked in the audiences' perception through the process of "connective-recollective cognition (*pratisandhāna*)" to form an *integrated whole*. In such a scenario, the succeeding view *qualifies* the previous one on the basis of the viewer's subjective imposition of the functional relationship of "walking" between them on the basis of the viewer's embodied and habitual experiences of life. It leads to the perceptual knowledge "He is walking" among the audiences.

Montage Cinema

Montage theory, propagated by early Soviet filmmakers, who believed that the process involves an intellectual synthesizing of discontinuous actions in the minds of the audiences. In the celebrated *Kuleshov Experiments*, when the shot of Ivan Mozzukhin's expressionless i.e. 'neutral' face is juxtaposed with the shot of a "bowl of soup", it generates the meaning "He is hungry" among the audiences. Kuleshov reasoned that since the meaning of "hunger" neither occurs in the expressionless face of the actor nor in the bowl of soup, it must have arisen in the form of an intellectual "idea" in the minds of the audiences as a 'third' meaning arising from synthesizing the shots. Kuleshov further

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[468] Matilal, *Perception*, 272

found that when the same shot of Mozzukhin's 'neutral' face is juxtaposed with the shot of "a child playing with balloons", it resulted in the cognition "He is happy" among the audiences. This reinforced Kuleshov's view that, since "happiness" neither occurs in the face of the actor nor in the child playing with balloons, it must have arisen as a synthesizing "third idea" among the audiences.

Nyāya would, however, differ with the above explanation. It would like to analyze these scenes in terms of *direct perception* alone. When the shot of the "bowl of soup" is being presented, the audiences immediately recall Mozzukhin's 'neutral' face in the preceeding shot. In terms of the audiences' habitual experiences of life, Mozzukhin's neutral face would have the "mode of appearance" of being 'hungry' and the "bowl of soup" would appear as 'food', the two being linked by the audiences on the basis of the functional relationship of 'hunger' to form an "invariable sequence" for them. That is, in this process, the "bowl of soup" would *qualify* Mozzukhin's "neutral face" through the *functional relationship* of 'hunger' in terms of the epistemic formula 'qualifier + qualified + relationship' to generate the cognition "He is hungry" among the audiences. Since the emotion of 'happiness' is habitually associated with a "child playing with balloons" in terms of the audiences' habitual experiences of day-to-day life, the scene would *qualify* Mozzukhin's neutral face to lead to the cogntition "He is happy" among the audiences.

Strength of Nyāya Theory vis-à-vis Kuleshov's Theory: Two Examples
The strength of the Nyāya theory of *direct* perception vis-à-vis Kuleshov's theory of *intellectual synthesis* may be further demonstrated from the following two examples.

First, in the example of Mozzukhin's "neutral face" and "bowl of soup", the following question may be raised: why don't the audiences read Mozzukhin as a Chef admiring his dish or a Hotel Owner feeling proud of the dish being served to the guests, both of which are likely to result in the cognition "He is proud" among the audiences? Nyāya's emphasis on perception being caused by embodied and socio-cultural practices of life would easily answer by saying that 'hungry' faces in front of 'food' plates are more common than that of a proud chef or of a hotel owner admiring his dish. The scene

also lacks appropriate 'signifiers' which would *qualify* Mozzukhin as belonging to the "class" of the Chefs or as the Hotel Owner for the audiences. In contrast, Kuleshov would be hard put to explain why the "third idea" cannot be that of Mozzukhin being the Chef or the Hotel Owner unless he falls back upon the viewers' common experiences of life which occurs no where in his theory.

Second example is based on Kuleshov's "Sensitivity Test". In this test, even when Mozzukhin expresses emotions that are contrary to the juxtaposed visual, like expressing grief on seeing the child playing with balloons, the audiences still cognized him as being "happy".[469] This experiment is rather unsatisfactorily explained by Kuleshov as signaling the perseverance of the mentally intuited "third idea" that links the shots for the audiences. However, Nyāya offers a much better explanation of the above scene. According to the Nyāya theory of perception, *qualifiers* are the real meaning-generators of a scene. Matilal notes:

> Nyāya says that a prior awareness of the qualifiers is all that is logically needed to formulate a "qualificative" judgment…The knowledge of the location or place signified by "there" may simply co-arise with the judgment...[470]

In the present case, the "child playing with balloons" becomes the *qualifier* of Mozzukhin's "neutral face". Since "happiness" is habitually associated with a child playing with balloons, it becomes the meaning-generator of the juxtaposed shots in the Nyāya theory resulting in the cognition "He is happy" even when Mozzukhin's own expression remains contrary to it!

Eisenstein's Critic of *Kuleshov Experiments*

Significantly, Eisenstein critiques *Kuleshov Experiments* as being instances of "linkage montage" in which shots are *perceptually integrated* rather than *intellectually synthesized* by the audiences which supports the Nyāya view.[471] Eisenstein holds that only in his

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[469] Vance Kepley, Jr. "The Kuleshov Workshop", *Journal of Theory on Image and Sound*, 4 No. 1 (1986): 5-23, 21

[470] Matilal, *Perception*, 351-52

[471] S. M. Eisenstein, "Beyond the Shot", in *Eisenstein Writings Volume 1 1922 – 1934*, Trans. & Ed. Richard Taylor (London: BFI, 1988): 138-50, 143-44

concept of "collision montage", an intellectual process of dialectical montage occurs among the audiences.[472] Thus, in the sequence of "Kerensky climbing steps" in Eisenstein's *October* (1928), Kerensky is seen as repeatedly climbing the same flight of steps even though his designation keeps rising in each such case. In no way, can these shots be perceptually integrated by imposing a functional relationship between them in terms of the audiences' habitual experiences of life. Instead, they would be required to exercise their intellect, i.e. 'higher thoughts' in terms of inference, hypothesis, etc, in order to resolve the disparities occurring within the scene. Eisenstein notes: "The incongruity between these two shots produces a purely *intellectual* resolution at the expense of this individual. *Intellectual Dynamization*."[473] The intellectual montage, representing the dialectical process of thesis and antithesis producing a synthesis at a higher level of integration, remains entirely beyond the purview of direct perception of the audiences.

In Mrinal Sen's *Padatik* (The Guerrilla Fighter/The Rank and File, 1973), an ad-film on a particular brand of baby food is being shown to corporate clients by the producer Shilpi Mitra (Simi Garewal). The film intercuts between shots of a healthy baby and a voice-over that keeps eulogizing the baby food's nutritional values. When the show ends, a young executive requests for one more viewing during which he imagines skeleton figures of under-nourished children while the voice-over still goes on recommending baby food for them! In no way can these shots be related by imposing a functional relationship between them; they need to be synthesized in terms of the 'idea' that the bourgeois society is an exploitative society.

Perceiving *Absence* in Nyāya and its Application to Cinema

Going against the view of other classical Indian theories that *anupalabdhi* or 'knowledge through non-cognition' is an intellectual process, Nyāya argues that "situational absences" (*abhāva*) are *directly* perceived rather than inferred by the audiences. Thus, a flower vase, which is regularly present on a table, generates perceptual 'meaning' for a

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[472] Eisenstein, "Beyond the Shot", 144-45

[473] Eisenstein, "The Dramaturgy of Film Form (The Dialectical Approach to Film Form)", in *Eisenstein Writings Volume 1*, 161-80, 163, original emphasis

viewer through its *situational absence* on a particular day. Nyāya views such *negations* in a positive sense: "x does not exist" is not to be understood as denying the occurrence of 'x', but rather as affirming something positive described as "*absence of x*".[474] Matilal notes:

> For Nyāya, the absence of a property is treated as another property. "The pot is not blue" is rephrased as "The pot has the absence of blue color.[475]

The significant point is that when "absence of x" is perceived as a *whole*, it does not mean the absence of an entity in general, but a specific absence. Thus, for Nyāya, the "table" and the "absence of flower-vase" form an "invariable sequence" in the viewer's perception. In this sense, *situational absences* are inalienably integrated with their locations in the Nyāya theory representing additional intentional information for the viewer.

Explained in terms of the epistemic formula "qualifier + qualified + relationship", the "the flower-vase" *qualifies* the location of "the table" through the *functional relationship* of its "absence from the table". However, since an "absence" as such cannot be *functionally related* to a table, Nyāya conceives of a relationship called the "self-linking relation" (*svarūpa saṁbandha*) which defines absences as being identical with either one or both its relata.[476] Clearly, Nyāya has constructed a heuristic device here in order to explain human beings' common experiences of life.[477]

Examples of Perceiving *Absence* in Cinema

This notion finds useful application in cinema. It is a general practice of the filmmakers to deliberately keep a certain 'space' empty within a particular frame in order to draw the audience's attention to this absence in the location, thereby, making the absence suggestive of deeper meanings for the audiences.

In Satyajit Ray's *Charulata* (The Lonely Wife, 1964), an empty room is shown with the camera pointing towards the door. Charulata subsequently enters through the

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[474] Potter, *Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, 109
[475] Matilal, *The Character of Logic*, 146
[476] Chatterjee, "Navya-Nyāya Language", 18
[477] Matilal, *The Navya-Nyāya Doctrine of Negation*, 133

door. The very emptiness of the frame in which Charu enters signifies the overwhelming loneliness of her life, caused by her husband's total absorption in his own work.

In Arjun Gourisaria and Moinak Biswas's *Sthaniyo Sangbad* (Spring in the Colony, 2010), a bulldozer demolishes a slum silently watched by the slum-dwellers. In this scene, the sound track is deliberately kept silent. This *felt absence* of the bulldozer's sound is experienced by the audiences as *qualifying* the location representing the slum-dwellers' *silent protest* against the demolition.

In Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'Eclisse* (Eclipse, 1962), a series of 52 'empty' shots of busy city corners at the end of the film generate "invariable sequences" between busy city corners and their present *absences* for the audiences to generate a sense of *felt absence* among them signifying the ephemeral transience of all forms of relationships in the modern day city life.

Nyāya Notion of *Visual Synesthesia* and its Application to Cinema

The notion of *visual synesthesia* in the Nyāya theory deserves special mention not only because it anticipates Merleau-Ponty's theory of *vision-touch equivalence* but also exceeds it in certain respects. It also forms the main basis for Bharata to construct his theory of the evoction of an *affective state* among the audiences in the course of witnessing a play.

The roots of Nyāya's idea go back to the Vedic notion of vision-touch equivalence. It has generally been held since the Vedas that the vision of a thing is also a form of touching that thing. Vedic scholar, Jan Gonda, notes: "That a look was consciously regarded as a form of contact appears from the combination of 'looking' and 'touching'. Casting one's eyes upon a person and touching him were related activities."[478] Stella Kramrisch notes:

Seeing, according to Indian notions, is a going forth of the sight towards the object. Sight touches it and acquires its form. Touch is the ultimate connection by

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[478] Jan Gonda, *Eye and Gaze in the Veda* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1969): 19

which the visible yields to being grasped. While the eye touches the object, the vitality that pulsates in it is communicated…[479]

In the above sense, there is a 'hierarchization' of the sense organs in Hindu theories where *vision* and *touch* occupy special position.[480] While holding that the *direct* perception of 'qualifiers' lend meaning to a scene, Nyāya, being a realist, also holds that, 'qualificands' or 'substances' are also *directly* perceived. Hiriyanna notes:

> The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika considers that substances are also directly cognized. But not all the senses are capable of doing this. In regard to external substances, it is only the organs of *sight* and *touch* that can do so; and in regard to the internal, it is the *manas*. In other words, *while all the organs can sense, some can perceive also*. The position is substantiated with references to experiences such as "I am now *touching* what I *saw*".[481]

Hiriyanna further clarifies: "What the two senses apprehend are clearly different, yet an identity is perceived by them explained as referring to the underlying substances being experienced alike in the two moments".[482] Underlying the above process is the assumption that sense-atoms shoot out from the body to envelop external reality, e.g., "object", thereby generating its form (*ākṛti*) within the particular sensation, by perceiving which in the mind's 'eye', the *self-body system* comes to know what it is.[483] The orthodox theories further differentiate sense-organs by holding that while *vision* and *touch* are distant senses, *hearing*, *smell*, and *taste* are proximal senses, i.e. they cannot sense beyond a limited distance. While it is clear that *vision* is a distant sense-organ, *touch* is so

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[479] Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 2 Vols, Reprint (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1946): 136, quoted in Diana L. Eck, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998): 9

[480] Based on the idea that *like only can affect like*, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika atomism conceives sense organs to be derived as follows: sight from fire-atoms, taste from water-atoms, touch from air-atoms, smell from earth-atoms while hearing is *ākāśa* itself, the underlying medium constituting the universe, often mistakenly likened to the earlier notion of ether in scientific thought, which conveys sound through its internal 'movement' or 'vibration', delimited by the corresponding physical organ, the ear (*karṇa-śaṣkuli*), see Hiriyanna, *Outlines*, 248

[481] Hiriyanna, *Outlines*, 248, emphasis added

[482] Ibid, 248-49, modified

[483] It appears to be a weak explanation since it has not been made clear how the outgoing sense-atoms can influence an understanding within the system

considered only because touch-sensations are considerd to be *given* in the architecture of vision when it sweeps over a surface making it *touch* the surface.

While it is generally accepted by both Hindu and Buddhist theories that each organ has its own specific domain of experience, the Hindu theorists are forced to make an exception in case of vision-touch equivalence. Thus, against the Buddhist "restriction theory" (*vyavastha*), which holds that "the domain of objects for each sense-faculty is exclusive and separate", the Hindu theories advocate "mixture theory" (*saṃplava*) in case of vision and touch sensations by holding that "the same object may be known or established through different processes".[484] Matilal notes that the question whether vision and touch experience the same thing,[485] was raised by Molyneax to Locke: if a blind person, who has learnt to differentiate two things by *touch* alone, suddenly regains his sight, would he be able to identify the two by *vision* alone now?[486] In the light of the above, Nyāya would like to reply that, since *seeing is also touching*, the person would indeed be able to differentiate the two through vision alone. In fact, the Nyāya treatise, *Nyāyasūtra*, elevates it as a principle: "*Because* the same *artha* ('thing' or 'object') is grasped by seeing and touching".

However, the same situation does not prevail in case of the other senses. Nyāya holds that, while vision and touch grasp the *same* material body as their sources, the other senses, like hearing, smelling, and tasting, can only grasp the relevant sensations, but not the sources from which they are emanating.[487] Matilal says:

> Nyāya would say, for example, that we smell the fragrance of the flower but not the flower itself and we taste the sweetness of sugar but not the sugar lump itself.[488]

Thus, whether the sensations are coming from synthetic or natural sources are beyond the grasp of these sense-organs.

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[484] Hiriyanna, *Outlines*, 248-49
[485] Matilal, *Perception*, 252
[486] Ibid, 251-52
[487] Ibid, 210
[488] Ibid, 252-53, modified

However, Nyāya does include the sensations of sound, smell, and taste in the experiencing of an "event" through a process which is unique to its theory. Nyāya holds that experiencing something through vision and touch may automatically revive memories of hearing, smell, and taste as well in the perceiver through a process called "perception through revived memory" (*jñānalakṣaṇā pratyāsatti*).[489] Nyāya holds it to be an *extraordinary mode of perception* because these sensations are not physically sensed by the sense organs but are generated in the viewer's mind.[490] Thus, when a rose is seen from a great distance, its smell is likely to be lost on the way. However, mind would still revive it for the perceiver in terms of the "impressions" of a rose experienced in terms of the viewer's embodied experiences in the past. According to Matilal, these revived memories *qualify* the visual nucleus in terms of the epistemic formula "qualifier + qualified + relationship = unit of perception", generating an experience of these sensations alongside the one produced by vision and touch. In this sense, in the Nyāya theory, perception is much 'fuller' than what vision-touch equivalence can produce in the viewer.[491] Matilal notes that this theory generates the following perceptual experiences for the viewer:

> The above principle of Nyāya is extended to explain various facts about perceptual situation. It is contended by Nyāya that even such reports as "I *see* sweet honey", "I *see* cold ice" or "I *see* fragrant flowers" would be correct as long as the 'nucleus' of the object-complex is visually presented.[492]

Sometimes, the mind can even make a 'mistake' by generating false associations under certain compelling circumstances. Thus, Macbeth *sees* a dagger and Lady Macbeth *sees* blood where there are none.

By incorporating other sensations in perception through the process of "perception through revived memory", Nyāya goes much beyond Merleau-Ponty's theory

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[489] Matilal, *Perception*, 372

[490] It forms one of the three extraordinary powers of perception in the Nyāya theory, the other two being *sāmānyalakṣaṇā-pratyāsatti* or "seeing a universal in a particular", and *yogaja* or "yogic power of intuitive seeing", ibid, 372

[491] Matilal, *Perception*, 289

[492] Ibid, 289, modified; also see Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 21

of vision-touch equivalence. Since vision still forms the nucleus around which not only touch but other sensations also cluster, the Nyāya process may appropriately be called *visual synesthesia*.

<u>Examples of *Visual Synesthesia* in Cinema</u>

The difference between experiences generated by Nyāya *visual synesthesia* and Merleau-Ponty's *synesthetic* experience may be illustrated through the same film example used in Merleau-Ponty's case: James Cameron's *Titanic* (1997). When the protagonists are sinking in the sea, Nyāya would like to say that the audiences would not only experience touch sensations, but also other sense qualities like sound, smell, as well as taste, in case the audiences have personal experience of theses sensations in relation to sea or have learnt about them from authentic sources to generate an imagination which would be revived by mind for the audiences. In case the senses of smell and taste (sound is already included in cinema) are 'painful' for the body, they would generate a sense of embodied pain for the audiences. In this sense, according to Nyāya, the audiences' experiences would be even fuller than what Merleau-Ponty visualizes.

Similarly in Ritwik Ghatak's *Titas Ekti Nadir Naam* ('A River Named Titus', 1973), a boy wades into the river up to his waist while the camera also stands in waist-deep water to watch him. As weeds float by the camera lens, the audiences not only experience the touch sensations of the cool river water, but also *taste* the river water as well as *smell* the weed floating by through their memory. Nyāya theory of cinematic experience flies in the face of existing film theories based on the notion of *disembodied vision* alone.

In conclusion, one may sum up the advantages that Nyāya theory of perception offers in relation to contemporary theories of perception as follows:

i)   One gets a more detailed analysis of the process through which perception works. It, thus, makes us understand the complementary roles that "mode of appearance" and "mode of presentation" play in perception: while the "mode of appearance" give us the "event", "mode of presentation" gives us a 'measure' of the "event".

ii)   It makes clear the respective roles that embodiment and socio-cultural practices of the viewer play in perception.

iii)   It makes clear that an *integrated whole* of elements within view is formed in perception so that a unified response can be given to the scene as a whole, essential for the survival of an organism.

iv)   Since it forms an *integrated whole* in perception, perception is a "goal-directed" activity which forever seeks a *narrative closure* in completing the process of integration. Narrative constructions are, thus, an in-built component in the human psyche as part of its survival instinct.

Existing film theories had narrowed the role of perception to *disembodied vision* as the role model of Western theories since renaissance. Nyāya significantly reverses this trend by holding that the audiences do not witness a scene in isolation; rather, they carry with them a load of experiential factors relating to their body, history, and culture which determine what they ultimately *see* on the screen. Nyāya thoughts on the *structure* and *process of perception*, involving "modes of appearances", "invariable sequences", "universals", and "classes" as constituting "object-hoods" for the perceiver and "modes of presentation" and "sense-object trajectories" as giving an embodied 'measure' of the "event" to the perceiver, becomes a treasure trove for analysts operating in the field. Nyāya seems to be far ahead of contemporary theories of perception. More importantly, its emphasis on the audiences' embodied and socio-cultural experiences of life helps it to bring back ordinary audiences to the center of academic discussion, a position from where they have been most unfortunately banished by the existing film discourse.

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Chapter 4

Cinema and Identification
Bharata's Theory of *Rasa*

The drama I have devised is a *re-presentation* of actions and conducts of people depicted in different situations, rich in various emotions.

----------- Bharata

In the following two chapters, I enter the domain of Indian aesthetic theories which deal with the following basic question "*knowing that it is a fiction, how do the audiences still experience emotions?*" These questions are essentially related to the *issue of identification* of the audiences with an artwork which culminates in Bharata's (c. early 1st millennium CE) theory of *rasa* or aesthetic pleasure enunciated in his celebrated work on the theory of drama, *Nāṭyaśāstra* ('Treatise on Drama'), and the brilliant commentary *Abhinavabhārati* thereon by the Kashmir Śaiva philosopher-aesthete Abhinavagupta (c. 10th CE). This chapter examines Bharata's thoughts on the levels of audience *identification* with an artwork and the evocation of a corresponding *affective state* among them which enable the audiences to both consciously and bodily *relive* scenes constructed by the artwork. Together these two aspects constitute one of the most distinctive Indian contributions to the theory of art.

On the question why people *identify* with situations which are fictional in nature, Bharata notes that, since the situations depicted are "a *re-presentation* of actions and conducts of people, depicted through different situations, rich in various emotions",[493] they lead to the audiences' *identification* with scenes at various levels of their occurrence. This idea has led the philosopher-aesthetes Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka (c. 9th CE) to theorize that the fictional nature of artworks *generalizes* audience emotions by virtue of which they do not suffer emotions as they do in real life. On the question why, then, the audiences seek to engage with artworks at all even after knowing all are fictions, Abhinava had come up

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[493] Bharata, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol. I.2, Trans. and Ed. Manomohan Ghosh (Calcutta: Manisha Granthalaya, 1967): Ch. I. III

with the brilliant idea that the audiences engage with artworks because they *identify with the fictional nature of the play* even before they have stepped into the auditorium, an identification which starts acting as the core for all other identifications in relation to the artworks hereafter. What this core level of *identification with the fictional mode* does is to make the audiences "willingly" interact with artworks that engage their attention. This idea provides one of the most effective solutions to the most perplexing problem in the domain of arts: "why do the audiences *enjoy* tragedies?"

Once the core level of identification is formed among the audiences, they undergo various other levels of identification in relation to the artwork. Thus, while engaging with the artwork, they initially pass through a 'mild' form of identification as they start 'paying attention' to the play, which primarily involves the evocation of a corresponding *affective state* i.e. a "psycho-somatic state" among the audiences that helps their 'unconscious' bodies being brought at par with their consciousness enabling them to *relive* a scene in terms of both their bodies and souls together. The above process leads to the formation of more intense forms of identification like 'sympathetic' identifications with the generic form of the artwork in terms of its narrative and action modes, which may finally culminate, at the highest level of intensification, with an 'empathic' identification with the focus of the play, a state in which the audiences not only feel sympathetic towards the main protagonists and their actions, but exchange places with them. The formation of different levels of identification together with their corresponding affective states produces different levels of aesthetic pleasure among the audiences in the course of their interactions with the artworks, called the *rasas*, broadly classified by Bharata as constituting of three basic types, e.g., *aesthetic relish*, *aesthetic saturation*, and *aesthetic immersion* or *ecstasy*. One of Bharata's brilliant insights consists in linking these aesthetic experiences with different narrative structures of the play, an aspect which would be analyzed in greater detail later.

In this connection, the word *rasa*, which forms the *summum bonum* of Bharata's theory, needs farther explanation. The word derives from the root "*rasa*" (lit., 'juice') leading to its various interpretation in the aesthetic field as "relish", "taste", "mood", etc, basically signifying that *experience of emotions in the field of arts is qualitiatively*

different from emotions experienced in practical life. In contrast to practical emotions, *rasa* means "generalized resultant emotion"[494] shared by all spectators in relation to an artwork which stands on the basic idea that, in principle, all human beings share similar embodied experiences and socio-cultural practices within a particular culture, or sometimes in case of certain basic emotions, across cultures.[495] Bharata holds that *rasa* represents the *tasting* of an aesthetic emotion by the audiences from 'outside', rather than personally 'suffering' it, a process which makes all aesthetic experiences *pleasurable* for the audiences including tragedies.

Different aspects of Bharata's theory and Abhinava's brilliant elucidations thereof will be discussed as follows:

In the first section, contemporary notions of audience identification in Western thought will be discussed;

In Part 1, a discussion on relationship between the *levels of audience identification* and artworks will take place, including the significant contributions made in this regard by the two philosopher-aesthetes Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and Abhinavagupta; in this regard, the following levels of audience identification will be analyzed: identification with the fictional mode of the play, 'mild' identification with the play when the audiences start paying 'attention' to it including the evocation of a corresponding *affective state* among them, sympathetic identification with the narrative mode of the play, sympathetic identification with the action mode of the play, and empathic identification with the focus of the play; a discussion of what will be the Indian response to POV identification in cinema will also be undertaken;

Part 2 will deal with the relationship between narrative structure and aesthetic experience. In this connection, Bharata's theory of "extended action", involving three five-step narrative structures consisting of the mental state of the protagonists (*avasthāa*), the nature of the unfolding action (*arthaprakṛtis*) and the joining together of these various parts as limbs of a living organism (*sandhis*) will be discussed; Bharata's farther

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[494] Gerow, "Notes", 87-8
[495] Here "generalization" means "broadening" and not "abstraction", ibid, 89

subdivisions of *sandhis* into *sandhyaṅgas* representing the templates of situation-models and *lakṣaṇas* representing elements that lend grace and beauty to an artistic rendering will be highlighted;

In the next section, the nature of the resulting aesthetic experiences among the audiences, broadly classified as aesthetic relish, aesthetic saturation, and aesthetic immersion or ecstasy, will be discussed;

In the sixth section, Abhinava's listing of the obstacles to proper aesthetic appreciation of the play when reality intrudes into the fictional mode of the play will be elaborated; in this connection, Vivian Sobchack's discussion of "fictional" and "documentary" attitudes will be analyzed;

In the seventh and concluding section, Bharata's idea of subjective-objective alteration will be discussed in relation to dance drama and cinema with special reference to Merleau-Ponty's notion of the *chiasm*.

lustration 4: Concepts in Bharata's Theory of Aesthetic Experience (*Rasa*)

Identification → At the most level in classical Indian theories, identification is said to occur with the process of integration of various elements within view into a *cognitive whole* which enables the human organism to give a unified response to a situation essential for the survival of the organism.

In the field of arts, the process leads to the following levels of identification between the audiences and an artwork:

1. Basic Identification with the *Fictional Mode of the Artwork*
2. Identification with the *Perceptual-Cognitive Mode of the Artwork* with the simultaneous evocation of a corresponding *Affective State* among the audiences
3. Sympathetic Identification with the *Narrative Mode of the Artwork*
4. Sympathetic Identification with the *Action Mode of the Artwork*
5. Empathic Identification with the *Basic Focus of the Artwork*
6. Indian Response to *POV Identification in Cinema*

Affective State → Various Levels of Identification evoke their corresponding Affective States in the perceiver which helps align the perceiver's Body with her Consciousness. This process enables the audiences to *relive* a scene created by an artwork.

Rasa → The "generalization" of aesthetic experiences that the audiences undergo in relation to an artwork is called *Rasa* or Aesthetic Pleasure. The basic three forms of *Rasa* have been broadly classified as under:

1. Aesthetic Relish (*Bhoga*) → It is an aesthetic state where the audiences' consciousness is in a mode of expansion signifying a state of enquiry
2. Aesthetic Saturation (*Rasavat*) → It is an aesthetic state where the audiences' consciousness is in a mode of repose and inner blossoming signifying a successful completion of the mode of enquiry
3. Aesthetic Immersion (*Samāveśa*) → It is an aesthetic state where the audiences consciousness is in a state of immersion, overwhelmed by archetypal emotions being released from within the audiences' own subconscious

Western Notions of Audience Identification in Cinema

The notion of "identification" is a vexed issue which has not yet run its full course in Western thought. Following is a brief discussion of the issue in three segments: contemporary theories of identification in the West, identification in film theories and changes occurring in the notion of identification due to findings in cognitive and neurosciences.

Since "identification" is invariably associated with "identity" of the entity which is *identifying*, this brief discussion may profitably start with the notion of "the self" in Western thought. Western tradition has found it difficult to reconcile the fact that while the "identity" of "the self" is predicated on constancy, change remains in-built in the biological system. In this connection, two trends are visible: "identity" as an unalterable inner core and "identity" as an external construction.

The traditional notion of "the self" as a unique inner core has been under threat from two sides in contemporary times, psychology and sociology. As far as psychology is concerned, Freud's theory of identification holds that a child assimilates, i.e. "introjects" external persons or objects within his psyche. Lacan reworked Freud's thesis in terms of Saussurian linguistics to hold that "identity" is not a organic unity but has an alienated aspect within it on the analogy that linguistic "meaning" is not internal to individual expressions but arises externally from a selection of words and their arrangement within a linguistic structure. Lacan explains the understanding of a child's own "self" through the metaphor of the "mirror image" where the child, looking at its own reflection, experiences unity within the image which it lacks in its own body resulting in his identification with his own image. Lacan holds that it parallels the process where the caregivers literally 'construct' the child from outside which the child misrecognizes as its own. In this sense, Lacan describes the child's "identification" with his own *representation* as an instance of *primary narcissistic identification* which henceforth would underlie all his future identifications with the world.[496]

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[496] Gordon Marshall, "Identity", in *A Dictionary of Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

In contemporary sociological thought, William James and George Herbert Mead held "the self" to be an "identity" that has two aspects: the "I" as the knower which is creative and yet unknowable within itself and the "Me" which forms its outer core determined by the social phase. "Identification" here becomes a process of naming, of placing oneself within socially constructed categories where language holds a central position. Michel Foucault, combining Saussurian position with the sociological finding, holds that individual positions of identity and agency are formed through *discourse* which shape the way human beings come to know the world.[497]

These two aspects of "identity" viz. *identity as an unalterable core* where somebody can call an "I" as really belonging to him and *identity as constructed* where nothing can be called one's own are sought to be reconciled by some contemporary thinkers who shift the emphasis from the "identity" of a person as an underlying core to "identity" as a steady pattern observed within the persons' experiences and actions.[498] In this connection, Paul Ricoeur argues that we make sense of our own and others' biographies the same way we understand stories: by following a plot involving the protagonists featured within it. In narrative terms, then, the "identity" of a person becomes the identity of a character existing within a play. Ricœur's view of *narrative identity* is largely based on Aristotle's *Poetics* in which characters are shaped by their actions and circumstances. What makes the characters recognizable to the audiences is the similarity of the ordered series of events occurring within a play with their own lives.[499]

The above aspects frame the "Identity" discourse in film theories. In *classical film theory*, the montage theorists of early Soviet cinema hold "identity" to be entirely constructed by an exploitative bourgeois society which the filmmakers wanted to replace with a construction undertaken by the masses themselves. In this connection, the filmmakers advocate montage cinema as a solution where juxtaposition of discontinuous

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[497] Marshall, "Identity", *A Dictionary*
[498] David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan, "Identity and Narrative", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, Reprint (London: Routledge, 2010): 231-35, 231
[499] Ibid, modified

shots breaks the spell of conventional film narrative to produce a new understanding of reality among the audiences.

In contrast, André Bazin's theory of realism proclaimed a transcendental form of identification between nature and human beings which operate at a deeper level of their existence than perceived at the surface level of reality. He, therefore, argued in favor of a mode of filmmaking that presents 'undistorted' reality to the audiences. In this sense, both these theories sought to distance the audiences from their conventional modes of identification with cinema with new forms of engagement with cinema.

During the '60s and '70s, the incorporation of Lacan's thoughts in *contemporary film theory*, led to the idea that, for any communication to take place between a subject and others, some form of identification is necessary between them.[500] Since Lacan's idea is also based on the notion that "I" is only graspable through the *other*, the very process of understanding any communication by the audiences in cinema becomes a socially mediated process through the *other*.[501] On this basis, contemporary film theory came to hold that while the "socially structured regimes of meaning known as the Symbolic domain" constitute forms of communication that results in the audiences' "primary identification" with cinema, their "secondary identification" occurs with the very process of filmmaking itself that constructs such domains for them.[502] Althusser subsumes this Lacanian position in his theory of *interpellation* where social institutions conditioned human psyche to make them *subjects* subservient to the bourgeois purposes. Bordwell notes that, since the Lacanian and Althusserian processes of identification literally comprehend all aspects of reality, it tends to lose its focus, eventually becoming useless as an effective tool for analyzing cinema.[503]

Cognitive film theory, arising in mid '80s, advocated an intellectually alert audience in place of a socially conditioned 'passive' audience as conceived by

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[500] Bordwell, "Film Studies and Grand Theory", 15
[501] Ibid, 15-6
[502] Ibid, 16-7
[503] Ibid, 17

contemporary film theory. In this theory, the audiences identified with the intellectual process itself that unraveled enigmas posed by the films. Plantinga notes:

> The fundamental tenet of a cognitive approach is that the spectator's affective experience is dependent on cognition, on mental activity cued not only by film form but also by story content. In viewing films, cognition would include inferences, hypotheses, and evaluative judgments.[504]

The theory, while being intellectually 'strong', lacks an effective explanation of the depth psychological aspects generated by cinema.[505]

These, in brief, are the notions of "identity" of the audiences as conceived by various film theories, all of which, incidentally, cater to the constructivist idea in some form or the other. At a deeper level, all these ideas are based on the notion of a *disembodied vision* representing an idea of human intelligence detached from the body and which gets imprisoned by the social structures. The film theories generally used this notion of *disembodied vision* as the basic instrument of understanding films which totally negated the audiences' embodied experiences and the socio-cultural practices built around them.[506] In this context, Brecht's idea of the "alienated spectator" came to be adopted as the *ideal* form of audience response to cinema. This "estranged" or "distanced" response (*verfremdung*), resulting from a mental distantiation of the audiences from the story-line of the play which would have the effect of instituting an unbiased observer in place of a spectator identified with the narrative of the play. This process, which was expected to enable the audiences to grasp the underlying reality, became the criterion of informed film criticism since the '60s.[507] However, Bordwell argues that this notion of "identification" is still rather vague: "The theorist must still clarify what identification *is* and why we need the concept in order to explain the effects of cinema."[508]

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[504] Plantinga, "Notes on Spectator Emotion and Ideological Film Criticism", in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, Eds. Richard Allen and Murray Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): 327-93, 378
[505] Bordwell and Carroll, "Introduction", in *Post-Theory*, xiii-xvii, xvi
[506] Richard Allen and Murray Smith, "Emotional Response", in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, 369-71, 369
[507] Murray Smith, "The Logic and Legacy of Brechtianism", in *Post-Theory*, 130-48, 130
[508] Bordwell, "Film Studies and Grand Theory", 17, original emphasis

In recent times, the conventional notions of audience "identification" and their associated emotions, which had taken a beating in the hands of film theorists and avant-garde filmmakers and dramatists, have resurfaced thanks to revelations taking place in cognitive and neurosciences. These findings are that emotions have a key role to play in the formation of "thoughts" in human life.[509] In the present scenario, following forms of audience identification are under discussion: states of *a-central* and *central imagining* involving 'sympathetic' and 'empathic' identifications, and the type of identification that operates in a *POV shot* in cinema. A brief outline of these arguments is presented here.

The film theoretician Murray Smith explains the art critic Richard Wollheim's ideas as follows: in *a-central imagining*, a person imagines the best course of action in relation to a scene standing outside the scene and thinking "from no-one's standpoint" as to what is the best course of action for the protagonists operating in the scene in contrast to the notion of *central imagining* where a person "standing inside the scene" responds entirely by adopting a character's point of view.[510] Smith is, however, skeptical about the latter which "seem to imply a kind of total replication of a character's experience" among the audiences.[511] Instead, Smith argues in favor of the production of a *sympathetic state* among the film audiences as a result of the following thress processes: "*recognition* (the identification and assignment of traits to characters), *alignment* (the revelation of the actions and psychological states of characters), and *allegiance* (the evaluation of characters, especially morally but in other ways as well – according to notions of taste, etc)".[512]

In contrast, Alex Neill argues in favor of *empathic* states which he differentiates from *sympathetic* states as follows:

"With sympathetic response, in feeling *for* another, one's response need not reflect what the other is feeling…In contrast, in responding empathically to another, I come to *share* his feelings, to feel *with* him; if he is in an emotional

[509] Damátio, *Descartes' Error*, 226

[510] Smith, "Imagining from the Inside", in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, 412-30, 413

[511] Ibid, 413

[512] Ibid, 415, emphasis added

state, to empathize with him is to experience the emotion(s) that he experiences."[513]

While noting that *empathic* responses have been 'short shrifted' in contemporary debate,[514] he notes that the trend is reversing:

> The idea that historical and social scientific explanation involves *verstehen*, "seeing things from another's point of view", has a distinguished and influential history…And more recently, a growing number of philosophers and psychologists have been arguing that empathy is crucial to our "everyday" ability to understand, explain and predict the behavior of those around us: that our "folk psychological" attribution of mental states to others depends on empathic understanding.[515]

Since feeling from another person's point of view not only depends on the viewer's belief of what the real situation is but also an active identification with it, Neill holds: "Empathizing with others also makes available to us possibilities for our *own* emotional education and development."[516]

Smith and Gregory Currie have engaged in a debate on what has been called a *POV* state. While Smith argues that the primary function of a POV shot is to inculcate sympathetic identification between the looking character and the spectator, he, however, concedes that, because of the multifaceted alignment that a POV shot can bring about between the spectator and the character, it may promote an 'empathic' identification involving "central imagining" or "imagining standing inside the scene" by the audiences, an argument which Currie further advances.[517] The debate has, however, remained inconclusive so far.

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[513] Alex Neill, "Empathy and (Film) Fiction", in *Post-Theory*, 175-94, 175-76, modified, original emphasis
[514] Ibid, 176
[515] Ibid, 178, modified
[516] Ibid, 191-92
[517] Smith, "Imagining from the Inside", 417

Part 1

Levels of Audience Identification in Bharata's Theory

The present section would discuss classical Indian theories of "the self" and the various levels of "identification" that it generates in relation to artworks. Before embarking on the specific levels of identification that Bharata considers in relation to an artwork, a general discussion on what is understood by the concept of "identification" in the classical Indian theories would be useful here.

The notion of "the self" in the orthodox theories has already been elaborately discussed in chapter 3 under the section "Nyāya Ontology" as well as in Annexure 1. Suffice it to say that, as far as Nyāya theory is concerned on which, I argue, Bharata's aesthetic theory is based, it conceives the notion of "the self" (*ātma*) as a unique *locus* in the whole universe where "knowledge" and its associated emotions generated by "the body" in the course of its interactions with the material world accrue. However, since "the self" occurs in a different existential plane than "matter", it cannot interact either with "the body" or "matter" constituting the world. As a solution to this problem of 'category mistake' suffered by Descartes in his theory of mind-body duality, Nyāya as well as other orthodox "Hindu" theories hold that "the self" undergoes an *illusory identification* i.e. *mis-identifcation* with "the body", resulting in "the self" arrogating to itself all the properties, drives, tendencies and experiences acquired by "the body" in the course of its interactions with the material world. These aspects accrue as "knowledge" in "the self" resulting in its manifestation of an 'agency' which acts on the world sole through "the body". Crucially, since Nyāya, together with its aligned schools, like Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsā, hold that the true nature of "the self" is devoid of all consciousness and agency, the "knowledge" that accrues within it is literally constructed by "the body". In this sense, it is a "bottoms-up" theory where the "identification" exhibited by "the self" is synonymous with "the body's" "identification" with the world. Since another human being also undergoes similar experiences, understanding the bodily interactions with the world forms the basis for *intersubjectivity* in the Nyāya and its allied schools. Due to the prominence accorded to embodied experiences in this group of

theories, a *total* construction of the subject by the *other*, which requires the notion of a *disembodied intelligence* as its basis, remains an alien concept here.

As far as "Hindu" theories opposed to Nyāya group of theories are concerned, the monists among them, e.g., Advaita Veānta and Kashmir Śaivism, hold that "pure consciousness" constitutes the whole universe which periodically undergoes phases of involution and evolution with temporary stability achieved in-between those formations. During the relatively 'stable' evolutionary phase of "pure consciousness", entities such as "the self", "empirical consciousness", "ego" and "the body" appear as its various 'moments'. Since all entities belong to the same source in these monistic theories, the problem of 'category mistake' does not arise. However, the "identification" that "the self" exhibits during its phase of *illusory identification* with the world represents a 'fall' from the pristine state of "pre consciousness" signifying a "top-down" theory of "knowledge" here.

On the heterodox side, the most revolutionary theory is presented by the Buddhists who deny the existence of "the self" altogether. Noting that in any particular moment of our experience, we experience only some form of sensation, Buddha challenges the notion that these experiences have an unchanging core reality known as "the self".[518] Instead, the Buddha holds that these sensations are generated by the momentarily existing phenomenological "ultimates", called the *dharmas*, constituting five types of experiential series (*vithi*) involving the sense-experiences of form representing all five sense-organs (*rūpa*), feelings (*vedanā*), concepts (*samjñā, saññā*), traces (*saṃskāras, saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*cetana, viññāna*). When 'bunched together', forms an aggregate called the *skandhas* (also *khandhas*, lit., 'the trunk of a tree')[519] that give the appearance of an abiding "self" is nothing but an an ever changing, *fluid* self, more famously known as *streams of consciousness.*[520] However, when the five *dharmas* are not bunched together, they generate the impressions of isolated "things" and "objects".

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[518] Hiriyanna, *Outlines*, 138-39
[519] Dasgupta, *A History*, 93
[520] Puligandla, *Fundamentals*, 55

One may sum up the thead that underlies all the above notions of "the self", whether 'abiding', as in the orthodox theories, or 'fluid', as in Buddhism, which lead to the *fundamental form of identification* thus: they all *identify* or, more appropriately, *mis-identify* with the material world, a process in which "the body" plays a prominent role. In this sense, the "identification" that the human organism, which may be more appropriately called the *self-body system* in terms of the above thinking, is associated with following three processes at the most basic level its 'existence': the urge for survival internalized as the *survival instinct*, the continuity of the organism through procreation internalized as the *sexual instinct*, and securing favorable conditions in the immediate surroundings conducive to the above processes internalized as the *acquisitive instinct*. While the first two signify embodied processes, the third one 'spills over' into the socio-cultural sphere where an amount of 'control' is needed to be exercised over reality in order to secure favorable conditions for the survival and continuity of the organism. In this sense, alongside our desire for survival and propagation, the instinct of exercising "ownership" (*svatva*) and "power" (*śakti*) over sections of reality, also appear to be in-built in our psyche.[521]

At the perceptual level, the working out of above *instincts* requires that the elements occurring within one's field of vision be converted into a *cognitive "whole"* to ensure unity of response of the viewer, essential for its survival.[522] Thus, classsical Indian theories hold that *an individual's basic identification is with this basic "knowledge-process" that secures its survivial and propagation*. While the *primary identification* is, thus, always with the *processes* of *narrative integration* of a scene rather than with *individuals*, the organism may, however, develop *secondary identifications* with *individuals* when they are seen to perform such tasks repeatedly. It is only in this sense that "heroes" are created whether in real life or in artworks in the Indian theories. In this sense, Indian theories depart from Paul Ricoeur's notion that "identification" occurs with

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[521] The Navya-Nyāyika, Raghunātha Śiromaṇi appears to hold this view quted in Ganeri, *The Lost Age of Reason*, 170

[522] At the deepest level, however, classical Indian theories hold that identification with the process of survival signifies a 'clinging to life' which prevents a person from attaining the highest level of realization representing the state of liberation.

characters representing a center for linking of experiences and actions in a narrative constructed by an individual "self" rather than with the "knowledge-process" as such.

The following levels of "audience identification" would be discussed in the ensuing sections: identification with the *fictional mode* of an artwork; a 'mild' identification with the *perceptual-cognitive mode* of the 'play' based on the audiences' *mental attention* and the beginning of the evocation of a corresponding *affective state* among them; their *sympathetic identification* with the narrative and action modes of the 'play'; and their *empathic identification* with the general focus of an artwork if the work is capable of elevating them to that rarefied level. This section will finally end with comments on how classical Indian theories would have dealt with *POV identification in cinema*.

1. <u>Identification with the Fictional Mode:</u> *Generalization of Audience Experience*

This is a seminal Indian contribution to the theory of arts, which, arguably, solves the problem of the "paradox of junk fiction" or "why do the audiences *enjoy* tragedies?"

In trying to solve the above paradox, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka (c. 9th CE) thought that artworks generate *bhāvanā* ('the state which is caused'), among the audiences which makes them 'align' with the ideas represented in an artwork on the analogy that Vedic injunctions generate *bhāvanās* among its devotees viz. i) "Someone desires me to do this" and so ii) "I must do this".[523] However, while the Vedas ultimately promise eternal happiness which makes a person follow its injunctions, it was not clear to Nāyaka why the audiences would frequent tragedies which not only cannot promise any such thing but also may evoke painful sentiments in them?

While wrestling with this question, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka makes one of the greatest breakthroughs in Indian aesthetic theory. He argues that the very fictionality of the

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[523] The motivational theory underlying this position has been advocated by the Prabhākara School (c. 8th CE) of the classical Indian theory of Mīmāṃsā (c. 3rd BCE). See Krishna S. Arjunwadkar, "Rasa Theory and Darśanas", in *Some Aspects of the Rasa Theory*, Ed. V. M. Kulkarni (Delhi: Bhogilal Leherchand Institute of Indology, 1985): 54 – 62, 57, modified

artworks *generalizes* the audiences' experiences (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, 'universalization') which are not personally "owned" by them any more, i.e. which are different from the emotions experienced by them in their real life. When a person experiences something in such a *generalized state*, it amounts to experiencing something without personally 'suffering' it. In the context of his theory of *rasa*, Bharata uses the expression "chewing" (*carvaṇā*, 'tasting', 'relishing') which holds that the audiences "taste" the experiences as if from 'outside' without being personally involved in them. Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka holds that his idea of *generalization* (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*) provides a solid foundation for Bharata's *rasa* theory which provides the key to the understanding why the audiences *enjoy* all artworks, including tragedies. In other words, in such a state, all *aesthetic experiences become pleasurable* to the audiences. On the question whose emotions do the audiences experience in such a *generalized state*, the literary theorist Viśvanātha (c. 14th CE) enigmatically replies that they are "another person's, yet not quite another person's; mine, but not quite mine".[524] In other words, they appear as "ownerless" emotions in the audiences' experience.[525]

Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's great idea, however, still leaves the following question unanswered: even after knowing that an artwork is a fictional work, why do human beings still frequent them? In other wirds, why do human beings at all feel motivated in engaging with artworks? Mohanty notes that *motivation* underlying classical Indian *theory of action* has been conceived as under: [526]

$$\text{Knowledge} \;\rightarrow\; \text{Desire} \;\rightarrow\; \text{Will to Do} \;\rightarrow\; \text{Motor Effort} \;\rightarrow\; \text{Action}$$

$$\text{(\textit{Jñāna})} \qquad \text{(\textit{Cikirṣā})} \qquad \text{(\textit{Pravṛtti})} \qquad \text{(\textit{Ceṣṭā})} \qquad \text{(\textit{Kārya})}$$

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[524] Viśvanātha, *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, III/13a: "*parasya na parasyeti mameti na mameti ca*", quoted and translated by Arindam Chakrabarti, "Play, Pleasure, Pain: Ownerless Emotions in Rasa-Aesthetics", in *Science, Literature and* Aesthetics, Vol. XV Part 3, Ed. Amiya Dev, in the series *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, Gen. Ed. D. P. Chattopadhyaya (New Delhi: Centre for Studies in Civilizations, 2009): 189-202, 189

[525] Chakrabarti, "Play, Pleasure, Pain", 190-91

[526] J. N. Mohanty, "The Idea of the Good in Indian Thought", in *A Companion to World Philosophies*, Eds. Eliot Deutsch and Ron Bontekoe (Malden, Massachusetts and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999): 290 – 303, 292, emphasis added

While the motivational process kicks off with the arising of cognitive knowledge in the viewer, it subsequently leads to desire, etc, resulting in visible action in the final stage. The question is what is the *motivation* or *desire* acting within human beings which make them engage with artworks?

Abhinavagupta offers an innovative solution to the problem faced by his predecessor. He extends Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's idea of *generalization* a step farther by holding that the motivation operating within the audiences of artworks is their *identification with the fictional mode of the artwork* even before they have started engaging with an artwork. In other words, this prior "willingness" creates the basic desire among the audiences to engage with a particular artwork which brings them to the auditoriums to witness the play.

While Abhinava was, thus, able to present a creative solution to the "paradox of junk fiction", it, however, raised the following question of logic: if the audiences know an artwork to be a work of fiction, why are they still profoundly influenced by it? It is clearly a violation of the law of contradiction in the sense that "A believes *p* and doesn't believe *p* at the same time". While Carlyle noted this contradiction by holding that the audiences undertake a "willing suspension of disbelief" in experiencing an artwork and the Indian tradition held that knowledge generated by an artwork was "knowledge produced out of one's own desire at a time when a contradictory knowledge is present in the person's mind",[527] it still did not solve the problem. The Neo-Nyāya or Navya-Nyāya (c. 13th CE) offered a possible solution to the above problem: "a property *p* and its absence *not-p* cannot be asserted of the same object at the same time *in the same sense*".[528] Thus, a tree may be conjoined to a bird as well as not being conjoined to it at the same time though not *in the same sense*, provided spatial segments of the tree are appropriately delimited, e.g., while its upper branch was conjoined to the bird, the rest had remained free from it.[529]

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[527] Raghunath Ghosh, "The Concept of Ahāryajñana in Navya-Nyāya: Some Reflections", *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, 15 No. 1 (1997): 88–93, 88

[528] Matilal, *Epistemology, Logic, and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis*, Ed. Jonardon Ganeri (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1971): 36

[529] Ibid

The above explanation, however, raised a fresh logical question: how can one's belief that it is a work of fiction and his response as if it is real can simultaneously co-exist in the same person at the same time? Again Navya-Nyāya offers a possible solution based on an article of belief held by the orthodox Indian Schools that a *temporal unit of experience consists of three moments* (*pal*):

i)   Moment of Origination where awareness arises (*sṛṣṭi*, 'evolution', 'creation'),

ii) Moment of Existence where awareness leaves its trace in memory (*sthiṭi*, 'existence', 'maintainance'),

iii) Moment of Destruction where awareness ceases to exist (*saṁhāra* or *proloy*, 'involution', 'destruction').

Navya-Nyāya argues that, in the above sense, even while a new awareness is arising in a person in its *moment of origination*, a memory-trace left by the previous awareness in its *moment of existence* remains resident in the individual's consciousness.[530] Navya-Nyāya holds that there is no logical conflict in holding that the new arising and the trace left by the past may be contradictory in nature.

According to Abhinava, the importance of audiences' *willing identification with the fictional mode* lies in the fact that it acts as the substratum for all subsequent identifications between an artwork and its audiences.

2. Identification with the Perceptual-Cognitive Mode of an Artwork

In Nyāya theory of perception, whenever a person starts integrating elements within her perceptual field into a *cognitive whole*, it is assumed that she is paying *mental attention* to it. Called an "engaged situation at the time of cognition", it represents a process which does not remain an 'empty' perception but one where a person both perceives and cognizes, a process which has a striking similarity with contemporary integration theories of attention.[531] It represents a preliminary stage of identification for the audiences.

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[530] Buddhist theory of *momentariness* only prescribes two moments viz. the moment of origination and the moment of destruction which makes them account for memory in a different way

[531] Workshop Report on "Mind and Attention in Indian Philosophy", Harvard University, 21st and 22nd September, 2013, Accessed Online in June, 2016

Hitchcock's following description of a hypothetical scene may be taken as a classic example of a 'mild' identification with a perceptual-cognitive mode aroused by the perceiver's mental attention:

> A curious person goes into somebody else's room and begins to search through the drawers. Now, you show the person who lives in that room coming up the stairs. Then, you go back to the person who is searching, and the public feels like warning him "Be careful, watch out. Someone is coming up the stairs." Therefore, even if the snooper is not a likable character, the audience will still feel anxiety for him.[532]

Hitchcock holds that, even when the audiences are not effectively identified with the scene, they would still feel the urge to warn the interloper "Hey, watch out! Somebody is coming up the steps!" It confirms the traditional Indian thought that, as long as the audiences are not mentally switched off from a scene, their consciousness would continue to act within a scene.

Evocation of an Affective State in Bharata's Theory

One of the lasting contributions of Bharata has been to demarcate a basic unit of performance which evokes an *affective state* (*sthāyī bhāva*, lit., *sthāyī* means 'abiding' and *bhāva* means 'state') among the audiences corresponding to their level of identification with a scene or an artwork. Since the audiences' bodies remain 'unconscious' even as they identify with the scene in their consciousness, it creates a problem as the two are likely to go in two different directions. Bharata's seminal discovery of the evocation of a corresponding *affective state* among the audiences solves this problem by bringing their bodies and consciousness at par which enables the audiences to *relive* a scene by employing both.[533] Before proceeding further, it is,

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[532] François Truffaut, *Hitchcock* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983): 73, quoted in Plantinga, "Spectator Emotion", Footnote 29, 391
[533] Since Nyāya holds that human "consciousness" is an *effect* of "the body's" interactions with the world, there is ultimately no dichotomy between the two planes.

however, necessary to explain what an "affective state" means in terms of contemporary research.[534]

In contemporary research, an *affective state* is considered to be a "psycho-somatic state" which helps human beings experience feelings and emotions.[535] It has three operational dimensions, e.g., *valence*, which evaluates subjective experiences along a positive to negative trajectory; *arousal*, which activates a 'sympathetic nervous system', a psycho-somatic state within the organism in relation to such experiences; and *motivation*, which generates an impulse to respond in a particular way to the situation or scene.[536] Clearly, in the scenario where the audiences identify with a scene, while *valence* represents a cognitive understanding of the scene and *arousal* represents the evocation of a corresponding affective state among them, *motivation* occurs as the product generating the desire to act in a particular way in the given situation. Strikingly, these thoughts exactly mirror Bharata's thoughts on the subject explained below.

In Bharata's well-known formula, the crucial *unit of enactment* consists of the "determinant + consequent + transient" in which the audiences witness a "dramatic situation" called the "determinant" (*vibhāva*) having psychological implications for the protagonists which produces an appropriate response among them termed the "consequents" (*anubhāva*) as well as some fleeting responses called the "transients" (*vyabhicāribhāva*) either among the protagonists themselves or among some of the side characters, the latter having the effect of conveying the 'measure' of the scene to the audiences. Since, on the basis of the Nyāya theory, human beings have an inherent urge to combine elements occurring within view into a *narrative whole*, the audiences integrate the scene into a *causally-linked cognitive whole*, a process with which they identify. Witnessing this chain of "goal-directed activity", a psycho-somatic state (*sthāyī bhāva*) is evoked among them where their bodies aquire the same state of readiness as those of the protagonists within the scene.[537] When the audiences in this *state of affect*

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[534] For different interpretations of the term "*bhāva*", see Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts*, 252

[535] See Wikipedia listing of current research on "Affective State" in www.affect, accessed in July, 2015

[536] Wikipedia listing of current research on "Affective State"

[537] Since an *affective state* is evoked among the audiences only when they witness a "goal-directed activity" occurring within a scene, this state arises among them only with this identificatory level and not

witness the farther unfolding of the scene, emotions in the form of "aesthetic pleasure" (*rasa*) is produced among them.

Bharata's two-stage formula of *unit of enactment* which evokes an *affective state* among the audiences leading to the production of *rasa* or aesthetic pleasure among them in the next may be represented as follows:

1st Stage

The Audiences *Witness* a "Goal-directed Activity" in a Play →

Determinant + Consequents + Transients   →   Evocation of an "Abiding State"

(*Vibhāva*)   (*Anubhāva*) (*Vyabhicāribhāva*) (*Sthāyī bhāva* among the Audiences)

2nd Stage

The Audiences now in an "Abiding State" *Witness* the unfolding Play →

Determinant + Consequents +   Transients   →   Production of "Aesthetic Pleasure"

 (*Vibhāva*)   (*Anubhāva*) (*Vyabhicāribhāva*)   (*Rasa* among the Audiences)

The above explanation significantly departs from the traditional explanation of "abiding state" (*sthāyī bhāva*) in Bharata's theory. It has generally been held that by *sthāyī bhāva*, Bharata generally meant "dominant emotion". However, since Bharata holds that "aesthetic pleasure" (*rasa*) is produced among the audiences only in the next stage, what kind of "dominant emotion" arises among them in the first stage? Clearly, since it is not yet *rasa*, it is not an "aesthetic emotion". Then, what kind of an "emotion" is this? In view of the contradiction, I argue that Bharata's "abiding state" (*sthāyī bhāva*) represents the evocation of a "sympathetic nervous system" involving a psycho-somatic *affective state* among the audiences. With this idea, Bharata brilliantly fills the gap between the 'unconscious' body and consciousness of the audiences, a gap which has not been satisfactorily dealt with before. With the introduction of an *affective state* in his schema, Bharata is able to bring the audiences' body and consciousness at the same level enabling them to respond in unison to a scene.

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with their identification with the fictional mode in general

There is further support for this idea. Etymologically, *bhāva* comes from the root *bhū* which means "to be" or "caused" which have been used in two different ways: "cause to be" like creating and "to pervade" like a perfume does. Clearly *bhāva's* meaning as "emotion" has been derived from the latter use. However, it means much more. While the verve of the word is *bhāvayati* which means "something exists due to a cause", its noun *bhāvanā* means "state which is caused".[538] Gupt holds that, in the above sense, *bhāva* generates many meanings: "state of being, becoming, type of feeling and thinking, sentiment, purport or intention".[539] In fact, *bhāva* is a state which not only produces "emotion" as is generally contended, but also "thought" and a "state in-between", like indifference, indolence, laziness, sleep, etc, which form an important part of Bharata's category of transient states or *vyabhicāribhāvas* (to be explained shortly) in the chapter. In case *sthāyī bhāva* is only interpreted as "dominant emotion", Bharata's transient categories are likely to create enormous confusion for an interpreter as it does for Marie Higgins:

> This list includes many things that we in the West would not consider to be emotions at all, such as sleep, epilepsy, death, and deliberation. These may, however, occur as side effects or consequences of an emotional state, and that is enough for Bharata to classify them as *vyabhicāribhāvas*.[540]

In order to make sense of the categories Bharata is using, *bhāva* clearly needs to be interpreted as an *affective state* alongside its other meanings. A final argument in this regard is provided by the Indian art critic Mukund Lath as follows:

> We can speak of "*narrative bhāvas*" which represent specifiable "states" in the realm of action rather than emotion. Bharata's *sthāyī bhāvas* are subservient to actions that seek their own dramatic value in a narrative. For example, "suspense" generates a *sthāyī bhāva* which is specifiable in terms of the narrative requirement

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[538]Meera Chakravarty, "The Concept of Emotion in Tantra", *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, IX No. 2 (1982): 123- 30, 123

[539] Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts*, 252

[540] Kathleen Marie Higgins, "An Alchemy of Emotion: Rasa and Aesthetic Breakthroughs", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 65 No. 1 (2007), Special Issue "Global Theories of Art and Aesthetics", 43-54, 46

of creating surprise, tempo, and the like rather than specific emotions which remain secondary, ambiguous, or even vague. Similarly, *moral dilemmas* (*dharma-saṇkatas*) generate a kind of *sthāyī bhāva* which, while being rich in feelings, are not specifiable in terms of emotions.[541]

I do not think any farther arguments are necessary in this regard.

Anticipating Eisenstein's Formula of *Dramatic Performance*

It is interesting to note that Bharata's formula of enactment has a remarkable affinity with Eisenstein's formula for constructing a dramatic scene in cinema. In analyzing what an *Image* represents in totality, Eisenstein says that it consists of the following two components: an "image" (*obraz*) which represents the "psychological content of the scene and the interaction of the characters" within it, and a "depiction" (*izobrazhenie*) which represents "people's normal, accepted behavior" within the scene in response to the situation.[542] Eisenstein's formula of performance may be represented as follows:

Image = Inner Psychology of a Dramatic Situation that has an Effect on Characters
+ Character's 'Normal Behavior' in Response to the Situation

Since the 'Inner Psychology of a Dramatic Situation' is nothing but 'Determinant' in Bharata's formula and 'Character's Normal Behavior in Response to the Situation' is identical with Bharata's 'Consequents', Bharata's formula is similar to Eisenstein's except in the following two areas: the notion of *transients* (*vyabhicāribhāvas*) and the *evocation of an affective state among the audiences* (*sthāyīn*). While the concept of the "affective state" has been amply elaborated above, the need for "transients" require some farther clarifications being offered below.

By the "transients", Bharata means states which occur on the sides of the main state being experienced by the protagonists in response to the determining scene. Marie Higgins clarifies its need as follows:

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[541] Mukund Lath, "Review Article" on V. K. Chari's *Sanskrit Criticism* (Honululu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, Vol 11 No. 1 (Sep-Dec, 1993): 123-38, 129, modified

[542] S. M. Eisenstein, "Montage 1937", in *Eisenstein Writings Volume 2: Towards a Theory of Montage*, Trans. Michael Glenny, Ed. Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor, New ed. (London: BFI, 1994): 11-58, 20

> *Vyabhicāribhāvas* are represented only in passing, but *they strenghthen and provide shadings for the main action and the durable emotions they represent*…In *Hamlet*, for instance, Hamlet's fear of ghost, his wistful recollection of Yorick, his sarcastic attitude in speaking to the King, his wrathful outbursts towards his mother are among temporary emotional states that hamlet undergoes and that contribute to the avenging anger as the prevailing emotional tone of the play.[543]

While Higgins emphasizes the role of emotions in the "transient state", it even includes states, like indolence, lazinenss, etc, which occur in-between 'thought' and 'emotion' has already been noted.

However, it is felt that the true significance of *vyabhicāribhāvas* has been missed in the above interpretations. I argue that, in Bharata's theory, the side characters may even be totally unrelated to the development of the scene, their main purpose being to give a 'measure' of the event to the audiences from a 'neutral' point of view. The importance of the concept lies in the fact that if the audiences are forever kept within the confines of the main development, they may not only miss the 'intensity' of the event but may also miss its ramifications in other areas judged by a neutral person.

For example, at one point in Clint Eastwood's *Sully* (2016), the true story of an airliner hit by birds landing safely on the river Hudson by the pilot "Sully' Sullenberger, the director cuts to three unrelated characters, involving a car driver, a person on the terrace with a cup of coffee in his hand and a company executive looking through the glass panes of his office, who see the plane flying at an alarmingly low altitude in between New York highrises. Even though the persons are rank outsiders, they give a neutral 'measure' of the 'intensity' of the event happening so close to the 9/11 event in America. In the absence of their perspective, the ominous similarity of this event with the past event would have been missed by the audiences. More importantly, it is with the help of *vyabhicāribhāvas* or promiscuous activities 'unrelated' to the story that a playwright could control the 'measure' or 'intensity' of the main event either by

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[543] Higgins, "An Alchemy of Emotion", 46, modified

enhancing or diminishing it. While such transient characters are obviously present in Eisensteins' films, they have not been theorized as such by him.

*Anticipating Mirror Neurons***: Evocation of an *Affective State* among Observers**

The evocation of an *affective state* among the audiences when they witness a causally connected "goal-directed activity" in a scene has scientific support now. In early 1990s, Giacomo Rizzolatti, Shaun Gallaghar, and others found that when great apes observe "goal-directed activity", i.e. acts that are not aimless or mere movements but "purposeful" in nature, similar *neurons* (that's why they are called "mirror neurons") start firing in them as well which puts them in the same *affective state* as the performers themselves. Such an automatic initiation of motor activities within the body reverses the hitherto understood formula of perception from "perception → cognition → motor activity" to "cognition → perception → motor activity" in which what the human beings perceive produces understanding in them *directly* rather than through a higher faculty making meaning for them.[544] Scientists claim that it is ultimately on the basis of this evoked state that an observer understands what a performer is doing: "without a mirror mechanism we would still have our sensory representation, a 'pictorial' depiction of the behavior of others, but we would not know what they were really doing".[545] Scientists, in fact, claim that it forms the basis for inter-subjectivity among human beings.

Scientists have since extended their theory to the domain of hearing[546] representing "goal-directed" activities through audios as well as videos to produce the same effect on the observers.[547] However, Rizzolatti sounds a warning: "[S]haring someone's emotive state at viscera-motor level and feeling empathy for that person are two very different things. For example, if we see someone in pain, we are not automatically induced to feel compassion for him…compassion depends on many factors

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[544] Giacomo Rizzolatti and Corrado Sinigaglia, "Preface", in *Mirror in the Brain: How Our Minds Share Actions and Emotions*, Trans. Frances Anderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): IX-XII, XI and XII, also 124-25
[545] Ibid, X
[546] Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia, *Mirror in the Brain*, 106
[547] Ibid, 125

other than recognition of pain."[548] Naturally, further scientific research is needed in the matter.

3. Sympathetic Identification with the Narrative Mode

Abhinava holds that the most basic level of audiences' identification with an artwork viz. their identification with the fictional mode of the work even before they have started engaging with the work and with the perceptual-cognitive mode of the work as they start 'paying attention' to it together with the evocation of corresponding affective state among them, would only be intensified to sympathetic or empathic levels only when they have "sensitivity" (*sahṛdayatva*, 'similarity of heart') towards the work. This happens when the audiences have constantly polished their skill of understanding arts and are willing to engage with it. Abhinava notes when the audiences' hearts are in 'sympathetic' identification (*sahṛdaya*, *hṛdaya saṁvāda*) with the work:[549]

> The realization (*bhāva*) of the [artistic] object consisting of determinants, etc, which finds sympathy in audience's heart, is the origin of *rasa*. The body is pervaded by it as dry wood by fire.[550]

In this context, Abhinava's celebrated definition of a *sensitive reader* is as follows:

> The word *sahṛdaya* [literally meaning 'having their hearts with it'] denotes persons who are capable of identifying with the subject matter, as the mirror of their hearts have been polished by the constant study and practice of poetry, and who respond to it sympathetically in their hearts.[551]

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[548] Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia, *Mirror in the Brain*, 191
[549] Ānandavardhana, *Dhanyāloka*, 1,1e L, 70
[550] Ibid
[545] Raniero Gnoli, *Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1985): XLIII
[546] Ibid

Both Bharata and Abhinava point out that not everybody has the capacity to "identify" with art. *Sahṛdayas* are sensitive, cultured, and learned in the way of the world as well as of the arts on the basis of which they are able to perceive "the natural appropriateness of what is being represented" in an artwork.[552]

Intensification of the audiences' identification occurs in the form of identifying with the generic mode of the play. Herman and others mention: "Genres reflect one of the fundamental realities of human cognition and communication: we understand and refer to phenomena by comparing them to existing categories, and, if necessary, by modifying the categories or creating new ones".[553] In the Indian aesthetic theories, the *narrative integration* of scenes generates the following eight dominant aesthetic emotions among the audiences: the erotic (*śṛṅgāra*), the comic (*hāsya*), the pathetic (*karuṇa*), the furious (*raudra*), the heroic (*vīra*), the terrible (*bhayānaka*), and the marvelous (*adbhuta*), to which Abhinava has added a ninth viz. the mode of quiescence or peace (*śānta*). Subsequently some other generic modes have been added to the list. While all aesthetic experiences are 'pleasurable' for the audiences, the nature of *rasa*, however, differs from genre to genre. Abhinava notes:

> All the *rasas* consist in beatitude. But some of them, on account of the objects by which they are colored, are not free from a certain touch of bitterness; this happens, for example, in the heroic *rasa* which consists of, and is animated by, a firm endurance of misfortunes.[554]

While Abhinanva's comments indicate the audiences' differing response to them, an interesting example occurs when the audiences respond differently to a similar scene being portrayed in two different genres. Thus, while in the comedy *Modern Times* (1936), Chaplin is strapped to a chair and is being force-fed through a machine at the dictates of his capitalist boss, the machine suddenly starts malfunctioning, hitting Chaplin all over

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[552] Gnoli, *Aesthetic Experience*, XLIII

[553] Herman and Others, "Genre Theory in Narrative Studies", 201–05, 201

[554] Gnoli, *Aesthetic Experience*, 73, quoted in Ananta Chandra Shukla, "Rasa, Dhvani, and Rasa Dhvani: Ontology and Epistemology of Emotion in Literary Discourse", in *Indian Art: Forms, Concerns and Development in Historical Perspective*, Vol. XIII Part 3, Reprint, Ed. B. N. Goswamy, in *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization* (2005): 183-201, 190

his face, spilling hot soup over him, etc. Clearly, he is in extreme physical pain and yet the audiences laugh their hearts out over the scene. In contrast, in Brian Helgeland's crime thriller *Payback* (1999), when Porter's (Mel Gibson) feet is being hammered by a Mafia thug while being strapped to a chair, the audiences wince each time the hammer comes down on his feet! The answer lies in the fact that the audiences' initial identification with the genres of comedy and thriller determine their subsequent responses to the two scenes.

Generic forms of narratives are inalienably associated with "narrative universals" which represent similarity of features of story or discourse that recur across cultures.[555] Since these cultures were unrelated in ancient times, the recurrence of the "narrative universals" point towards something more substantial in terms of human experience than mere elements of chance.[556] Vladimir Propp[557] and Gérard Genette[558] have identified narrative codes of traditional stories which have been further analyzed by Patrick Colm Hogan in recent times.[559] In the context of genres, Derrida makes the following important points: genres are determined by the audiences in terms of reading codes and generic marks in the texts and that generic boundaries are established in the very act of participation by the audiences.[560] It is interesting to note that Hogan has been deeply influenced by the Indian notion of "narrative universals", acknowledged by him in his book *The Mind and its Stories* (2003) in more than one place. Bharata's contribution in this regard would be farther discussed in the section dealing with his notion of "extended action" in a drama.

4. <u>Sympathetic Identification with the Action Mode</u>

Audience identification with an artwork does not remain confined to the narrative codes of a play alone, but immediately spills down to the "action modes" operating within

[555] Herman & Others, "Narrative Universals", 384-85, 384

[556] Ibid

[557] Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folk-tale*, Trans. Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968)

[558] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, Trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988)

[559] For a brilliant analysis of "Narrative Universals", see Patrick Colm Hogan's *The Mind and its Stories: NarrativeUniversals and Human Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

[560] Herman & Others, "Genre Theory", 203

them. An 'action mode" may be defined as the distinguishing feature of certain action types which, though involving planned behavior within the narrative context, generally include some unplanned events or happenings that generate unexpected behavior within the narrative, resulting in the production of enigma and suspense among the audiences.[561] A narrative is generally co-extensive with an action mode representing the following three states of an unfolding action: i) an *initial state* where the story world rests before action is initiated, ii) an *end state* where the story world reaches at the end of the action, and iii) the state in which the story world would have been had action not been intiated.[562] In the above sense, both the Narrative and Action Modes mutually reinforce each other: "actions could not be mentally projected at all in the absence of narrative-based norms of actions".[563] However, defining or distinguishing *discrete acts* within narrative modes, which may or may not advance the narrative and yet have a profound influence on the audiences, has always posed a problem for the theoreticians.[564] Virginia Woolf notes some such actions:

> Recall, then, some event that has left a distinct impression on you – how, at the corner of the street, perhaps you passed two people talking. A tree shook; an electric light danced; the tone of the talk was comic, but also tragic; a whole vision, an entire conception, seemed contained in that moment.[565]

An action in the above sense represents an "image" which Ezra Pound describes as: "An image is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time".[566] Such actions fall within Bharata's classification of *sandhyaṅgas* or the "span-elements" of an "action" and *lakṣaṇas* or the signifying moments of "actions". These aspects would be discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

An appropriate example of an action mode is given by Hitchcock. His concluding comments on his example in the section "Identification with the Perceptual-Cognitive

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[561] Herman & Others, "Action Theory", 2-3, 2

[562] Ibid

[563] Ibid, 3

[564] Ibid

[565] V. Woolf, *The Second Common Reader* (Harcourt: Brace, 1932): 282 – 83, quoted in Krishna Chaitanya, *Sanskrit Poetics: A Critical and Cmparative Study* (Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1965), 82 -3

[566] Quoted by Krishna Chaitanya, *Sanskrit Poetics*, 91

Mode" acts as an ideal illustration of how the audiences identify with the action mode of a scene. In referring to his film *Rear Window* (1954), Hitchcock notes:

> Of course, when the character is attractive, as, for instance, Grace Kelly in *Rear Window*, the public's emotion is greatly intensified.[567]

Hitchcock's reference is to the scene where Lisa (Grace Kelly) snoops inside Lars Thorwald's (Raymond Burr) apartment seeking evidence of Lars having killed his wife. In the meantime, unknown to her, Thorwald is seen coming up the stairs, eventually to find her there. Since Jefferies (James Stewart) is watching this whole scene through his binocular through his rear window, he is extremely anxious, along with the audiences, about Lisa's safety. This extremely dangerous situation is ultimately averted when he informs the police who arrive quickly on the scene. This scene signifies what happens when the audiences are not only *sympathetically* identified with the narrative elements of the scene but also with its action mode through which the narrative expresses itself in the scene.

The generic action-modes with which the audiences identify may be called "action universals". While each narrative mode generates its own form of action, Indian aesthetes have classified three broad categories of action-universals that underlie all of them: i) a *mode of enquiry* where a state of search is initiated by the protagonists in resolving an enigma posed by the narrative which results in the audiences' consciousness remaining in a mode of expansion (*vistāra*) throughout the scene, ii) a *mode of rest*, where an enigma having been resolved permits a scene to be 'closed', resulting in the audiences' consciousness reaching a state of rest blossoming internally (*vikāsa*), and, finally iii) a *mode of immersion* where the audiences' consciousness raches a state of melting (*drūti*) being overwhelmed by emotions unleashed by the triggering of archetypal experiences from within the audiences' subconscious.

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[567] Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, 391

5. <u>Empathic Identification with the Basic Focus of an Artwork</u>

While contemporary Western thought on this issue by Alex Neill has already been mentioned, Indian theory differs in the way empathy is evoked among human beings. The ultimate ideal of Indian philosophy is to reach a state of empathic identification (*saṁvedana*, lit., 'identical experience') signifying a complete shift from one's egoistic self representing 'selfish action" to one of "self-less action" (*niṣkāma karma*, 'action without any selfish desire') in the service of others (*lokasaṃgraha*, 'for the people'). In the Indian tradition, it represents a state of liberation for an individual (*jīvan-mūkti*, 'liberated in this life'). Abhinava has equated *aesthetic experience* in general and *aesthetic state of immersion* in particular with the experience of a liberated "self" (*Brahma-svada*) on the ground that, in both cases, the audiences forget themselves. Mohanty notes:

> The enjoyment of *rasa* is said to unfold through various stages: other objects disappear from consciousness until *rasa* alone is left…Aesthetic enjoyment then becomes somewhat like the contemplation of the *Brahman* [the Ultimate].[568]

As to why Abhinava equates audience experience of artworks with states of liberation experienced by seekers may be gleaned from Abhinava's explanation of the audiences' response to the dear-hunting scene in Kālidāsa's celebrated *Abhijñanaśākuntalam*. The scene has been analyzed by Gupt as follows:

> Abhinava says that on seeing a deer being chased by King Duṣyanta [ready to be felled by his arrow at any moment], the spectator knows that even though the deer appears to be afraid within the scene, there is "no earthly reality" (*viśeṣa rūpa abhāvaḥ*) to which this fear can be related as the "chaser is unreal and the chase is not happening in real space and time'. Therefore, says Abhinava, the spectator is neither afraid himself, nor does he think that the actor [playing the role of the deer] is afraid nor does he think the other actor [playing the role of King Duṣyanta] is a friend or a foe.[569]

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[568] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 135, emphasis added
[569] Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts*, 268, modified

In such a state of 'make-belief', concrete personal reactions are set aside. Gupt analyzes Abhinava further:

> The dramatically represented emotion, e.g., the fear which looms large before the spectator's eyes, goes straight into his heart as *bhayānaka rasa* or the *rasa* of fear. At this moment, "the self of the spectator is neither assertive nor subdued". That is to say, dramatic emotion is impersonal and hence felt in a special way.[570]

Since *rasa* represents a universalized state (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*),[571] a process which helps the audiences to move away from their egoistic self, it invariably represents a state of restfulness (*viśrānti*) for the audiences, akin to the realization of the Ultimate by individual seekers, their only difference being that while the former state is temporary, the latter is a permanent one.[572] Mohanty notes, since the experience of *rasa* invariably leads a person to a state of mental tranquility, Abhinava holds *śānta rasa* or the *rasa* of peace to be the highest form of *rasa* in artworks.[573]

6. POV Identification in Cinema: The Indian Response

Smith mentions the following interesting example of a POV experience in cinema:

> Close to the beginning of Phillip Noyce's *Dead Calm* (1989), a character climbs on board a deserted boat drifting on a clam sea…the calm is broken by a loud noise; our protagonist John Ingram (Sam Neill) turns his head to see a large, heavy pulley swinging directly towards him…rendered for us through a POV shot…My reaction to this shot on a first, unprepared viewing, was visceral flinching…[574]

The same thing must have happened to the audiences in the first show of Lumière *Actualités* in Paris in 1995 when they had run helter-skelter on seeing a train coming towards them in his short *Train Arriving at the Station*. Similar reaction has been noticed

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[570] Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts*, 268, modified
[571] *Generalization* means "universalization" of one's experiences in terms of "broadening" of one's perspective rather than "abstraction"
[572] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 136
[573] Ibid
[574] Smith, "Imagining from the Inside", 412

among the audiences when 3-D was first introduced in films. Carroll describes such reflexive reactions as the "startle response":

> If we are studying horror films, it strikes me as incontrovertible that filmmakers often play upon what psychologists call the "startle response", an innate human tendency to "jump" at loud noises and to recoil at fast movements. This tendency is, as they say, impenetrable to belief; that is, our beliefs won't change the response. It is hardwared and involuntary.[575]

Arguably, classical Indian theories, especially Nyāya, would not agree with Carroll that the "startle effect" is impervious to belief. According to Nyāya, it represents a *bio-mechanical response of the body* in the face of danger signals being sent by the senses and classified by the mind. However, Nyāya would argue that, the ability of the effect to 'startle' the audiences would progressively diminish as the knowledge that it is ultimately fictional in nature gains ground. In other words, progressively, the audiences would get used to such effects resulting in their fictional cover remaining intact even during such effects. This conditioning would help the audiences *enjoy* such effects as fiction in future. However, since POV may involve as yet unchartered aspects of audience experience, as held by Currie and Smith, a fuller discussion on the subject would call for more details in the matter.[576]

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[575] Noël Carroll, "Prospects for Film Theory: A Personal Assessment", in *Post-Theory*, 37-68, 50

[576] See Smith's detailed discussion of POV in "Imagining from Inside"', 417-24, where he raises various points without reaching any definitive conclusion

Part 2

Narrative Structure and the Production of Aesthetic Pleasure

Bharata's theory forges a significant relationship between the narrative structure of a play and the aesthetic experience it produces among the audiences.

Bharata's Theory of Extended Action

Bharata extends his formula of unit of enactment to a five-step structure of extended action, which usually involves a "story" (*kāhini*), and its "plot" line (*itivṛtta* 'so it happened') also endorsed earlier by Aristotle as follows: since "beauty depends on magnitude and order" having a beginning, middle, and an end in a story is much appreciated as an act of beauty by the audiences.[577]

Dramatizing a Story: Bharata's Notion of The Plot (*Itivṛtta*)

That a full-scale drama having five acts exerts maximum impact on the audiences appears to have been universally accepted both in the East and the West. While Aristotle called it "plotting" in the context of Greek drama, it is called "itivṛtta" ('so it happened') in Bharata's theory of drama. Margaret Kane notes the significance of "plot" in his theory:

> Even though Bharata deals with all facets of dramatics ranging from the structure of the stage to the use of hand gestures, one of his most significant and interesting contributions to dramaturgy is the eleaborate theory of *plot structure* that he details in the ninth book of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The plot of dramas, according to Bharata and subsequent Indian dramatists, consists of many individual members that together give substance and shape to a unified drama.[578]

Bharata's brilliance lies in describing the plot of a drama in three interrelated categories having five members each, called the *pañcakatraya*:[579] the first group analyzes the five mental states of the protagonists (*avasthās*) in the five stages of the play when they are

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[577] Aristotle, *Poetics*, VII: 3-4, quoted in Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts*, 218; also see S. N. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 4th ed. *(*New York: Dover, 1951)

[578] Margaret Lynn Kane, *The Theory of Plot Structure in Sanskrit Drama and its Application to the "Uttararamacarita"*, PhD Thesis (Harvard University, 1983): 2

[579] Ibid

stiving to attain their goal; the second group analyzes the nature of the actions (*arthaprkṛtis*) which the protagonists adoptin the five stages of the play to reach their goal; and the last group analyzes the intricate lacing of scenes and sequences that function like joints (*sandhis*) which connect the five acts of the paly into a united whole.[580] Formulated on the analogy of a living organism, Indian dramas are conceived as first being embedded, then sprouting and growing, and finally bearing fruit within a play.[581]

Bharata's first five-fold plot structure, analyzed from the point of view of the protagonists' mental states (*avasthās*), is as under:[582]

Beginning → Effort → Hopeful of Achievement
(*Prārambha*)   (*Prayatna*)   (*Prāptisaṃbhava*)

→ Certainty of Achievement → Fulfillment
(*Niyatāpti*)   (*Phalaprāpti*)
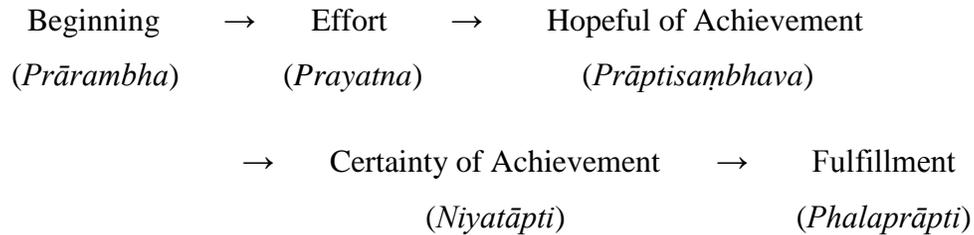
Each of the above mental states (*avasthās*) may be seen as a mirror replica of being the product of the *level of identification* that the audiences are experiencing in relation to a particular scene or a sequence and their corresponding evocation of *affective states* among them. Bharata has repeatedly said that, while forms of drama may change, the above five mental states are mandatory for the production of *rasa* among them.[583]

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[580] Kane, *The Theory of Plot Structure*, 2; also Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts*, 219-21

[581] Kapila Vatsyayana, "The Nāṭyaśāstra: The Implicit and the Explicit Text", in *Indian Art: Forms, Concerns and Development in Historical Perspective*, Vol. VI Part 3, Ed. B. N. Goswamy, in *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, reprint (New Delhi: Centre for Studies in Civilizations, 2005): 77-106, 92

[582] Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts*, 220-21; the stage involving "Certainty of Achievement" has since been analyzed in detail as "Despair" by Maria Christopher Byrski in his work *Concept of Ancient Indian Theatre* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1974)

[583] Byrski, *Concept of Ancient Indian Theatre*, 113

The other two forms of Bharata's five-fold plot structure are briefly described below:[584]

Sources of Action (Arthaprakṛti)	Points of Joining Actions (Sandhi)
1. The Seed (*bīja*)	1. The Mouth (*mukha*)
2. The Flow of Action (*bindu*)	2. Unseen Development (*pratimukha*)
3. Sub-Plot (*Patākā*)	3. Revitalization in the Womb (*garbha*)
4. Side-Plot (*prakarī*)	4. Disappointment (*vimarśa*)
5. Working towards Fulfillment (*kārya*)	5. Fulfillment (*nirvahaṇa*)

As far as the nature of the action (*arthaprakṛti*) is concerned, movements are conceived both *horizontally* in terms of the main plot and *vertically* in terms of the sub-plots, which advances the plot directly by helping the protagonists, and the side-plots, which help them only incidentally. Lane quotes from Dhanañjaya's *Daśarūpaka*:

> The secondary plot has a purpose that belongs to another (i.e. the principal hero), through which one's own purpose is incidentally furthered. When it is protracted, it is called an episode (*patākā*), and when it has a shorter duration, it is an incident (*prakarī*).[585]

Lane notes that it would be wrong to view the *arthaprakṛtis* as a list of actions 'from the beginning to the end of a play'.[586] Rather they delineate the crucial *sources of main actions* (*prakṛtis*) occurring within the play. Thus, we have the germ (*bīja*) or the original source of action, drop (*bindu*) or how the action 'spreads' or develops, subsidiary action (*patāka*) or how secondary matter helps the main action *directly*, incidental action (*prakarī*) which helps it *indirectly* and denouement (*kārya*) towards which all action remains directed.[587]

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[584] Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts*, 221-22

[585] Dhanika's *Dasarūpaka* 1.13, quoted in Lane, *The Theory of Plot Structure*, 12

[586] Kane, *The Theory of Plot Structure*, 40

[587] Surendra Nath Shastri, *The Laws and Practice of Sanskrit Drama: An Investigation into the Canons of Sanskrit Dramaturgy and their Application to Some Principal Plays in Sanskrit*, Vol. 1 (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1961): 89

It is only with Bharata's third five-fold structure, the Joints or *Sandhi*s that we start entering into the domain of the scenes and sequences constituting the play. *Sandhi* performs the task of 'binding' and intricate 'interlacing' (*bandha*, 'stitching together') of various scenes and sequences occurring within the broad five-fold structure.[588] *Sandhis* are further sub-divided into the sub-section called the *Sandhyaṅgas*, 64 in number, which are not completed episodes but represent "span-elements" which merely identify the *model-situation* occurring at a particular juncture in the play. In this sense, noting that "Each Sanskrit drama represents an aggregate of model-situations",[589] Byrski mkes the following perceptive comments:

> *Nāṭyaśāstra* breaks up the major action-spans of the *Sandhi* phase to a series of "span-elements" called the *Sandhyaṅgas* which establishes the characteristic of Indian drama as a series of *situation-models*.[590]

These "span-elements" or *sandhyaṅgas* merely act as the templates for the actions in progress during a particular moment in the play. In this connection, Byrski farther notes that the *sandhyaṅgas* are basically indicative of two types of *situation-models*: one which identifies the psychological condition of the characters and another technical representation of situations within the play.[591] A random sampling of *sandhyaṅgas* helps illustrate the templates in use in Bharata's theory: suggestion (*upakṣepa*) which hints at the central problem, allurement (*vilobhana*) which makes the problem attractive for the audiences, decision (*yukti*) which indicates the decision made in the matter, arrangement (*vidhāna*) which infuses conflict in the situation, dissension (*bheda*) which introduces difference of opinion among the protagonists, and so on.[592] In the above sense, *sandhyaṅgas* represent the smallest pieces of plot construction with no specific lengths prescribed to them. Lane notes: "They are not actual events or happenings, but rather are individual and specific moments of dialogue, or brief expressions of emotions, which

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[588] Vatsyayana, "The Nāṭyaśāstra", 93-4

[589] M. Christopher Byrski, "Sanskrit Drama as an Aggregate of Model Situations", in *Sanskrit Drama in Performance*, Eds. Rachel Van M. Baumer and James R. Brandon (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993): 141 - 66, 143

[590] Ibid, 146

[591] Ibid, 147

[592] Ibid, 147 - 48

collectively form the nature of each individual *sandhi*".[593] *Sandhyaṅgas* constitute subtle moments in the narrative which exercise a profound influence on the audiences. Nabokov comments on the construction of such moments in *Lolita*:

> These are the nerves of the novel, the secret points, the subliminal co-ordinates by means of which the book is plotted – although I clearly realize that these and other scenes will be skimmed over or not even noticed, or never even reached…[594]

Lane notes: "The similarity between Nabokov's conception of the nerves of his novel and the *sandhyaṅgas* is more than curious."[595]

Bharata also classifies 36 *Lakṣaṇas* or "indicators" which act as the lineaments of nature (*sāmudrika lakṣaṇa*), like the sportive look of a person, etc. These "indicators" act like ornaments (*bhusana*), e.g., a lock of hair falling on the forehead; compressions (*akshara-saṅghata*), e.g., smart dialogues; beauty (*śobha*), e.g., compositional harmony, etc. The *lakṣaṇas* 'glorify' the dramatic execution of a scene by imparting grace and beauty to it. In this sense, they do not belong to any particular juncture of the play, but may be freely spread throughout the play.[596] Using Ezra Pound's description, the *lakṣaṇas* represent "images" which signify "intellectual and emotional complexes in an instant of time".[597]

When we turn our attention to Western thought, we find that, in a classic analysis of five-act tragedies, Gustav Freytag (1816-1895), in his study titled *Die Technik des Dramas* (1863), said that it ultimately represents three points of a triangle starting with the play's introduction (A), its climax (B), and the catastrophe (C):

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[593] Lane, *The Theory*, 65
[594] Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, reprint (New York: Greenwich House, 1982): 318 quoted in Lane, *The Theory*, 4-5
[595] Lane, *The Theory*, 5
[596] Surendra Nath Shastri, *The Laws and Practice of Sanskrit Drama*, 157 - 58
[597] Quoted in Krishna Chaitanya, *Sanskrit Poetics*, 91

B

Freytag's Pyramid
adapted from Gustav Freytag's
Technik des Dramas (1863)

CLIMAX

Traditionally situated in the third act of a play, the climax is the moment of greatest tension, uncertainty, or audience involvement. The climax is also called the *crisis*.

The moment of reversal is also called the *peripeteia*. In classical tragedy, the reversal is that moment in which the protagonist's fortunes change irrecoverably for the worse. Frequently, the very trait we admire in a tragic hero is the same trait that brings about the hero's downfall.

At some point after the reversal, the tragic hero realizes or verbalizes his tragic error. This moment of tragic recognition is called the *anagnorisis*.

Rising action is an increase in tension or uncertainty developing out of the conflict the protagonist faces.

Complication

Reversal

Rising Action

Falling Action

During the falling action, the earlier tragic force causes the falling fortunes of the hero. This culminates in the final catastrophe and invokes *catharsis* (emotional purgation) in the audience.

Exposition consists of early material providing the theme, establishing the setting, and introducing the major characters and sometimes early hints of the coming conflict.

Exposition

Catastrophe

The catastrophe often spirals outward. Not only does the hero suffer for an earlier choice, but that choice causes suffering to those the hero loves or wants to protect.

Inciting Moment

Moment of Last Suspense

The Structure of Tragedy

After the suspense ends, the *denouement* unwinds previous tension and helps provide closure.

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A   C

Freytag's Triangle

In the above triangle, at "A", characters, settings, and the initial state of affairs are introduced, "AB" covers 'rising action' of the protagonists to reach their goal in the face of obstacles, and "BC" covers the 'falling action' representing the protagonists' declining fortunes ending in catastrophe in case of tragedy which Freytag had theorized.[598] Later theorists have variously redistributed the Freytag points in terms of introduction, development, complication, climax, and resolution.[599]

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[598] Herman & Others, "Freytag's Triangle", 189-90, 189; Google Free Download
[599] Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 190

Bharata's categorization of *avasthās*, *arthaprakṛtis* and *sandhis*, with the latter's sub-division into *sandhyaṅgas* and *lakṣaṇas* provides one of the most detailed and painstaking analyses of the dramatic structure. Arguably, Bordwell's structure of Hollywood 'canonical' films',[600] which follows Freytag's Triangle, represents a broad generalization of Bharata's notion of *arthaprakṛtis* in certain respects:

Introduction of Settings & Characters

Explanation of a State of Affairs

Complicating Action

Ensuing Events

Outcome/Ending

Since the primary focus of this chapter is on the aesthetic aspects of Bharata's theory, a more detailed exposition of Bharata's above three extremely sophisticated structures would not be undertaken here.

Nature of Aesthetic Experience (*Rasa*) in Bharata's Theory

In Bharata's theory, aesthetic experiences representing *rasa* have been classified as belonging to the following three broad categories: "aesthetic relish" (*bhoga*, 'sensuous enjoyment'), "aesthetic saturation" (*viśrānti*, *rasavat*, 'rasa-like'), and "aesthetic immersion" (*samāveśa*, *āveśa*, 'ecstasy'), the latter, according to the latter aesthetes like Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, signify the highest form of *rasa* in art.

Aesthetic Relish (*Bhoga*)

In Indian tradition, *bhoga* or *prasāda* represents an offering to God by the devotees which is inspected and accepted by the deity by casting His/Her glance (*dṛṣṭi*, 'vision')[601] on the devotee with the latter being aware of it. The process basically represents an activity of sensuous consumption through vision.[602] Since in the Indian theories, vision is not only equivalent to touch sensations, but also, according to the Nyāya theory, evokes

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[600] Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 49

[601] Orthodox Indian theories are full of both Devas ('Gods') and Devis ('Godesses')

[602] Eck, *Darśan*, 6

other sensations through memory on the basis of an in an extraordinary process of perception, the process of *darśan* ultimately represents an all comprehensive process in the Indian theories. According to the Indian theorists, however, this mode of enquiry is not uni-directional in nature but involves the reciprocal awareness of the deity's look by the devotees with the proviso that the devotee's glance should not meet the deity's *directly* lest the devotee be singed by it. Only when the deity's glance and the devoteee's awareness occur simultaneously, the process of *darśan* is said to be complete. In this way, the deity not only inspects the devotee but also his offering, a process which may be fraught with 'doubts' on His/Her part, even a 'crisis' where He/She may be on the verge of rejecting it.[603] On his part, the devotee may even have 'doubts' as to whether his offering has been accepted by the deity at all. The important point is that, while this process of enquiry may be filled with 'anxiety', it still generates an experience of "delectation" in the enquirer progressively reaching towards the goal.[604] Once a satisfactory conclusion is reached, it generates a sense of rest and repose in the enquirer which produces a different form of pleasure within him. Finally, an altogether different and more intense kind of pleasure is generated when certain archetypal experiences are triggered from within the enquirer by application of appropriate cues from outside which release emotions suppressed within one's subconscious that overwhelm the enquirer's sensibilities completely. The Indian theory of aesthetic experience is basically modeled on these three types of experiences.

Regarding sensuous experiences and its attendant pleasures (*bhoga*), which are associated with *modes of enquiry* that keep the enquirer in a state of animated suspense having the effect of expanding their consciousness (*vistāra*), classical Indian theories follow two well-defined paths. The Vedic process represents the 'preventive path' (*nigama*) which argues that, since sensuous pleasure is extremely powerful and mutually reinforcing, one must learn to shun them from the beginning; in contrast, the Tantrik process represents the 'affirmative path' (*agama*) which advocates that sensuous pleasures can only be controlled by experiencing them. This has created a dichotomy in Indian thought with Advaiata Vedānta and Kashmir Śaivism falling on the two sides of it.

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[603] Gerow, "Notes", 8
[604] Ibid

However, since one of the ultimate aims of an artwork is to generate sensuous pleasure, the Indian dichotomy shifts to a conflict between "high" art, which produces refined enjoyment (*vinodana*) of sensuous pleasure, and "low" art, which doles out sensuous pleasure (*bhoga*) for its own sake alone. It raised the following question: is the contradiction between "high" and "low" art basic to Indian art or is it arbitrary? Lath comments:

> It is not surprising that the list of *kalās* ['arts'] from the *Kāmasūtra* includes such "high" arts as literature, theatre, music, and painting along with such 'low' arts as cooking, perfumery and the like. I say this in order to emphasize the fact that there is a continuum between *bhoga* and the more elevated appeal of the higher arts.[605]

Lath notes that as far as Indian art theories are concerned, they hold that 'higher arts', representing higher forms of knowledge, can only be approached by negotiating the 'lower arts' which act as the basis for yielding such knowledge.[606]

Film Examples of Aesthetic Relish (*Bhoga*)

Since Detective films or Suspense movies use intense forms of modes of enquiry to unravel enigmas posed by narratives, they may be appropriately used here to illustrate aesthetic relish or *bhoga*.

The suspense genre provides a special form sensuous pleasure: "Suspense engages our emotions through anxious uncertainty".[607] In Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), the private investigator Abrogast (Martin Balsam) is slowly climbing the steps of Norman Bates' house to meet 'the mother'. In the background of the audiences' knowledge, they would be expecting the worst for Abrogast. It is to Hitchcock's credit that despite such anticipation, the final act of his murder still comes as a shock. The important point to

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[605] Mukund Lath, "The Aesthetics of Music", in *Science*, *Literature*, and *Aesthetics*, Vol. XV Part 3, ed. Amiya Dev, in the series *History of Science*, *Philosophy*, *and Culture in Indian Civilization*, Gen. Ed. D. P. Chattopdhyaya (New Delhi: Centre for Studies in Civilizations, 2009): 177-88, 179

[606] Lath, "The Aesthetics of Music", 179

[607] Herman & Others, "Suspense and Surprise", 578-79, 578

note, however, is that the scene proves "delectable" for the audiences even though they constantly face a "crisis" generated by uncertainty and fear of what might happen to him.

In Quentin Tarantino's *Inglorious Basterds* (1978), SS Colonel Hans 'The Jew Hunter' Landa (Christoph Waltz) plays a cat-and-mouse game with the French dairy farmer Perrier LaPadite (Denis Manochet) to make him reveal where the Jewish Dreyfus family is hiding. Framed against the audience's background knowledge of their hiding place, it provides a mesmerizing sequence of enquiry and the impending "crisis" they face in the possible revelation of the place by LaPadite. This results in a delectable state of sustained suspense for the audiences.

Aesthetic Saturation (*Rasavat*)

In classical Indian thought, particularly in the school of psychology represented by Kashmir Śaivism (c. 9th CE), *bindu* ('the point') represents a state of consciousness, which "when saturated with a particular knowledge, gathers into an undifferentiated point-like state".[608] When a mode of enquiry reaches a satisfactory solution, it leads to a state of "saturation" where the audiences' consciousness tends to "rest" and "repose" (*viśrānti*) representing a state of inner "blossoming" or "radiance" (*vikāsa*).[609] While *viśrānti* originally means an epistemic rest signifying the "last meaning" (*rodhana*),[610] in an aesthetic sense, it signifies the arising of "the fullest delight from the complete awareness of an object".[611] This is a state where the subject and the object are no more "adrift like two logs in an ocean", but form two equal parts of a dynamic whole.[612] In this state, the subject rests in its own knowledge, thereby, ending "all dependence on the outside world".[613] Dehejia notes:

> Abhinavagupta argues that the cognitive process, which moves out towards knowledge and enjoyment of objects, is not complete until it is reversed and

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[608] Harsha V. Dehejia, *Pārvatīdarpaṇa*, 114, modified

[609] Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka*, 1.5L, Footnote 3, 118

[610] Ibid, Footnote 3, 117

[611] Dehejia, *The Advaita of Art*, 136, modified

[612] It is symbolically represented by the androgynous *ardhanāriśvara* image of man and woman. See Dehejia, *The Advaita of Art*, 135

[613] Dehejia, *The Advaita of Art*, 135

brought to rest in the knowing subject. This signifies that all objective knowledge culminates in a deepening awareness of the subject and subjectivity. This culminating moment of resting in the subject is technically called *viśrānti*.[614]

Film Examples of Aesthetic Saturation (*Rasavat*)

In the last scene in Ritwik Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (The Cloud-Capped Star, 1960), Shankar (Anil Chatterjee) watches a young lady returning from her office. As the strap of her slipper is torn, she picks up the slipper in her hand, gives a wan smile to Shankar and moves on. It reminds Shankar and the audiences of a similar scene where the main character Nita's (Supriya Choudhury) slipper was similarly torn which symbolically represented the endless sacrifices that she was making for establishing her refugee family. Since Nita not only loses her lover to her younger sister but also dies of TB subsequently, the audiences 'rest' in the knowledge that the present lady is also destined to suffer a similar fate. This very realization leads the audiences' consciousness to a mode of rest and repose (*viśrānti*) in midst of a *generalized* sense of pathos (*karuṇa-rasa*) experienced by them.

In the last sequence in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Andrei Roublev* (1966), the Painter Roublev (Anatoly Solonitsyn) watches in wonder Boriska's (Nikolai Burlyayev) casting of the bell which ends in success. He asks himself, how can a boy, who has never ever been taught the necessary skill, cast such an enormous bell in his first attempt? Roublev takes it as a miracle and regains his faith in God. He starts painting again where restoration of his faith is reflected in the color sequences of Roublev's painting captured by Tarkovsky. The final shot of horses grazing peacefully on the banks of a river represents the audience's mind, which, exhausted by a continuing cycle of violence and counter violence in the film, finds "peace" at last and reposes (*viśrānti*) there.

Aesthetic Immersion or Ecstasy (*Samāveśa, Āveśa*)

In this state, the audiences' consciousness is overwhelmed with the triggering of emotions suppressed within them by appropriate cues employed by an artwork which generates an experience of "melting" (*drūti*) within them.

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[614] Dehejia, *The Advaita of Art*, 134

In modern parlance, "immersion refers to any state of absorption in some action, condition, or interest".[615] Holding that the 'getting carried away' phenomena is instigated by mimentic, illusionistic devices, Plato had criticqued it on the ground that anything inaccessible to analytical thought was epistemically void and hence dangerous.[616] While noting that "the psychological and representational features of the state of imaginative immersion are still very poorly understood", Herman and Others note:

> Plato's view of immersion as an illusionist device that fools the senses and the mind seems to be misguided. In fact, Walton maintains that, in the course of the immersion process, the spectator always remains conscious of the fact that he or she is in a "game of make-belief", retaining an awareness of the distinction between the imagined situation induced by mimetic primers and her real-world surroundings.[617]

In the above context, it would be interesting to see how classical Indian theories explain the phenomenon.

Abhinava has used the terms *samāveśa* or *āveśa* interchangeably to describe the process of immersion "to imply immersion of limited and restricted subjectivity into the unlimited universal self".[618] Yoga theory (c. 2nd CE) offers the first available explanation of this process. Since certain types of activities or images, along with their associated emotions, keep recurring in human experience, they ultimately get detached from the original events and merge into *generalized* forms of experience which remain submerged in the human subconscious. These forms represent pure forms of potentiality which cannot be recalled through normal memory. Accroding to classical Indian theories, conscious acts leave traces in memory in two ways, as 'impressions" (*saṃskāras*) of specific events and as "dispositions" involving mental attitudes that accompany such acts. In case of archetypal images, repetitive experiences, together with their accompanying mental attitudes, get merged into pure potentiality, the two together forming what are

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[615] Herman & Others, "Immersion", 237-39, 238
[616] Ibid
[617] Ibid
[618] Manju Deshpande, "Samāveśa", in *Indian Aesthetics and Poetics*, Ed. V. N. Jha (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 2003): 115–24, 115, modified

called the *vāsanās* (lit., 'abodes', which, however, in the derivative Indian languages has the meaning 'desires'). When confronted with certain images, *vāsanās* are revived flooding human beings with emotions, along with the dispositional tendencies that underlie such events, which make the receivers respond in a certain way to the events concerned. This process leads to the experiencing of a *state of immersion* involving a sense of 'drowning' among the receivers, the reasons for which, however, remain unknown to them. More importantly, since such archetypal images may be triggered even by a minute cue, which may or may not have anything to do with the film or the story as such, like a lock of hair falling on a face mentioned earlier, or the snatches of a musical tune, etc, the audiences experience emotions much beyond the capacity of the images being represented on screen.

In this context, the Yoga theory holds that, since the generalized form of these potentialities or *vāsanās*, involving "emotions" and "dispositions", occur in terms of human beings' embodied and socio-cultural practices of life, they cut across boundaries set by individual experiences to become the common legacy of human beings. It is well-known that the Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung (1875 - 1961), who was originally a disciple of Freud till he changed his line of thought, was deeply influenced by this Yogic thought in formulating his theory of the *collective unconscious*, which involved the experiencing of certain archetypal forms not only common within cultures but also across cultures, like the *mother image*, etc, which generated overwhelming responses from human beings.[619]

Since, in the state of aesthetic immersion or ecstasy (*vigalita-parimita-pramārtṛtva*), the audiences experience their "own" emotions, a question arises as to whether they *suffer* these emotions? Despite these emotions being their "own", the repeatation of the events generating them get lumped together to form a *generalized* form which prevents the audience from *suffering* them as their personal emotions. Voicing Bharata, Abhinava holds that the audiences "taste" such emotions while standing 'outside' them. Hogan holds that Abhinava's idea is duly supported by modern

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[619] See Harold Coward, "'Desire' in Yoga and Jung", *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, 5 No. 1 (Sep-Dec 1987): 57-64

researches in cognitive science.[620] It shows that the memory of a person has two components, one representational and one emotive. Over the years, its representational part tends to get lost to memory, while its emotive part has a tendency of remaining intact.[621] Detached from the event these emotions were originally associated with, the emotive part assumes a *generalized* form. Witnessing certain scenes in cinema triggers such generalized affective memories which had earlier bled into the audience consciousness, remaining there in the subconscious form. Hogan clarifies the specific nature of such generalized and submerged emotions:

> The emotive part is not an abstract recollection of one having had an emotion…it is, rather, *a re-experiencing of that emotion*. In other words, it is not remembering that one was sad or happy or frightened at a given time and place, but actually feeling again, in some degree, that same sadness or happiness or fright…The experience of *rasa* is precisely the experience of these feelings.[622]

Hogan concludes that artworks have the ability to trigger such activations involving "a pang of sadness" or "a moment of tenderness" in a patterned manner resulting in "a more pronounced and continuous experience" for the audiences.[623]

These triggered moments represent autonomous states of *rasa* which are independent of the preceding or anticipated developments of the narrative in an artwork or a film. In this sense, *rasa*, representing a state of immersion of the audiences, is a *sui generis* experience which is qualitatively different from all other aesthetic experiences generated by an artwork, signifying an *aesthetic leap* for the audiences. Dehejia notes:

> Knowledge of ultimate reality is a step-ladder process which proceeds step-by-step, from joy to greater joy, but that *the penultimate step requires a leap produced by the thrill and unbounded joy of the expansion of consciousness*.[624]

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[620] Patrick Colm Hogan, "Toward a Cognitive Science of Poetics: Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta and the Theory of Literature", *College Literature*, Issue: Comparative Poetics: Non-Western Traditions of Literary Theory, 23 No. 1 (1996): 164-78, 170

[621] Ibid

[622] Ibid, 170-71

[623] Ibid, 169

[624] Dehejia, *Pārvatīdarpaṇa*, 71, emphasis added

This has been called the *rasa-dhvani* stage by Ānandavardhana (c. 8th CE) which, according to him as well as Abhinavagupta, represents the highest form of art.[625]

Film Examples of Aesthetic Immersion (*Samāveśa*)

In Ritwik Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (The Cloud-Capped Star, 1960), Nita (Supriya Choudhury) discovers her sister's treachery in trying to take away her lover who is no longer prepared to wait for Nita who is making endless sacrifices in trying to establish her refugee family. As Nita watches them chatting animatedly, she asks her brother, Shankar (Anil Chatterjee) to sing with her the Tagore song, 'Je rate more duar guli bhanglo jhore' ('the night storm broke all my doors'). Ghatak takes the shots not only from very close below her chin but also from all odd angles during the song, with one particular shot projecting an unusually elongated profile of her face resembling the mother image in the form of a Goddess to the audiences. While these shots generate a *haptic*, i.e. synaesthetic experience among the audiences, their representation of the archetypal mother image making untold sacrifices for her children trigger the revival of "ownerless" pathos (*karuṇa-rasa*) lying submerged within the audiences which overwhelms their sentiments generating an experience of *immersion* in them.

In Ritwik Ghatak's *Subarnarekha* (The Golden Line, 1962), Sita (Madhavi Mukherjee), who had eloped with her lover Abhiram (Satindra Bhattacharya) on being denied marriage by her elder brother Iswar (Abhi Bhattacharya) on caste considerations, is forced to take to prostitution on her lover's sudden death. This is going to be her first day with a customer. Iswar, who loved her sister dearly is grief-stricken and comes to Calcutta in search of solace. After drinks and merriment in a Night Club, his friend Haraprasad (Bijon Bhattacharya) advises him to visit a prostitute who, coincidentally, happens to be his sister. Though, in his drunken stupor, he fails to recognize Sita, she recognizes him. In a tragic act, she chops off her head with a kitchen slicer with blood sprinkling all over the walls and on Iswar's dress. As reality gradually dawns on Iswar, he raises the slicer over his head, makes a desperate cry of anguish, and falls weeping on the ground. Here Ghatak not only enforces a jerky, expressionistic camerawork but also frequently alternates between the subjective and objective perspectives. It triggers the

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[625] Hogan, "Toward a Cognitive Science of Poetics", 169, original emphasis

revival of generalized, "ownerless" emotion of the odious type (*bībhatsā-rasa*) lying submerged within the audiences which overwhelms their sensibilities.

Intrusion of Reality in Fiction: Obstacles to Aesthetic Realization

Before discussing what happens when reality intrudes into the fictional world, one would like to clarify what happens when it does not intrude.

Abhinava notes that in a well-enacted play, where the author has constructed an effective fictional world, a *single unified experience* (*ekaghanatā*) is generated among all spectators based on the triggering of similar desires and emotions residing within them.[626] Noting that, in the above sense, the audience's consciousness undergoes an expansion in a public place or an auditorium, Abhinava says:

> *In public celebrations, it returns to a state of expansion since all components are reflected in each other*. The radiance of one's consciousness (which tends to pour out of oneself) is reflected in the consciousness of all bystanders, as if in so many mirrors, and, inflamed by these, it abandons its individual contraction.[627]

It leads to the production of a specific state experienced by all members of the audiences. Abhinava perceptively comments on the audiences' *special state of being while experiencing an artwork*:

> One's own self is neither completely immersed (*vigalita*) nor in a state of emergence (*ullikhita*), the same thing happening with other selves as well. As a result, the generality involved is not limited (*parimita*), but extended (*vitata*), as happens in the case of pervasion (*vyāpti*) between smoke and fire or that between trembling and fear.[628]

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[626] Abhinavagupta, *Abhinavabhāratī*, 6.31, quoted in Gupt, *Dramtic Concepts*, 68-69
[627] Gnoli, *Aesthetic Experience*, XXXVIII, modified, emphasis added
[628] Ibid, 56

Abhinva's idea is similar to Kant's notion of "a common connection" between disinterested viewers.[629] In the above context, Abhinava notes the importance of the audiences' necessary skill and attitude (*sahṛdayatva*) to identify with the play:

> For this very reason, in meetings of many people, fullness of joy occurs when every bystander is identified with the spectacle…On the other hand, even if only one of the bystanders does not concentrate on the spectacle and does not share the form of consciousness in which other spectators are immersed, this consciousness is disturbed, as if at the touch of an uneven surface.[630]

The question is what happens when *reality* intrudes in a fictional play?

Vivian Sobchack discusses a scenario where reality intrudes in fictional cinema. In Jean Renoir's *La Règle du Jeu* (Rules of the Game, 1939), the hunting sequence was real. Scores of rabbits and birds were massacred for the scene. How do the audiences react to it? There has been two deaths in the film, the rabbit's 'meaningless' death is supposed to bracket the first transatlantic pilot André Jurieu's (Roland Toutain) equally 'meaningless' death with one character even commenting how he 'rolled over like a rabbit' when he died. In fact, the second death, belonging to a great hero like Jurieu is supposed to be even more tragic since it occurs due to his sincere love for Christine, wife of his host Robert de la Chesnaye. Since true sentiments do not form part of the "rules of the game", Jurieu's death should have appeared as more shocking to the audiences than that of the rabbit's death. In reality, however, the audiences all over the world have been haunted by the meaningless massacre of the little rabbits, particularly the one which folds its paws on its chest as it rolls over and dies. Why is it so? Clearly, it is because of the fact that the audiences *know* that, as against Jurieu's fictional death, the rabbit's death is real which breaks their fictional cover. In this connection, Sobchack quotes filmmaker Haskell Wexler as follows:

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[629] Sebastian Gardner, "Aesthetics", in *The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy*, eds. Nicholas Bunin and E. P. Tsui-James (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996): 231-56, 233

[630] Gnoli, *Aesthetic Experience*, XXXVIII, modified

I find people's reaction to "real" death and "movie" death fascinating. For example, in Jean-Luc Godard's *Weekend* (1967), perhaps twenty people are dramatically killed. But there is one scene in which the throat of a pig is cut. I have seen the film several times, and each time that scene appears, the audience gasps. They know that they are seeing an animal die. They know that, unlike the actors, when the Director says "cut", the pig will not get up and walk away.[631]

Same thing happens to the audiences when a real ox is slaughtered in Eisenstein's *Strike* (1924).

Vivian Sobchack makes two points here.[632] First, there is a difference between the "documentary attitude" and the "fictional attitude" and the audiences *know* the difference between the two. For example, when *Forrest Gump* (Tom Hanks) is shown as shaking hands with successive American Presidents, like Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon respectively, despite its seamless editing, the audiences aren't fooled. The point is how do the audiences *know* what is real and what is fictional? Here Sobchack makes her second point. She says that when the audiences encounter real trees, real rivers, etc, in a fictional film, they are willing to put them "out of play". In other words, for the audiences, their existence remains *generalized*. Sobchack notes:

> [I]n fictional experience…they would be engaged as what philosophers call *typical particulars* – a form of generalization in which a single entity is taken as exemplary of an entire class. Thus, although they retain a diffuse existential "echo", trees and rabbits and grasshoppers in fictional consciousness are not taken up by us in their individual and specific particularity.[633]

Sobchack notes that this is, however, not the case when some real incident intrudes in a film which: "...foregrounds their specific existential status for us and restructures the kind and quality of our investment in them".[634] She concludes by saying that ultimately two

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[631] Jean Epstein, "Interview with Haskell Wexler", *Sight & Sound*, 45 No. 1 (Winter 1975-76): 47, quoted in Vivian Sobchack, "The Charge of the Real", in *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2004): 258-85, 271

[632] Sobchack, "The Charge of the Real", 271

[633] Ibid, 281

[634] Ibid, 271

factors always remain present as an undertone in the audience experience of a fictional film: their phenomenological sense of *embodiment* and their *extra-textual knowledge* of *real events in the world outside in terms of their own embodied and socio-cultural experiences of living in the world*.[635]

Abhinava's List of 'Obstacles' to Aesthetic Experience

In the above connection, Abhinava lists the following obstacles (*vighṇas*) to the generation of appropriate aesthetic experience among the audiences when reality intrudes into the fictional world of an artwork:

i)   *Lack of verisimilitude*

    According to Abhinava, since "consent of the heart" in relation to a play is a necessary condition among audiences, a lack of conviction among them would vitiate their appreciation of the play. Lack of verisimilitude is one of the important factors in this regard. In this context, Aristotle's advice is that actions must be plausible, rather than being improbable.

ii)   *Immersion in one's personal thoughts*

    If one is too heavily weighed down with his own practical problems i.e. if one cannot relinquish her egoistic self, then she would to fail to appreciate art.

iii)   *Absorption in one's own sense of pleasure*

    One is distracted in the theatre by the awareness that one may lose one's sense of pleasure in real life. It is absolutely necessary that a psychic distance between the viewer and his practical life is built up. To put her into such a state, conventions of theatrical illusion like the ambience of the cinema hall, etc., are used.

iv)   *Defective means of perception*

    Abhinava notes: "if the means of perception are absent, perception itself will also be naturally absent".[636] Clarity about what is being perceived is an essential condition for identification of audiences.

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[635] Sobchack, "The Charge of the Real", 271
[636] Gnoli, *Aesthetic Experience*, 82

v)   *Lack of clarity in the play*

Abhinava notes: "The presence of words alone, by means of which the reader infers the narrated acts, is not enough to make the reader identify himself with the subject and characters of the play".[637] Susan Langer says that the actors must develop actions to the point of self-sufficiency so that speeches become dispensable.

vi) *Lack of an abiding mental state*

Wallace Dace notes: "If a person's consciousness rests on something of a secondary order, something transitory, then an obstacle to *rasa* is encountered because [his] perception would find no rest in itself and would run [elsewhere]. Only the permanent mental states can be the object of tasting."[638]

vii) *Doubt about what is being conveyed through the play*

Doubts cannot be eliminated among audiences unless consequents are attached to appropriate determinants. Abhinava notes:

> Tears may be aroused indifferently by a great delight, or a pain in the eye. A tiger may arouse either anger or fear [on stage]. The combination of these elements, however, has an unmistakable significance. For example, when the determinant consists of the death of a friend, the consequents of wailing and tears and the transitory mental states are of anxiety and depression, then the dominant mental state which results cannot be other than sorrow…[The act of tasting this dominant mental state in the theatre] is perfect *rasa*.'[639]

Thus, whenever the fictional façade of a 'play' is broken (*āvaraṇa-bhaṅga*), it ruptures the generalized state of the audiences' experiences resulting in every member of the audience getting affected by the act![640]

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[637] Gnoli, *Aesthetic Experience*, 84

[638] Dace, "The Concept of 'Rasa'", 254

[639] Gnoli, *Aesthetic Experience*, 96

[640] Chakrabarti, "Play, Pleasure, Pain", 197

<u>Subjective-Objective Alteration in Bharata's Theory</u>

The notion of subjective-objective alteration in the theories of Indian arts, the concept of *darśan*, which has a strong affinity with Merleau-Ponty's notion of the *chiasm* elaborated in chapter 2, plays a decisive role.

In the context of worshipping a deity, it is commonly said that the deity or a sage (*sādhu*) "gives *darśan*" while the devotee "takes *darśan*". Diana Eck notes:

> What does this mean? The very expression is arresting, for "seeing" in this religious sense, is not an act which is initiated by the worshipper. Rather, the deity presents itself to be seen through its image, or, the *sādhu* makes himself available to be seen. One might say that this is a "sacred perception" given to the devotee, just as Arjuna was given special vision to see Kṛṣṇa's universal figure (*viswarūpa*) as described in the Bhagavad Gītā.[641]

Devotees seeing the image, however, represent only one part of the process; the more important part lies in the deity seeing the devotee as well.[642] When a crowd cranes its neck to catch a glimpse of the deity, it wishes not only to "see" the deity, but also to be "seen" by the deity.[643] Later, various Indian systems or schools of philosophy came to be called *Darśans* signifying different "points of view", instead of a single-eyed process of revealing *the* truth.[644]

It has already been noted that Bharata's seminal contribution to the field of arts lies in postulating the processes of identification occurring between the audiences and an artwork and the corresponding evocation of affective states among them which enable their bodies and souls to *relive* a scene. This process makes the audiences an inalienable part of the play which breaks down the subjective-objective duality between the stage and the audiences. In the above sense, the significance of the term "rasa" means both "tasting" and being "tasted".[645] Heckel notes:

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[641] Eck, *Darśan*, 6

[642] Ibid, 7

[643] Ibid

[644] Ibid, 10

[645] Angelika Heckel, "*Rasa*: The Audience and the Stage", *Journal of Arts and Ideas*, Nos. 17-18, (1989): 33-

This means that while *rasa* is the taste of performance, it is realized completely only when *tasted*, that is to say, when a relationship is established between what is staged and the spectators.[646]

The above process has significant application to the field of performing arts.

Applying Bharata's Theory of Subjective-Objective Alteration to Dance Drama

What does the above notion of subject-object transformation bring to the field of arts? Analyzing the mode of "seeing" or "gaze" in an artwork, Uttara Coorlawala mentions that, according to Laura Mulvey, there are three mechanisms of gaze in cinema: gaze of the camera which "choreographs" our perceptions, gaze of the male characters within the film which determines our relation to the content, and gaze of the spectator which combines the two. Mulvey contends that, ultimately, all three forms combine to serve the male gaze in cinema.[647] Citing an example from Odissi dance, Coorlawala, however, says that the gaze doesn't operate in the same way in the Indian arts. In a dance presentation of poet Jayadev's masterpiece *Geet Govinda*, which celebrates love between Radha and Kṛṣṇa that evokes an erotic sentiment (*śṛṅgāra-rasa*) among the audiences, the following alternating gazes of Radha and Kṛṣṇa are personified in the same dance maestro Kelu Charan Mohapatra.

When Radha plays the role of an erotic object for Kṛṣṇa, she subverts the mores of a conventional society in the sense that she is married to another person; and when she, as a subject, looks at herself as an erotic object object.

Mohapatra then plays out the following alternating gazes between Radha and Kṛṣṇa: when Kṛṣṇa is absorbed in decorating Radha's breasts with sandalwood on being invited by her to do so; when he ends the work by gently applying two dots (*tikka*) on Radha's two nipples visibly admiring his work; when Radha, who is an object of desire for the male so far, regains subjectivity by expressing her pleasure as she slowly closes

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42, 37

[646] Ibid

[647] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989): 17-9, quoted in Uttara Asha Coorlawala, "Darshan and Abhinaya: An Alternative to the Male Gaze", *Dance Research Journal*, 28 No. 1 (1996): 19-27, 20

her eyelids in ecstasy; [648] and, finally, when, in a subtle shift of gaze, Radha now joins in the activity of decorating her own body alongside Kṛṣṇa as she also watches him continue with his work. Thus, Radha's position, which started as an adorned erotic object, gradually shifts to the male position of the constructing subject.

In the final act, a modest Radha, who, as the wife of another person, applies *sindoor* (red turmeric powder signifying the married status of a woman) on her forehead, draws a veil around her, and walks away to her husband.[649]

In this context, Coorlawala differentiates *scopophilic*, i.e. voyeuristic pleasure of the male gaze from the concept of "seeing" in *darśan* which is a model of subjective-objective transformation in India:

> A mutually complicit merging of subject-object positions is a necessary requisite of *darśan*. A transformative *darśan* necessarily involves reciprocal 'seeing'…An observer who aligns with the dominating male gaze which claims possession, or which criticizes and separates [from the ongoing act], is unlikely to experience transformation.[650]

She finally concludes: "Thus, subjective-objective interaction or *darśan*, together with aesthetic equivalent of the performer being the mirror or *darpaṇa*, involves a reversal of the power structures of voyeurism itself".[651]

Applying Bharata's Theory of Subjective-Objective Alteration to Cinema

The opening sequence in Alain Resnais's *Hiroshima Mon Amour* ('Hiroshima, My Love', 1959) is a classic case of subjective-objective alteration in cinema. The sequence has three intercutting segments: the present day story of an affair between the French actress 'Nevers' (Emmanuelle Riva) and the Japanese architect 'Hiroshima' (Eiji Okada), both of whom are married; Never's self-narrated past involves her love affair with a German soldier during the Occupation, his subsequent death, her incarceration by her

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[648] Coorlawala, "Darshan and Abhinaya", 21
[649] Ibid, 21-2
[650] Ibid, 24
[651] Ibid

family and society; and the new scale of destruction wrought on Hiroshima by the Atom Bomb.

The voice-over flashback of Nevers makes the film image to be a shared mental image between Nevers and Hiroshima, between her own past and the present with Hiroshima's frequent interruptions "you have seen nothing about Hiroshima" brings the film back to an objective present. Clearly, therefore, an overlapping of different systems of reference exists in the film with the images sliding along multiple points of a subjective-objective scale.

A documentary-like footage of a hospital is then introduced where people even look directly into the moving camera. Even though these are supposed to be documentary images, yet they are presented as mental images pertaining to Never's memory. All these factors force the immanent field to constantly shift between various planes of reference: the objective present, Nevers looking at the objective plane subjectively, Never's own act of looking at herself as an object interjected with Never's past memory, and Hiroshima's subjective interruptions of Never's account.[652]

While the notion of subjective-objective alteration in classical Indian theories appears to be to Merleau-Ponty's concept of *chiasm*, yet Merleau-Ponty's notion of the internalization of the *chiasmas* within the body seems to be missing in the Indian theories. As already pointed out, the Merlau-Pontian notion helps to explain *haptic visuality*, the *shot-counter shot technique as* well as the more complex Deleuzian *time-images* of Resnais, Godard, or Tarkovsky, phenomena important for modern cinema.

In conclusion, the classical Indian concepts of the various stages of "identification" together with their evocation of corresponding "affective states" among the audiences provides a comprehensive basis for understanding the nature of aesthetic experiences generated by arts. In this connection, the "generalization" (*sādharanīkaraṇa*) of audience experiences, arising from the *knowledge* and *willing identification* with the fictional mode of an artwork, is a seminal concept which effectively solves the "paradox of junk fiction" in art theory. In fact, Bharata's theory presents a two-fold theory of generalization of

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[652] Vaughan, *Where Film Meets Philosophy*, 117-18

audience experience, once when they identify with the fictional mode of an artwork which generalizes their aesthetic experiences *prospectively* and once when certain archetypal images are revived from within the audiences' subconscious which generalizes their experiences *retrospectively*. Bharata's formula of enactment, which captures the process of evocation of states of identification, affect, and aesthetic pleasure or rasa among the audiences, together with his classification of the aesthetic experiences into sensuous experiences, a sense of saturation and a sense of immersion are some of his memorable contributions to the field of arts. The support lent to his views by Eisenstein and the discovery of "mirror neurons" make them highly relevant in contemporary times. In all these respects, Bharata and his commentators leave us with a legacy whose implications would keep unraveling for a long time to come.

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Chapter 5

Cinema and Suggestion
Ānandavardhana's Theory of *Dhvani*

Dhani is art and *rasa-dhvani* is the highest form of art

----- Ānandavardhana

Rājānaka Ānandavardhana's (c. 8th CE) theory of *dhvani*, contained in his magnum opus *Dhvanyāloka* ('Light on Suggestion'), with Abhinavagupta's (c. 10th CE) celebrated commentary *Locana* ('The Eye') thereon, break new grounds in the theorization of arts in India. Taking Nyāya theory of perception (*pratyakṣa*) and Bharata's theory of drama (*rasasūtra*) as its basis, Ānandavardhana's theory brings about a revolutionary change in the understanding of arts by introducing the concept of "suggestion" (*dhvani*) which is an indirect mode of communicating that which cannot be directly communicated by human beings in real life. In this sense, I argue that Ānandavardhana especially chooses *dhvani* to manifest human expressions that are repressed by the society, traumatic experiences generate existential conditions among human beings that prevent them from relating to their surroundings, or archetypal experiences that remain submerged within human subconscious and yet keep influencing their human actions on the surface. By manifesting them, *dhvani* helps restore 'full' subjectivity to the affected individuals. Since nothing more significant has happened in the field of classical Indian art theories thereafter, the theory of suggestion may be said to bring about some kind of a 'closure' to classical Indian thoughts on the subject.

For Ānanda and Abhinava, *suggestion* signifies an independent power of signification in communication, especially in the field of arts. Starting with the literature, Ānanda demonstrates that suggestion (*vyañjanā*) is a fourth power of signification over and above the conventional powers of "denotation" (*abhidhā*, 'primary'), "indication" (*lakṣaṇa*, 'secondary'), and "intention" (*tātparya*, 'authorial intention') in Indian linguistic theories. While *vyañjanā* means 'manifesting' suggestion, *dhvani*, which literally means 'sound' as well as 'echo', ultimately comes to assume in Ānanda's hands meanings suppressed by the literal meaning of an expression in the field of arts. As

Ānanda's theory develops, *dhvani* ultimately comes to assume deeper roles in the field of arts: of transgressing socio-cultural norms that censure human behavior, of dealing with *l'condition humaine* where individuals, after having undergone a traumatic experience are in search of a new "meaning" in their lives and of connecting with the archetypal experiences and images stored deep within human psyche. Considering arts in the above roles signals an important shift from the conventional mode of textual analysis of artworks to the mode of their reception by the audiences in Indian theories of art.

The following points will be discussed in this chapter:

The first section will discuss Western thoughts on suggestion in artworks;

Part 1, which delas with *dhvani* as suggestion in Indian theories of art, will start by analyzing the nature of *dhvani* as an independent power of signification that has a socio-cultural dimension crucial for human understanding of the world, an aspect which eludes conventional modes of expression;

The third section discusses the notion "What is art?" in classical Indian thought and the theories that were built around this issue. Starting with the conventional theories of *guṇa-rīti-auchitya* (quality-style-appropriateness) theories and their larger subsumption within the two larger modes of expression, *realism* and *formalism*, acknowledged since Bharata's time, Ānanda's idea that "art" represents the gap that opens up between an expression and the expressed where suggestions dwell will be elaborated;

The fourth section will farther elaborate the above issue by indicating how *dhvani* alters the conventional theories of Indian "art" from elements which enhance the meaning of an artistic expression in terms of *guṇa-rīti-auchitya* to elements which subvert the literal meaning of an expression in order to bring out their underlying suggested meaningsis; in this connection, the idea that *artistic suggestions* arise by *comparing* reality constructed by artistic imagination and reality as *lived* by the audiences will underlie a discussion of the three artistic modes viz. "realism" or *vastudhvani*, "Formalism" or *alaṅkāradhvani* and the "direct mode" or *rasadhvani* will be highlighted;

In Part 2, which deals with the *dhvani* modes of expression as means of retoring full subjectivity to human beings, the respective roles played by the three *dhvani* modes of expression viz. *vastudhvani* ('suggestion through realistic mode'), *alankāradvhani* ('suggestion through formal mode') and *rasadhvani* ('suggestion through direct mode') as instruments of manifesting social repressions, existential conditions and triggering "lost" archetypal forms, together with their associated emotions and accompanying mental dispositions will be elaborated by citing examples from cinema;

The sixth and final section will discuss *dhvani's* influence on Lacan's thoughts on language acting as a rupturing device and its relation to the emergence of post-structural thought in the West.

Suggestion in Western Thought

Ingalls notes that there is nothing in Western classical (Greek and Latin) tradition that corresponds to the concepts of either *rasa* or *dhvani* which have, since Ānanda and Abhinava's time, become central to Indian theories of art. He says that, except for Longinus and his work, *On the Sublime*, all classical western rhetoricians chose the path that Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin had chosen in the Indian context: painstakingly listing instances of suggestions that are directly conveyed by recognized and conventional "tropes" and "figures of speech" in artworks. Only Longinus had the uncanny skill of recognizing passages of literature that excite the reader, or, as Ingalls put it, that drive him to ecstasy.[653] Noting that ancient Western artisits lacked the grand vision in which Ānanda and Abhinava conceived their theory of suggestion, Ingalls wistfully mentions: "If only Longinus had had followers, they might have worked out a critique of literature not unlike that of Ānanda and Abhinava".[654]

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[653] Daniel Ingalls, "Introduction", The *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana with the *Locana* of Abhinavagupta, Trans. Daniel H. H. Ingalls, Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, Ed. Daniel Ingalls (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990): 1-39, 38-9.

[654] Ingalls, "Introduction", 39; apart from Longinus, the idea of "suggestion" occurs in Edgar Allan Poe and in Paul Grice's notion of "implicature" in contemporary Western thought. For suggestions in Poe's work, see Jaishree Odin, "Suggestiveness: Poe's Writings from the Perspective of Indian 'Rasa' Theory", *Comparative Literature Studies*, 23 No. 4 (1986): 297-309

In contemporary Western literature, Edgar Allan Poe is considered to be the first person to have specifically used the word "suggestiveness" in his writings.[655] In his article "Philosophy of Composition", Poe says: "Poetry should have some amount of suggestiveness – some undercurrent, however indefinite, of meaning…which imparts to a work of art so much of that richness."[656] Poe sometimes uses the word "mystic" for the purpose meaning thereby "that class of composition in which there lies beneath the transparent upper current of meaning an under or suggestive one".[657] Talking about Tennyson's poetry, Poe says that it manifests "a suggestive indefiniteness of meaning with a view to bring about a definitiveness of vague and, therefore, of spiritual *effect*".[658] Regarding Tennyson's poetry, Poe goes on to note:

> Imbue it with any determinate tone, and you, at once, deprive it of its ethereal, its ideal, its' intrinsic and essential character. You dispel its luxury of dream. You dispel the atmosphere of the mystic upon which it floats. You exhaust it of its breath of fairy. It now becomes a tangible and easily appreciable idea – a thing of the earth, earthy.[659]

The emotional mood in Poe's own tales is captured first through horror and then the terror that his protagonists feel when facing sure death. In such a state where all hope is lost, a person is able to look death in the eye in a disengaged manner which opens up aspects of death that has so far remain hidden from him. In Poe's "A Descent into the Maelström", as the helpless fisherman is swept in by a huge whirlpool which keeps drawing him towards the interior of the abyss, he arrives at a stage of selfless reflection on the abyss. Poe notes: "With nothing to gain, no reason to exert, no plan to formulate, no expectation to make, the sailor can do something he has never done before; he can look at the abyss with detachment".[660] On Poes' other celebrated short stories, like "The

[655] Krishna Ryan, "Edgar Allan Poe and Suggestiveness", *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 9 (1969): 74
[656] Quoted in James A. Harrison, in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, 17 Volumes, Ed, (New York: AMS Press, 1965): 207
[657] Ibid, 65
[658] Ibid, 28, original emphasis
[659] Ibid, 29, quoted in Jaishree Odin, "Suggestiveness: Poe's Writings from the Perspective of Indian 'Rasa' Theory", *Comparative literature Studies*, 23 No. 4 (1986): 297-309, 301
[660] Gerard M. Sweenet, "Beauty and Truth: Poe's 'A Descent into Maelström'", *Poe Studies*, 6 No. 1 (1974): 22, quoted in Odin, "Suggestiveness", 305

Pit and the Pendulum", "William Wilson", or "The Fall of the House of Usher", the art crtic Jaishree Odin draws a significant parallel between the states of Poes' characters and *rasa*: she comments that, in case of Poe, characters are mesmerized by the suggestiveness of death which *transforms sentiments of terror into a generalized form similar to the generalization of sentiments experienced by the audiences in the rasa theory.*[661] What Odin implies is that persons undergo an experience of immersion in these states through the triggering of impressions of terror that lie submerged in a generalized form in the human subconscious.

H. P. Grice's "Implicature" theory of the 1950s is arguably a contemporary theory of suggestion. However, it entirely lacks the philosophical dimensions that Ānanda and Abhinava brought to their theory and the social purposes that they made *dhvani* to serve for human beings.[662]

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[661] Odin, "Suggestiveness", 304, emphasis added

[662] See H. P. Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* (Princeton, California: Harvard University Press, 1991)

Illustration 5: Concepts in Ānandavardhana's Theory of Suggestion (*Dhvani*)

Suggestion → Ānandavardhana's Theory of *Dhvani* seeks to express through suggestive means human expressions that remain 'unspoken' due to various socio-cultural reasons.

Socio-Cultural Conditions that Curtail Human Expression and the Role of *Dhvani*

Human Condition of Social Repression:

Normal Expression is blocked due to socio-cultural repression of human beings. These meanings are *indirectly* suggested by suggestive narratives generated by *dhvani* theory.

Existential Crisis produced by Trauma:

Human Beings cannot meaningfully relate to their surroundings due to trauma suffered by them. By artificially creating these experiences, *dhvani* theory seeks to make the audience these experiences which result in a deeper understanding of reality among them

Human Condition of 'Lost' Connection with Archetypal Experiences:

Certain repetitive human experiences, together with emotions and mental dispositions associated with them, get detached from concrete events and remain submerged within human subconscious as pure forms of potentiality. These experiences, when revived by the *dhvani* modes, release overwhelming sentiments which *immerse* the audiences.

Suggestive *Dhvani* Modes of Expressions that Restore Human Subjectivity

Suggestion in the Realistic Mode (*Vastudhvani*)

It *Suggests by Comparing* an artist's creation of reality, i.e. "state of affairs" (*Vāstu*) with reality as *lived* by the audiences in terms of the following criteria: Generic Form or Class (*Jāti*), Generic Characteristics of the Class (*Guṇa*), Typical Class Activity (*Kriyā*) and Special Property of a particular Member of the Class (*Viśeṣa*).

Suggestion in the Formal Mode (*Alaṅkāradhvani*)

It *Suggests by Comparing* through formal means an artist's creation of reality with reality as *lived* by the Audiences in following areas which forces them to go beyond a surface understanding: Simile (*Upamā*), Hyperbole (*Atisayokti*), Pun (*Sleśa*), and Irony (*Atisleśa*).

Suggestion in the Direct Mode (*Rasadhvani*)

It *Suggests by Directly Evoking* Archetypal Forms, which lie submerged within human subconscious in a *generalized form*, that overwhelm audiences' consciousness.

Part 1

Suggestion in Indian Thought and its Role in 'Arts'

This section would discuss how Ānanda and Abhinava reconceptualize the role of *dhvani* or suggestion in the field of Indian arts, earmarking in the process a more fundamental purpose for the arts.

Suggestion as an Independent Power of Signification

Noting that "*dhvani* is another meaning" (*dhvanirnāma arthāntaram*)[663], Ānanda explains that it manifests a suggested sense which takes precedence over the literal sense.[664] While *dhvani* literally means "sound", "voice" or "echo", it represents "reverberation" as well as "resonance", all of which signify a process representing "that which comes back" from an expression to a receiver.[665] In keeping with the Sanskrit tradition, Abhinava explains the triadic signification of *dhvani* as "the suggestion, the suggested, and the process of suggestion", which, together, generate greater comprehensibility about a situation among the audiences.[666]

With the help of his celebrated example "A village on the Ganges" (*gaṅgāyāṃ ghoṣaḥ*), Ānanda demonstrates *dhvani's* power of suggestion as a means of expression that exceeds conventional powers of linguistic expression. Since a village cannot be located *on* a river, the "primary sense" involving the denotative power (*abhidhā*) is blocked requiring the "secondary sense" (*lakṣana*) to be invoked in the matter: "A village

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[663] Harsha V. Dehejia, *The Advaita of Art*, 113

[664] Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka*, 2.1d A, 212, original emphasis

[665] Since "echo" is something which comes back, it represents a contrary movement, which signifies that the suggested meaning here is something which is above and beyond the literal meaning (*pratiśabdadhvani*); in contrast, since "reverberation" is something where sound waves keep causing subsequent waves with the last one which strikes the ear being heard, suggested meaning acts like the reverberations of a bell (*anuraṇana*, *anunādadhvani*); in "resonance"', suggestions primarily arise through associations, including those generated by non-verbal elements. For "echo", refer to Sheldon Pollock, "The Social Aesthetic and Sanskrit Literary Theory", *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 29 No. 1-2 (2001): 197-229, Footnote 13, 224; for "reverberation", refer Daniel Ingalls, *Dhvanyāloka*, 1.13l L, 170

[666] Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka*, 1.8 L, 125; something similar happens in case of the technical term "*rasa*" as well: it means consciousness of a goal-directed activity as the cause, an abiding affective state as its effect, and the process; Sheldon Pollock explains *rasa* in another way: a textual object, reader's competence and a transaction between the two. Refer Sheldon Pollock, "The Social Aesthetic and Sanskrit Literary Theory", 209

on the bank of the Ganges" (*gaṅgātaṭaḥghoṣaḥ*). In the above context, since the author has deliberately used a poetic expression, his "authorial intention" (*tātparya*) is to bestow a sense of "coolness" and "serenity" on the village by evoking its association with the river in a more direct manner.[667] While accepting the useful roles that the above three powers play in communication, Ānanda holds that, in the case of the arts, however, they are not enough to comprehend the full extent of the experiences undergone by the receiver. Thus, for example, he notes that the river Ganges also *suggests* a sense of "purity" and "piety" to the devout Hindus for whom Ganges happens to be a holy river, an idea which is not captured by the conventional powers of a language.

What Ānanda seeks to emphasize is the fact that the meaning of an expression is also suggestive depending on the socio-cultural context of its use. Thus, all expressions involving the Ganges do not convey "holiness" to the pious Hindus. Ingalls notes: "The word *gaṅgā* possesses suggestiveness of purity [and piety] only under certain conditions, not, for example, in the sentence 'There are many fish in the Ganges' (*gaṅgāyāṃ bahavo matsyā jīvanti*)."[668] In other words, suggestion arises only under certain specific conditions related to human beings' embodied and socio-cultural experiences of life. An interesting example in this regard is the English expression "Newcastle-upon-Tyne" which, arguably, has a history, but does not have a socio-cultural dimension for the British people as "Village on the Ganges" does for the Hindus.

Lacan, whose admiration for Ānanda's *dhvani* theory has been noted in the last section of this paper, points out the importance of the socio-cultural context of an expression by mentioning the following example from Indian mythology:

When Devas [gods], Maṇusa [men], and Asuras [devils] were ending their novitiate with Prajāpati, the God of Thunder…they addressed to him this prayer "Speak to us". "*Da*" said Prajāpati and the Devas answered "Thou have said to us: *Damyata*, master yourself" …"*Da*" said Prajāpati and the Men answered "Thou have said to us: *Datta*, give"… "*Da*" said Prajāpati and the Asuras answered "Thou have said to us: *Dayadhyam*, be merciful" …That, continues the text, is

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[667] Gerow, "Notes", 95

[668] Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka*, 3.33l A, Footnote 2, 579

what the divine voice caused to be heard in the thunder: submission, gift, grace. *Da, Da, Da*. Prajāpati replied to all of them: "You have heard me".[669]

The above example strikingly illustrates the socio-cultural dimension of the reader's understanding of an expression. Ānanda's theory of suggestion seeks to unearth the socio-cultural contexts which lie under the surface of human expressions. In this sense, for Ānanda and Abhinava, *dhvani* becomes a *meta-language* in the field of arts. Pandit notes:

> *Dhvani* meaning is that which lies beyond spoken words. It is the meaning that is constituted by *silences in midst of speech*…Through dhvani, the poetic language reaches its condition of silence. It functions like a *meta-language*, generating many meanings by deploying collective and individual memory, latent impressions, and mental associations.[670]

By bringing out that which remains suppressed within human beings, *dhvani* restores full subjectivity to human beings. According to Ānanda, the suggestive aspect of an artwork constitutes the basic sense of what is called "beauty" in the arts. He says: "suggestiveness is nowhere found without the suggested meaning being a source of beauty whereas secondary [literal] meaning…needn't necessarily have a beautiful meaning".[671] Abhinava clarifies that, by the experession "beautiful", Ānanda means that which holds the audiences' attention which is generally the *dhvani* or the suggestive aspect of an artwork. In the absence of the receivers' attention dwelling on the suggestive means of an artwork, it would have a tendency to turn back and rest on the literal sense once again "like a common man who catches a glimpse of the divine only to lose it in the next moment."[672]

Though *dhvani* is initially used in explaining the aims and methods of poetry, it is ultimately applied to all forms of art. Hiriyanna notes:

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[669] Jacques Lacan, Chapter 3: "The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis", in *Écrits: A Selection*, Trans. Alan Sheridan, reprint (London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1989): 30-113, 106-07, modified
[670] Lalita Pandit, "Dhvani and the 'Full Word': Suggestion and Signification from Abhinavagupta to Jacques Lacan", *College Literature*, Comparative Poetics: Non-Western Traditions of Literary Theory, 23 No. 1 (1996), 142-63, 148, emphasis added
[671] Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka*, 3.33j A, 570
[672] Ibid, 3.33L, 574, emphasis added

This is indicated by Ānandavardhana's own references to other arts, like music, for purposes of illustration. It is clear from the nature of *dhvani* itself; for the means of suggestion need not be confined to linguistic forms, but may extend to the media employed in arts other than poetry.[673]

In the next section, what is meant by "art" in Indian theories would be discussed.

The Notion of "Art" in Indian Tradition

After Bharata's premise that "art" is that which generates aesthetic pleasure or *rasa* among the audiences, a more detailed understanding of "What is art?" starts emerging from the comments made by the literary theorist Bhāmaha (c. 7th CE), who forms the first of a significant group of literary art critics to emerge in classical India, a process which continued unabated almost till the 17th century CE. Bhāmaha held that art is *śabdārthau kāvyam* or art is "a combination of the expression and the expressed".[674] This pretty innocuous definition, however, suggests a deeper meaning: while *śabda* represents 'word' signifying 'meaning', *artha* is a "stronger word than its translation 'meaning' conveys, for it implies an aim, an intention and a will" of the person using it.[675] In this sense, *artha* creates a space between an expression and what it expresses in the Sanskrit language. In contrast to the natural sciences (*śāstras*), which seek to close the gap in order to have a tighter grip on reality, art eventually comes to be represented by the very gap it is able to create between the two in an artwork. The essence of this artistic process is evocatively captured by the literary theorist Kuntaka (c. 1000 CE): there is a "mutual rivalry" (*parasparaspardhā*) between the expression and the expressed in the arts.[676] In this sense, the more pregnant a gap is, the more significant an artwork is assumed to be.

It automatically leads to the next question: what are the elements of an artistic expression that creates a suggestive gap between the expression and what it purports to

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[673] Mysore Hiriyanna, *Art Experience* (Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1954): 71

[674] Edwin Gerow, "Notes", 92; *kāvya* is an expression which literally means "literature" but ultimately came to represent all forms of "art" during the ascendency of literary theorization in India from 6th CE onwards. The legacy of literature is still palpable in India when persons going to cinema still say "Going to see a *book*"! Similarly, while going to a folk theatre, they say "Going to *hear* a jatra", an expression that has similar connotation!

[675] Ibid, 91, modified

[676] Ibid

describe? The earlier critics successively held that the suggestive elements consist of "figures of speech" (*alaṅkāras*, 'ornaments') in the field of literature - 140 of them having been identified till the last count – which lent a particular 'quality' (*guṇa*) to the expressions, like the use of the word 'robust' in a heroic tale, etc or a particular 'style' (*rīti*) which evokes specific sentiments among the readers, like the lyrical poetry; and, finally, a judicious combination between the two schools to keep the suggestive elements within bounds of 'appropriateness' (*aucitya*) in order to generate maximum effect among the audiences, 'everything in good measure' being the principle of *guṇa-rīti-auchitya* school. The figures of speech and their styles are considered to create a gap between an expression and the expressed which connotes more than what their literal sense conveyed. In this way, they acted to *enhance* the meanings conveyed by an expression which, according to them, constituted "art".

Since Bharata had advocated two broad modes of expression in his theory of drama viz. realism (*lokadharmī*) and formalism (*nāṭyadharmī*),[677] the literary theorists subsequently calling them the modes of "natural utterance" (*svabhāvokti*) and "oblique utterance" (*vakrokti*), the question naturally arose as to how the so far identified ingredients of art, e.g., figures of speech, style, etc, would fare in them. Considering that "art" represents a process of creating a pregnant gap between an expression and the expressed, a raging controversy ensued as to whether realism or "natural expression" (*svabhāvokti*) can at all be called an artistic expression, especially since it was supposed to close the very gap between its description of reality and reality itself. Since this debate throws light on an analogous debate between montage and realism in film theory, a brief recounting would be useful here.

The proponents of formalism (*vakrokti*) had asked the question: can the following reportage (*vārtā*) of a realistic situation like "the sun has set, the moon is up, birds go to their nests" ever become part of an artistic expression?"[678] The advocates of formalism held that, since an "indirect expression" involving formalism (*vakrokti*) necessarily creates space between its mode of expression and what it purports to express, it becomes

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[677] For a detailed analysis, see Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts*, 236-47

[678] Bimal Krishna Matilal, "*Vakrokti* and *Dhvani*: Controversies about the Theory of Poetry in the Indian Tradition", *Evam*, 4 No. 1 & 2 (2006): 372-81, 374

a natural heir to the epithet "art". However, problems with the above line of thought surfaced immediately. Many oblique expressions, like "hit the nail on the head", etc, or the example given by Ānanda, e.g., "A village on the Ganges", have long become part of realistic day-to-day expressions.[679] In fact, all languages have in their kitty a large number of such expressions which originally belonged to the formalistic repertoire but have since been naturalized to become a part of normal or realistic expression, used freely in artworks. Moreover, the literary theorist Mammaṭa (c. 11th CE,) showed that, depending on the differing contexts of the socio-cultural situations, the reportage "the sun has set" would *suggest* at least nine different meanings to the hearers![680] Matilal also notes that Kālidāsa, the doyen of Sanskrit authors, has himself used realism in midst of formal expressions on many occasions:

> [T]he point is that the cart driver's plain or vulgar language can be invested with beauty or obliqueness by setting it in an appropriate context. For example, in the Vishkambhaka in *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, the fisherman's as well as the policeman's plain and rough and ready speech become part of an excellent *drishyakāvya* [audio-visual scene].[681]

The Indian theorists ultimately came to the realization that, since the process of naturalization of expressions has gone on for centuries, a 'pure' mode of expression in the arts does not exist anymore. This idea resulted in the acceptance of both realism and formalism as two legitimate forms of artistic expressions in Indian theories of art.

"Art" as Comparison: Insight from *Dhvani* Theory

By Ānanda's time, the limitation of the *guṇa-rīti-auchitya* school had become all too apparent. While these schools did create a suggestive 'gap' between an expression and the expressed through an appropriate combination of words and styles, the elements thus selected merely acted to 'enhance' the literal sense of an expression; unearthing meanings lying hidden underneath an artistic expression, either by a partial or a full subvertion of its literal sense, was simply beyond the power of these schools. This was a severe

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[679] Matilal, "*Vakrokti* and *Dhvani*", 373
[680] Ibid, 374-75
[681] Ibid, 378

limitation in analyzing the true import of artistic expressions used by such Sanskrit authors as Kālidasa, Baṇa, etc, or the philosophical drives underlying the epics like Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata. A new understanding of "what is art" was necessary to explore the depths reached by the above works.

The break-through came in realizing that the gap that "art" creates between an expression and the expressed is not due to the quality, style, or the appropriateness of a given expression, but between the 'reality' *constructed* by the artistic imagination and the reality *lived* by the audiences in terms of their embodied and socio-cultural practices of life. Through this process, the artist, by virtue of her powerful imagination, generates a deeper understanding of reality, generally missed by the audiences in the course of their hum-drum life. In other words, the 'gap' in this new understanding of "art" arises out of the *comparative mode* between the artist's creation and reality. This suggestive gap is *dhvani* in Ānanda and Abhinava's theory of "art".

Ānanda's Classification of *Dhvani* Modes of Expression

Ānanda classifies *dhvani* modes of suggestion as follows:

1. *Dhvani* or Dominant Suggestion where suggestion dominates the literal sense of an expression. It has three forms:

    i)   Dominant Suggestion in the Realistic Mode (*Vastudhvani*)

    ii)   Dominant Suggestion in the Formal Mode (*Alaṅkāradhvani*)

    iii)   Direct Evocation of Rasa through Suggestion (*Rasadhvani*)

2. *Guṇībhūtavyañga* or Subordinated Suggestion where literal sense dominates the suggestion

3. *Citrakāvya* or Unintended Suggestion where suggestion occurs only incidentally in an artwork

Even though notions of "subordinate suggestion" and "unintended suggestion" occur in Ānanda's theory, only "dominant suggestion" would be elaborated here for reasons of brevity.

Vastudhvani ('Suggestion in the Realistic Mode') and its Application in Arts

Vastudhvani (*vastu*, 'thing') signifies a "realistic" mode of presenting facts, situations, characters, prohibitions, permissions, etc, through an accumulation (*samuccaya*) of significant details called the "factuals" (*vāstava*) in Indian aesthetic theories.[682] These accumulations by the artist - ideally comprising of a genera or class (*jāti*), general characteristics of the class (*guṇa*), typical acts performed by the class (*kriyā*) and special properties of a particular member of the class (*dravya, viśeṣa*) – helps her to construct a reality much richer in insight and details into reality than what the audiences are able to grasp from the world in terms of their embodied and socio-cultural experiences of living there.[683]

The very first sequence in Satyajit Ray's *Paras Pathar* (The Philosopher's Stone, 1957) may be analyzed in terms of the four characteristics mentioned above as the bench mark of realistic suggestion viz. class, typical characteristics, typical act, and a special act which further reveals the nature of a character. Paresh Chandra Dutta (Tulsi Chakraborty) is a bank clerk who is waiting for the lift at the end of office. As his colleague joins in the wait, Dutta informs him that he has received a lay-off notice recently. As the lift comes up and they are about to enter, senior officers arrive on the scene for whom they immediately make space. Dutta's colleague even hurriedly removes his umbrella from the lift cage as if that would have stopped the lift from moving. As the lift gate is being closed, a junior officer appears on the scene and the gate opens again. The lift finally leaves with this full contingent, leaving Dutta and his colleague behind. In this scene, Ray accumulates significant details of the class (*jāti*) to which Dutta and his firend belong, the general characteristics (*guṇa*) of this class as revealed through their normal banter, typical acts performed by this class (*kriyā*), like giving way when the managerial class arrives and the special property of certain members of this class (*viśeṣa*), like the hanging of their umbrellas in the lift cage. Together these details suggest a class

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[682] Gerow, "Indian Poetics", 240
[683] See Gerow, *A Glossary*, 324-26 for an exhaustive analysis

difference prevailing in the society which turns Dutta and his friend into a mere cog-in-the-wheel in the system.

Alaṅkāradhvani ('Suggestion in the Formal Mode') and its Application in Arts

Alaṅkāradhvani or Formalism (*vakrokti*) *suggests by comparing* between the artistic imagination of a phenomenon and the audiences' experiences of reality, the point of 'formalism' being that the artistic creation of an "event" essentially remains 'incomparable' to the audiences habitual experiences of life. In this sense, when compared, they form a *montage of discontinuities* which forces the audiences to break the boundaries of realistic understanding of phenomenon in order to make sense of the artist's presentation. In this processs, the Indian theorists hold that formalism employs the following four comparative modes to suggest 'new' meanings to the audiences: simile (*upamā*), hyperbole (*atiśayokti*), pun (*śleṣa*) and irony (*atiśleṣa*). Thus, simile (*upamā*) suggests by comparing two substantially different things. For example, when Robert Burns compares love with red rose to say that "My Luve's is like a red, red rose" or Daṇḍin compares a lady's face with the moon to utter "The moon of her face, slightly flushed with drinks, rivals the moon ruddy above the eastern hills", they are essentially using simile to compare two essentially incomparable things. In this process, the artist is not trying to say that the items are identical, but to make the audiences compare some of the elements occurring in one with the other in order to suggest new things to the audiences.[684] Hyperbole (*atiśayokti*) suggests by exaggerating forms of comparison. Sandburg's following example "They built a skyscraper so tall they they had to put hinges on the two top stories so as to let the moon pass"[685] essentially suggests height of the new construction to the audiences through this exaggerated comparison. Pun (*śleṣa*) suggests through a derogatory comparison between two things or situations. Thus, a Court Jester produces pun (*śleṣa*) by comparing two essentially in-comparables things

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[684] Gerow, *A Glossary*, 37
[685] Ibid

derogatorily, thereby generating meaningful suggestions for the audiences. Irony (*atiśleṣa*) is considered to be an extreme form of pun (*śleṣa*) in Indian theories.[686]

In Ritwik Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (The Cloud-Capped Star, 1960), Nita (Supriya Choudhury) comes to her lover Sanat's (Niranjan Ray) room only to realize that her younger sister Gita (Gita Ghatak) is present in the next room. Feeling betrayed, she walks out of the room. As she comes down the staircase clutching her throat, camera captures her anguished face from low angle. Ghatak's picturisation of the scene is extremely evocative. A shot, taken from a low angle just below her chin as she comes down the stairs clutching her throat and looking straight ahead, essentially evokes a *comparison* between her face with that of a *devi* or a goddess. Audiences hear repeated whiplash on the soundtrack signifying Neeta's extreme anguish at her betrayal.

Eisenstein on *Comparative Mode* in Cinema: Complementarity of Realism and Formalism

Eisenstein holds that cinema is essentially a representational medium which primarily generates meaning by *comparison* for the audiences:

> *I should call cinema the art of comparisons* because it shows not facts but conventional (photographic) representations…For the exposition of even the simplest phenomena, cinema needs comparison (by means of consecutive, separate presentations) between the elements which constitute it: montage is fundamental to cinema, deeply grounded in the conventions of cinema and the corresponding characteristics of perception.[687]

More interestingly, however, Eisenstein holds that both realistic and montage modes of expression are complimentary in cinematic representations. While montage generates 'new' meaning by juxtaposing two or more discontinuous pieces, Eisenstein clarifies that the process is dependent on the fact that the two pieces must be represented realistically. It is only when the audiences are able to gather their meanings in terms of their

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[686] Gerow, "Indian Poetics", in *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. 5, ed. Jan Gonda (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977): 240

[687] S. M. Eisenstein, "The Montage of Film Attractions (1924)", in *Eisenstein Writings Volume 1 1922 – 1934*, Trans. & Ed. Richard Taylor (London: BFI, 1988): 39-58, 41

experiences of life, would they be able to construct a 'new' meaning from their juxtaposition. Eisenstein notes:

> Whereas in theatre an effect is achieved primarily through the physiological perception of an actually occurring fact (e.g., a murder), in cinema, it is made up of the juxtaposition and accumulation in the audiences' psyche of associations that the film's purpose requires, associations that are aroused by the separate elements of the stated fact, associations that produce, albeit tangentially, a similar (and often stronger) effect only when taken as a whole.[688]

What Eisenstein is essentially saying is that the idea of an action in cinema is generated by the accumulation of distinct pieces of the act represented in realistic terms which *suggest* to the audiences the total act through the montage process.

This is exactly similar to the idea occurring in the Indian theories that *realism* in arts operates through an accumulation of significant details which help the artist to construct phenomena on the basis of her own imagination. Similarly, the Soviet filmmakers' notion of *montage* represents a form of *formalism* which is akin to the Indian concept of *formalism* or *vakrokti* in many respects. Thus, while the juxtaposition of 'discontinuous' pieces of reality creates a 'new' meaning among the audiences, in the Indian theories, the very 'incompatibility' between the artist's construction and reality creates a 'disconitnuity' in montage terms for the audiences to make sense from them.

In a striking anticipation of Eisenstein's thoughts on cinema, Abhinava notes that realistic modes of expression act "like a wall" on which formalistic expressions are inscribed, thereby pointing out, like Eisenstein, that the two modes are *necessarily* co-extensive in the field of arts.

Rasadhvani ('Suggestion through Direct Evocation of Rasa') and its Application in Arts

As far as the mode representing 'direct evocation of *rasa*' (*rasadhvani*) is concerned, it is a significant innovation on the part of Indian aesthetes which remains largely unknown to

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[688] Eisenstein, "The Montage of Film Attractions (1924)", 41

the West. While early Indian thoughts on arts were restricted to the realistic and formalistic modes of expression alone, the arrival on the scene of the School of Kashmir Śaivism (c. 6th CE), to which, arguably, Ānanda, and certainly Abhinava belongs, brought considerable psychological depth to Indian thoughts on arts. The process of direct evocation signifies the evocation of a *state of immersion* among the audiences where certain archetypal experiences, which remain submerged within them, are *directly* revived by means of appropriate clues used by an artist. When the emotions associated with such experiences together with the mental disposition that the experience had originally created in the receiver are revived, they tend to overwhelm the audiences' sensibilities completely. In the sense, the process has been called a '*direct evocation* of *rasa*' is because these experiences are *directly* triggered by an audio or visual notes or images which may not have anything to do with the narrative as such. Thus, for instance, the view of the sea, a single musical note, a lock of hair falling on a forehead, etc, may be enough to revive archetypal experiences submerged within the audiences irrespective of the meaning that this image may have in the narrative context of a film. While noting that both realism and formalism are capable of throwing up such suggestive pieces, the inner mechanism of this process, together with examples from cinema, will be discussed in greater detail in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Part 2

Dhvani as Means of Restoring 'Full' Subjectivity

In the following sections, specific uses of *dhvani* as an instrument of restoring 'full' subjectivity to human beings, a role envisaged by Ānanda for the arts, would be discussed.

It has already been indicated that Ānanda reserves a much larger and deeper role for *dhvani* modes of expression in his theory of "arts" than has been done so far by the previous critics. This new role is to subvert literal sense of expressions on the surface to reach senses which are suppressed within them. Ānanda pitches *dhvani* exactly at this juncture where it acts as an effective instrument of socio-cultural transgression in order to give voice to the voiceless, thereby restoring "full" word to them. In this connection, even though all *dhvani* modes are capable of subverting social practices or conditions that truncate human subjectivity, Ānanda holds that some of them are more effective in certain areas than others. Their specific areas of application are being discussed below.

Vastudhvani and Narrative Construction: Negotiating Socio-Cultural Repression

Ānanda considers *vastudhvani* to be more effective in combating cases of sexual repressions. Pandit notes its efficacy:

> Abhinava and Ānanda's selection of examples revolves around the subject of prohibition, transgression, and other such contextual conditions as motivations for denial, negation, and foreclosure.[689]

The very first example of *dhvani* that Ānanda mentions is as follows:

> Go your rounds freely, gentle monk
> The little dog is gone;
> Just today a fearsome lion had emerged from the thickets of Godā
> And killed him[690]

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[689] Pandit, "Dhvani and the 'Full Word'", 155; also Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka*, 2.27c A, 337

The above is a Prakrit free verse (*muktaka*) which has generally been interpreted as follows: a young girl, in the habit of meeting her paramour in the thickets of the river Godāvari, has been disturbed recently by a monk frequenting the thicket in search of flowers. Under the garb of a 'friendly' permission, she is actually *suggesting* to the monk not to go there anymore! It is a *suggestion* which fully subverts (*atyantatiraskṛta*) the literal sense of the expression.

The question is how does one know not to take her expression at its face value? Noting that nothing in the poem tells us that the speaker is a woman, that her place of rendezvous is the thicket, and that the main point of her advice is to keep the mendicant away, Pollock says:

> Evidently, unless the poem is embedded in a more complete context…that supplements the sign system in use, there can be no access to the implication, let alone its significance, that is the *dhvani*.[691]

Pollock notes the following characteristics of narrative construction in classical India:

> The linguistic theory of suggestion that the above example illustrates…does nothing to help us grasp what we really need to grasp in order to understand this verse. We should note at once, too, that *the absence of its semantic core is no peculiarity of this verse, but is actually fundamental to vastudhvani poetry (and, in a more general sense, to much of Sanskrit poetry)…*[692]

In other words, the semantic core of the narrative constructed by the artist necessarily remains loose for the audiences to make meaning from them by filling out details in the light of their habitual experiences of life, a practice on this basis of which Indian epics and other social texts have 'grown' in India.

In the above connection, Pollock notes that we construct the basic premise of the above poem from the fact that "the gender relations that constitute the social world of

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[690] Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka*, 1.4b A, 83

[691] Pollock, "The Social Aesthetic and Sanskrit Literary Theory", 205

[692] Ibid, 205, modified, emphasis added

Prakṛit poetry demand that it is always the woman, never the man who organizes adultery".[693] For grasping the essential meaning of the verse, the *construction of an appropriate narrative* becomes incumbent on the readers. Thus, Mahimbhaṭṭa (c. 11th CE, Nyāya scholar), constructs the narrative as follows: "A certain woman, hungry for the sweet pleasure of undisturbed lovemaking, has made a rendezvous with some lucky fellow in a deserted forest spot alive with bees attracted by the sweet-smelling flowers".[694] In contrast, Hemacandra Suri (c. 11th CE, Jaina scholar), constructs a narrative in following terms: "A certain loose woman is always leaving her house, under the pretext of fetching water from the river, in order to meet her lover in a thicket on the bank of Godāvarī river".[695] While Lacan admires the idea of the lion in it viz. "The absence of the lion may thus have as much effect as his spring would have were he present, for the lion only springs once, says the proverb appreciated by Freud",[696] Mahimabhaṭṭa finds it extremely "inappropriate" (*anucita*) that a majestic animal like the lion would kill a dog: "I have given this a lot of thought and still cannot figure out the poet's intention"; in despair, he changes the lion to a "fierce bear"'![697]

Ānanda's second example of *vastudhvani* in *Dhanyāloka* is even more interesting:

> My mother-in-law sleeps here and I there,
> Look well, traveler, when it is light;
> For, by mistake, you should not fall into my bed,
> When it is night.[698]

In contrast to the earlier verse where the speaker is suggesting a prohibition under the garb of a friendly permission, here exactly the opposite happens: the young wife is suggesting permission under the garb of a stern prohibition! In order to make the narrative more 'meaningful', the literary theorist, Rudraṭa (c. 7th CE), freely adds a father-in-law, a domestic help, and an absent husband to the verse:

[693] Pollock, "The Social Aesthetic", 207
[694] Ibid, 204
[695] Ibid, 204
[696] Jacques Lacan, Chapter 3, "The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis", in *Écrits: A Selection*, Trans. Alan Sheridan, Reprint (London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1989): 30–113, 82
[697] Pollock, "The Social Aesthetic", Footnote 17, 224
[698] Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka*, 1.4b A, 98

> That's where my aged mother sleeps,
>
> And there sleeps daddy, the oldest man you've met;
>
> Here sleeps the domestic help worn out by her chores during the day,
>
> And here sleep I, who must be guilty to deserve,
>
> These days of absence of my lord.[699]

Rudraṭa concludes: "With these words, the youthful wife conveyed to the traveler his opportunity"![700]

Vastudhvani and Narrative Construction in Bollywood Cinema

Since India has always swayed between erotic and ascetic ideals, with the austere schools like Buddhism, Advata Vedānta, etc, recommending shunning the sensuous as being a hindrance to higher contemplation, other schools, like Kashmir Śaivism, advocate that the erotic experience is essential for gaining control over worldly affairs. In midst of such a controversy, the contemplation of an erotic female form has always posed a challenge in India.[701] The Bollywood film industry has developed strategies to counter social objections by suggestive means that has come to form an essential part of its very filmmaking process. Through this process, it creates an 'idealized moral universe' that upholds the austere 'official' line and then subverts it through narrative suggestions that escape the grasp of moral censures of the society just like authors of *prakṛit free verses* do in Ānanda's theory.[702] Since erotic song and dances often represent such moments of subversion, Kasbekar notes:

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[699] Ānandavardhana, *Dhvnyāloka*, 2.23 A, 318, modified

[700] Ibid

[701] While "kissing" on screen was permitted in colonial India, it was banned by the Board of Censors in independent India on the ground "kissing and embracing by adults in public is alien to our country" as being "repugnant to good taste", and then permitted again since 1980s. See Panna Shah, *The Indian Film* (Westport, Coria: Greenwood Press, 1981): 246, quoted in Asha Kasbekar, "Hidden Pleasures: Negotiating the Myth of the Female Ideal in Popular Hindi Cinema", in *The History, Politics and Consumption of Public Culture in India*, Eds. Rachel Dwyer and Christopher Pinney, paperback, 4th impression (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002): 286-308, 290

[702] Kasbekar, "Hidden Pleasures", 293; Rosy Thomas, "Sanctity and Scandal in Mother India", *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 11 (1989), 15 quoted in Rachel Dwyer, *Kiss or Tell* -----

The paradigmatic moments of song and dance mark a shift of registers that places them well within the realm of fantasy, and frees and distances these moments of spectacle from the syntagmatic narrative.[703]

In other words, Bollywood strategically separates the 'moral universe' from the 'voyeuristic universe' with such erotic displays often representing *performances within performances* in which the film spectators are merely "looking at looking", i.e. they are perforce required to 'look' at the film diegetically without being personally involved in it. This process essentially subscribes to the idea that, in such cases, the film spectators are "forced" to look at something they don't morally approve: "any erotic voyeurism on the part of the film spectator is disavowed by the deliberate mediation of a diegetic spectator".[704] By remaining sympathetically identified with protagonists who are morally upright, the audiences are also able to absolve themselves from any vicarious intentions on their part. In this sense, even when vamps or cabaret dancers directly wink at the audiences, as happens in some Bollywood films, they are supposed to be winking at the diegetic spectator but not the real person occupying the seat!

In Romesh Sharma's *New Delhi Times* (1986), Vikas Pande (Shashi Kapoor), the upright editor of the newspaper, who is investigating a case of political corruption and murder, meets an underground informant Anwar in a sleazy restaurant where a cabaret is in progress. The very positioning of Pande, Anwar, and the cabaret dancer in the film is significant. While a pipe smoking, neatly dressed Pande sits in a manner where his back is turned to the dancer, Anwar, in a dress typical of the lower strata, faces the dancer. While the audiences' identification with Pande absolves them from any voyeuristic intent on their part, they are, however, 'looking at looking' of Anwar as he lasciviously laps up the dancer through his male gaze as well as when they partake of the dancer's erotic body as the camera cuts close to her. Arguably, Ānanda and Abhinava would have entirely approved of the suggestive strategy that Bollywood adopts today! Like the Prakrit verses, the Bollywood film narrations are often loose, meandering, and even downright illogical

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[703] Kasbekar, "Hidden Pleasures", 293

[704] Ibid, 296; Stephen Heath mentions "looking at looking" in *Questions of Cinema* (London: Macmillan, 1981): 120

at times which serves very well the purpose of foregrounding of female eroticism through suggestive means to the audiences.

Alaṅkāradhvani: Negotiating Trauma

In *Dhvanyāloka*, Ānanda assigns *alaṅkāradhvani* the role of engaging with the existential crisis faced by human beings as he starts dealing with Indian epics like Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata and Sanskrit classics of Kālidāsa, Bāna, Sudraka and others. While an act is considered 'meaningful' only when it engages in a 'goal-directed' or 'purposeful' activity, the question is what happens when a person has lost sense of such 'goals' in his life? In such a state, the person finds his surrounding to be "meaningless" and hence fails to engage with it. In view of such a traumatic experience, Hamlet dithers in taking action against his mother and uncle, as happens to Arjuna, the mythical fighter from the Indian epic *Mahābhārata*, who lays down his arms in order not to fight the very same people he has revered and cherished all his life.

Trauma, from the Greek root *traumat* meaning 'wound', started being theorized in modern times since the clinical experiments of Jean-Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet, Sigmund Freud, and Josef Bauer who understood it as a case of extreme psychic distress, earlier called "hysteria" in the medical annals.[705] It affects individuals in a manner that detaches them from their personal memories, leading to a state of extreme helplessness in believing that no action is possible which subdue their instinctual responses to danger as well as normal activities of life. It is generally believed that for the individual to come back to normal life, a *traumatic re-enactment* or *traumatic recall* is necessary, the process being to construct a story around the trauma which would mean something to the individual rather than a story neutrally told to him.[706] This process is expected to transform his traumatic memory into a narrative memory having a therapeutic value for the individual concerned. An important finding is that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as trauma is medically called, is: "The product *not* of trauma in itself, but of trauma and culture acting together. PTSD is, thus, the product of a particular cultural

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[705] Herman & Others, "Trauma Theory", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, 615-19, 615
[706] Ibid, 616

situation, and not an inherent disease."[707] The trauma of partition inflicted on the filmmaker Ritwik Ghatak may be well understood along these lines. The condition of trauma has raised another important question: is it a personal phenomenon which universally occurs among all human beings as Freud has claimed or is it caused by cataclysmic events uniquely happening to individuals located in particular history and culture? Critics today favor the latter.[708]

A cinematic example of a 'traumatic' state occurs in Deleuze's notion of "time-image" in contrast to "movement-image", the latter being characterized by "coherence of filmic space and temporal causality" in which characters have a clear direction of moving forward as against the "time-image" where the characters neither have any clear-cut goal nor of any action that can lead to such a goal.[709] In such cases, bereft of causality, while the characters subjectively experience time passing, they do not experience any kind of causal movement as such. In this connection, Deleuze's distinction between *action-image* as movement-image and *crystal-image* as time-image is interesting. Thus, talking about spaces in Tarkovsky's films, Deleuze notes:

> There are *crystallized spaces*, when the landscape becomes hallucinatory…What characterizes these spaces is that they cannot be explained in a simple spatial way. They imply non-localizable relations. These are direct presentations of time. We no longer have an indirect image of time which derives from movement, but a direct time-image from which movement derives…we have a chronic non-chronological time which produces movements necessarily "abnormal", essentially "false".[710]

Tarkovsky's characters generally roam in such crystalline spaces in which Cartesian co-ordinates of space and time have been lost. Having been deprived of a measurable sense of space from which a measurable sense of time can emerge, these characters dwell only in a generalized sense of time that Deleuze evocatively calls "chronic non-chronological

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[707] Herman & Others, "Trauma Theory", 618, modified, original emphasis

[708] Ibid, 618

[709] Kuhn and Westwell, "Movement-Image/Time-Image", in *Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies*, 271

[710] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Trans. H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta (London: Continuum, 2005): 125-26, emphasis added

time".[711] This generates an experience for the audiences that do not depend on space but on time alone, echoing Hamlet's existential lament "time is out of joint".

In the *Wash Sequence* in Andrei Tarkovasky's *Zerkalo* (Mirror, 1974), the first identifiable dream sequence in the film occurs in black & white. A small child gets up from bed and utters 'papa' as an owl hoots and a mysterious sound is heard. As he stands in the doorway of an adjoining room, an uncanny scene confronts him. His father is helping his mother wash her hair in a basin. However, as the mother straightens up in slow motion and makes flapping gestures with her arms almost like a ritual dance, the camera zooms out to reveal another room in a flat where neither the father nor the washbasin is there. As water streams keep rolling down its walls and plasters keep falling from its ceiling, the flooded floor remains lit by a gas stove.

Skakov notes that the uniqueness of this sequence lies in its "doubling of the double": the mother looks into the camera like a mirror, then the camera by-passes her to reveal an actual mirror; we, however, see the mother's reflection in the mirror as an old woman (played by Tarkovsky's real mother, Maria Ivanovna).[712] Even though there is no actual action-movement here since we still notice the same streams of water flowing down the walls and the same glow from the stove, there is a temporal progression in Tarkovsky's imagination where the young mother is meeting her old self. We then see the aged mother touching her own reflection on the mirror's surface. This dream episode sequencing a flash forward imagination ends with the shot of a hand placed against the fire.[713] In this sequence, the immanent plane slides from child Tarkovsky's memory to adult Tarkovsky's imagination, its trigger being the abnormality of space being signaled by the transition from a room in their summer house to a room in their Moscow flat. The hallucinatory aspect of this new space transports the scene to a poetic domain where experience of present time when compared with an imaginary space constructed by the filmmaker doubles up with the character's memory of the past generates a new sense of experience among the audiences. In Tarkovsky's words, one feels "time pressure" in

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[711] Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 125-26
[712] Skakov, *The Cinema of Tarkovsky*, 115-16
[713] Ibid, 115

these images without experiencing any "movement pressure" in the scene, their comparison yielding new experiences and insights about reality among the audiences.

Rasadhvani: Negotiating Archetypal Experiences

Rasadhvani is an autonomous state independent of the other two suggestive modes with the proviso that they may, as so often happens, trigger the *rasadhvani* stage. In essence, it signifies the arousal of an affective state from deep within the audience's own sub-conscious where they remain stored. This state represents the triggering of certain archetypal forms and their associated emotions and affects which, due to their endless repetition in human experience, have lost their connection to specific events and have merged to generate pure forms of potentiality in the human sub-conscious. Once triggered, these archetypal experiences produce states of overpowering sentiments among the audiences. Since these experiences may be revived independently of the developments occurring in the narrative, Ānanda and Abhinava hold that *rasadhvani* may be achieved equally through either the modes of realism and formalism.

Noting that mythologies are the site for such archetypal forms, Ritwik Ghatak makes the following important connection between archetypal images and cinema:

> Take, for instance, the question of the *archetype*. Even before man became human, the social collective unconscious, the storehouse of collective memory beyond consciousness, had formed itself. It is the source of all our deepest feelings. And some fundamental symbols (archetypes) determine our reaction to various things. Most of our spontaneous reactions have their roots there. And the archetypes always find their way into images in the form of symbols.[714]

Noting that one such image is the naked image of the Mother which is even present in the deep caves of the Pyrenes, he mentions its overarching influence in the Bengali culture: "This mother archetype has penetrated our society in its every pore. All the songs of Agamani and Bijaya from Bengal, the deeper aspects of our folktales, bear witness to

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[714] Ritwik Ghatak, "Human Society, Our Tradition, Filmmaking, and My Efforts", Trans. Moinak Biswas, *Cinema Journal*, 54 No. 3 (Spring 2015): 13-7, 14, emphasis added

this."[715] Ghatak recommends that the ultimate basis for judging films should lie in a film's ability to connect with these archetypal images and their associated emotions in a particular society.[716] In other words, for him, an image should not only give information or portray this or that individual, but connote much more by linking up with the collective unconscious of the society at large. In this connection, he had been deeply influenced by the theory of Carl Gustave Jung,[717] whose theory of the *collective unconscious* is based on the Yoga theory mentioned in chapter 4.[718]

Ghatak mentions certain examples from cinema in order to illustrate his point of view. Thus, the character of the *Tramp* in Chaplin's films, the character of *Indir Thakrun* (Chunibala Devi) in Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Little Road, 1955), or the character of the *Priest* (Francesco Rabal) in Luis Buñuel's *Nazarin* (1959) represent archetypal forms capable of stirring the audiences profoundly from within themselves.[719] The oft-repeated image of a man (Andrei Gorchakov played by Oleg Yankovsky) with a dog sitting in a water-soaked space in *Nostalghia* (Nostalgia, 1983) is an archetypal image representing certain experiences residing deep down within the audiences' subconscious which they have 'forgotten' which connects with the audiences' inner beings.

Dhvani and Lacan's Post-Structural Thought

Ānanda's theory of *dhvani* or suggestion has certain striking similarities with post-structural thoughts in the West. Freud, and especially Lacan's notion of language is motivated by the unconscious having a subversive role in rupturing the structural 'closure' of an expression:

Impediment, failure, split. In a spoken or written sentence, something stumbles. Freud is attracted by these phenomena, and it is there that he seeks the

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[715] Ghatak, "Human Society", 15

[716] Ibid, 15, modified

[717] The article "Human Society", which deals with the notion of the archetypes and their evocation in cinema, is of tremendous significance for both filmmakers and audiences alike

[718] Harold Coward, "'Desire' in Yoga and Jung", *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research,* 5 No. 1 (Sep-Dec 1987): 57-64

[719] Ghatak, "Human Society", 15

unconscious…What occurs, what is *produced* in this gap, is presented as *the discovery*. It is in this way that the Freudian exploration first encounters what occurs in the unconscious.[720]

Lacan replaces the Cartesian thought "I think therefore I am" with the enigmatic expression "I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think".[721] In going beyond thinking "the unconscious merely acts [as] the seat of instincts",[722] he says that *poetic expressions* "signify *something quite other* that what it says". In this sense, artistic expressions 'disguise the thought' of the subject much more effectively that the Freudian processes of slip of tongue, etc.[723] By holding that artistic expressions have great power to circumvent social censure,[724] Lacan recommends a *renewed technique of interpretation of the symbolic effects in a carefully calculated fashion* as means of restoring "full word" to the subjects,[725] described by Freud as "I must come to the place where that was".[726] In this venture, Lacan acknowledges his debt to Ānanda's theory of *dhvani* and "the teaching of Abhinavagupta (tenth century)" thus:[727]

> In this regard, we could take note of what the Hindu tradition teaches about dhvani, in the sense that this tradition stresses the property of speech by which it communicates what it does not actually say. Hindu tradition illustrates this by a tale whose ingenuousness, which appears to be the usual thing in these examples, shows itself humorous enough to induce us to penetrate the truth that it conceals.[728]

In the above sense, Indian theories appear to have played critical roles in the formation both Structuralist and Poststructuralist thoughts in the West during the '60s and the '70s.

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[720] Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*, Trans. Alan Sheridan, Ed. Jacques Alain Miller (New York: Norton, 1973): 24, original emphasis

[721] Lacan, Chapter 5, "The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud", in *Écrits*: *A Selection* (London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1989): 146-78, 166

[722] Ibid, 147

[723] Ibid, 155, original emphasis

[724] Ibid, 158

[725] Lacan, Chapter 3: "The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis", in *Écrits*, 30-113, 82, emphasis added

[726] Lacan, Chapter 5, 171

[727] Lacan, Chapter 3, Footnote 74, 110

[728] Ibid, 82

<u>Illustration 6: Principles of Knowledge in Classical Indian Theories – At a Glance</u>

<u>Nyāya Theory of Perception (*Pratyakṣa*)</u>

In the Nyāya Theory, a Unit of Perception is represented by the following Equations each of which throw a different light on various aspects of the Perceptual Process:

Meaning = Referent + Mode of Appearance

Embodied Sense = Referent + Mode of Presentation

The Nyāya Perceptual Formula, stretched to its full, assumes the following Form:

Meaning = Referent + Mode of Appearance + Mode of Presentation

The above valuations lead to the Fundamental Formula of Nyāya:

Qualifier + Qualificand + Relationship = Unit of Perception

<u>Bharata's Theory of Aesthetic Experience (*Rasa*)</u>

<u>A</u>. Levels of Audience *Identification* with an Artwork:

Sympathic Identification occurs at the Fictional, Perceptual-Cognitive, Narrative and Action Modes of a Play and *Empathic Identification* with the Focus of the Play

<u>B</u>. Evocation of a Corresponding *Affective State* among the Audiences:

The witnessing of a Purposeful Activity in the Play evokes a corresponding *Affective State* among the Audiences which brings their *Body* at par with their *Consciousness*, enabling them to Experience a Scene as a *Cognitive Whole*

<u>C</u>. Bharata's Two-Stage Formula of Unit of Enactment within a Play:

1st <u>Stage</u>: Audiences in a particular *Mode of Identification* witness a "Goal-directed Activity" in a Play →

   Determinant + Consequent + Transient → Evoking an *Affective State* among Audiences

2nd <u>Stage</u>: Audiences in a *Mode of Identification* and *Affect* witness the Play →

   Determinant + Consequent + Transient → Production of *Rasa* among Audiences

D. **Production of Aesthetic Experience (*Rasa*) among the Audiences:**

Aesthetic Relish = Enigmas occurring within Narratives constructed by Artworks

(*Bhoga*)   generate a *Mode of Enquiry* among the Audiences Consciousness

which, together with its corresponding *Affective State* evoked

within them, produces an Experience of Sensuous Plesure among

them

Aesthetic Saturation = Once a Narrative Enigma is resolved, it generates a *Mode of Rest*

(*Rasavat*)   in the Audiences' Consciousness which, together with its evoked

Affective State, produces an Expereince of *Repose* among them

Aesthetic Immersion = Artisitc Cues used within an Artwork revive Archetypal

(*Samāveśa*)   Experiences, together with Emotions and Mental Dispositions

associated with those Experiences, long held suppressed in the

Audience Subconscious, which release Overwhelming

Sentiments that generates a *Mode of Immersion* among Audiences

Ānandavardhana's Theory of Suggestion (*Dhvani*)

Suggestion in Realistic Mode (*Vāstudhvani*)	Suggestion in Formal Mode (*Alaṅkāradhvani*)	Suggestion in Direct Mode (*Rasadhvani*)
Realistic Comparison between Artistic Imagination of Reality and Reality as *Lived* by the Audiences in terms of the following Factors: Genera (*Jāti*), Property (*Guṇa*), Property (*Guṇa*), Action (*Kārya*) and Special Property (*Viśeṣa*)	Formal Comparison between Artistic Imagination of Reality and Reality as *Lived* by the Audiences in terms creating a montage of 'discontinuity' within the following Factors: Simile (*Upamā*), Hyperbole (*Atiśayokti*) Pun (*Śleṣa*) and Irony (*Atiśleṣa*)	Reviving Archetypal Experiences, together with Emotions and Mental Dispositions associated with such Experiences, from within the Audiences' Subconscious

In conclusion, it may be mentioned that, Ānanda and Abhinava identify a much larger role for the "arts" than what Indian tradition had prescribed so far, the primary function of art now being to restore "full word" to individuals whose subjectivity has been truncated due to various socio-cultural reasons, primarily involving social repression, trauma, and lost connection with certain archetypal experiences. In this connection, the notion of *dhvani* or suggestive means which bring out meanings and experiences lying under the surface is a revolutionary thought that is far ahead of its time whether in the East or in the West. In this sense, for Ānanda, who classifies the *dhvani* modes of expression as basically three, each of the *dhvani* modes acts as the most potent instrument of socio-cultural subversion in the following areas: *vastudhvani* ('dominant suggestion in the realistic mode') in unearthing socio-cultural oppression, *alaṅkāradhvani* ('dominant suggestion in the expressive mode') in bringing individuals face-to-face with social trauma suffered by them and the existential condition it breeds in them and *rasadhvani* ('direct suggestion in an affective mode') in reviving archetypal experiences suppressed within human subconscious which overwhelm them with the emotions and dispositions associated with such experiences. In this sense, Ānanda and Abhinava's ideas reconstitute the notion of "art" in Indian theories: "art" represents the initiation of a comparative mode among the audiences between reality as constructed by artistic imagination and reality as lived by the audiences which generates suggestions that triggers a much deeper understanding of the existential conditions suffered by human beings in the world.

Above Indian authors succeed in showing that artworks engage human beings at a much deeper level of their being than visualized so far, an idea which has won them psychoanalyst admirers like Lacan and others. In this first ever full-scale application of the *dhvani* theory to cinema, the new directions chalked out by Ānanda and Abhinava provide new tools in the hands of analysts to understand cinema at a much deeper level than have been attempted so far.

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Chapter 6

Cinema and Alternate Methodology
A Case for "Piecemeal" Theorizing and "Local" Solutions

In film studies, as in its literary counterpart, "method" has been largely synonymous to what is known as the 'interpretative school".

-------- David Bordwell

Does the preceding discussion help deepen our understanding of cinema? While this thesis does not aim at producing an alternate theory of cinema, it constructs "piecemeal theories" to provide a platform for theorizing experiences which occurs at the most basic level of engaging with cinema. In this sense, these theories help *expand* our current understanding of the cinematic process. This research does not intend to replace the understanding reached through hundred years of film discourse, but to enrich it in places where it lacks clarity. The new "methodology" being advocated here points out certain inconsistencies, absences, and lacks in the existing discourse which help us to reach a more meaningful understanding of cinema.

This expanded understanding has been achieved by looking at cinema from two alternate viewpoints – phenomenology and classical Indian theories – none of which have been part of any serious film discussion till recently. Even when undertaken, they have either been done sporadically, as in the case of classical Indian theories, or have remained confined to a select group of experts, as in the case of phenomenology. And yet these theories unfailingly point out certain "wild meanings" occurring under the surface which significantly influence our rational and ideological understanding of cinema. Merleau-Pontian Phenomenology and Classical Indian Theory of Nyāya are able to identify these "wild meanings" because they generally follow an embodied path to understand the world. In contrast, the world has so far been understood in an "objective" scientific manner which debars any kind of subjectivity to enter into its calculations. Even the Kantian theory, which departed from such "objective" understanding of the world, used "subjectivity" in terms of certain *à priori* body-neutral "categories of understanding", like

the categories of three-dimensional space, linear time, etc, modeled on the Newtonian worldview, which are generally body-neutral in their import. In this context, both Merleau-Pontian phenomenology and Nyāya theory seek to understand reality in terms of human beings' *lived* experiences of the world, the experiences being based on human beings' embodied experiences of the world and the socio-cultural practices built around them. In this sense, this process is neither fully "objective", as in science, nor fully "subjective", as in Kant, but is a "subjective-objective" process where the body's *lived* experiences of reality constitutes one's understanding of the world existing "out there". These meanings, which Merleau-Ponty most aptly calls "wild meanings", have sadly been ignored by contemporary film theories, resulting in a perceptible impoverishment of their theoretical process.

Since this is an effort which brings diverse thoughts under one roof, it represents, in terms of the film theorist Noël Carroll, a "piecemeal" and "bottoms up" process that provide "local" solutions to some "local" problems.[729] Reacting against the notion of a "totalizing" and "top down" *grand theory*, Carroll notes:

> It attempts to answer all our questions concerning filmic phenomena in terms of a unified theoretical vocabulary with a set of limited laws (primarily concerned with subject positioning) that are applied virtually like axioms. In contrast, I favor theorizing that is "piecemeal" and "bottom up". That is where contemporary film theory presents itself as the The Theory of Film, I prefer to propose film *theories* – e.g., a theory of suspense, a theory of camera movement, a theory of Art Cinema, etc. – with no presumption that these small-scale theories will add up to one big picture some day.[730]

This is exactly what this research seeks to achieve with the help of a single agenda: after the high intellectualization of the existing film theories, which had generally left ordinary audiences and their normal experiences of cinema out of their reckoning, *all the issues being raised and discussed here would have the effect of bringing them to the center of academic discussion for a more meaningful, down-to-earth understanding of cinema.*

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[729] Carroll, *Mystifying Movies*, 8
[730] Ibid, 6, original emphasis, modified

This chapter would recapitulate the "piece-meal" findings of alternate methodology in the following sections.

First, a brief discussion of the gaps in the existing film discourse, detailed in chapter 1, will be undertaken.

Secondly, phenomenology's potential contribution to cinema in perceiving an embodied and socio-culturally conditioned cognition of "objects" and "relation between objects", detailed in chapter 2, will be briefly mentioned. In this connection, Merleau-Ponty's notions of *synaesthetic perception* involving vision-touch equivalence and *chiasm* involving subjective-objective alterations will be highlighted.

Thirdly, while recapitulating Nyāya theory of perception, detailed in chapter 3, perception of "objects" and "relation between objects" will be highlighted together with the roles that "intentional consciousness", "modes of appearance" and "modes of presentation" play in them. In this connection, the constitution of "invariable sequences", "universals" and "classes" in perception in Nyāya will be indicated.

Fourthly, it will be pointed out how Bharata's theory of drama, detailed in chapter 4, introduces the twin concept of the audiences' *identification* with an artwork and the evocation of a corresponding *affective state* among them which help the audiences to respond to a scene as a unified whole in terms of both their consciousness and their body. This whole process, which leads to the production of various aesthetic experiences among the audiences, called the *rasas*, which has rich application in cinema, will be indicated.

Fifthly, and finally, while recapitulating Ānadavardhana's theory of *dhvani* or suggestion, detailed in chapter 5, the role of suggestion as a metalanguage in artworks, which acts as the means of voicing *untold* human experiences, suppressed due to the occurrence of various socio-cultural conditions, which acts as means of restoring "full" subjectivity to human beings, will be briefly discussed.

Gaps in the Existing Methodology for Understanding Cinema

The existing film discourse leaves certain discernible gaps in the understanding of cinema by discounting audiences' *ordinary* experiences of life which they not only carry to the film, but, more importantly, on the basis of which they understand the film.

The basic factor on which existing film discourse is based is *disembodied vision*, the roots of which go back to Cartesian dualism, where mind is not only equated with a transparent intelligence independent of the body capable of understanding phenomena, but also represents the "I" of the ego which understands. In contrast, the body in the Cartesian theory is an unconscious and passive extension of matter which is expected to yield to an understanding by the mind as well as mechanically responding to its' commands. However, since the mind and the body belong to two distinct categories of existence, the question arises as to how they interact with each other? The point at issue is this: how the mind reaches a *conscious* understanding of what the body is throwing up as *unconscious* data?[731] Despite no satisfactory solution to this problem, mind-body dualism has continued to permeate Western thought including even some hard-core disciplines of science today.

With the Cartesian notion of a transparent intelligence, which hovers as an unacknowledged omni-presence in the human system, which 'understands' phenomena, the existing film theories did not feel the need for an embodied understanding of the world at all. Under the circumstances, those aspects of cinema which are more directly connected with the body, like film sensations, called the "cinema of attractions" by Eisenstein, remained beyond the immediate concern of the film theories. This neglect happens despite film sensations being the prime factor which attracts audiences all over the world.

The third factor involves the acceptance of the *narrative mode* as the be all and end all of understanding cinema. After a promising start made by classical film theory to concentrate on the formal features of cinema, both contemporary and cognitive film theories adopt the narrative mode as the *only* basis for theorizing cinema which acted to

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[731] Schweizer, "Mind/Consciousness Dualism", 337, 330

the complete detriment of the embodied aspects human experiences and the soico-cultural practices built around them.

In sum, the above factors have led to an erroneous assumption being made about how the audiences make sense of what they see on screen. In the existing film discourse, it either involves the *ideological interpellation of the audiences* who are made to understand what the bourgeoisie wants them to understand or the operation of a *disembodied intellect* which makes the audiences understand cinema in the same way as the buyers evaluate their choices in a market place.

What does "Alternate Methodology" Offer?

The alternate methodology, primarily constructed on the basis of Merleau-Ponty's theory of existential phenomenology and the Nyāya theory of perception, represents a particular subjective-objective mode of experiencing the world which is unique whether in the West or the East. The 'alternate' viewpoint that these theories offer is born of the audiences' *embodied* and their *habitual experiences of socio-cultural life*. I argue, when these insights are applied to the two aesthetic theories involving Bharata's theory of aesthetic pleasure or *rasa* and Ānandavardhana's theory of aesthetic suggestion or *dhvani*, they generate a much deeper understanding of cinema that help restore 'ordinary' audiences to the high table occupied by film discourse in the present time.

Phenomenological Experience in Cinema

In order to attain accurate, formally reproducible results, the West had shunned all forms of subjectivism from its theories for the most part of its history. Kant's idea that human beings understand reality in terms of certain *à priori* "categories of understanding" *given* in them first seriously questioned this premise. The phenomenological contribution since the 19th century has further intensified this process by examining the objective world not as it is subjectively *understood* by Kant's otherwise 'neutral' "categories", but as it is subjectively *experienced* by human beings in the course of their *lived* experiences of the world.

Husserl holds that the formation of stable "objects" in the viewer's perception from sense data received in a flux is based on the *intentional* imposition of certain archetypal structural forms occurring in human consciousness as a legacy of human being's *lived experiences* of the world. In this sense, even though Husserl ultimately came to accept what he called "pure consciousness", a notion which, though appearing to be similar to the Cartesian notion of intelligence, was, however, different in not being detached from the body. It did not operate transparently as the Cartesian intelligence, but interacted with the world in terms of the internalization of certain archetypal structures arising from human beings' *lived* experiences of the world.

Heidegger enormously expands human beings' embodied 'touch' sensations of the world inherent in Husserl's theory by considering human beings as tool-wielding animals of the world. Thus, while a teacher *touches* a blackboard with his chalk, a carpenter *touches* wood with his hammer, both their consciousness and their bodies being oriented appropriately towards their tools and, through them, to the socio-cultural world. Heidegger implies that human existence in the world is inter-subjective to the core. Through this process, Heidegger incorporates technology in the phenomenological theory, an addition which is of crucial importance in the modern world, including cinema.

While, for both Husserl and Heidegger, there is still the existence of a "consciousness" which is a throw-back on the Cartesian mind, it, however, stands imbued with "intentions" generated by the body. In contrast, Merleau-Ponty replaces it with the notion of a "consciousness" which arises only as an *effect* of the body's interactions with the world:

> In perception, we do not think the object and we do not think ourselves thinking about it; we are given over to the object [which] merges into the body which [the body] is better informed about them than we are about the world.[732]

Since the body has grown in tandem with nature, the latter has fundamentally oriented human body in a particular way, called the "operational intentionality". Thus, for instance, the body knows how to orient itself in its interactions with a river or a tree. On

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[732] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 277, quoted in Hopp, "Perception", 152, modified

this foundational layer of "operational intentionality", the body has grown a further layer of "bodily intentionality" due to its acclimatization to the artefactual world. Thus, the body knows how to curl its fingers in trying to hold a cup. Thus, simply by noticing the bodily orientation of others within view, human beings can become aware of their 'intentions' in the world. In this sense, the "intentionality" of the body as a whole forms the basis of *intersubjectivity* in the Merleau-Pontian world.

Merleau-Ponty's notion of *bodily intentionality* leads to his twin concepts of vision-touch ecquivalence that generates *synesthetic* experience in the body, and *chiasm* that produces a process of subject-object alteration anticipated by the body based on the way it has *lived* and *internalized* the world. As far as *synaesthetic* experience is concerned, Merleau-Ponty holds that, since vision and touch experience the same surface, touch sensibilities are already *given* in the vision of an individual. This is why expressions like "I *see* cold ice" or "I *see* a heavy metal ball" become legitimate for Merleau-Ponty. Cinema, being an audio-visual medium, is loaded with such *synesthetic* experiences which convincingly explain the experience of *haptic visuality* in cinema, an experience which arises from a close contact of vision sweeping over the surface of reality.

Merleau-Ponty's notion of the *chiasm* points to the fact that, during an interaction between two bodies, a role reversal of being a subject and an object alternately is always anticipated by the two bodies based on the internationalization of such repeat processes within their bodies since millennia. The easy acceptability of *shot-reverse shot* practices by the film audiences can be effectively explained on the basis of such subjective-objective *encroachments* anticipated by the body. The twin notions of *synesthesia* and *chiasm* are likely to have a profound influence on future understanding of cinema.

Classical Indian Theories

Its application in Nyāya theory of perception, Bharata's theory of aesthetic pleasure or *rasa* and Ānandavardhana's theory of suggestion or *dhvani* are summed up below.

Nyāya Theory of Perception and Cinema

While Nyāya theory is similar to Merleau-Pontian phenomenology in emphasizing embodied and habitual experiences of life as the basis of all cognitions, it, however, differs from Ponty in the process it adopts in establishing this idea.

Like Merleau-Ponty, Nyāya also effectively discards the notion of a "consciousness" independent of the body for all practical purposes. Instead, Nyāya holds that "consciousness" arises as an *effect* representing the body's interactions with the world. In this sense, Nyāya "consciousness" is symbolic of the body's "intentionality" towards the world. It farther holds that the body 'acts' in response to three instinctual processes internalized within the body, e.g., the survival instinct, the instinct for continuity through propagation or the sexual instinct and the acquisitive instinct with a desire to secure the surroundings for survival and propagation of the organism. As part of its survival strategy, the body converts elements occurring within its perceptual field into an *integrated whole* in order to ensure a unified response to a situation confronting it. In this sense, according to Nyāya, *narrative construction* is ingrained in the human psyche, a process which essentially requires that an element of 'ownership' and 'power' be exercised by the organism over its surroundings in order to ensure optimum conditions for its survival and growth. It represents a "knowledge-process" for the organism with which it *identifies* at the most basic level of its existence. This *primary identification* at the embodied level leads to *secondary identifications* at the socio-cultural level. Thus, while *fire burns flesh* is an embodied experience, *fire cooks food* is a socio-cultural practice built around the first expereince. While classical Indian theories, including Nyāya, advocate that basic "identifications" occur with the "knowledge-processes", they lead to secondary identifications with human beings or characters who remain associated with such processes.

According to Nyāya, the perceptual process of constructing an *integrated whole* within view is represented by the fundamental formula: "qualifier + qualified + relationship = unit of perception" where a *location* is *qualified* by a property through a *functional relationship* to form a *whole* within perception. The resulting percept or percepts appear in particular "modes of appearance" to the perceiver. Thus, while a

flower may occur in the "mode of appearance" of being a *plant-specie* to a botanist, it may appear as a *decorative piece* to a commoner. Similarly, a lady with books in front may "appear" as a *student* and the books as her *study-material* to be linked into an integrated whole within perception through the functional relationship of "studying" to generate the cognition "She is studying". Nyāya explains the perceptual process involves the forming of an "invariable sequence" within view between the lady and books resulting in the arising of "universals", like "student-hood" for the qualificand or location, "study-material-hood" for the qualifier or the property and "study-hood" for the functional relationship to constitute the cognitive whole for the viewer. Nyāya concludes that the particular "mode of presentation" of the percept conveys a certain embodied sense to the viewer, the final perception being a product of the "mode of appearance" and "mode of presentation" for the perceiver. The formation of such "subjective" relationships between elements existing "objectively" within view advocated by Nyāya, a process generally accepted by all classical Indian theories with minor qualifications, represents a process understood entirely from the *perceiver's point of view* as against the *speaker's point of view* represented by the Western tradition. The above considerations lead to some of the most incisive modes of analyzing perception in cinema.

Bharata's Theory of Aesthetic Pleasure (*Rasa*)

While the statement "The lady has deep sentiments for him" can be 'intellectually' understood by the readers, they would, however, not be able to *experience* the exact nature of the sentiments she is having for the person. The primary aim of Bharata's (c. early 1st millennium CE) aesthetic theory is to enable the audiences to *relive* a scene in terms of the characters' experiences. In this sense, Bharata holds that when the audiences form an *integrated whole* within view, what they are basically doing is to *integrate* the elements occurring in the scene in terms of a causal-chain, a "knowledge-process" with which they *identify* as a "goal-directed activity" occurring within their view. This *identification* immediately leads to the *evocation of a corresponding psycho-somatic state i.e. an affective state among the audiences* which enable them to *relive* the scene by virtue of bringing their "conscious" understanding of the scene and the "unconscious" response of their bodies at par, the whole process occurring in terms of the audiences' embodied and socio-cultural practices of life.

In a classic analysis, the philosopher-aesthetes Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka (c. 9th CE) and Abhinavagupta (c. 10th CE) add a preliminary level of identification by holding that *the audiences willingly identify with the fictional mode of a play even before they have entered the auditorium which generalizes their experiences of the play as a whole*. The process of *generalization* of audience experiences has the effect of removing them from their practical concerns, resulting in aesthetic experiences invariably appearing as 'pleasurable' to them, including tragedies. It is a theory which provides a satisfactory solution to the vexed question of the "paradox of junc fiction" which had plagued aesthetic theories ever since their inception. The above levels of basic identification eventually lead to their more intensified forms of *sympathetic identifications* with the *narrative mode of the play* and its *action modes employed by the work* and, in cases of certain master works, an *empathic identification with the focus of the play*.

These *identificatory levels*, together with the evocation of their corresponding *affective states*, generate different aesthetic experiences or *rasas* among the audiences which have been broadly classified as *aesthetic relish* (*bhoga*), in which the audiences' consciousness remains in a "mode of enquiry" in pursuit of a solution to an enigma presented by the play, *aesthetic saturation* (*rasavat*), in which the audiences consciousness attains a "state of rest" on the resolution of the enigma, and *aesthetic immersion* or *ecstasy* (*samāveśa* or *āveśa*), in which certain archetypal experiences are triggered from within the audiences' subconscious to overwhelm their sensibilities and experiences.

Ānandavardhana's Theory of Suggestion (*Dhvani*)

Ānandavardhana's (c. 8th CE) theory of suggestion (*dhvani*), with Abhinavagupta's comments thereon, acts as a *meta-language* generated by artworks which give voice to the voiceless among human beings whose normal power of communication has been truncated due to reasons of socio-cultural repression, existential conditions produced by a trauma or repetitive experiences producing certain archetypal experiences within human beings which remain submerged within them in a *generalized* form of pure potentiality. Since the above loss of human 'voices' has the effect of curtailing human subjectivity, Ānanda and Abhinava seek to restore "full word" to them by employing art as *dhvani* or

suggestive means to make human beings come face-to-face with their 'lost' experiences. The process of *dhvani* advocated by Ānanda and Abhinava employ a *mode of comparision* between the artistic creation of a reality and its practical counterpart which has the effect of bringing to the surface by suggestive means portions of human experiences suppressed within them.

Ānanda classifies *dhvani* modes to be three, with *vastudhvani*, which generates 'suggestion through the realistic mode', being more effective in tackling cases of sexual repression imposed on individuals by the society, like those occurring in *Bollywood cinema* due to censureship; *alaṅkāradhvani*, which generates 'suggestion through formal mode', being ideal in tackling existential crisis produced by traumatic experiences suffered by individuals visualized in Deleuze's *time-images*, like those manifest in the works of modern filmmakers like Tarkovasky, Resnais, Godard, etc; and, finally, *rasadhvani*, which involves 'suggestion through direct mode', is more effective in reviving archetypal experiences lying submerged in human subconscious, like those mentioned by Ritwik Ghatak in his analysis of certain film images.

In conclusion, it is pertinent to point out that the existing film discourse remains essentially limited due its neglects either in full or in parts the operation of perception in terms of embodiment and socio-cultural practices of human beings, their identificatory and affective states, different types of aesthetic experiences and the restoration by suggestive means of their 'voices' lost due to various reasons. In the absence of any systematic understanding of these fundamental processes on the basis of which the audiences engage with an artwork at the most basic level of their interaction with an artwork, these experiences remain as untapped "wild meanings" under the surface which, however, continue to exercise a profound influence on the audiences' understanding of a film scene or reality as such. Substantial gains are to be made if insights generated by such "alternate methodology", involving "piecemeal theories" and their "local solutions" are adopted in understanding how ordinary audiences *actually experience cinema*, rather than how they *should experience cinema* as propagated by the existing film theories.

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Conclusion

Philosophy, according to Bertrand Russell, represents a "no man's land" between different disciplines. By virtue of this very property, it is able to offer more analytic tools culled from many sources which provides for a more meaningful and inclusive interpretation of the world. It has been shown in this research that the philosophical thoughts underlying Merleau-Pontian phenomenology in the West and Nyāya theory of perception in classical India represent a crucial shift from a disembodied understanding of the world to its embodied understanding whose application to aesthetic theories bring about a new interpretation of the way artworks function for the audiences, including what happens in cinema. Since the basic findings of my research have already been summed up in chapter 6, this concluding section can be more appropriately utilized for discussing the shift in *meaning* that my research brings to the following determining concepts with the help of which we understand the world: "the self", "consciousness", "the body", "causality", "rationality", "meaning" and "truth".

My research throughout has sought to highlight the basic difference between the explanations being offered in the existing film discourse and the ones being offered in my research as a clash between a *disembodied objective view of the world* where "the body" has no meaningful role to play and an *embodied subjective-objective mode of analysis* where "the body" plays a determining role in human understanding of the world. The question exactly how does the two dispensations viz. the disembodied and the embodied differ, especially when they are applied to cinema? In this connection, barring only the notion of "the body" which acts as the very foundation for this entire research, the differing explanations that the above two paradigms of thought offer to phenomena would be highlighted in the ensuing sections.

In orthodox Hindu theories, "the self" is understood as a non-performing witness of events occurring in the empirical world, a process of which it *essentially* forms no part. However, by virtue of its *illusory identification* with "matter" icuding "the body", "the self" aquires "the body's" experiences and drives which acts as "the self's" material "ego", which not only acts as a base (*āadhār*) for knowledge of the material processes to

accrue within it but also to make it interact with the world through "the body". The true nature of "the self" is revealed only when it achieves liberation (*mokṣa*) from its material bondage. It raises a question: since the *egoistic* activities of "the self" are synonymous with the activities of "the body", why conceive "the self" as a separate entity at all, particularly since, according to Nyāya, its liberated state represents a consciousness-less, agency-less existence, literally a 'blind' state which is of no practical use to us? I argue that, in terms of human experiences, the liberated state of "the self" is conceived as a state of *no-thing-ness* (to borrow a Heideggerian concept) in the Indian theories primarily to act as a basic yardstic for marking change in the world. Thus, for example, while the 'atomist' group of orthodox Hindu theories, represented by Nyāya and others, considers the liberated state of "the self" as representing "nothing" in human experiences, the 'substantialist' group of orthodox Hindu theories, represented by Advaita Vedānta and others, describes the true state of "pure consciousness", which constitutes the universe, as with the epithet "it exists, it is true, it is bliss" (*sadcchidānanda*) which essentially means that "the self's" liberated state is a tensionless existence signifying no experiences whatsoever. In contrast, the non-Hindu, heterodox theory of Buddhism holds the universe to be constituted of unrelated momentarily existing "ultimates", called the *dharmas*, which denies the existence of "the self" as a cohesive permanent entity, leads to the conclusion that human experiences are apparent rather than real. In sum, we see that, in all dispensations of classical Indian theories, "the self" represents a state of "no thing-ness" or "no body" which acts as the basic minimum denominator for judging embodied events occurring in the world, just like the unalterable speed of light is considered as the final yardstick for judging changes occurring in the world.

"The self" gains knowledge of the world by using the via media of "consciousness" which translates all unconscious bodily experiences of the world in conscious terms. What is this "consciousness"? In contrast to "consciousness" being conceived as a form of transparent "intelligence", called "the mind", by Descartes, or as the repository of *à priori* "categories of understanding" occurring in Kant, in the theory of Merleau-Ponty as well as in Nyāya, its separate existence apart from the body has been denied; instead it occurs in both these theories as an *effect* of "the body's" interactions with the world. This embodied "consciousness" is synonymous with the responses that

"the bodies" have internalized in relation to the material world. This change in outlook brings about a massive change in the process of theorizing the world: in place of a conscious and 'intelligent" understanding of the world, we now have an embodied understanding that does not involve "intelligence" in the conventional way we understand the term. The question is what difference does it make to our understanding of cinema? The basic difference occurs as follows: the embodied experiences provide to the audiences a basic understanding of the material processes portrayed in the films, called "wild meanings" by Merleau-Ponty, which acts as the basis for the production of cognitive understandings among the audiences, including the production of 'higher' thoughts, like inference, etc, on the basis of which the audiences understand what is going on in the films.

It immediately brings us to the next determining concept of the world, "reason". In Western thought, "reason" has been conventionally understood as a principle or a cluster of principles which exist within human beings *prior* to their experiencing of the world. It is claimed that by applying this principle to reality, truth can be established independent of "the body". The seed of this idea goes back to the Platonic dialogues where Socrates says "follow the argument where it leads" or "the unexamined life is not worth living".[733] Socrates's commitment to critical enquiry is raised a level higher by Aristotle who holds that, alongside the nutritive, locomotor and sensory faculties of he body, man is endowed with a "rational" faculty which makes human beings *zoon politicus* or a "rational animal". Noting that it forms the highest faculty, Aristotle says that man's supreme happiness lies in doing *theoria* or theories which involves applying purely theoretical powers of reasoning to the world at large.[734] The Greek notion of "rationalism" has since been associated mostly with the 17th century philosophers like Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibnitz, called the "Continental Rationalists". Thus, for Descartes, we start from the first principles known *directly* by reason viz. *cogito ergo sum* or "I think therefore I am" where "thinking" represents the power of "the mind" endowed with transparent "intelligence" inherent within Man. From this basic premise, Descartes progressively deduces all other forms of knowledge. Calling knowledge

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[733] John Cottingham, *Rationalism* (London: Paladin Books, 1984): 3
[734] Ibid

acquired through trasnsparent "intelligence" as "intuition", Descartes holds that it is trustworthy because it is not based either on perception or memory or introspection, all of the latter being knowledge gathered through the deceptive senses. While it inaugurates the "Age of Reason" in Western thought, Kant shifts its orientation by considering that the power of human beings to 'understand' does not belong to the power of transparent "intelligence" as such, but the existence of *à priori* "categories of understanding" occurring within them. In this sense, the Kantian notion of "reason" does not arise from the transparency of "intelligence", as Descartes had conceived, but is a structured consciousness *given* within human beings *ab initio*.

Ranged against this theory of "Rationalism" is the theory of "Empiricism", which, coming from the Greek concept *empeiria* ('experience'), holds that all human knowledge ultimately derives from sensory experience. Championed by the English empiricists, Locke and Hume, this theory may be said, in certain senses, to be the forerunner of the embodied thinking of today. Despite this empiricist challenge, "rationality" continued to hold sway as the *essential* characteristic of human beings in Western thought even today.

As far as classical Indian theories are concerned, it has already been mentioned that there is nothing *à priori* in them, all understandings being *à posteriori*, i.e. they arise from experiences undergone by human beings in this world. While the theories of Merleau-Ponty or Nyāya continue to be virulently embodied, there does exist the notion of "pure consciousness" in the "substantialist" theories, like Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Advaita Vedānta or Kashmir Śaivism, which, on the face of it, gives the appearance of being similar to the notion of transparent "intelligence" of Descartes in Western thought. However, there is a significant difference between the two. Thus, while, in Descartes, "the mind" 'understands' phenomena *transparently* on the basis of a *given* "intelligence", in the Indian theories, "pure consciousness" generates 'understanding' of phenomena through its modifications (*vṛtti*) undergone in constituting the phenomena. In this sense, knowledge *ideally* means experiencing a difference between its "pure" state, which remains as the basic common denominator within "the self", and its modifications in constituting the worldy phenomena. The point to note is that knowledge is entirely experientially formed even in this group of theories.

What difference does an *embodied understanding of the world* signify for the concept of "reason"? The changes that "embodied reason" brings about are revolutionary in nature: it not only overthrows centuries of wisdom in Western thought but also substantially challenges popular understanding of classical Indian thought. In this new avatar, "reason", being bodily generated, is not only unconscious but also emotionally motivated in the ultimate bodily terms of experience something as 'pleasure', 'pain', or 'indifference'. In this sense, "reason" is not 'universal', but 'evolutionary' in the sense that it changes in terms of the changing bodily experiences of Nature and the artefactual world. "Reason", thus, differs from geography to geography and culture to culture which immediately leads to the conclusion that there can be no universal basis for morality. Whatever commonality is perceived in the "reasoning" process is due to the commonality of our bodily structures. Clearly, these changes call for an urgent reworking of the way we understand the world, including cinema.

This brings us to the role of "causality" in the embodied theories. "Causality" is one of the fundamental principles which is invoked for understanding the world, equally acknowledged in the West and the East, with Hume calling it "the cement of the universe".[735] In most general terms, "causation" may be described as "the relation that connects events and objects of this world in significant relationships".[736] Conventionally, it means that an "agent" *causes* a "change" in some object or state of affairs to produce a new object or a new state of affair. However, even this very simple idea is fraught with controversies. Hume and J. S. Mill had held that "causation" represents only the process of a regular association occurring between certain events which cannot be analyzed any farther without becoming circular. This notion of "causality" as a state of "constant conjuction" has been disputed by other theories which hold that, since the effect would not have happened in the absence of a particular cause, the "cause becomes a *sine qua non* for the effect".[737] In this context, the Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy denotes this vexed problem as follows:

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[735] Robert Audi, "Causation", in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 110-12, 110

[736] Ibid

[737] Ibid, 111

The attempt to "analyze" causation seems to have reached an impasse; the proposals on hand seem so widely divergent that one wonders whether they are all analyses of the same concept. But each of them seems to address some important aspect of the variegated notion we term as "cause" and, it may be doubted, whether there is a unitary concept of causation that can be captured in an enlightended philosophical analysis.[738]

As far as classical Indian theories are concerned, its ideas are equally divided in the context of "causation". The main two forms of "causation" conceived by the classical Indian theories are briefly as follows. The first theory conceives "causation" as producing a *real effect*, including the production of a *delayed effect* due to the belated maturing of a cause, the most commonly cited example being milk turning into curd as held by the Sāṃkhya theory. The other theory, primarily held by the Buddhists, conceives "causation" to be a mere *coincidental co-existence* of entites, which, when frequently repeated in human experience, leads to the notion of an "invariable sequence" occurring between the entities organized in the form of immediately *before* and *after* in the perceiver's mind which, however, produces no *real effect* in the practical field, the most commonly cited example being the case of a transparent crystal appearing as 'red' in the presence of a red flower. The important point is that while the *coincidental coexistence of entities* does not preclude the production of a 'practical result' in the real world, it has an effect in perception which may or may not be practically fruitful in each instant case. Various Indian theories try to amalgate different aspects of these two positions in their causal theories.

Nyāya, generally, subscribes to the "co-existence" theory of Buddhist "causality" with the proviso that, for Nyāya, *coincidental coexistences* produce *real effects* in the world. Thus, while for the Buddhists, the existence of "objects" is a mere appearance being conceptual in nature and hence non-veridical in real life, for the Naiyāyikas, the "objects" exist in reality. The Naiyāyikas further hold that, even those entities which are merely forming an "invariable sequence" in perception, produces a *new product* for the perceiver which has a *real effect* on him or her, i.e. it has practical efficacy in the

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[738] Audi, "Causation", 112

perceiver's world in terms of the viewer's embodied experiences of the world and his socio-cultural practices of life. This is an instance of a 'powerless causality' which produces a practical result for the perceiver. Thus, a lady seen with books in front is perceived as "She is studying" on the basis of the formation of an "invariable sequence" between them in terms of the perceiver's embodied and socio-cultural practices of life, even though the lady may not have anything to do with the books as such.

This brings us to the uncanny similarity between what is understood by "meaning" in the theories of perception advocated by Merleau-Ponty and Nyāya, both the theories significantly differing from what is conventionally understood by the term "perception" in common parlance viz. a passive reception of sensations which are transparently interpreted by "the mind" in terms of a given "intelligence", as Descartes had held, or on the basis of *à priori* "categories of understanding", as Kant had held, or as an experiential understanding of the process as in case of empiricism. Merleau-Ponty critics both: "Empiricism cannot see that we need to know what we are looking for, otherwise we would not be looking for it, and intellectualism fails to see that we need to be ignorant of what we are looking for or, equally again, we should not be searching".[739] Shunning what Foucault terms the "empirico-transcendental doublet of modern thought" involving mind/body, thought/language, self/matter, inside/outside dichotomies, Merleau-Ponty leads us to the notion that "there is no meaning which is not embodied, nor any matter that is not meaningful".[740] Since for Merleau-Ponty the perceiving body is also the 'thinking' body, the individual is not simply a body, but also a *body-subject system.*[741] Perception, thus, means conceiving the perceiving *body-subject* in a situation rather than as being a 'neutral' spectator who somehow stands beyond the situation. In overturning the common understanding that we first *passively* see something and then *intellectually*

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[739] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Trans. Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962): 28
[740] N. Crossley, *The Politics of Subjectivity: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty* (Aldershot, England: Avebury Series in Philosophy, 1994): 14, quoted in Jack Reynolds, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961)", in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Accessed July 17, 2016
[741] Reynolds, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961)", Internet Access in July 2016

interpret it, Merleau-Ponty notes that perception itself is a process of "creative receptivity".[742] Reynolds explains the concept as follows:

> As hard as we may try, we cannot see the broken shards of a bear bottle as simply the sum of its shape, color, etc. The whole background of what the bottle is used for, what consuming the liquids contained therein means for different people, what it means for being "broken", etc, comes with, and not behind, our perception of that bottle. For Merleau-Ponty, perception is not a type of thought in a classical, reflective sense, but, equally clearly, it is not a third person process…[743]

Thus, depending on what one sees as the background, a thing would appear to be either a duck or a rabbit, or as a vase or as two faces confronting each other in the famous examples given by Jastrow/Wittgenstein.[744] In this sense, one never perceives an objective world in its concrete materiality, but a "subjective" world in terms of the perceiver's *lived* experiences of the world.

When we come to the notion of "meaning", 'habituality' plays an interesting role in Merleau-Pontian theory of perception. He notes that 'understanding' as a phenomenon in bodily terms means that there are two existences of the *body-subject*: a general existence and an existence in response to a particular phenomenon which calls for a certain response from the body. Thus, while how to hold a plough emanates from the former, what to do with the plough in a given situation results from the latter. Terming these processes as "inhabit", Merleau-Ponty notes that both of them act in tandem to guide the *body-subject* what to do in a given situation. Moya notes the importance of this concept:

> Merleau-Ponty explains that habitual behavior arises on the basis of a set of situations and responses that, despite not being identical, constitute a community of meaning…This is explained by the fact that the *body-subject* integrates certain

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[742] Reynolds, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961)", Internet Access in July 2016
[743] Ibid
[744] Ibid

elements of general motility that permits her to grasp what is essential to the phenomenon…[745]

It is striking that Nyāya's *self-body system* is an almost exact analog of Merleau-Ponty's *body-subject system*. More interestingly, one cannot miss the uncanny similarity between Merleau-Ponty's notions of "habituality" and "inhabit" and the Nyāya notion of the "universal" signifying an integrated whole in perception habitually experienced by the perceiver in real life. In this sense, while the understanding "She is studying" signifies the concept of the "inhabit" for Merleau-Ponty, it represents the notion of the "universal" in the Nyāya theory, both ultimately arising from embodied experiences of the world and their naturalization in terms of socio-cultural practices of life.

Paul Mus' comments on Alice Boner's analysis of composition in Hindu sculptures clarify the process of "meaning" formation influenced by the Nyāya theory of perception:

> The golden rule is that no element should be allotted any circumstantiated, specific meaning, except in reference to the complete, delimited and well-balanced total. It amounts to saying that within the relief-field, the various form-elements should stand in such correlation together that the specific of any one of them, while undoubtedly related to its lexical definition, should also be the outcome of whatever addition, alteration, suppression or correction the others project into it. This comes very close to what the Brahmanical treatise, *Bṛhaddevatā* calls "reciprocal origination" (*anyo' nyayonitvam*), lit., "being the matrix (*yoni*, 'womb') of one another".[746]

The above notion automatically leads to the formation of "objecthood" in the Nyāya theory of perception in which an "object" signifies that which serves a human function. It has already been noted that if "Cyclops" serves a human purpose, it is perceived as an "object" irrespective of how many parts it may have. In the same sense, whether a flying

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[745] Patricia Moya, "Habit and Embodiment in Merleau-Ponty", *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience,* Accessed Online in July, 2016

[746] Paul Mus, "Preface", in Alice Boner's *Principles of Composition in Hindu Sculpture*, ix-xiv, xii

entity would be perceived as a "bird" or as a "falcon" would depend on the purpose it serves for the perceiver.

Finally, we come to the notion of "truth" in these theories. Even though frequently used, it is a vexed idea which originally relates to the notion of "universal truth". In Western thought, skepticism about such a grand "truth" has been institutionalized in the poststructural theory resulting in "the function of terms like 'true' and 'false'" being confined to local issues and discussions.[747] It is one of Hayden White's significant insights that when "truth" is assimilated in thought, it undergoes a certain structural patterning which makes the product necessarily both factual and fictional in nature.[748] Since Merleau-Ponty does not accept the existence of a transparent intelligence as a *given* among human beings, there is no transcendental measure of "truth" in his theory. All that is there is the *body-subject system* which "adapts" in response to an invitation from the world, building up on experiences already internalized in the *system* in the past. The cognitive scientists Gallaghar and Zahavi note: "The environment calls forth a specific body-style so that the body works with the environment and is included in it. The posture that the body adopts in a situation is its way of responding to the environment."[749] Under the circumstances, the criterion of "truth" in Merleau-Ponty remains the practicality of local solutions achieved in terms of particular bodily responses occurring in particular situations.

Since classical Indian theories are essentially *experiential* in nature, they do not subscribe to the existence of a transcendental notion of "universal truth" in the empirical world. True that the Vedic notion of *Brahman = ātma* is conceived as the ultimate truth that transcends all local "truths", the important point to note is, however, that all classical Indian theories are primarily concerned with human beings' experiences in the material world which consist of myriad forms of "contingent truths", with the Vedic notion merely acting as a guiding principle for such an "event" rather than being a useful tool. The non-Vedic theories, like Buddhism, Jainism and Materialism even categorically reject the

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[747] Herman & Others, "Truth", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, 621-22, 621
[748] Ibid
[749] See S. Gallaghar and D. Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science* (New York: Routledge, 2008)

Vedic notion altogether. Under the circumstances, for classical Indian theories including Nyāya "the only reason some contents are regarded as real is that they have not yet been contradicted".[750] In this sense, the only workable criterion of "truth" accepted by all classical theories is when *a thing practically works in a given situation*. The Buddhists cite an interesting example to support this idea of "truth": when two persons run in two different directions on seeing a luster emanating from them thinking it to be a pearl, while one of them finds a real pearl, the other merely finds a conch-shell! Nyāya, being an arch realist, holds that even illusions, like mistaking a *rope* for a *snake*, and hallucinations, like Macbeth seeing a dagger and Lady Macbeth seeing blood in an empty space, are real since the parts with which they are constructed in one's imagination have a *real effect* on the perceiver.

In this context, Bimal Krishna Matilal suggests that the conclusions reached by analysts should be taken as so many *assertions* which are valid within their own particular analytical frameworks rather than being held as expressions of "universal truth".[751] He says that even the statement "My finger touches the button", which is conventionally accepted as true in all possible frameworks, is, however, not true in the physical sciences involving "atoms"[752] and in Buddhist thought involving the momentarily existent "ultimates" or *dharmas*!

In conclusion, one would like to emphasize the fact that a shift in the real significance of the determining concepts of the world produces a difference in our understanding of the cinematic process as a whole. Research undertaken in this thesis has opened up multiple possibilities for producing a more insightful film discourse. Since these responses do not, at this moment, unite into a homogenous doctrine, they should be taken as so many "assertions" of reality involving "contingent truths", as Matilal mentions, or "piece-meal theories" having "local solutions", as Bordwell and Carroll hold, rather than as statements of "universal truth" forming a grand theory. The loss of such a 'grand' understanding of

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[750] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 142
[751] Bimal Krishna Matilal quoted in M. Krausz, "Relativism and Beyond: A Tribute to Bimal Matilal, in *Relativism, Suffering, and Beyond: Essays in Memory of Bimal K. Matilal*, Ed. P. Bilimoria and J. N. Mohanty (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997): 93-104, 102-03
[752] Krausz, "Relativism and Beyond", 103

worldly phenomena, including cinema, would be more than off-set by the insights gained from "piecemeal" theories culled from different cultures. Crucially, as has been demonstrated throughout this research, this process has the added benefit of bringing back 'ordinary' audiences to the fold of film discourse, a position from where they were most unjustly displaced during last hundred years of film theorizing.

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Annexure 1
Nyāya Ontology

Nyāya ontology involves three fundamental players, "the self", "consciousness", and "the body" as constituting the human organism which experience "matter" i.e. undergoes material interactions with the world. More specifically, in this schema, while "the body", formed of "matter", experiences the worldly phenomena, "the self", which is conceived as transcendental to this plane, is made "aware" of these interactions by the intermediary of "consciousness". While the resulting awareness pertains to a material "thing", it accrues as "knowledge" in "the self" in a structured form where a property *qualifies* a *location* through a *functional relationship* in the formula qualifier + qualificand + relationship", known as the fundamental principle of knowledge in the Nyāya theory. The following sections describe the individual parts played by each othese players in the Nyāya theory.

"The Self"

In Nyāya, "the self" may be defined as an 'unconscious' "substance" (*ādhāratva*, 'that which contains') which merely provides a non-material location for properties of the material world to accrue as "qualities" in "the self".[753] Since "the self" inhabits a different existential plane than "matter" in the Nyāya theory, it ultimately remains untarnished by the material qualities, the true nature of the Nyāya "self" in its 'liberated' state (*mokṣa*) being a non-conscious state devoid of all forms of 'awareness', 'knowledge', 'feelings', etc, and as such devoid of any form of agency whatsoever. In this sense, the true state of "the self" represents a state of "no-thing-ness" (a Heideggerian term) which, though appearing unique to the Nyāya theory, is, however, a general feature of all classical Indian theories as has been argued in the "Conclusion" of this work. In this sense, the 'liberated' state of "the self" acts as the basic common

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[753] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 44; the Naiyāyika Udayana (c. 11th CE) defines "A substance is a thing which is not the locus of an absolute absence of qualities", in *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. VI: Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika from Gaṅgeśa to Raghunath Śiromaṇi, Eds. Karl H. Potter and Sibajiban Bhattacharyya, reprint (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2001): 33

denominator equivalent to a 'measure' for judging material events happening in the world.

Since the liberated state of "the self" is a consciousness-less, agency-less state which is 'blind' for all *practical* purposes in the material world, it shows that Nyāya emphasis is on "the self's" interactions with the material world, rather than on its liberation from the mundane world. However, since "the self" occupies a different existential plane than "matter", the question of "category mistake" crops up that debars any real interaction occurring between two existential planes. Nyāya avoids this problem by holding that "the self" undergoes a state of *illusory identification* with "matter", an aspect which would be explained later.

It is important to point out a significant difference between what is understood by the terms "knowledge" and "awareness" in the Nyāya theory. While, for Nyāya, "knowledge" is a structured process, "awareness" is an unstructured experience primarily resulting from "the body's" unstructured, mechanical responses to the world. It has already been indicated that Nyāya uniquely holds "knowledge" to be the result of a structured form of perception occurring in terms of the formula "qualifier + qualificand + relationship". In the above sense, "knowledge" in the Nyāya theory neither arises due to the presence of a transparent intelligence occurring in man, as Descartes had held, or on the existence of *à priori* "categories of understanding" occurring as a *given* in human consciousness, as held by Kant, but on *à posteriori* knowledge gathered through various experiences that "the body" had undergone in the past and their internationalization within "the self-body system".

It may be noted here that while the true state of "the self" is a state devoid of all consciousness and agency, it, however, acquires all material proclivities and drives occurring within "matter" through "the self's" *illusory identification with "matter"*. In order to work out these tendencies, "the self" aquires a material "body" through which it acts on the world. The association of the constructed "body" with "the self" makes it a *self-body system* till "the self" achieves liberation from its bondage to "matter".[754]

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[754] It is generally held by the orthodox Indian theories that the principle of sentience, called *prāṇa* ('that

"Consciousness"

It is significant that Nyāya does not have an equivalent word for "consciousness" in its theory. Mohanty notes:

> For Nyāya, there is no consciousness as such; there is, of course, a universal "consciousness" which is instantiated in every cognitive state or occurrence. Each such state – perceiving, inferring, remembering, and so on – is either called a *buddhi*, a *jñāna*, or an *upalabdhi* – which arises when appropriate causal conditions are met.[755]

Arguably, like Merleau-Ponty, for Nyāya, "consciousness" manifests as an *effect* of "the body's" *lived experiences* of the world. In this sense, all the interactions and responses that "the body" is privy to during its interactions with the world arises as states of awareness, knowledge, feelings, etc, in "the self". Conceived in this manner, Nyāya "consciousness" becomes *intentional* in nature (*artha-pravaṇa*, 'purposeful', 'goal-directed') which arises only contingently to make "the self" *aware* of the sense experiences arising from the material world. In this sense, Nyāya "consciousness" occurs only as "consciousness of something" (*savisayakatva*, 'together with a thing'), there being no concept of "pure consciousness" in this theory. In other words, "consciousness" has no independent and separate existence in this theory apart from the *effects* that "the body" manifests in the course of its lived experiences of the world. This notion of *intentional consciousness*, firmed up by 6th century CE in the Nyāya theory, strikingly anticipates the phenomenological notion of *intentional consciousness* conceived by Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl in the West during 19th century CE.

The argument that Nyāya "consciousness" may be perceived merely as a heuristic device is reinforced by the fact that it is conceived as transparent and formless (*nirākāra*), lacking any structure within it, its job merely being to act as a transparent *principle of illumination* (*prakaśa*) for "the self" to become *aware* of the interactions going on in the

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which breathes') comes from "the self", a principle which remains independent of "matter"; see Dale Riepe, *The Naturalisitc Tradition in Indian Thought* (Delhi: Motilal Banrarsidass, 1964): 199, quoted in Puligandla, *Fundamentals*, 127-28

[755] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 61

material world. More importantly, while *intentional consciousness* throws a transparent light on reality, "the self" becomes aware of it *externally* on the basis of merely the external shapes and forms (*ākṛti*) of reality, whose real significance is 'understood' only in terms of the memory that "the body" has acquired in terms of its past experiences.

In contrast, the "substantialist" orthodox theories conceive "consciousness" to be "pure consciousness" which, unlike contingent and *intentional* "consciousness" of the Nyāya theory, has an independent existence apart from its contents. The monist theories of Advaita Vedānta and Kashmir Śaivisim eventually reduce all existents to one, holding that "pure consciousness" constitutes the whole universe. In these theories, "pure consciousness" occurs in two states, the unmanifest involutionary stage where it remains in a passive form and the manifest devolutionary state where it manifest the universe, the states of "the self", "empirical consciousness" and "the body" constituting but three 'moments' within it. In this ense, all three ontological constituents occur in the same existential plane. In this stage, "the self" comes to *know* of the interactions going on in the world *internally* by comparing the original state of "pure consciousness" with the modifications (*vṛttis*) that it undergoes in its constitutive role. "The self", ultimately being a part of the constituting element of the universe, is conceived as representing the existential truth, which, in its unmanifest originary form of unmanifest "pure consciousness", represents a state of tensionlessness signifying pure bliss (*sad-cid-ānada*). The unmanifest involutionary phase of "pure consciousness" represents 'higher truth' (*pāramārthika-satya*) while its devolutionary phase represents 'lower truth' (*vyavahārika-satya*).[756]

On the heterodox side, Buddhism conceives the universe as solely consisting of momentarily existing phenomenal "ultimates", called the *dharmas*, which appear in five specific forms of consciousness consisting of form (*rūpa*), feelings (*vedanā*), concepts (*saṃjñā*), traces (*saṃskāras*), and consciousness (*cetanā*),[757] the latter often thought to be forming an underlying core of all the above states. The Buddhists further hold that the *rūpa-dharmas* constitute an "atom" of sensuous experience, 'which is not a "substance-

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[756] Puligandla, *Fundamentals*, 246
[757] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 54

atom" (*dravya-paramānu*), but rather represents the smallest gestalt (*samghāta-paramānu*) occurring in that are of four kinds: visual, olfactory, taste and touch'.[758] The inclusion of sensory elements in Buddhist thought constituting the world makes it a phenomenological theory through and through. Since the *dharmas* decay in a moment, the Buddhists deny any form of continuity in the universe. The Buddhists, thus, believe in radical discontinuity which makes them deny the conventional notion of "causality" as the exercising of "power" by an entity on other entities that *transforms* them; instead, the Buddhists explain "causality" as a *coincidental coexistence* of two entities, constituted of two series of aggregated "ultimates", that gives the appearance of one being *caused* by the other. In denying the Hindu notion of "the self", which continues forever through reincarnations till it achieves liberation, the Buddhists hold that the bunching together of five series of *dharmas* give the false impression of a unity appearing as "the self". In reality, however, each member of these 'bunched' series represents various *streams of consciousness* of momentarily existing *dharmas* in a state of continuous flux.

"Matter"

In the Nyāya theory, "matter" consists of indivisible "atoms" which differ according to the five basic elements of fire, water, etc. Mutual interactions between these "atoms" form various aggregations, leading to some of them forming *combinations* that have properties separate from those of the aggregating "atoms" or forms. In this manner, Nyāya builds up the empirical world. Arguably, however, once such material formations come into existence, Nyāya follows the Sāṃkhya (c. 7th/6th BCE) conception of "matter" which, being the most innovative among all the orthodox theories, acted as a model for theorizing "matter" during the classical period. Larson and Bhattacharya mention that the genius of the Sāṃkhya lie in its success in formulating a tight set of conceptualizations that knit together a great variety of speculative loose ends which rendered human experiences of the world intelligible, in the process, exercising an enormous influence on different aspects of Indian intellectual life.[759]

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[758] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 54

[759] Gerald James Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, Eds. Vol. IV, Sāṃkhya: A Dualist Tradition, in *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Gen. Ed. Karl H. Potter (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987): 83-4, modified

Sāṃkhya model of "matter" is distinguished for the following innovations: the notion of conceiving an equivalence between the objective existence of the world and its subjective experiencing by human beings and the formation of a "material ego" (*ahaṁkāra*) within "matter" in this regard. Both these aspects profoundly influenced Nyāya understanding of the world in general and its theory of perception in particular.

Sāṃkhya Conception of "Matter"

Larson and Bhattacharya note that, in contrast to the Nyāya process of atomic combinations to generate higher-order forms representing "bottoms-up" materialism, Sāṃkhya materialism followed a process of material formation where the notion of a subtle material energy (*prakṛti*), originally in an exceedingly translucent (*sattva*) form, becomes increasingly reified as its own inherent capacities of dynamic motion (*rajas*) and material formulations (*tamas*) start manifesting within "matter" representing a process of "top-down" process of material formation.[760] Noting that the Sāṃkhya presents a unique concept of "matter", Larson and Bhattacharya have analyzed it perceptively:

> In the Sāṃkhya conceptualization of the inner essence of primordial materiality, it makes use of a formulation that is unique in the history of Indian philosophy (and unique for that matter in the general history of philosophy), namely, the *triguṇa* process which may be translated as the "tripartite constituent process".[761]

Sāṃkhya's unique conception becomes farther manifest in holding that *objective descriptions of above triadic properties are exactly equivalent to the way they are subjectively experienced by human beings*. Since this constitutes the most innovative part of Indian thought about "matter", the process is explained in greater detail below.

For a clearer grasp, one needs to understand the role that material evolutes (*tattvas*) play in the Sāṃkhya theory of material devolution. Mohanty has listed the functional order of their 'devolution' as follows:

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[760] Gerald James Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, Eds. Vol. XII: Yoga: India's Philosophy of Meditation, in *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Gen. Ed. Karl H. Potter (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008): 80, modified

[761] Larson and Bhattacharya, Sāṃkhya, 65

1.   Pure Consciousness or *puruṣa*

2.   Originary Nature or *mūlāprakṛti* consisting of three material qualities, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*

3.   Intellect or *buddhi*, also called *mahat*

4.   Egoity or *ahaṁkāra*

5.   Mind or *manas*

6–10   Five Sense Organs or *jñānendriyas* involving hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling

11–15   Five Motor Organs or *karmendriyas* involing speaking, grasping, moving, excreting and procreating

16–20   Five Subtle Elements or *tanmātras* involving sound, touch, form, taste and smell

21–25   Five Gross Elements or *bhutas* involving space, wind, fire, water, and earth[762]

In the above schema, Sāṃkhya holds that *puruṣa* acts as a mere witness (*sākṣi*) to merely record the changes occurring in *prakṛti* or the material domain. Among the material evolutes, "intellect" (*buddhi*) represents the property of natural discrimination (*sattva*), signifying a pre-reflective "willing-ness" to undertake certain kinds of activities which, though unconscious and mechanical, are still capable of creating new courses and pathways within the material domain.[763] The next evolute is "egoity" (*ahaṁkāra*) which represents a center of "self-awareness" (*abhimāna*) within "matter", which gives life to the property of natural discrimination within "matter", without which nothing would happen within this domain. Not to be confused with the psychoanalytical "ego" of human beings, it may be more appropriately called the "empirical ego" or the "material ego" which 'blindly' acts within "matter". Since the "empirical ego" needs memory to be able to act, the third evolute of *prakṛti* is the "mind" (*manas*) which, acting as the storehouse of memories, represents a process of mechanical "conceptualization" (*saṃkalpas*) that enables 'identification' of "objects" and "things" by the "empirical ego" within "matter".[764] Together, these three evolutes, often called the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*),

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[762] Mohanty, *classical Indian Philosophy*, 51
[763] Larson and Bhattacharya, Sāṃkhya, 69
[764] Ibid, 70

create a "two-fold willing-ness" (*taijasād ubhayam*) within "matter" which act as the enabling condition for it to act within this domain viz. the power of "sensing", consisting of the five internal sense-organs (*buddhi-indriyas* or *jñānendriyas*), and the power of "acting", consisting of the five motor-organs (*karma-indriayas*).[765] Finally, five subtle elements (sound, touch, form, taste, and smell) emerge as objects of sensing followed by five gross elements (space, wind, fire, water, and earth) as their sense-content.[766]

Subjective-Objective Equivalence **and the Formation of** *Material Ego* **in Sāṃkhya Theory of "Matter"**

Analyzing the subjective-objective equivalence of this process, Larson and Bhattacharya note that a description of the first three material evolutes in *objective* terms occur as follows:

> *From an objective perspective*, Sāṃkhya describes the tripartite process as a continuing flow of primal material energy that is capable of *natural discrimination and ordering* (the *sattva* 'moment'), *spontaneous* activity (the *rajas* 'moment'), and *determinate accumulations* resulting in the objectification of matter (the *tamas* 'moment').[767]

Their *subjective* description occurs as follows:

> *From a subjective perspective*, Sāṃkhya describes the tripartite process as *pre-reflective desiring* and *reflective discrimination* (the *sattva* 'moment'), *spontaneous motion* in the fulfillment of that desire (the *rajas* 'moment'), and a *continuing awareness of an opaque enveloping world* (the *tamas* 'moment'). In other words, the flow of experience actively seeks material gratification resulting in processes of 'satisfaction' or 'pleasure' and 'frustration' or 'pain'…Sāṃkhya recognizes that the subjectivity of material experiences is the exact obverse of the objectivity of matter.[768]

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[765] Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika does not recognize *karmendriyas* explaining their function as being due to *prāṇa* or the vital breath, see Hiriyanna, *Outlines*, Footnote 1, 341
[766] Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 51
[767] Larson and Bhattacharya, Sāṃkhya, 66-7, modified, emphasis added
[768] Ibid, 66-7

According to this remarkable theory, there is, then, no polar difference between the subjective and the objective domains, between mind and matter, or between thought and extension, subjective experiences merely being another way of describing the objective world.[769] Larson and Bhattacharya emphasize the importance of this equivalence:

> The subjective processes that are 'pleasurable' or 'frustrating' are non-different from the objective primal processes of matter that are purposeful and coherent. The tripartite process of *guṇa* of matter is, in other words, a sort of philosophical *Klein bottle* or *Möbius Strip* in which the usual distinctions of subjective/objective, mind/body, thought/matter simply do not apply.[770]

Larson and Bhattacharya note that Sāṃkhya description of "matter" is a remarkable case of *reductive materialism* where, being unconscious and mechanical, neither the most 'pleasurable' subjective experiences differ in kind from the most 'painful' experiences, nor do they essentially differ from the 'indifferent' stones and trees of the objective world. In this sense, *the empirical subject is really a substance* for Sāṃkhya.[771] These material 'pleasures' and 'pains' accrue to the "material ego" making it a prisoner of the proclivities of "matter", a process which has generally been conceived as the phase of the *illusory identification* of "the self" with "matter" during which all material properties accrue within "matter" making it an 'agent' for all practical purposes. These material proclivities are called the *karma* with the *doctrine of karma* holding that any activity occurring within "matter" leaves an "impression" (*saṃskāra*) in it that influences all its future performances in relation to it. Thus, when 'pleasurable' activities are experienced by the "empirical ego", it has a tendency to repeat the experience which reorients "matter" in a manner that makes even "the self" its prisoner. Being an Indian counterpart of the Pavlovian process of the *conditioned reflex*,[772] the Indian *karma doctrine* holds that

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[769] Larson and Bhattacharya, Sāṃkhya, 67

[770] Ibid, 67-8, modified, emphasis added

[771] Ibid, 71

[772] Ivan P. Pavlov, "Lecture III: The Formation of Conditioned Reflexes by Means of Conditioned and Direct Stimuli", *Conditioned Reflex*, reprint (New York: Dover Publications, 1927): 33

such a process can only be reversed when "the self" *consciously* follows a reverse process, similar to the Pavlovian theory of *reverse conditioning*.[773]

In view of the fact that *reductive materialism* appears capable of explaining both objective and subjective experiences of the material world satisfactorily, why does the Sāṃkhya, as well as Nyāya, need to conceive "the self" at all as an entity which lies beyond the material domain? Larson and Bhattacharya offer the following reason: since the tripartite material process tantamounts to being nothing more than an endless mechanical process, the states of "awareness", "knowledge" and "feelings" of 'pleasure', 'pain' and 'indifference' ultimately have no *conscious* content. In such a scenario, one is apt to arrive at the remarkable paradox that an apparently uniform, rational world is pointless after all![774]

Larson and Bhattacharya are making an important point here which helps us to differentiate Nyāya's emphasis on the body vis-à-vis Merlau-Pontian notion of the body. While the Merleau-Pontian process is a mechanical process where bodily cognitions have no *conscious content*, the Nyāya theory keeps the door open to a process beyond the body by imputing a "self" beyond the material domain. In Nyāya as well as other orthodox Hindu theories, "the self" acts as a 'neutral' "no thing" yardstick to function as a 'measure' of the formation of "things" in the world. In this sense, even while "the self" is conceived merely as a "witness" (*sākṣin*) in Nyāya, whose true nature neither manifests "knowledge" as its *essential* characteristic nor does it *actively* participate in any worldly affairs, functions as a 'measure' that influences human beings' 'understanding' of worldly phenomena and their behavior towards these events in the same manner as the illusory perception of a rope as a snake influences the behavior of a perceiver. Moreover, by holding up liberation of "the self" as the ultimate aim of human life, classical Indian theories, including Nyāya, seek to introduce an urge among human beings to move away from an engagement with meaningless, mechanical cycles of "matter".

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[773] Pavlov, "Lecture IV: Internal Inhibition of Conditioned Reflex: a) Extinction", 48
[774] Larson and Bhattacharya, Sāṃkhya, 79

Annexure 2

Interview

Dr. Moinak Biswas, Dept. of Film Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata
26 November, 2013, 2 – 4 pm

GM: Thank you Dr. Biswas for granting this interview. It concerns my PhD work at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK, the working title being 'Cinema and Wild Meaning: Phenomenology, Classical Indian Theories, and Embodiment in Cinema'. I will present you with some of my findings and request you to react on them. My first point concerns Cartesian metaphysics where mind prevails over the body as the centre of all experiences and knowledge. Our film theory generally follows this trend of highlighting intellectual thought processes at the cost of an embodied reading. Do you think this impoverishes our knowledge of cinema?

MB: What I'm not sure about is how theoretical reflection can incorporate what you call embodied experience or embodied knowledge. Because the moment you call something embodied against something that is cognitive and mental, you have already accepted that there is a mind-body division. There is no escape from this because these are categories that we don't create on our own. Categories have to be agreed upon, categories have to emerge from collective experiments and investigations. It makes me slightly uncomfortable with this idea of embodied knowledge. This is, of course, due to my lack of exposure to this literature. I must tell you at the outset that I'm not really familiar with this literature and that I've come across this kind of writing only sporadically. What I know of cinema or the kind of discussion that I engage in is mostly of the other kind, of what you may call mind over body. But what little I've come across, I've not found, and you have to correct me if I'm wrong, a proper theoretical elaboration of this category. The moment you elaborate something as a category or as a concept, you cannot keep on saying that this is something that can be known only intuitively, that it can only be known in the body. The moment you articulate it analytically or put it in words, you are kind of denying the bodily aspect of it and moving onto its cognitive side. This is a self-defeating exercise – how can you theoretically elaborate on embodied

knowledge? It is something that I'm not sure about in film criticism, I've not seen anybody do it. I'm only a little familiar with Vivian Sobchack's work, for example, who has tried in recent times to consistently bring phenomenology back into focus. But phenomenology isn't necessarily entirely about embodiment. The kind of phenomenology that one has heard about, for example, even in Merleau-Ponty, the little bit that I'm familiar with – it is from him that the theory of *gaze* comes, the Lacanian theory of the gaze owes its origin somewhat to Merleau-Ponty's work. Or, let's say, the kind of phenomenological elaboration that this very influential Hegelian, Alexandre Kojève in the 1930s did to make Hegel popular among the Parisian intellectuals including Lacan. They were all attending Kojève's lectures on phenomenology of the mind for six years between 1933 and 1939 which, very profoundly, renewed an interest in the area. If you look at that kind of writing - I've read those lectures in a book - it's primarily what you might call a mode of ratiocination or cogitation. It is not entirely, or not even in a major way, devoted to embodied knowledge as such. So when you say embodied, my response would be in a form of question: how do you theoretically elaborate it? If you say something like the *rasa* theory, as I see it from your findings, it's a kind of theoretical elaboration. But I'll let you go to the *rasa* theory first.

GM: Actually, you are absolutely right because phenomenology, really speaking, is a kind of transcendental mental affair in Husserl's theory which Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty later bring within the domain of the body.

MB: Let's turn the focus back to the body. The moment you analytically articulate something – that's what your work is as a theoretical researcher – how would you actually say that theoretical elaboration is possible on the basis of embodied knowledge? Because the moment categories and concepts come into play, how do you avoid a kind of abstraction from everyday embodied experience and knowledge? Theory, by definition, involves abstraction.

GM: You are possibly right that the objective criterion of bodily reading is still apparently lacking.

MB: Let's make it something more specific so that we have something more concrete to hold onto. Give me an example of this embodied knowledge as a category, because a theoretical category or a concept or whatever is useful is actually a utilitarian thing. If a concept doesn't

explain things properly, if it is not useful, then it doesn't serve any purpose. How is it more useful than other things i.e. comparatively more useful so that you chose this concept rather than the other, chose symbolic knowledge rather than something else. Could you give me an example where its explanatory power is better than some other explanatory model in films?

GM: Emotions are, of course, a major thing. One may argue that only after one has mentally understood a situation, then only emotions get generated. But, the new theory of Neuroscience holds that it is really the bodily response that is generating those emotions. For instance, all the emotions of fear usually happen through that. António Damátio, the HoD of Neuroscience, UCLA, holds that even when we are dealing with the most theoretical of thoughts, the body sends its signals through the body loop, which he calls the 'somatic markers', to the mind. So whenever we are interacting, we are actually doing so both on the basis of the mind and the body. According to him pure thought is a myth.

MB: Ok, that can be one sort of discussion. But I was asking you a simple question. Let's say we have to explain a film or a sequence or a group of films critically – because that's what criticism's job is – to an audience – group of students, readers, my colleagues – where bodily experience serves my critical purpose more than the other option.

GM: When I'm confronting an object from different angles, my bodily response changes the meaning of the thing. One of the classical Indian theories gives the formula of 'qualifier-qualified-relationship' where, on the basis of what the viewer sees, meaning is generated in her. Let's say when a person is seen as sitting in front of a lot of books, she is being qualified by the books to generate the meaning 'she is studying'. The same scene seen from a different angle may change the meaning completely. So they say that all these viewpoints are very visual, very physical viewpoints. What it further says is that only on the basis of this perception, higher thoughts are generated.

MB: Something that is physically perceived is also processed. It is related to other things that are physically perceived. Everything initially starts from sensations. In case of cinema, it has to be like that at the basic level. But you are telling me that when I perceive something and relate it to something else, it is only through that relationship that meaning emerges. But why is this relationship to be considered as an embodied knowledge? I've an idea of the books,

I've an idea of the person who is an avid reader, somebody who has an intellectual life, let's say. So a person who is just sitting on a chair and a person who is sitting on a chair surrounded by books would mean two different things because I've an idea what it means to be surrounded by books. So where is embodied knowledge here?

GM: What this theory is saying is that the relationship that is being formed between books and the person arises out of immediate or direct perception. It is not based on intellectual thought.

MB: That happens with most of the perceptions. But nobody stops there. They are processed. You just move onto the next plane. Associations, processing, meaning-making pass into apperception as Kant says where a set of other things get connected to the specific perception I'm talking about. When you, as an analyst of films, are trying to tell us something about the film, what sort of advantage do you gain by using one set of explanation vis-à-vis another; it is all a question of usefulness. What is the usefulness of the category of embodied knowledge? You give me a specific sequence or a film where this would be more useful than just a rational analysis of things.

GM: Sure. I've already mentioned in my notes, the *haptic* experience, the bodily experience in cinema. Let's say In Ritwik Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* ('Cloud-Capped Star', 1960) where Nita finds out that her sister is betraying her, she asks her brother to sing a Rabindra Sangeet with her. There Ritwik uses all sorts of camera angles to portray this scene. We may rationally try to explain that, like ok, here is montage, here is something else, etc. Because of his genius, we may even be justified in using all those explanatory modules. But what the phenomenologists would say or probably Nyāya would say is that it is the very embodied nature of the whole scene that makes it a more synesthetic kind of experience than an intellectual one. One *bodily* interacts with the scene.

MB: Nobody has any quarrel with that. Nobody is suggesting – and I don't think anybody in his or her right mind would suggest – that you can explain a film entirely through rational means of disentangling each and every element from a scene. This is a question of some sort of integration and organicity. I see it as a problem of that. Because when things come together and they enter into some sort of a proper relationship with each other, like the scene you have

just mentioned. In 'je rate more duar guli bhanglo jhore', when the camera angles, lighting, the body movements, the characters, the actors, the music - all the elements that you can think of – enter into some sort of meaningful coherent relationship, then explaining that bit by bit by disentangling every little element and assigning it a meaning separately is actually a very tedious and meaningless exercise. Beyond a point, I don't think anybody would seriously suggest that this is the only way of explaining a film. In this sense, your idea of direct perception of an emotional scene is not under any dispute. Initially, it is direct perception of something, sense of suffering or pain, abandonment, betrayal, call that what you like. But my question is this. The moment you are explaining it as a critic or as an analyst to your audience, how can you just keep saying that it is an embodied knowledge. In such a case, I've to just stop right there, I can't say anything else. If I say that it is a total and unified *rasa* – *rasa* is always a combination of four or five *rasas* as Nāṭyaśāstra says - which is an example of total embodiment. Now *rasa* cannot be analyzed and served to you on a platter. If I say this to my audience, then I've to stop right there. My question is: what utility does the category of embodied knowledge serve? I'm not asking a rhetorical question you know. I want to know what purpose it serves because if I try to write about that scene in *Meghe Dhaka Tara*, and many of us have tried to write on that scene, I cannot just say that it is an embodiment of *rasa* and stop there. This is some sort of traditional criticism, literature departments always seem to do that. At one point, even film criticism was like that. One would just say that there is an experience that comes through the scene, there is an affect that happens, which cannot be put into words. It is another dimension altogether. Like in Bengali we say 'anyo matra', 'bhinno matra' ['a separate dimension'], etc. While I understand that it belongs to a different dimension, my unfortunate task as a critic is to elaborate on that scene: communicate, analyze, and even evaluate. Right? I'll admit that 'embodied experience' is a valid term, there is no quarrel with that. Let's say, we are watching Sanat and Nita in such a scene. After having said that it is an embodied experience, I've to stop there because the rest is all a rational explanation. For example, slowly Nita's face – it is actually a very abnormal kind of action – goes into a total 90° angle tilt to her neck. Usually one doesn't use his body like that. Now there is a melodramatic tradition where bodily movements are used to signify things. A very good example is *Sahab, Biwi, aur Ghulam* where a scene like occurs as pure melodrama. There is a scene where Meena Kumari is putting the mohini sindoor [vermillion] on in order

to keep her husband at home. Mohini sindoor [a particular brand of vermillion] is supposed to perform that magical task. And she sings the song 'piya aiso jiya mein samayo gayo re ki main tan-man ki sudh budh gawa baithi'. The way the song is picturised – Guru Dutt is of course a master of song picturisation – you see Meena Kumari is making a movement of the body in front of the mirror which is an impossible movement, one can't move one's waist like that. A human body cannot move beyond a certain degree. So this is something that is allowed in melodramatic representation and Ghatak has taken all the liberties to do that. But when I explain this scene – I cannot explain the whole of the emotions, I won't even try – but if I tell you that it is because the light is used in a certain way and because the head is backlit, there is a kind of dust of light that is falling on her hair and her face being perpendicular to her neck, all of this gives you a kind of ecstasy that is both pain and pleasure. It is a jouissance kind of a thing; it is something that is neither pain nor pleasure. May be I won't use the word 'jouissance'; it is an ecstatic kind of a situation. Actually it is only after this scene, where the body does the most mundane and sordid kind of living in an extraordinarily impoverished dwelling, that we go to the mountains [Nita is admitted in a Shillong TB Sanatorium]. You actually have a sense of what is coming through this composition. You mayn't accept it, but if I say that, I'm actually performing a critical task. Now while I talk about the scene in this manner, I'm already breaking up, rationalizing, creating an argument. I cannot just say that Nita has an embodied knowledge, that she has knowledge of her death, that she doesn't yet know she has TB, but she has a foreboding of some kind of knowledge. There is certainly an embodied kind of knowledge in the scene, but I cannot just stop there.

GM: It is a very valid question. I think you agree to the embodiment of knowledge but that we don't have verbal words or concepts to express them. While we have this very important kind of experience in cinema, the film theories haven't tried to incorporate them. The present efforts are some of the very basic attempts at theorizing or verbalizing this kind of experience which underlies all the rest, our mental reactions, all our intellectual thoughts. Somehow, in certain cases, like when you are confronted with a landscape or something like that, you cannot even explain why you become nostalgic or afraid or feel some absence or whatever. I'll like to say that the theory of embodiment is an attempt to discover whether we can conceptualize such experiences. As you very correctly said, in an analytical framework, how do we do it? How can we explain emotion to another person? It has to be enacted for the other

person to feel that emotion. Such enactments are very important in cinema or in theatre or even in music perhaps. How do you conceptualize that experience? It is a moot question whether through phenomenology or classical Indian theories, some narrative can be put to that.

MB: I'd like to know what that is. I'm not an expert in that area. But little that I know of *rasa* theory, it is a very elaborate taxonomy and it is argumentative and its cognitive side is extremely strong. It doesn't say that there are embodiments that are so ethereal and so beyond words that we shouldn't try to verbalize. It is exactly the opposite what these people were trying to do. The very little that I've seen of Indian aesthetics, it is intellectually extremely elaborate; it is not as if they speak in terms of something ineffable, something that cannot be captured in words. To a large extent, it is exactly the opposite; it is intellectually very stimulating and so on. I don't think you have done that but I would be a little careful in falling into the trap of mind being associated with the West and heart and emotion with some kind of an Indian tradition. This is an extremely dangerous trap. This is why I'm asking all these questions. Even if we start from an Indian aesthetic premise, we would be confronted with an extremely intellectualized atmosphere. Little bit of Abhinavagupta that I've seen, his arguments represent a most sophisticated form of separation of categories, distinctions, and applications. It is a laboratory of the mind from which comes his commentary on *Nāṭyaśāstra*, that's a book which I've seen a little bit. For instance, even Western theories are full of some kind of non-rational thought – I'm not doing some kind of a value-judgment here. For example, a part of Romantic notion which is still very strong and overbearing, a romantic notion of what poetry is, what inspiration is, what an artist ought to be and so on. A large part of that is not dependent on a kind of Cartesian mind over body theory. There is a lot of emphasis put on intuition, on direct emotions, on one's direct response to things and so on. Read the Romantic poets who themselves theorize about their own works and you would find that it is basically intuitive, spontaneous, overbearing emotions, overflow of emotions, that kind of thing and direct perception of something without channeling it. So it is not even true that the Western tradition is primarily a mind over body thing. Well, what has happened with phenomenology in film studies is that after the structuralist and the poststructuralist period i.e. the mid-60s onwards upto early 80s, there is a wide scale reaction against it. To that extent, everybody now scoffs at Screen theory to the extent that even the most valuable things that

they were doing have been overthrown like the baby with the bathwater. I think phenomenology is also serving the purpose of a refuge; one would be a bit wary of that. Because obscurantism might creep in like there is something so ineffable that we have to leave it at that. Now in relation to most of our experiences, we actually do that, we don't talk about them or, even if we do, we just say oh! What a wonderful experience! We don't usually sit down and analyze. But if art has to be taught, if principles of art have to be handed down from generation to generation or from the teacher to the student or from friend to friend, if anything has to be taught, there is no other way but to provide a rational framework of explanation. So, we need to strike a balance first and take into account the fact that there is a lot that is purely bodily sensation, especially in a post-modern kind of market situation…the *haptic* is even enhanced by mobile touch-screens, smart phones, the *haptic* is everywhere, the smart screen is *hapticity* personified, embodied if you like, but the moment we reflect, it is one thing to say that media is *haptic* and another thing to say that my refection on that would also be nothing but *haptic* and *embodied.* So I don't say anything, just go and touch and feel it. May be a day would come when we would be able to communicate x with x and not x with y. The problem is that, at the moment, we have a separation between the explanatory disourse and the original discourse or the original object. In an explanatory discourse, I'm not sure how can we avoid a fundamentally cognitive kind of explanation. Even if we speak of the pre-rational – Eisenstein himself does it so many times, in 1929, he is all dialectics and montage involving this calculation and that calculation in 1929, he goes abroad and in his 1930s writing, there is a lot that is intuitive, preverbal, pre-rational and so on and so forth - but the way Eisenstein tries to explain it, his explanatory framework is not pre-verbal. For an explanatory module to be pre-verbal and pre-rational, we would have to resort to a ritual communication. In ritual communication, people communicate through purely rhythmic, dynamic movements, energy kind of thing. I'm not denying that there must be something like that happening, there are perceptions that go back and forth between people, anticipating things within a certain frame of mind in a ritual situation. It doesn't have to be a religious ritual, but I'm calling all that as a ritual situation. I'm not disrespectful of that kind of communication and I'm not denying that it exists; probably it exists even more than our rational lives. But you are trying to create a theoretical framework here. My answer would again be a question: how do we go about it?

GM: These are valid points to which an immediate answer cannot be given. While there surely is bodily knowledge, like when I'm weeping, you immediately understand, when you are laughing, I immediately understand, but then when you are trying to explain it to somebody, then by simply laughing you cannot explain that. The formula that Bharata has given in *Nāṭyaśāstra* – in a given situation, the protagonists act or react in a certain way, more than their words, their gestures and postures are more important, it creates an effect that generates emotions among audiences. In the second stage of the same formula, he takes audience emotion also into consideration for creating *rasa.* Now, I'll be asking you the question where is the cognitive part in all this, where does thought occur? In fact, I've raised this question in relation to intellectual kind of theatre vis-à-vis Bharata's theatre. A large part of the formula is a formula of embodiment without which *rasa* cannot be generated. If I've understood correctly, intellectually you cannot attain *rasa.*

MB: That's the perception of the performance or the film. But we aren't talking about the perception of characters in the film, not even the perception of audience, including myself, of the film. We are talking about another level of discourse here where I put down in words to a community of readers what I've experienced and what does it all mean i.e. whether cinema has been successful in communicating to us. That *rasa* has to be intuitively grasped there is no quarrel with that – you can call it *rasa*, in another framework, aesthetic pleasure or ecstasy. Bharata himself cannot just say that it is *rasa* and you have to understand it. You have to explain. The moment you divided up something into *vibhāva* ('determinants'), *anubhāva* ('consequents'), and *vyabhicāribhāva* ('transients'), you have already broken up the totality of the wholeness into fragments, there is no actual existence of the *bhāva* ('mental state'), it automatically merges into and flows. So it is a logical separation. How can you emotionally separate things? One has to answer this question at the explanatory level. There is a huge body of very sophisticated thinking right next to us in India that we don't use. We only read something which a Western critic has written. It is not an either/or situation. I should first correct this Western bias by looking at other traditions. That is the first step which I admit I've not done. I'm in sympathy with your project to that extent; but I also must admit that for me at an explanatory level, the mind-body dualism doesn't really pay. The moment you say embodied knowledge, you are already setting it over and against neutral, cognitive aspect of things. There is a question to pander: wouldn't you, rather, look at the alternative explanatory

frameworks which probably can correct some of the imbalances, some of the gaps, and absences? It is exactly what happened with structuralism with its semiotic analysis, etc. Deleuze's reaction was the first major reaction that you cannot have that kind of a linguistic format for understanding films. You won't be able to explain movement, time, color, light – you won't be able to explain all these affects. What you are trying to do is to bring back affect into play. Now there is a worldwide slide towards that. But because it is also being done by so many people, one has to be careful. It is not an either/or or a mind/body or a mind/affect kind of a situation. Nor is it a Western or an Indian kind of a thing. For me, for a critical exercise, whatever is more apt, more useful, and more precise for understanding something, I would adopt. So a comparative framework would be more useful, more interesting. If Ānandavardhana or *dhvani* or Abhinavagupta have concepts that can explain things, they have concepts which other traditions haven't even thought of - which is quite possible – then they should be explored.

GM: It is only that now my research would be entering into classical Indian theories and your riders would be really useful. In fact, I've felt many of the questions which you have raised. Going back to your comment that mind-body bifurcation is arbitrary, Ānanadavardhana's famous sentence 'The village is on the river Ganges' proves that. He says that while it creates a suggestion for coolness for us, it also generates a sense of piety in the mind of the worshipper. While the first is an embodied experience, the latter one is not.

MB: It is contextual, if you believe in the holiness of the river.

GM: So both embodied and cognitive are combined in the experience and, as you correctly say, we would have to find a balance between them. But my point is that you would agree that there is a need for research in this area.

MB: Research is, of course, necessary. My discomfort with people who have tried to apply *rasa* theory to Indian films is that they talk about the characters and what the characters are doing to each other. They try to say that this character or this action introduces this *rasa*. Now this is just a taxonomical shift. Why should we only use the taxonomy of the West? Let's use new words. But using new words is a very, very limited exercise of the theorists. One may call it a 'source' or you may call it *vibhāva*; the latter is more beautiful because it evokes

something like a *bhāva*. But it should move beyond that. My problem with my friend Amrit Gangar is that Amrit is providing new taxonomies, don't call it 'experimental', call it 'prayoga'. But you can't stop there; you have to see if 'prayoga' unravels new meanings, opens certain doors for me. Other than that just using a new label sounds fine but doesn't serve much purpose. You have given an example of the landscape. I'm interested in that. Very recently Arindam Chakrabarti has given me a few things to read. It includes an essay by K. C. Bhattacharya, one of the greatest philosophers that India has produced in modern times, and another by Arindam Chakrabarti himself. They have written about this notion of 'ownerless emotion' using Indian aesthetic theories. They have slowly moved from there to show that, within this theory, there is a conception of certain emotions, *rasa*, which do not need to be pinned to a character or a person. This is what K. C. Bhattacharya has said which he calls the 'sky of the heart' ('heart universal'). One implication of that concept is that you probably can arrive at an idea by going forward from Abhinavagupta's theories where you can imagine things or emotions in terms of their autonomy, and not on their dependence on individual characters. This is important for me because it helps me understand, not embodiment, but why, sometimes, anchoring of all emotions to a person becomes very limited. If we un-anchor them in cinema, probably it would become much more interesting and meaningful. I'm thinking of all those films and sequences where I've felt something like this is happening. So far I'd only felt it, but now I see that people have even cogently thought about it. These people have the apparatus, the equipment to think because they have the Indian aesthetic theory as a support. Arindam da is forcing me to write which I'm failing. May be I'll write something but can already see that there is a possibility where understanding world cinema, not only Indian cinema, through this lens becomes important. Although they haven't talked about cinema, but this concept of 'ownerless emotion' is helping me understand films. While he gave me a no. of things to read, I latched onto that because it sounded like it can explain to me my memory of cinema. I'm interested in the use of Indian aesthetics in that manner. It is a very personal thing. There is another thing. You can say that your job is to understand Indian aesthetic tradition properly. That's a different task. I'm neither an aesthetician nor a philosopher. Because I'm purely a utilitarian, I'm not immediately taken in by the greatness of something Indian; I'm taken in by their sophistication, the range and complexity of some of their ideas. And certain ideas work for

me. In a film this *rasa* is emerging in this moment and that *rasa* in another moment, I'm not interested. It's a classification that doesn't help me.

GM: it is one of the most unsatisfactory ways of doing things. In fact, it can do a lot of damage.

MB: May be not damage, but it is not going anywhere. But also there is a strange underlying assumption that Indian popular cinema – I don't know what that is – is based on Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra. It can be immediately shown that this is entirely wrong. There is no popular cinema in the world which has grown on indigenous soil. Cinema from the very beginning has its own life and energy precisely because it has no purity. It has always grown at the intersection of trends from all over the world, it is a mixture of many things. And content in Indian popular cinema is even less explicable. But there may be things happening in contemporary cinema in India or elsewhere which may be eminently explicable in terms of Indian aesthetic theories. I'm ready to accept that premise. Since Indian theories are such a rich and great body of work and it is here, why should we entirely neglect this and constantly look to other sources. That's probably our ex-colonial mind-set, a slavish kind of mentality.

GM: Actually you know Adoor Gopalakrishnan had given a lecture at SRFTI at the 50th anninversary of *Pather Panchali* where he had said that our colonial past has ingrained in us…

MB: You have quoted it.

GM: So what do you think the real situation is with our students or our teaching or our understanding of cinema?

MB: We have to bring more and more of all sorts of alternatives. We shouldn't be focused only on what Deleuze has said or Laura Marks says. This kind of constant look at some distant kind of source in Paris or London is really debilitating. We have this advantage. They don't know our things, but we know our things. And there are modern Indian philosophers who are rethinking some of these categories. I'm more interested in them because sometimes if you are reading a 10th century text, one must remember certain things of the social life, economic organization, technology, many things that weren't available then. They were

talking about things that were radically different from our own. But there is a group of modern thinkers in India and abroad who are interested in them. I think there is a renewed interest in Indian aesthetics.

GM: Actually Bimal Krishna Matilal, Jiten Mohanty, Arindam Chakrabarti, Jonardon Ganeri, etc, are reinterpreting Indian theories.

MB: Yes, yes, these are big names, but there are also others. They are still debating the issue, they are yet to take a single position. I was reading Sheldon Pollock recently. A very interesting essay is on one Kashmiri Śaiva theoretician between Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta whose text is lost. He is only reading it from the references and quotations by others. But he claims that Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's theory moves the entire burden of *rasa* and *rasa-āśraya* from the actors to the spectators. If somebody says that then these are intriguing, very, very interesting. If I now talk of audience response, why should I use only Western theory? This 9th or 10th century is a very interesting, intellectually stimulating period.

GM: Abhinava takes from Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and develops his own theory.

MB: It should immediately feed into how I think of audience response and so on. Why should I shove it aside and concentrate only on reader-response theory or this and that from the West?

GM: As you said they have their own strength but, probably, this also points to the fact that these theories have universality built in them.

MB: This is something that has never appealed to me that to understand Indian stuff, you need Indian theories and so on. If there is a valid Indian theory, it should apply to Western art also, why not? I should be able to understand Antonioni, you mentioned him isn't it? or a test case could be to apply to something from Siberia.

GM: I mentioned Tarkovsky. I'll give you only one more question. It concerns the discovery of 'mirror neurons' where the great apes, including humans, get into the same bodily state when other members undertake a goal-directed task. In other words, audiences get into the

same bodily state as those of the performers due to the firing of similar neurons within their own bodies. This militates against the theories of 'theory-theory' and 'simulation theory'.

MB: I'm not aware of this discovery.

GM: In fact, it is only in 1996 that this discovery has been made and it has been hailed as one of the greatest discoveries since the DNA. This may explain a lot of audience reactions to moving images.

MB: Well, this is important information for me but I can't see your line of argument on that basis.

GM: Thank you Dr. Biswas. This has been a critical and enlightening discourse.

MB: Same here.

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Annexure 3

Interview

Dr. Amita Chatterjee, Professor Emerita, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

January 31, 2014, 2.30 -4.30pm

GM: Thank you Prof. Chatterjee for granting this interview. I'm doing a PhD in Film Research at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK exploring the connection between phenomenology, classical Indian theories and embodiment in cinema. In this connection, as a Nyāya expert, I'll like to ask you some questions. It is important for Nyāya that it deals with different cognitive wholes of the same thing seen from different perspectives. This becomes important in explaining different camera angles operating in cinema.

AC: When Nyāya is trying to give a scientific theory of perception, what it is trying to do is to define the objective conditions of perception which would apply to individuals per se to any perceiver. They aren't bringing in the question of perspective at that point even though they are all the time talking about embodied perception and they have all the time said that one of the preconditions of our having any knowledge is to have our body. But what I feel is lacking in Nyāya is that they haven't actually explained in detail the mode or nature of our bodily experiences, the perception that we have of our body or the feeling that we have of our various bodily experiences on which they haven't focused at all. If you remember their categories or the classifications they have made, it is in terms of internal and external perception where external perception gives you the modalities by which you can know the world and internal perception makes you aware of your internal state, but not the bodily feelings or even the feelings that we have when we know something. It is like what is nowadays called what it is like to be a bat or a bat type experience. That is something which is lacking in Nyāya. For that I would refer you to K. C. Bhattacharya's 'Body as Subject' or 'Subject as Freedom'. But I would like to point out that I personally think that our body is too remarkable a source for knowledge and understanding.

GM: My topic being very complicated, I believe you are one of the persons in Calcutta who can throw some light on it.

AC: Undoubtedly your topic is very complicated. As I told you I would be very happy to interact since not much work has been done in this area. That's why I was interested. It so happens that I'm now concentrating on the body as one of my research areas – right now I've a project to look at the variations in the Nyāya theory through the lens of cognitive science. Immediately that brings me to the concept of the body because, to the Naiyāyika, any kind of knowledge is an embodied experience. A disembodied mind cannot have any knowledge. They would say that a liberated soul doesn't possess any knowledge at all. And that's why they have been ridiculed very much. Critics said that it is only Gotama, which literally means the 'best cow', who could have propounded this thesis! All other theorists had said that liberated souls have cognition. And if you look at various philosophical systems, you would find that, excepting for *Achintya Vedāvedavāda*, in other systems models of liberation are very cognitive. They aren't taking into account conative or affective aspects at all; ultimately they say that self is the nature of cit which is conscious per se. So if some systems claim that a liberated soul cannot have knowledge, it goes against the Upaniṣadic saying that self is cit.

GM: Sorry to interrupt, madam. Prof. Mohanty says that such an uninteresting state of the liberated self, where the self is completely blind, is such an unwelcome state…

AC: Yes, who would want that kind of liberation? Because of their logic and their metaphysical beliefs they were led to that kind of a position. And, therefore, they always maintained that whenever we have knowledge, it is always embodied knowledge where our body plays a vital role in attaining any kind of knowledge. Perception being the primary source of knowledge, with all other types of knowledge being dependent on perception, perception admits the very important, very salient, role of the body. And it is very much in tune with the contemporary theories of embodiment, not only of Merleau-Ponty, but also of the cognitive scientists and others who are talking of embodiment nowadays. If you look at the Western theories of perception, you would find that what contemporary theories are trying to do is to bridge the gap between perception and action. Previously, you know, people used to think that while perception is something which pertains to our sensory abilities. Action is a

late realization of our perception, of our goal. But there are theories now which hold that action is constitutive of perception and perception is nothing but a kind of action. There are others who would say that, even if perception is not constituted of action, or it is not an action, perception is always for an action. For attaining something, for acting in the world, perception is required. And I think the Naiyāyikas would agree with the position that perception is a kind of action, but from the point of Indian philosophy, it would be a bit problematic to say that perception is a kind of cognition and cognition is different from action, but, at the same time, their account is such that it always leads to some action or the other. And, I believe, all our perceptual interpretations and even our decision-making, our conceptualizations, our concepts of rationalization, all these are really formed by our specific type of embodiment. For that I agree with the phenomenologists and Merleau-Ponty. In the third wave of cognitive science, the cognitive scientists are pointing out that our cognitions are always situated. So if you look at the situated cognition theory, then also you will find this emphasis on the body. The three theses that they want to bring together in the theory of situated cognition are, first, the theory of embodied cognition which applies to bodily perception, secondly, embedded perception or embedded cognition, and, finally, the extended-mind theory. So if you think about this embodied cognition, then you will see that they make a distinction between two concepts, one is our body image and the other is the body schema, and they say that, in our perception, either our body image or our body schema is involved in action. This distinction is made by Shaun Gallaghar. We can draw on an active example. Say when we are really engaged in the act of perception, we will find that it is not the case that while our body schema is involved, our body image might not be present at all. It is not like an on-line off-line processing of information. When we think about something, our motor cortex or our body is involved. But it has been found that even when we think of some of our perceptual experiences, then also certain areas of the motor cortex in the brain get excited. Cognitive scientists have done a lot of experiments to show that. First, certain words are projected on the screen and, at the same time, you are given certain tasks to perform. When you are reading loud, the task is to pull a lever towards you or push it away from your body. It was found that when certain words, like laugh, etc., were projected on screen, the task of pushing away the lever takes more time. But when you are pulling the lever towards you, the action time got much decreased. So when you are reading or being shown an

affective scene which is pleasurably affecting you, if there is a consonance between your action and analyzing the scene, the reaction time of performing the task always gets shortened. In contrast, when there is a dissonance, then reaction time gets longer. On the basis of these experiments, they have come to the conclusion that our perception is really an embodied perception. By embodiment, as I pointed out, one doesn't mean the involvement of our body, but we have a body schema in our brain which gets activated whenever we are saying, thinking, or perceiving something. Body is very much important for our understanding of the world. Initially, you know, only cognitive considerations were taken into consideration. But there is another side to it. Most of the time, you would find that the scientists are giving the example of a chair. We know a chair is a place to sit upon. Even when it is a non-standard type of chair, like a tree-stump, we know that it is a place where we can sit. This is because we have a body like this. But if we had a body like a horse, or a deer, then we wouldn't have thought that a tree-stump is something on which you can sit. But they also point out that it is not all biological. Our culture is also responsible for our understanding of 'chair' in this way. For example, the Japanese didn't have any concept of 'chair'. They were more used to squatting on the floor. When the first ship arrived on the coast of Japan carrying a chair, they criticized it as a devil's merchandise!

GM: Sorry to interrupt again, madam. The intentionality of consciousness that Nyāya holds – probably one of the earliest in the line – is it, then, not only experiential but also cultural and all other things combined as well?

AC: Yes, but when we analyze or theorize, we do it piecemeal all the time, by focusing on certain aspects while neglecting the others. But now that we want to know what are all the factors involved in our understanding of the world, we are trying to evolve different type of concepts for that purpose and also how our concepts change. And not only that. How our brain can compensate for the change of light, etc. If we want to understand all these things, then there is no other way but to consider the contribution made by our body and our understanding of the body in constructing our theories of perception. And, since in film, this constructive part, even in understanding a particular scene, it is very important that we look at these problems and hence we cannot move away from embodiment. It mayn't be the case as Moinak has pointed out that even if it is accepted that the body is an important component but

he doesn't know how it works vis-à-vis the narrative or a rational interpretation. But both in the context of a narrative and a rational interpretation, cognitive scientists are continuously trying to find out the contribution of the body, how much of the body is involved in all these. They are now saying that there is actually no gap between the mind and the body. We will always have to consider it as a mind-body or body-mind together. Moreover, our mind is not confined within our body only but it can overflow. And most of the time, it is not the case that the world is being replicated in our head when we perceive something. There is a very interesting psychological experiment called the 'change blindness'. If you change something very slowly in your environment or a scene, the viewer will not detect the change for a very long time. For film theory, this aspect becomes very important. If our visual-perceptual system had acted like a camera, then it would have taken in the whole scene at a time and there would have been no gaps. But, even if we disagree with everything else, gaps have to be there because we blink which creates some gap. So we have to compensate for that. That's why it is not that in perception we are passive receivers of impressions or stimuli from the external environment. We are all the time contributing something and constructing our world, our objects of perception.

GM: Prof. Chatterjee, you have reached a point which is very important for cinema. When somebody is looking through camera or even one's own eyes at, let's say, a person sitting with some books in front, we are constructing some meaning. We are absorbing this scene through an epistemological structure of qualifier-qualified-relationship. We are not taking in the items within the scene separately. So when we are constructing a relationship between these items, they are really fictional, isn't it? These may ultimately be proved right based on their 'workability' in the real world. Thus, in cinema, we are constructing fictions all the time of what we are seeing. So perception literally becomes a construction of fictions of what we are seeing.

AC: This is a theory which would be supported by the Buddhists, but not Naiyāyikas. The Buddhists have a very rich theory of perception and Richard Gregory, who is a very famous psychologist, has said that all our perceptions are fictional. When he was asked how a veridical perception is distinguished from a non-veridical perception, he had said that when our expectations are fulfilled, then it is a veridical perception, otherwise it remains a non-

veridical one. Suppose while creating a set you have created a house as a façade. Without understanding that if I wanted to enter through the door but couldn't, then my expectations are not fulfilled and I understand that it is just a façade. Similarly when in everyday life I see a table, I don't doubt that it will be able to hold my keys; but supposing it was made of such a material that it wouldn't hold it, then we would understand that it is not a table surface. While the Buddhists have this kind of a theory, not the Naiyāyikas because they say that, through our perception, we can have direct access to reality. That's why where you would find the Nyāya theory most relevant in your research is in their theory of extraordinary perception, *jñānalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa*, and not their account of ordinary perception where they are trying to grasp the real objects of the world. They are giving us the entire causal mechanism of that perceptual process which has little scope for any interpretation there. But their theory of *jñānalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa* is relevant particularly in the area where you deal with synesthesia. People usually think that synesthesia is not a very common phenomenon; while we are all synesthetists in our infancy, as we grow up, certain links in our brain snap. But mostly people think that synaesthesia is a kind of aberration, an abnormal way of knowing the world. There is a very contemporary way of looking at this *jñānalakṣaṇa sannikarṣa*. The theory that can be immediately applied to this is the 'cognitive penetrability thesis' or 'oractic penetrability thesis'. Both of them are present in the case of Nyāya. As you have correctly pointed out, what happens in *jñānalakṣaṇa* is that, if somebody has seen a fragrant piece of sandalwood before, then seeing it from a distance, his earlier knowledge would evoke in him some memory which would become a part of his sensory apparatus which directly links his sense organ to this fragrance. So, when we are having the impression of fragrant sandalwood from a distance, it cannot be a visual perception. Similarly, when we see a block of ice, we see that it is cold. It so happened that we went to see the film *Koni* on a very hot summer afternoon. All the time Koni was swimming in the film, we felt so refreshed with all that water around us. So that gave us the experience of 'coolness' just by looking at the scene. But, it is not possible for our eyes to smell or touch. How does it happen? Some people would say that it is inference, while some others would say that it is just memory. But the Naiyāyikas say that it is perception. There are also some psychologists in the West who say that it is perception because only perception can have this kind of vividness in our experience. Naiyāyikas say that it is *sākṣatkāra* i.e. vividness which is the mark of perception. Thus, when we have this

memory-retrieval access to the fragrance of sandalwood, the very vividness of this experience indicates that it cannot be anything else but perception. What's happening here? One mode of cognition is penetrating into another mode of cognition. Thus, when memory penetrates our perceptual apparatus, it becomes a part of the visual process, and that's why the scientists call it the "cognitive penetrability thesis".

GM: It is surprising that experimental support comes for something which was thought so long ago!

AC: Indeed! I'll also like to point out something which this 'cognitive penetrability thesis' tells us. Even when the stimulus is the same, two persons can have different cognitions. Why? Because our memories are different. Since our perceptions are memory-driven according to Nyāya, we can have two different perceptions of the same object. Here we needn't create a gap between the seeing of an object and its interpretation which comes after perception; rather here the thing itself would be cognized differently due to differences in memory. Because the Naiyāyikas say that a child who has always seen a ribbon rose, when she is confronted with a real rose, she wouldn't have the memory of its fragrance. So when you are talking about this *jñānalakṣaṇa sannikarṣa*, one way of understanding it is through the synesthetic route and another is through the cognitive penetrability thesis. I think two persons would be of great help to your studies. One of them is a young student of mine who is pursuing his PhD in MIT, Nilanjan Das. I'll give you his email. Nilanjan has actually drawn my attention to the cognitive penetrability theory. Another person who has thought a lot about it is Arindam Chakrabarty.

GM: Without your reference, Arindam Chakrabarti mayn't be accessible.

AC: Actually Arindam watches all the movies that he has access to and then analyzes and discusses it. And he has also read Abhinavagupta thoroughly. For Abhinava, you must talk to him. Regarding the cognitive penetrability thesis, it can be seen from the Nyāya perspective in this way. Since Nyāya is saying that we have a direct causal link with perception, how can we have a different sort of knowing of the same object between two persons? Doesn't this violate their theory of real access to the world? The answer, as I've already said, lies in the

fact that we can have different perceptions of the same object because our memory images are different, our background knowledge of what we can remember are different.

GM: I'll ask you a question here. Let's say somebody is sitting in a chair in front of a table on which there are some books. As you said, Nyāya would say that we are realistically seeing this person, the books and all that is on the table. While the Buddhists might say that we are conceptually building up these images, for Nyāya, a relationship is built up between them on the basis of the formula 'qualifier-qualified-relationship' which is experiential in nature. Thus, memory comes into play in building up this relationship as well, isn't it?

AC: Yes. You know my current project is to look at the variations in earlier and later Nyāya. Nyāya started with what I feel is a very realistic kind of philosophy. But, in course of its interactions with other philosophical schools, it changed its theory. But most of the time, we don't take these changes into consideration. While realism persisted all through, ultimately such realism came with a variation. So when we come to this qualifier-qualificand-relationship in Navya-Nyāya, we find that, in Gaṅgeśa, we have a hint of distinguishing between object and content. In other words, the content of our perception is different from the objects occurring in the scene. Thus, how the same scene is being presented makes a difference between the knowledge of two persons. See this table. If I say that 'it's a table with a bunch of keys', then the table is the qualificand and the bunch of keys is its qualifier which is one sort of cognition. But, on the other hand, if I describe it as 'there is a bunch of keys on the table', then the bunch of keys become the qualificand and the table the qualifier which is a different cognition. In reality, then, what is the case? While the Navya-Naiyāyikas do not say that our perception is a 'construction', but they do say that it is not 'bastobiki' ('realistic') which means as the facts are, but it is 'baigyaniki' ('scientific') which means that how it appears to us which has some amount of construction in it. I had found this in some place whose reference I cannot immediately give you. This aspect has been accepted by Gaṅgeśa in this qualifier-qualificand-relationship. That I think would give support to your position that, if we see a lady sitting with a stack of books in front of her, then whether the lady is perceived as being overwhelmed by those books or otherwise would depend on the way the scene is presented to the viewer.

GM: In a low angle shot, the books would appear to overwhelm her while in a normal angle shot she would appear to be in control of the books.

AC: Even though the Naiyāyikas haven't admitted but we know that in many of our theories of art, there are three views: bird's eye view, normal human point of view, and not natural point of view. The artists say that when you are making a sculpture, it becomes important where you are going to put that sculpture. On that would depend the proportion of the figure. Proportions have to be different depending on whether you are putting it at the base of a temple or putting it near the ceiling or in direct line of vision. All these things are taken care of in other systems but in Nyāya there is no such discussion…Another important thing I'll like to point out is that Nyāya is not only talking of 'cognitive penetration', but also about 'affective penetration'. As you know, they explain that the *jñānalakṣaṇa* type of perception explains not only our visual perception of the fragrant sandalwood or cold ice, but that they also explain our illusions, our process of recognition, and introspection. In case of illusion, they say that who would actually misperceive a rope for a snake? It is a person who not only has the memory of a snake but also who has some sort of fear from snake. In the city, I had the experience of misperceiving a snake for a rope. When I was returning from somewhere in the night, I saw there was a piece of felt lying in front of my door. I said oh! Once again the felt has come out and the air-conditioner wouldn't be ok. So when I wanted to move it, it raised its hood. Staying in Alipur in the heart of the city, I wasn't expecting a snake. Similarly, Nyāya specifically says that only a person who is desirous of money (*rajatarthi vyakti*) would mistake a shell (mother-of-pearl) as silver. So, there must be some sort of desire, some sort of emotion, in the back of one's mind when he or she is misperceiving something. So, in case of perception, it is not only that one type of cognition penetrates into another type of cognition, but, when we are cognizing something, our emotions play a very important role in our perceptions. This is what has been called the *oractic penetrability* or *affective penetrability* in cognitive science.

GM: Is there any specific portion of Nyāya where I can find this because, unfortunately, I've missed it completely.

AC: You will find this in Phanibhusan Tarkavagish's first volume of Nyāya Darśana, in the Chatusutri account of Vatsyayana Bhasya. It occurs in the very fourth segment where he is discussing the definition of perception…The other thing that I would like to talk about is the haptic experience. Interestingly, though we find that when the Naiyāyikas are discussing our experience of the world, it is dominated by vision. But, while they are giving more stress on visual perception, at the same time, they are also saying that whatever can be said of vision applies to other modes of perception as well.

GM: They have said so, have they?

AC: They have said that. More specifically they have said that whenever we perceive an 'object' – object perception is a very complicated thing – even from your cinematographic perspective, we identify a full object. There are so many modalities involved in that process of identification. Sometimes we identify an object by right kind of smell, sometimes by shape, etc. When you perceive a rose, you also perceive so many things at the same time: you are perceiving its smell, texture, colour, petal, softness, etc. So it is very difficult to say what an object perception really is. Naiyāyikas, however, have said that an object is perceived only through two modalities: one is by touch and another is by vision. And these two modes would give us two completely different sets of information about the object. While touching an object, we don't need any light, like visually challenged people don't need any light, but for vision, the presence of light is essential. So the qualities of the object known would be very different.

GM: Why not identify through sound, like that of a bird?

AC: This is for perceiving a full object. There is this controversy that when you are hearing a sound – it is present in Nyāya as well as in Heidegger and other phenomenologists - that when you hear a horn, do you hear it only *as a horn* and then see whether it came from a motor car or did you hear it *as a motor car horn* itself? In the latter case, we might have some sense of that object, but it doesn't give us the entire breadth of the object. That we can have only through touch and vision. This however forced them to explain a lot of things like how can you, through a very small aperture, see a whole object or, while looking through a

key hole, how much of an object should be perceivable to a viewer to make him identify that object.

GM: How did they explain that, madam, because it is so cinematic?

AC: (Laughs) You will find them best in the 2 Vols. of Nyāya Darśana by Phanibhusan because he has actually combined most of the views in his own commentary. You just look at his 'tippani' part which involves his personal commentaries. In the 2ⁿᵈ Volume, you would find all these discussions. Gangeśa also has discussed a lot on this but the summary or the crux you would find in Phanibhusan's 2ⁿᵈ Vol. May be when we are looking at an object, some part of it is not visible but still we perceive the whole. Or we may never see the backside of a tree, but we still see the whole tree. How does that happen? It is not that you have perception of different pieces and then combine them or it is not that you are having some clues and then inferring the rest. No; Nyāya says that by perceiving a part, you are perceiving the whole. What are its mechanisms we have already discussed elaborately and that is something which I think would be important for your paper.

GM: Madam, you gave the very interesting example of the keys on the table. Now may be the same thing is being seen by two different persons from the same angle and yet one of them sees 'the keys being qualified by the table' while the other sees it as 'the table being qualified by the keys'. How does this difference happen? It is like seeing 'cat is on the mat' or 'mat is under the cat'. Will this difference of perception depend on experience, or memory, or some kind of frontality or prominence appearing to one but not the other?

AC: They haven't explained it actually. But if you say that while one person is seeing it from the front while the other is seeing it from the side, it mayn't be unacceptable to the Naiyāyikas. They have said that this sometimes depends on the fiat or the purpose of the person looking at it and, in that fiat itself, emotion and all such things enter. And another thing they say, which hasn't been construed charitably by others, is the concept of the *adṛṣṭa*. But when they are talking about *adṛṣṭa*, they aren't talking about the supernatural, but as something that is not yet known. While they have said that two people can have two different cognitions of the same thing, they haven't said how that can be so. The point is that if the same thing seen from two different perspectives gives two different cognitions, then one

would have to distinguish between object and content. In this case, Nyāya theory doesn't remain a realistic theory of cognition: while there is direct access, but there is also mediation of the content. We find that while they are admitting different sort of contents, they haven't said how it happens. May be it can be due to position of the perceivers, may be due to their purpose, may be due to emotion or may be due to their fiat.

GM: Just one more question. From Nyāya theory of perception to Ānandavardhana and Bharata, what kind of difference can we expect? Ānandavardhana is bringing in much more of emotions.

AC: Yes, definitely. When they are talking about *vibhāva* and *anubhāva*, they are already bringing in the emotional parts, also *rasa*, etc. Another thing. When you go to Abhinavagupta, you would find his theory of *vimarśa*. And there he has really talked about our perception of the bodily experiences. In Nyāya, body acts as if it is an external object of perception or when the body is feeling pleasure or pain, Nyāya offers an explanation. But we have a peculiar feeling of the body which cannot be externally perceived. It is a feeling of being in that bodily state, not its feelings of pleasure or pain. It is being in this bodily state which gives me my physical identity as well as my place in the world. While Nyāya never discusses it, Abhinava's theory does. I don't know if you have read that book by Arindam Chakraborty 'Deha-Geha-Bandhutwa'; it was published by Gangchil and the first essay is on this bodily feeling in the context of Jibanananda's poetry and he has compared it with Abhinava's *vimarśa*. From there you would get many things that you want to explain. And, of course, this *rasa tattwa* and all these things, while there is some sort of discussion in the Navya-Nyāya, like when they are discussing *lakṣaṇa* and *vyañjana*, but not much. A fully developed theory you would find in Bharata and then Abhinava. Another book I think is Yoga-Vasistha. You would find that they are really following this cinematographic technology: it takes you back and forth from one life to another, from one place to another, analyze things through the eyes of different persons like camera is being placed at different places and different cameramen are taking these pictures. Yoga Vasistha is a very complicated story about a king who has several incarnations. While the story itself is fantastic, the technique and the method used is even more so. Sometimes it is flashback, sometimes it is flash forward, sometimes from one camera angle, sometimes from another.

In the last comment in your paper that during the 50th anniversary of *Pather Panchali*, Adoor Gopalakrishnan had said that our colonial past has ingrained in us a deep sense of self-deprecation and inferiority which makes Indian students celebrate foreign products more than their local products. We cannot put all the blame on the colonial past. That these discourses are available in our tradition, it's not known to the students at all. For example, we always had students from Comparative Literature, Film Studies, English, and Economics; sometimes they would ask 'since we have such rich tools of discourse, why do our teachers always use Western tools?' I used to say that's our deficiency. And also there is a kind of conservatism that an extended reading in interpreting other topics is sacriledgeous. Consequently, we didn't make these things available to our younger generation. And it is not that it happened in the colonial past alone. Even before, it wasn't accessible to everybody. It was more a part of an esoteric literature and common people didn't have access to it. So it never percolated.

GM: Western scholarship makes everything so palatable, so immediately available to everybody. Don't you think that there should be some kind of a change in our mind-set that we also exist, that we had also thought of many things in the past?

AC: Yes, you know the problem is this. Prof. Mohanty and Bimal Matilal had to struggle throughout their lives just to establish that Indian philosophy is not theology but philosophy which the Indians had been doing all along. Despite their efforts, people still feel that philosophy is a very European phenomenon. Rorty and his desciples still say that we don't have that kind of a philosophy. You know if somebody is feigning sleep, you cannot wake him. However, many people are working towards this now. In our area, for example, we call it 'fusion philosophy'. We don't think picking up one particular point from one tradition and applying it to solve problems in another is sacriledgeous, as if it would distort or warp the tradition itself. That's the mind-set from which we would have to come out. We would have to be bold enough to admit that while certain things aren't applicable to us now even if they have been glorified in our tradition, there are some others which can be applied to the present context, and may be even solve problems which people in the West have not been able to solve. We need to look at the scenario from this perspective. It is only then that we would be able to get rid of all this kind of inferiority complex or self-deprecation. Most of the time it is

because Sanskrit is a difficult language and we are not well-conversant with Sanskrit now. But now you would find that most of the experts in Indian philosophy are from the West.

GM: Madam, one last question and then we would close. You were mentioning that there is a greater awareness now and more work is being done on the Indian concepts. Do you have an idea how this process is progressing?

AC: Yes, it is progressing but many times we are arriving at some conclusion very quickly on the basis of some superficial reading. That is distortion.

GM: It is like a one-to-one connection 'Oh! Yeah, this is also in the Indian theories'.

AC: Yes. That's why Prof. Mohanty says two things. One is that focus more on the differences rather than on the similarities and second, as a philosopher, you should never quote names. You cannot simply quote something out of context without giving the argument which accompanies it. If we avoid these pitfalls, then a dialogue between different traditions will really enrich our entire knowledge repertoire. That's welcome.

GM: Thank you so much madam. But you would have to give me those connections with whom I would interact. And again when I come back here in august with some more research, may be you would permit me to interact with you again.

AC: It would be my pleasure. As I told you, I'm also looking at the body. I'd send you the email contact of my student and also Arindam.

GM: Some introduction to both of them would be required. Indians don't easily interact unless they get a solid reference.

AC: I would write to both my student and Arindam.

GM: Madam, what's Nilanjan Das's topic?

AC: Well, you know in Harvard or MIT, you don't have to write a book like a thesis. But you may write three or four essays which may have some overarching connection but mayn't be like a book at all. In this context, he told me that he is writing this cognitive penetrability

thesis of Nyāya, *jñānalakṣaṇa*, and asked me to comment on it. He is now working on many things and trying to decide which would be his final topic. He is very young but he has read a lot already and he is very, very bright. And, of course, Arindam is an authority. So, on film and Abhinavagupta, he would respond to you even without my introduction. On the cognitive penetrability theory, you give a Google search and you would find two papers, one by Segal and another by Fiona Macpherson. Nilanjan was using their thesis to interpret Nyāya. While reading his paper, I found that there is so much application of that in Nyāya. I hope these discussions would be of some help to you.

GM: Trust me, many critical areas have been clarified.

AC: You know while mentioning some point you have mentioned 'theory-theory' and 'simulation theory' and 'mirror neurons'. You know even now 'mirror neurons' have only been found to have resonance in monkeys like somebody tasting some food or so. On the basis of that, people have tried to explain a lot of other things for which we still do not have evidence. That's more of an expectation. It works only in some areas of cortex and only with respect to some stimulants. In the context of human beings, it hasn't been established experimentally yet. Yes, we do have those mirror neurons and may be in future it would be proved.

GM: I'd refer you to a book by Rizzolatti…

AC: Rizzolatti was the first person who discovered this mirror neuron and then they have been dealing with knowing other minds which have always been problematic. So they are extending this theory rather indiscriminately, almost science fiction like. But one needs to be a bit cautious. I think your theory is taking place and I can assure you that nobody has applied the Nyāya theory of perception to cinema before.

GM: On that note madam, I'd let you go. Thank you very much. I'm really grateful.

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Annexure 4

Interview

Suman Mukhopadhyay, Dramatist & Filmmaker

February 3, 2014; 10.30 – 12.10 pm

GM: Thank you Mr. Mukherjee for granting this interview. I am doing PhD research at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK on the topic 'Cinema and Wild Meaning: Phenomenology, Classical Indian Theories, and Embodiment in Cinema'. The centre of the research concerns the question how much of an embodied response goes into our understanding of cinema which generally remains under the surface. On this aspect, I'll like to have your opinion and then go on from there.

SM: I can start with the comment that anything which is not experienced or sensed by your body is never going to be a part of your intellectual capacity. Everything has to be sensed through the body; some physical sensibility like sound, smell, heat, cold on your body ultimately percolates towards your intellectual perception of the world. I think the body is very important that way. The sensations that your body feels through your daily living, through your existence, is very important. An intellectual thought which can get provoked that way finally translates into your creative expression. It comes primarily, fundamentally, out of some kind of bodily senses which gathers into an intellectual understanding of your reading, your historical perception, your political perception whatever you can say. I don't think there is only one intellectual sense which is the brain. I think the whole body is the centre of understanding. It can be in your feet, it can be in your elbows, it can be in the mid-centre of the body. These bodily senses are very important for any creative person and I especially speak from my own experience of doing theatre and cinema. We slowly understood how your bodily senses give expression to your image of theatrical or cinematic expression. Anything which is not understood bodily through your senses cannot be intellectually important, it cannot be intellectually perceived. That is one part. If we talk about theatre - *Nāṭyaśāstra* being one area of your study – it helps us to understand our bodily senses or body

as a unit, as a powerhouse of expression, and how our bodily senses can be demonstrated in a technical way. *Nāṭyaśāstra* is I think the first book or the first thesis which signals you towards that. The theory of *rasa* ('aesthetic emotion') or *bhāva* ('mental state') – we at the beginning of our acting career, as an actor or a director, went through the process of creating *rasa* through our bodies. It is like a *signal du frames*, a term used by Antoine Artaud. He is using the Balinese dancing codes in his theatrical understanding. He was in Paris, saw the Balinese dancers and finally found that one theory which he wanted to propagate: how do the Balinese dancers use signs as a language. I think it again connects us back to the *rasa* theory. Bharata was also talking about these bodily signs, to create a very independent, authentic language of artistic expression. We have *mudras* ('bodily gestures') and it is very important that these *mudras* mean something at the level of artistic expression. It means that new language of signs is being indicated by Bharata. But again all this has always been processed through your understanding of senses. Even today when we talk about the *mudras*, which has now many other historical baggage coming in the form of pre-modern, modern and postmodern study of the science of body languages, we think of exploring how different parts of the body interact and behave, how the body is intellectually aligned with your thinking, your senses, your historical knowledge. These studies have now come but, at the most fundamental level, you can see that there is one very strong stress which is that all these have come through your senses, your feelings, of how you understand your senses. Even when you talk about Stanislavsky much later or about other theories of acting or expression, it all comes to how you feel, how you sense, how you are perceived through your body. Even when we are talking about integrated histories, we are focusing much on the body politics, about the politics of the senses. It is like what happens when a historical rupture happens, when a political rupture happens, or a political turmoil happens and how it affects the individual body and the body in the social circumstances. I think that if you cannot perceive your reality through your body senses, then you cannot express reality, your own creative reality in art. That is one thing which I always understood. When I do theatre or cinema, I always make it a point to provoke the creative artists, even an actor, a cinematographer, or an audiographer, or even my entire collaborating team to go through the experience of perceiving the artistic text and the sub-text through their own sensibilities. Such sensibilities are absolutely fundamental; these are the organic sensibilities which can be provoked by reading through history or

cinema script or a theatre adaptation. So my entire approach in the workshop – when I do theatre I do workshops, when I do cinema I do workshops with actors and even brother actors – to get to that one point of truth which is not a technical truth, which is not an intellectual truth, but the truth that your body can understand. My whole approach is to take you through this process of how to give your body an understanding of what you are doing. Coming to Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, he is saying that everything is *bhāva*. What is *bhāva*? *Bhāva* is that one point of understanding through your body and how it is coming. It is not only an intellectual perception; it is always how the body is sensing anything, how you are responding to an emotion. We have our emotions and memory and what is important is our memory. How to provoke that memory, how to bring out that memory from a person? I'll cite two theatre personalities on that.

One is Stanislavsky. His theory of affective memory while acting which is a very dangerous area actually. When you are saying that ok, this is the emotion I want you to emote, now find out a moment in your own memory, your own history, your own existence, when you had a parallel emotion. For example, if you are emoting a particular mode of sadness, you find out from your own memory when a similar sadness was provoked by some event in your own life. When you are trying to do that, you are actually giving yourself pain in recalling that incident. It can also be a moment of happiness.

The other person is Grotowski who was telling in his acting theory that actors would have to burn their bodies. What it means is that the actor would have to go directly from instinct to expression, to come to a state of animal instinct in your body. Like when a dog is scared, its tail automatically goes inside, it cannot hide that. It is a very instantaneous response to anything, like when a dog is scared, its tail goes inside, when it is angry, it barks or growls. He wants an actor to get to that point of animal instinct where your bodily response automatically becomes your expression. What I'm saying is that when you are responding from instinct to expression, it is a straight journey, there being no intellectual processing involved in-between. In such a case, you are burning your body. I don't know whether Grotowski had any possibility of actually doing that but it was in his workshop theory, acting practices, acting classes, all these exercises that Grotowski was proposing was actually to take

the actor through this journey. If you go back to Bharata and connect him to Stanislavsky and Grotowski, I think he is saying the same thing, only the language is different.

Bharata was talking about a more integrated art theory, talking about stage-craft, talking about everything. He is talking about the entire vision, the entire artistic range of things. One important part is, of course, to talk about the actors. All the great theories – acting theories, art theories – talk about the actors because it is all about them. Whether in theatre or in cinema, you are actually working with human beings; they are malleable, you can do almost anything with them, making them burst into emotions or suppress them. So you are actually talking about the human body which is malleable, which can be controlled, which can be cued to certain elements so that it can give the right kind of expression that you want. An expression is also a bodily gesture, a sudden twinkling of the eye, a certain movement of your hand, even standing in absolute stillness is also an expression performed by the body. Like once a Kabuki dancer was asked how can he bring it all about just sitting there, how can he generate so much energy? The Kabuki dancer replied 'Look when I'm sitting still, I'm doing the entire act in my thought. My body is responding to that movement of thought. So while I'm sitting, I'm also performing. I'm bodily sitting idle, but thought is going around, so energy is generated.' I found this answer to be fabulous. People have a very wrong perception of physicality that only when one is jumping around, it is a physical act while sitting still is not a physical act. I think you learn to correct this impression from the Eastern art codes. All the great European or Western artists – they are mostly from Europe and America – took the art theory from the East, like from China, Japan, Balinese forms, Bharata and many others. The entire performing codes of different folk forms – they not only took from the classical but also from the folk performances – were taken from Chinese, Japanese, and Indian theatres. I believe even Brecht highly borrowed from them. And then it is coming back to us as a European theory. That's the problem. Even the most provocative kind of acting theory belonging to the latter half of the modern age, Antoine Artaud, who actually provoked Grotowski, who also provoked Peter Brookes, he was receiving his entire knowledge from the Balinese dancers, how they are creating this code language, this sign language. So I think this is the problem of the hegemony of knowledge that it goes from here to the West and then comes back as a new theory which we then perceive as 'ok, this is what the Western man has said to us'. This is because we never look back to our own history. We never see what was

there in our roots from Persia, to India, to China or Japan. We have these very modern art theories, modern performing codes which have been intellectually formulated in great ways. We always neglected our own culture. I'm not talking about some kind of Indian-ness or going back to the roots that have been variously used by the funadamentalists of our country, even by the fundamentalist theorists of our country. What I'm talking about is what went from here and then came back from the West as a hegemonic theory that 'this is what the West is giving you'. We then start quoting Brecht, or Stanislavsky, or Artaud, or Grotowski. I think all these were largely present in our own roots which can be redefined. One doesn't have to take everything; we don't take everything from Stanislavsky, we only take whatever we need. Even what Stanislavsky did in his acting theory is actually a diary of his experiences, of what he went through in his entire acting career. If you see the early writings of Stanislavsky and his later writings, you will see that they are totally at loggerheads with each other. He was gaining in experience and perceiving new areas of his thought. The more we get into this post-modern era or this post-structural era of our understanding of theory, society, even the language of the body – of how body has been perceived – even Foucault's entire theorization was mostly standing on body politics, of how he is using the body. His entire theory of sexuality and the jail house are about the body. In fact, he is always talking about the body. Body is, thus, always a historical curiosity. And I think all the artists have finally to put their trust on their own perception of the body and how the body reacts to different situations. This is the primary thing I'll like to say now. If you want some more specific things, we can talk about that now.

GM: No, it's absolutely fine. Your experiences are revealing for certain aspects of film and theatre performance which was not known to me till now.

SM: Like we talk of integrated history, philosophy and politics, the issue of integration has been there since a long time. Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* is an example of being an integrated work. In fact, it is a signature of how integrated such a work can be, of how you have perceived your entire world of artistic creation, of architecture, texture of theatre, sitting position of the audiences where, because of his times, he has taken note of the higher and the lower castes...such social hierarchy is part of culture, one can't deny that. Through all this, his thrust on the body and the *rasa* and *bhāva* is very important. The body is important because

rasa is not at the level of intellectual perception, it can only be perceived if it is expressed through the body. It cannot exist in a hollow, it cannot be a floating signifier, it has to come through the body, *bhāva* has to come through the body. Let's talk from the theatre first. I studied at a Performance Course in the US. I learnt a lot about integration there. When I asked myself why do I have to inspect a Van Gogh's painting, why do I need to watch a sculpture, why do I have to watch a Mime artist, or even a street hawker, I realized the answer. These are all integrated. But when I go back to *rasa* theory again, I think he was suggesting that you have to be a part of the bodily experience – all modern acting theories incorporate that. So when I came back and started my workshops, I saw very interesting things happening. One is when I was doing a play, I thought that these artists are totally blocked by certain bodily gestures and bodily expressions because they are going through the same social interactions, mixing with the same social groups, they are going through the same architectural milieu, like living in the same urban houses, sitting on similar chairs, shit in commodes, write on tables, sitting at a table in the office. We don't eat sitting on the floor or walk through sand and mud. As a result, slowly a part of our bodily muscles become redundant because we aren't using them. It is like emotions, you have to use those muscles everyday. But our daily living doesn't allow that. Even the very architecture of our urban living makes you go on a straight line on the footpath or make perfect circles, our vision remains straight, we don't have to look down. Everybody is getting trained or being modeled on this kind of an urban living. Actors being part of that get trapped into this. I, then, did a simple exercise. I took my entire group of actors to a remote village in Purulia and did a 'Chow' [tribal dance] workshop with them. I also stayed with them. Not that I wanted to do a 'Chow' production, I did this just to break their bodily ennui. There they practiced everyday by the riverside, on the sand bed. They are not walking on the urban roads, they are going through small lanes and by-lanes. All this shapes up the intellectual perception of your body into a different experience. You immediately realize that the urban structures, urban codes are breaking down. Your body is learning new things, your spine is behaving differently because it is no more walking on the solid cement or marbled roads. You are realigning the balance of your body in a different way. And the moment you realign your body, your emotions are getting realigned also. You start getting a different perception of reality. When I was a student in the US, I was told one day to act for 48 hrs as a person whose jaws have dropped (what we call in Bengali 'han kora

chele'). As a social person, we have been told not to open our lips because one looks like a fool that way. When you have dropped your jaws and moving through society, like going in a bus or walking, you will see that the world is changing in front of you. People are looking at you in a different way. So your entire social parameter is getting challenged because only your jaws have dropped! It is absolutely physical. If you just play blind one day, the whole relationship, the entire dynamics between you and the society would change. If you play one day that you are lame and walk around the street like that for 24 hrs, you would notice that the entire perception, the chemistry, the society, the reality and your body has changed. I use these techniques in processing my theatre and cinema. Most of the time, we only see the end product. But if you are an artist of that caliber, you actually want to challenge the broad processes in which you are doing cinema or theatre. Mostly we are trapped in this given process of doing anything. Like when you want to make a film, a certain processing method has already been defined for you to which you have to adopt, from making shooting schedules, your relation with the actor's guild, etc, everything has already been pre-processed. So you are coming to make a film where everybody has told you how to make that film. You are not given time to relocate your processing, your art. In theatre, more independence is there because it hasn't yet been invaded by the industrial money. It is still more like an amateur act, more like an independent thing. So you can do your theatre differently but these are getting more and more difficult.

But cinema is difficult because it is so much more dictated by the given order of things. The moment you want to something differently you are immediately challenged that no, no, this is not the way to do cinema, cinema has a particular discipline, it has to be done in a certain way. I always work with my actors in theatre, because, as I told you, cinema doesn't permit me that freedom. If you call yourself an independent filmmaker, you have to find ways to get out of this given model of doing cinema. Otherwise your process will never get liberated. When I'm working with actors, I try to break these physical modes, like I use painting and ask the actor to respond to it bodily or respond to a particular music. Supposing they are doing a line, but I'm not getting the required emotion, if I explain to them the intellectual background, they get more confused. The next day, if I play a particular music and ask them to do the line, immediately their tonality, their texture of doing things changes, their pitch changes. The moment music gets into your body, immediately your reading pattern

gets affected. It may still be the wrong tone, but the fact is that change has happened. If I ask an actor to respond to a painting instead of giving him an intellectual kind of help by using verbal language, it works. So these techniques of exposing them to different expressions of art are meant to provoke their senses. Instead of intellectually explaining what you want, it is better to give them a different kind of material which would help evoke that. The moment the actor tries to think more in language and in intellectual terms, like what is the history of Bengali stage, etc, he is likely to get more confused. Surely, you have to go through these questions as an actor – ok, I'm this character, what is my background, what is my father doing, what school I went, what is my cultural habit, etc, but, finally, these questions would help only if you physically and emotionally respond to these things. Finally, all the above things have to be evoked, but evocation is actually responding to your body. Anything that is not processed through your sense cannot be a part of your intellectuality that is my understanding till now.

GM: This is a very interesting point. It seems that Bharata's theory is absolutely geared towards what you are saying.

SM: I think because through this entire *bhāva* situation – through *vibhāva* ('determinants') and *anubhāva* ('consequents') – that moment is provoked in the actors, it is so important. Not only the actors, but even yourself: when you are searching for your own creative area, how to provoke yourself to new kinds of thought. It is not what you are trying to get out of others, but what you are trying to get out of yourself is very important. I'll give an example. I was trying to get an actor thrown into a mental contradiction – to be or not to be, something like that. I told him that 'ok, there is a rope, hold this rope'. I told the other actors to pull this rope. He is thus being pulled on two sides. I asked him how you are physically feeling that. The body has memory of this conflict within itself. I told him to remember the physical pain he got. Then I asked him to recite the lines while remembering the tussle within his body. The tug of war of the body now changes into a different perception, into a change of quality. Thus, I use body memory to provoke something which is intellectual. I gather these small exercises from my own rehearsal space, from my own processing centre of how our bodies behave. Since we hide within our bodies how civilized we are which may be completely different in Paris, we have our own perceptions of civilization that is coming out of our own bodies; our own social

practices, our own social growing up. I think a woman dressing up in India is very different from a woman dressing up elsewhere…it involves a particular perception of what dressing means. This is part of our physicality also, how you dress up. The perception of audiences in India, or even in the entire South-East Asia, is very different - we engage with our arts in a very different way. Like in our culture, we say 'Jatra shunte jabo' ('I'll go to hear jatra' where 'jatra' is folk-theatre). Thus, we *hear* jatra ('jatra sona') and *see* cinema as a book ('boi dekha'). It is thus that we perceive our theatre and cinema. And our audiences engage in a dialogue – they don't behave like 'civilized' audiences watching a great work of art. In our society, it is always thought that art is part of a social expression and we have a right to converse with the performers, to engage with the performance in an active way. We are always active, we are connecting in the same manner as Brecht wanted theatre audiences to be interactive, like a football spectator so that when a goal is missed somebody in the audience says that he is a bad player. In fact, Brecht wanted his audience to comment on every aspect of the performance. He didn't want a passive audience sitting in the black hole of the auditorium; he wanted a very active participation. And this is again coming from the cultural practices of the East where, during the folk performances, people are talking, like when they say that ok, there is a boring part coming up when I go to sleep, when Jatayu's lorai with Ravana comes (fight of Jatayu, the bird, with Ravana, the king of Lanka, in Rāmāyana), wake me up. So this is part of our cultural understanding, it is not a concise half-an-hour slot. Such cultural practices were slowly ingrained in us. It comes from an area of openness in our interaction with art. But am I shifting from our main area of discussion?

GM: I think these are all very relevant. Please go ahead. I think in Bharata's stage formula, audiences literally become a part of the performance which ultimately generates *rasa*. Literally the subjective-objective dichotomy, like you are separate from what is going on in the stage, breaks down. Only the whole thing taken together evokes the *rasa*.

SM: Yes, it encompasses this entire area…For example, let's take architecture – how architecture gives our body a different perception. In modern times, we live in an apartment, there's a kitchen, there is a place for the washing machine, there is a place for the TV; the*se* are all givens. One generally doesn't experiment with architecture, because it is now absolutely unified, codified, all over the world. In this space of daily living, you aren't facing

any kind of problematic with your body. In order to create, you have to create the problematic. If everybody is trying to confine you to a particular kind of body politics, then you have to confront it in a different way. Thus, I want to break in my actors the bodily habit of going on the straight path, turn full circles, or walk right or left angles; I've to walk on uneven places so that your body gets a different perspective. As I told you before you have to take your body through a challenge, and, in the process, your emotions are also getting challenged.

Let's talk about the theatre architecture. Once upon a time, the Greeks used the amphitheatre where there is equidistance between the actors and the audience because of its circularity. Slowly we broke away from this circularity to a very straight and square box as an auditorium now. If you see how Bharata designed his auditorium, it has the same sort of circularity. It recognizes the importance of the audiences to be a part of the performance. In the history of civilization, if you come to the middle ages and latter times, particularly after the Renaissance, the stage is getting more and more squarish with audiences in a black hole below and the actors on a stage above which is completely separate from the audiences. Only the Shakespearean stage has been an exception to this rule. From the audiences and the actors being on the same plane of vision to the audiences looking up at them, the entire perspective has changed. Now, modern theatre architecture is going back to the Greek theory. In the new re-modeling that is going on, the designers are again talking about re-dynamizing the audience-actor relations. It is so important to have this equidistance relationship between the audiences and the actors.

Now cinema is totally different because cinema actors aren't interactive participants in the process. It is unfortunately so, because this is the medium. In cinema, actors can only respond to the camera or your director or your co-actors. This is a very different way of generating emotion because you are emoting to a non-present audience. You cannot depend on the small laughter or that small clap from the audiences which enlivens your performance on the stage. When you hear somebody sobbing in the audience, it immediately changes your whole style of acting. Your body as an actor is also tuned in that way. Suppose you are a performer and there is a place where people laugh or clap. One day they don't laugh or clap. When you are reciting your next lines, you are wondering what went wrong today. These are

the questions that are always going through your minds when you are acting on stage. But cinema actors don't have that advantage. I saw you have mentioned in your note Eisenstein and Kuleshov and all that montage. I think it is very important how cinema directors use them. After you see Béla Tarr's film *The Tourin Horse*, what stays with you is the sound of the wind, you would only be hearing the sound of the wind for the next five days. He has used that as a strong reference on the bodily senses like that sound is inside you for the next few days. Even when I'm referring to that cinema now, I'm hearing that sound. Two things I remember about *Rashomon* is the sound of the rains which is literally consistent throughout the film and the final cry of the child found in the temple. I think the way filmmakers shoot the sound is symbolic of the fact how sound stays with you. Whenever I think of great directors, I think of how they have used the body to convey emotions to the audiences. Say, a shot like in Tarkovsky's *Mirror* where the mother is sitting on the fence. One still remembers those shots. When nothing else is left of the film, there is that one body sitting on the fence in a particular angle which provokes so many histories – history literally topples on you, emotions topple on you and you are bathing in those emotions. I think even in Ritwik Ghatak's use of facial structures, like when he was shooting 'je rate more duar guli bhaglo jhore' in *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (Cloud-capped Star, 1960), the bodily position of the character Nita stays with you. Dialogues don't stay with you, but bodies stay with you, sound stays with you. And these aren't sound like that of music, but sound of the wind, birds, or sea. I think these are very important for cinema – for artists who want to create those bodily sensations which would stay with you rather than your intellectuality. What comes to you even in the reading of a novel is what the Russians call 'jamissel', an all-pervading sense which stays with you. Even Akhtarujjaman Ilyas's novel *Chile Kothar Sepai* that whole history which I myself don't feel but getting through another artist's imagination is what stays with you. When you now read history, you remember those moments of perception. An artist's job is to give that all pervading sense of times which would stay with you for ages. That last walk in Satyajit Ray's *Aparajito* (The Unvanquished, 1957) where the camera pans down and then finally goes away as Apu (Smaran Banerjee) is walking towards the horizon stays with you. I always show that clipping to my actors and tell them that look, it evokes so many things in you. In Kozintsev's *Hamlet*, his last walk before he says the last words and dies, that one long walk and he knows that he is going to die and the camera holds him from the back just below

his shoulder. Hamlet (Innokenti Smoktunovsky) is looking a little halfway towards the back with the camera just following him with no physical or facial expression visible, he just walks and then sits down on this huge rock and says as his friend comes, there being only one light with the rest being in the dark. If you remember one thing from the whole film, it is that one single walk it is that one image that stays with you. Shakespeare has written great dialogues for his characters, but I still think what you remember are these small moments. Even that last run in Godard's *Breathless* (1960), that one ongoing shot at the end of which Michel Poiccard would die. These moments are part of your bodily experiences which stays with you much beyond those of the dialogues. These are created by filmmakers who respect reality as a source of our embodiment, as a physical source of our history. As a filmmaker and theatre director I always respect that.

GM: I'll now like to take you back to what Dr. Moinak Biswas has said. While these embodied moments are the most important scenes in cinema, yet while teaching he finds that embodied effects are difficult to be rationally explained. What do you feel about his comments?

SM: In case I'm rationally or emotionally reacting to a certain thing which I wouldn't be able to convey to students or collaborators rationally, I think I'll use another medium to convey its senses. Like when I'm trying to explain how a movie provoked me, how I felt exalted by it or certain moments in it, I would tell it is like when I hear the words 'uter gribar moto nistabhdhata' ('silence like the chin of a camel'), it would provoke a certain kind of image in the listeners. This expression is so metaphoric, it evokes a particular imagination. If I can convey my feelings through another medium, then I think my listeners would understand that; it wouldn't be a rational articulation because it is taking another route to articulate that. If I say that 'Sahabuddiner oi chobita dekhe amar oi chobitar kotha mone poreche' ('by seeing Sahabuddin's this painting, I remembered another painting'), then I have achieved conveying my feeling through another means, indirectly. I remembered Goya's painting of Spanish Civil War after seeing Pontecorvo's *Battle of Algiers.* So, I think you can reconnect in a different way. It may be difficult, but there are ways to do so. When I subjected my actor to that pain of the tug of war, I was not following the conventional way of explaining his mental conflict intellectually; it means to say to an actor that you are sad or you are morose, there are so

many layers to being sad. You have to take him to that particular moment where it can actually be conveyed. One can always tell them to read a Shakti Chatterjee poetry to feel what sadness is. I think one can even give an actor the Ninth Symphony and ask him to hear it for the whole night and then think about your character. One doesn't go to a theory how Lawrence Olivier played Hamlet; you have to find Hamlet within yourself. And if you can identify the Prince of Denmark within you, only then you can be that character, otherwise not.

GM: Thank you Mr. Mukhopadhyaya. It has been an exhilarating interview. Very many points have come up which I'll have to integrate within my research.

SM: I thought I will be able to speak only for 10 or 15 minutes!

GM: In fact, you spoke for 90 minutes. I'll let you know what comes up in my further research.

SM: Sure.

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Annexure 5

Interview

Samik Bandyopadhyay, Marxist Art Critic

Feb 24, 2015, Tuesday, 10 - 12 noon

GM: I thank you on behalf of myself and the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK for granting this interview. Your comments on certain questions placed below will be highly appreciated.

According to some thinkers, a fundamental theory of Indian plays is that Indian characters have an unchanging 'inner nature' which always acts as an inner pull on them throughout a play to restore them back to their original state. It belongs to the worldview propagated by Indian idealist theories like Advaita Vedānta or Kashmir Śaivism which holds that the same underlying substance that has an untarnishable inner nature, undergoes various manifestations on the surface. Accordingly, all change in this theory is a superficial change not having any effect on the constituting material. Western critics say that it makes Indian characters remain internally *unchanged* throughout the play. In other words, characters don't really *evolve* in such works. Changes happen to them only at the superficial level, having been brought about by chance occurrences, coincidences, or misunderstandings. Once these are cleared up, characters are *revealed* in their original nature. This is what happens in *Abhijyāñaśākuntalam* or *Mṛcchakatikam*.

Do you think this may be a good way to describe Indian commercial films where, in the end, *characters remain what they have always been* in the films?

SB: The first thing I'd like to place on record is that I'm not very strongly clued on to Indian philosophical theories. That is not my area of specialization and hence my knowledge of these theories would be extremely superficial, facile. The other question is when we talk about Indian plays or Indian dramaturgy and the construction of characters within that ambit, I've a serious problem in the sense that the presence of Sanskrit plays in our cultural history and our

experience has been so marginal. It was an extremely time-bound court theatre meant for the entertainment of the kings and the courtiers which never had any relevance for the larger society and the mind of the people. So trying to read Indian 'plays' in terms of the Sanskrit body of works, whether it is *Abhigyāñaśākuntalam* or *Mṛcchakatikam* or *Mūdrārakshasam*, is meaningless in the sense that I don't think they had any impact on the sensibilities of our playwrights or our audiences. The large body of work consisting of playwriting, play construction, and play making which has been part of the popular tradition, the oral tradition, the folk traditions spread all over the country hasn't been documented properly. We are barely getting into it since the 1960s and '70s, as late as that. Thus, we simply do not have any history of how these plays were constructed and who responded to them. From this lack of history, I can't really generalize or philosophize in any way about any Indian theory. Now who writes these theories? About *Nāṭyaśāstra* or *Daśarūpakam* or *Abhinayadarpana*, we don't have any idea about their all-Indian circulation or how many people read them. So I don't really find any historical continuity and meaning in building upon that body of thought and trying to apply them to cinema. That is a very, very fundamental problem for me.

I describe myself as a critic of the arts – because I dabble in literature, theatre, cinema, and the visual arts – with a strong Marxist historical, ideological reading of history which is my position of choice. Looking at phenomena from that perspective, Indian commercial cinema for me is an industrial product which has tried to relate to people's mindset which is also not so much as a *given* but which changes with various political happenings, operation of the media, operation of the consumerist mode, the consumerist applications of a massive propaganda industry and the way people are affected by this. Since I and you belong to the same generation, we have seen this happen in front of our eyes. We cannot identify and pin down these shifts through any theory or big psychological shifts scientifically. We can only see how different tendencies, different inchoate forces have been operating and how the mindset changes, how the response changes. It is compounded by the fact how new physical bodies of people come to constitute the new audience. How mass immigration to cities like Calcutta or Hyderabad or Bangalore changes everything. When we try to sit in Calcutta and try to theorize about audiences, we don't have the necessary tools to do so. But still when we try to understand why people liked this film but not that, we can't even identify the audience who are watching these films. Are they the same people who lapped up Uttam-Suchitra films

(Bengali commercial film icons) in the 1950s? They are certainly not the same body of people. So unless we look at these changing, evolving social bodies, to go through any generally *given* Indian way of looking or Western way of looking I don't find them usable in any meaningful way. Do we really know the Indian mind? We operate on the basis of a small section of people we know in the cities. If we take Bombay films which are extremely popular and have a huge market, have we really gone to the places from where ticket money comes? They do not come from the cities but from small places. Who are these people and how does this entertainment work for them? Are they all employed people? Are they agricultural labor who constitute the largest part of the Indian population but are largely invisible who aren't even taken into consideration in the running of the country? We are going on talking about more and more and more industry. How will it affect the people? It will affect the capital, accumulation of money, the power. How do they affect the people who are watching the films? They are really outside any political and ideological operation of power. How do we visualize their viewing practice? This becomes an extremely difficult problem for me for I don't like to talk nonsense or pass judgments about this is what people like and this they don't. My young friend Someswar Bhowmik has now opened up a debate in his new book 'On the Glitz'. He questions how far can we trust the figures we get of popular Hindi/Bengali films? We form our opinion by reading newspapers in the city which are completely manipulated by the propaganda machinery of the producers of these films. Do we have any means of checking these figures? Someswar goes into their tax accounts and shows that these are the taxes they have paid officially. Then how can they say that they have made profits? These are cold figures, hard facts. When we are not even sure how many people have watched a film, how can we generalize about them?

GM: Your point is well-taken. Perhaps the extreme diversity of India makes it even more complicated. But don't you think some effort to understand has to be made even in the interim period before the scientific studies come?

SB: At that level, I'll rather avoid bringing in classical Indian theoretical texts or the plays because they have never been in the mainstream. Now Sanskrit was never a popular language. It belonged to an extremely exclusive coterie of high culture. Moreover, Sanskrit was used by the Brahmins as a language of power. We lay down the rules, the codes, etc, in Sanskrit and

keep the people out of this magic circle of power. So trying to bring them into our reading of popular cinema is completely unacceptable to me. This is de-historicizing the entire process, the entire culture.

GM: My second question is as follows. In contrast to the theory mentioned above, Indian realist theories like Nyāya or Buddhism hold that characters don't have any inner nature. They are 'atomic' theories where external arrangement and rearrangement of *essence-less* atoms bring about changes on the surface. Accordingly, all change in these theories are external in nature. Being devoid of an inner nature, characters are *constructed* by external forces working on them. In this sense, characters undergo real *change* or *evolution* which cannot be retraced. We see a clear case of such construction in *Mahābhārata* where not only the Paṇḍavas but also such erudite persons as Bhismạ and Dronachārya remain silent in the name of *dharma* during Draupadi's disrobement in an open courtroom. Even when characters resist external pressure, they do so in terms of their earlier construction by the society. Western plays seem to be largely based on this theory. Thus, in Greek plays like *Oedipus Rex* or in Shakespearean tragedies like *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, or *Othello*, while characters trace a path from point A to B, there being no inner pull working on them, there is no mechanism to retrace their steps.

Do you think some of the Indian characters follow this worldview and undergo *evolution* in Indian works? In which category, for instance, you will place a character like Apu of *Apu Trilogy* or, perhaps, more potently, characters like Somnath Banerjee in *Jana Aranya* or Shyamalendu in *Seemabaddha* who seem to move along morally questionable paths without any hope of return? While, arguably, social circumstances push them into this path which they are unable to resist, are these characters morally flawed? Which category should we place a character like Antonio Ricci in *Bicycle Thieves*?

SB: I think when you bring in these characters and these experiences, even when you bring in Oedipus or Hamlet, I see a kind of continuity in the sense that all of them fall within the broad realistic tradition of representation. Even Oedipus or Hamlet I'll consider within the realistic tradition in a way. Their realism arises from the fact that they are solidly placed within a historical political context. They carry within and around them a historical situation. Now

when you come to *Oedipus* – *Oedipus* to *Bicycle Thieves* is a wonderful journey – I read it at two levels. One, the play is written in 5th century BCE Athens in the context of the first experimentation ever in the world in direct democracy. And this is the only instance till now – as a student of theatre history I'm telling you - of a state supporting the institution of theatre and its practice to that extent. To set up a 20000 strong auditorium with the architecture and the engineering to go with it so that 20000 people can watch and listen – the Epidaurus theatre has survived since 4th century BCE which reach a point of achievement through stone slabs, etc, where sound doesn't go out but circulate without reverberation - is wonderful indeed. All this is not some kings in the Indian courts patronizing *Abhijyāñaśākuntalam*, etc, for the entertainment of the courtiers in small theatres through highly stylized rules and practices. In contrast, 20000 strong audience in Greece where women and slaves had no right to vote as they weren't considered citizens! Theatre was designed with three performances a day to be followed by a kind of festival situation where people can eat and drink and talk about it. It is a democratic platform, a space where citizens and non-citizens can talk, the only kind of conversation they share institutionally and socially. We have reason to believe that the state had felt that the senate where decisions were being taken in a direct democracy tradition had an in-built failure in the rise of the oratory and the rhetoric. The orators could get away with their art of elocution and impress people temporarily. Since this was going against the grain of democracy, the state thought of making use of the larger space of the theatre – the celebratory, participatory, democratic space – where a discourse could be created. This discourse was about revenge, killing, vendetta, power of the state and its limits like how far the state can interfere in family practices and individual practices within the family. *Oedipus* is not a king who inherits but is chosen by the people. So the very first movement of this remarkable play is that *Oedipus* commits his allegiance to the people – he says that I've to serve you and if that means destroying myself I'm game. This is not the voice of a king. It means that a large political discourse is opening up. It is a shame when *Oedipus* is read in India, it is determined by the colonial education system and its machinery where it becomes a tragedy that goes into hamartia and things like that. It is utter nonsense. If one reads it in its historical context, the depth that comes out matches so many modern European treatments. Just think of Passolini's *Oedipus*. It is not about destiny and fate or these stupid ideas that the Victorians gave us. Aristotle didn't have any chance of watching the Greek plays because

they were gone by then. Plato was creating a different discourse against tragedy, against the play, against the democratic space. His reading and Aristotle's questioning him but ultimately toeing his line becomes our reading of *Oedipus* which is scandalous. *Oedipus* carries the history of a man elected by the people in 5th century BCE Athens and his dealings with the people who have elected him – how he relates to them, how he serves their interests. It is a profoundly democratic historical question that comes to the fore.

It's the same about *Hamlet*. Shakespeare writes Hamlet in 1602-03. Barely 38 years later in 1640 there is this revolution where, for the first time in the history of the world a king is thrown out through a legal process by the electorate through their representatives in the Parliament and the decision to behead him. Nowhere in the history of the world before 1640 has a king been beheaded by a majority parliamentary decision taken by the people. While Shakespeare was writing *Hamlet* barely 38 years before, he could see that things were moving in that direction. He is envisaging collapse of the royal power which is already clear to the people. It is there, simmering. And in that simmering when he writes Hamlet, he is talking about power, the intricate ethics of power. All these powers are defined in a community which is going through a process of historical change. That is what comes out of *Bicycle Thieves* also. In Italy during the Second World War, the chaos, the confusion, the collapse of all power which becomes acuter and acuter after the war and a man stealing, thieving in that historical context. So every major work, from these great classics to the popular works, are to be read in a historical context rather than going into the generics of some inner nature of characters and Indian theories. At so many levels, cinema is negotiating a very complex network of forces, industry, political identity of the viewership – who are these people, where do they come from, what do they represent when they watch these films. Industry does their kind of psychological reading of a demand which is partly there and partly reconstructed and manouvred. They hit the point there – not taking it exactly where it is but making something out of it. So, in a way, the Bombay film factory is a highly sophisticated industrial organization where it is not a question of what people want and what they get. It is not as simple as that. While they have all the machinery to construct and determine people, we poor critics have no machinery, not even simple tools to do a flash survey of the people. We don't have the means to do a sample survey over a week when a hit film comes, to ask some questions from the audiences and make some sense out of it. We haven't done it ever, neither

have we thought of any methodology to do so. But we are very happy to say that since thousands upon thousands of people are watching, they must be very traditionally rooted, so go back to *Abhijyāñaśākuntalam*. Who the hell has seen *Abhijyāñaśākuntalam*? We don't have any evidence, but we have solid evidence of people who have watched a Greek play through memoirs, reminiscences, etc, on the basis of family records that have come down to us. Out of these, we reconstruct Greek audiences and the Greek theatre. In contrast, we don't have evidence of even a single performance of *Abhijyāñaśākuntalam* or *Mūdrārākshaka* or *Mṛcchakatikam*. No evidence at all. I've not read Indian philosophy but I've read *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Abhinayadarpana* very closely. Since I can read Sanskrit, I've read these works with *tikas* and *tikakaras* and their translations in English and Bengali by very important scholars and have done their comparative studies. On that basis I can say that this is a sort of a compendium, of various ideas, of various places which are brought together into a kind of a *kosha* book. And then to give it a sort of authority, bring in Brahma and Bharata and create a mythology out of them. Keeping all this in mind, how can you go back to some originary or original Indian audience, Indian sensibility, and Indian mind and make an Indian theory out of that! However, since we can read Greek theatre and Shakespeare in their context, we can also read Bombay cinema and other regional cinemas in their context rather than going into philosophy. I'll be very happy if somebody does a very serious socio-psychological reading based on solid fieldwork, does direct interviews of people, talk closely with producers and scriptwriters from where they get their ideas. But film industry, being a myth-manufacturing industry also, whenever they are interviewed in the press, you know that they have bought this space and talk within that bought space. Bring this chap out of this space and interview him independently in a different context of storage and analysis. Nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing has been done at that level.

Because a different mindset was prevailing in the '70s, Satish Bahadur, the director of Pune Film and Television Institute, was making this experiment in the villages around Heggudu, Karnataka where people were exposed to only commercial Kannada or Marathi cinema. He had taken 27 films from the National Archives including *Pather Panchali*, *Bicycle Thieves*, *Umberto D*, *Rashomon* as well as some of the documentaries of Bert Haanstra and others. Say about 10 people from 10 villages had been interviewed and their reactions noted. A document was prepared on how people responded to these classics and published in

English. It was also published in *Samaj-O-Chalachitra* edited by Rajat Ray and Someswar Bhowmik where I had translated the piece into Bengali and had also written about the need for such kind of work. Soon after, I myself had done some sort of a survey for a youth organization which was very superficial at that point of time. I'd created a questionnaire which was circulated among 300 middle class filmgoers spread over colleges, banks, etc. But even that bit of a fieldwork, however superficial it might have been, provides at least a starting point. But after all these years of so many research projects, so many film studies depts., not a single solid fieldwork have been done. Take one film that is running, do an extensive interview with people, and see how the film was made and marketed. It is never considered a research project here because it demands working with a methodology, hard work, and sorting out hard empirical evidence rather than sit at your desk and finish off your work! In the absence of such evidence, to theorize that it was all there in *Nāṭyaśāstra* or that it was all there in the *Parsee* theatre is so fanciful and unscientific.

GM: In Chitrabani run by Fr. Gaston Roberge we had done such a survey on the Indo-Bangladesh production *Beder Meye Jyotsna*. Interviews were conducted in three parts of Bengal which was so revealing.

SB: Exactly. Inspite of official funding and resources, nothing is being done, except this kind of facile theorizing.

GM: In the above context, where would you place characters like Apu or Somnath Banerjee of *Jana Aranya* (The Middle Man)?

SB: In the 1950s when *Pather Panchali* happens – I was witness to its making by chance because of my relation to Karuna Bandopadyay who was playing the role of Sarbojaya – the original booking at Bina, Basusree, and Alochhaya the first booking was for 3 weeks. At the expiry of this period, the film was withdrawn. However, by then the film had circulated by word of mouth that it was very, very unusual from the rest of traditional films. So it was rereleased and became a huge hit. And that piece of nonsense about Cannes recognition – just imagine how many people in 1955 knew what Cannes was, whether it was 'naak' ('nose' in Bengali) or 'kaan' ('ear' in Bengali)? And it was not even an award, it was just a citation. So people who knew about Cannes wouldn't take a citation seriously, and those that were not

aware about Cannes, why would they immediately start buying tickets? Nonsense! So it was just word of mouth as well as a great gesture by all major writers who came together in the Senate Hall to give Ray a massive civic reception. That was absolutely new, nothing like that had ever happened in Indian cinema. All these things add up to build a new audience, recognizing a new cinema in all its newness. So a new possibility is opened up. Now the question what did people find there? There is something very, very common in the whole social history of the time when people in massive numbers were coming from villages to Calcutta - their first exposure to Calcutta, learning to live in Calcutta. This experience in the '50s of post-partition, post-second world war consists of a massive economic change. The demographic records will tell you that all these processes involved how to deal with the city. So the city became a great eye-opener for them all.

Another factor in the '50s, which was also a part of my growing up in the city, is the city's resistance to outsiders coming in – the ghoti-bangal ['East Bengal-West Bengal, insider-outsider'] differences really rustle up in this period – that they are going to take a share of what we have. With all these happening in the background, here is a humanist document which tells a moving story of someone from outside who comes and imbibes the culture of the city, its way of living, its progressive and radical ideas and the pains and tragedies of growing up there. So something, call it universal, the structure of a child growing up and along with that a whole history, a history that is becoming very potent at that point in time. This, I think, becomes a sort of form or structure for Satyajit Ray. So Apu is a sort of an outsider who is not totally urbanized, who is not as complex as a modern urban character with a certain naïveté about him. All his characters, whether it is Shyamalendu (Barun Chanda) in *Seemabaddha* or Ashok (Arun Mukherjee) in *Kanchenjungha*, are of that kind. These characters are not born and bred and roughed up in the city. All those who come into the city would identify with them. The characters' very point of vulnerability becomes a point of relating with them – he is not a star, a powerful man that I'll be afraid of and hence admire from a distance.

Right now I'm editing a book on the complete prose writings of Soumitra Chatterjee. Something which he acknowledges at one point – a good point about which I've also thought – is where he says that, in a way, he was an Apu and remains an Apu because he

comes from a moffussil town like Krishnanagar and cannot cope with a lot of urban things. Hence he has a sort of wide-eyed wonder about the city which makes him vulnerable. He falls into pitfalls, he crashes. So Ray deliberately chooses Soumitra Chatterjee for Apu's role. This is a point of association and identification that the audiences get.

Now when one goes back to *Pather Panchali* after all these years - I had this wonderful experience a few years ago. In Shantiniketan, they have a small film club called 'Bikhhan'. One day when the senior members were chatting, they realized that all the young boys and girls from class VI to X had never seen *Pather Panchali* in any meaningful way. So the big hall Gitanjali was hired and the film screened. It was full, children even sat on the stairs and laughed and cried and enjoyed the film thoroughly. These children were then asked to write their impressions about the film and, if some images came to their mind, to draw them. I was asked to release a book made out of these and talk to the children. That is the first time I walked into Patha Bhavan – I'd always read about it and seen it from a distance – and spoke about the making of *Pather Panchali*. I tried to give them a feeling that it was a cooperative effort rather than an industrial effort where individual artists were contributing individually like Bansi Chandragupta, Subroto Mitra, etc. Also how the film was stopped and resumed because there was no money. I also told them about how reality was being pieced together and reconstructed and that this is how art deals with reality. At the end, I invited questions. They were fascinated by the making of reality in the film – whether this wall was there or reconstructed, things like that. The last question came from a young girl who wore glasses. She identified herself, looked straight into my eyes and said 'You said this film was made 50 years ago. After 50 years of this film, do we have to see Haranath Chakraborti's (a commercial Bengali filmmaker) films?' You can't imagine Gopalan the bitterness, the rage, the hatred, the anger that came out of this girl. So this is the kind of impact that can happen.

The same kind of thing happened at Heggudu where Satish Bahadur was invited by U. R. Ananthamurthy and K. Subanna. The latter two legendary figures, who belonged to Lohia's party at one point, were trying to find out the relevance of cinema. After the 1957 elections, Lohia told his people that he was withdrawing from elections because nothing was going to happen here. In this context, one has to create these small spaces, these small hubs of culture. If there are many such hubs, people will feel and think differently. Only if culture

became a part of life, then some change may come. And that is how one of the most modern art-forms was brought to one of the most traditional places. Making a single sensibility of this is how people respond to cinema, this is how stories are told, the unchanging human essence, one rediscovers oneself at the end of a turmoil, etc, I don't subscribe to that view.

GM: A very good point you are making. It is surprising that these experiments are not repeated.

SB: Look at the film society journals now. Whether it is in Bengali or in English, it is so esoteric and nostalgic. They never highlight these little experiments, trying to understand and analyze them. Has any film journal ever taken any notice of the Heggudu paper, even a little quote from there perhaps?

GM: Hamlet is swayed by a moral dilemma which makes him say 'To be or not to be, that is the question'. In *Mahābhārata*, Arjun's moral dilemma may be similarly paraphrased as 'To fight or not to fight, that is the question'. Do you think these two characters are similar or there are significant differences underlying their similarity on top?

SB: Now Arjuna belongs so much to mythology and mythology, in a way, is predetermined. There is a kind of religion spreading its politics or politics masquerading as religion whatever. These characters are concealed within that framework very strongly. So Arjuna will have doubt only to be told by Kṛisṇa that this doubt doesn't mean anything. Arjuna doesn't really struggle with his doubt; he never asks himself 'to fight or not to fight, that is the question'. He only asks his sakha ('mate'), his guru, everything which Kṛisṇa answers. But Hamlet goes on struggling and it's not so much a doubt. It is very interesting that just a few months ago I was in Berlin and saw this outstanding production of *Hamlet* by this wonderful new director of Schaubühne, Thomas Ostermeier, whom I consider to be one of the greatest directors now and who showed his wonderful *An Enemy of the People* three days ago in Calcutta. He uses the 'to be or not to be' speech thrice. In a way, he starts with it, then uses it where Shakespeare uses it, and finally at the end of the play. Each time it is spoken differently. First time it comes when two elderly people are trying to fit a coffin in a grave with mounds of slushy earth lying around. The coffin doesn't fit. Hamlet slowly walks in and sits on the mound of earth. A transparent scroll rolls down from top. Hamlet looks at a video-cam in his

hand and utters 'to be or not to be'. Audiences get an elongated view of his face and lips on the scroll. Here it means do I take a position or not? When the utterance is made in the context where Shakespeare uses it, it means since I cannot take a position any longer, do I commit suicide or not? The third time it comes after the murder of Gonzalo where *Hamlet* bitterly charges King Claudius with that speech - I won't let you be. So for Hamlet doubt is not just a doubt, but how can he engage himself. So it is more of an existential thing at one end, a question of one's political choice, the choice that Sartre was making at one point out of his existential angst. Nothing of that is in the predetermined mechanical structuring of the Arjuna doubt.

GM: In Cartesian metaphysics of mind-body duality, mind prevails over the body as centre of all human experience and knowledge. Film theory generally follows this line to highlight intellectual thought-processes at the cost of embodied experiences of cinema. Thus, for example, film sensations, which generate spectacular effects among film viewers, are generally castigated. However, since ordinary viewers enjoy such film sensations - even go to the cinema halls only to experience them – there seems to be a gap in our film theories.

Do you think this has impoverished our understanding of cinema?

SB: When you talk of embodiment, I would make a distinction between embodiment and embodiment of the thought of an experience or emotion. Embodiment is vital to any performance act as opposed to a speech act whether a film or any kind of performance. So why would I identify or recreate embodiment with the body used for sensationalizing which is only one use of the body? The jumping body, the leaping body, the violent body, these are certain circuits of embodiment or bodifications, are these the only meaning of embodiment? Obviously Lamberto Maggiorani in *Bicycle Thieves* is a great piece of embodiment of his bewilderment. He is not embodying some abstract idea; he is embodying the crisis. A whole lot of crisis - a crisis which is personal, political, and universal where man as labour goes into a market but the market won't buy the labor. So it's a philosophical crisis, it is a moral crisis, it is an individual crisis, it is a crisis of daily survival, all these are embodied with so few words spoken. That is the charm of great cinema where you don't go on philosophizing in words, letting the body go elsewhere. So why should body be identified with just sensations?

The body can operate in so many different ways. Embodiment is, however, vital. After the initial intellectual thrill and novelty of what Godard had given me, I find Godard extremely boring and banal when he revels just in theorizing and talking, even sensationalizing the talking, rather than embodiment. I still believe strongly in embodied cinema.

GM: The word *haptic experience* is increasingly being used in film discourse. This coinage has been popularized by Phenomenologists like Maurice Merleau-Ponty and others. It says that certain experiences cannot be explained at the intellectual level alone. Thus, for instance, in *Pather Panchali*, when Apu and Durga run through 'kashbon', while Durga has a strange audio experience in listening at a telegraph pole, Apu has an unknown visual experience in seeing a train for the first time. These experiences heighten their haptic experiences of nature. Similarly, in *Meghe Dhaka Tara*, when Neeta discovers her sister and lover's treachery, she asks her brother to sing 'Je raate more duar guli' along with her. While she sings, Ghatak picturises her from all odd angles, the resulting experience appearing to generate a strong haptic experience for audiences which are difficult to explain intellectually.

Will you like to comment?

SB: I think it follows from your earlier question. To take it out of the body and to recast it in verbality is, I think, not possible. You can't translate an embodiment into a verbal act or a speech act. Once it is embodied, it is embodied. One has to take it as an embodied experience and the way it affects you.

GM: Classical Indian theories, which originated and flourished primarily during 1st millennium CE, have a strong streak of embodiment in them. Do you think their application to a modern art-form like cinema will serve any useful purpose now? Dr. Moinak Biswas, in his interview to me, expressed his discomfort by saying that new taxonomies like *rasa*, *vibhāva*, etc, were being used indiscriminately from Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* without explaining what they stood for. Thus, he says that the *Meghe Dhaka Tara* scene alluded above is explained as generating a *rasa* of pathos among the audiences. Dr. Biswas says that, as a teacher, he cannot simply say that it is *rasa* and stop there. There need to be further explanatory categories of Indian theories if they are to make sense to the students at all.

Would you like to comment?

SB: I've already expressed my utter dissatisfaction about supposedly Indian theories – historically I question these theories. Even when you talk of embodiment in Indian theories, what embodiment is really there? I've not found any serious piece of discourse where, in the so called classical Sanskrit theoretical literature on performing arts about the quality of the body, nature of the body, etc. There is a very, very conscious mechanical attempt to change them into categories, classes, denominations, etc, etc. Even about the rasa – how can you limit something to nine *rasas* and, then, another says oh, there is a tenth *rasa*. I find it so stupid and so mechanical. Now there are descriptions of *nṛtyabhangis*, of the *karaṇas*. What is about the embodiment there? It is just certain forms of the body, certain distortions or particular bends of the body, that's all. That is not embodiment. You are only trying to give a certain form of the body a certain meaning – the mechanical expression of converting a thing into a mūdra, coding expression of the body rather than allowing the body its freedom. New feelings, new experiences that are extremely modern which come with the evolving life and its pressures and its histories. Take, for example, the entire experience of a mass death at an unexpected moment, like say the experience of Hiroshima and those who survive that shock. How can their experience be codified? There can't be a mūdra for this, a single *bhangi* or *karaṇa*. So restricting or constricting the body to certain codified mechanical expressions, I consider it as disembodiment. You aren't allowing your body to get into an experience. I give the *rasa* and so now play the *rasa* through the body. I give you a simple mechanical sign for that. The entire embodiment business and the problem for people like Artaud or Artaud's clueless *chelas* ['disciples'] like Grotowski and Eugenio Barba have absolutely limited recording of Asian experiences. Artaud had very little effect and Grotowski sent his chela Barba to do it on behalf of him. Barba was again trying to codify things, limit things into an extremely facile cultural anthropology. Nobody takes it seriously. The natural plasticity of the body responds to intellectual experiences and emotional experiences, ideas and physical hits, both kinds. As I said, I'll like force, even abstract force, to be embodied in cinema of course and wonderful things have been done at that level.

GM: In contrast to Dr. Biswas, Suman Mukhopadhyay holds a contrary view. He thinks that embodiment is crucial for human experience and knowledge. He says that anything which is

not experienced or sensed by one's body is not going to be a part of his or her intellectual capacity. An intellectual thought provoked through the body finally translates into a creative expression. Anything which is not understood bodily through one's senses cannot be intellectually important, it cannot be intellectually perceived.

Do you agree?

SB: I don't agree with him entirely because human beings are capable of abstract thought. Why do I deny it? But where I would agree with Suman is that even the most abstract of thoughts we try to get into our senses and, in a way, try to embody that to that extent. But if somebody says that a thought which cannot be embodied, which cannot be part of my senses or sensibility until it becomes organic that I'm not prepared to accept. There is always this reaching out as part of human capacity to attractions, to ideas. Importance of the idea is tremendous for human growth, for human life. Some of the ideas may even get lost while I negotiate with ideas in an intellectual exercise. Why should I deny the intellectual part of this exercise? Why should I think that the physical is superior to the intellect? I'm not saying, however, that the mind is superior to the body. I'm giving them equal leverage. There should be a continuous interweaving, an interplay between a dialectic between mind and body. I'm only not prepared to say that if it is not absorbed in the body then it is useless.

GM: Here I'd like to make a point. Head of Department of neuroscience at UCLA, António Damátio, has written a book, *Descartes' Error*, in 1994 which has become quite famous. He says that every intellectual thought invariably passes through the bodily loop which he calls the 'somatic marker' through which the body gives its inputs into that. When a person takes a final decision, it becomes a kind of intuitive decision based on both. Sometimes it may even supercede the intellectual part in what is called the 'gut feeling'.

Do you think it challenges your opinion somewhat?

SB: I made the point that I'd like them to be dialectically interrelated giving them equal leverage. They are intertwined, you cannot separate them. But, of course, if a neuroscientist has scientific facts to prove it, that's another matter.

GM: There is also another important discovery involving 'mirror neurons' in 1995 by Rizzolatti and others. When a great ape, including human beings, observe a 'goal-directed activity' like somebody trying to reach at something, the same type of neurons – that's why called 'mirror neurons' – are triggered in the observer's body as well which put them in the same mental state as the performer. So watching a goal-directed scene in theatre or cinema puts the viewers also in the same mental state as the characters.

SB: Literally *reliving* the scene, very interesting.

GM: Suman Mukhopadhyay says that Asian performing arts have influenced Western systems on the basis of their theories of embodiment. Thus, Antoine Artaud coined the term *signal du frames* after watching how Balinese dancers use sign of the body as a language. He claims that Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* is practically the first thesis in the world in this regard which uses the semiotic language of the body to create a very independent, authentic language of artistic expression. The body is important for him because *rasa* is not at the level of intellectual perception; it cannot exist in a hollow, it cannot be a floating signifier. *Rasa* and *bhāva* has to come through the body.

SB: I've already answered that. I think that there is too much of a codification, rather than an embodiment. Ok, it's a kind of semiotic, the signs are there. It's a kind of a lexicon. But, in the process, you are limiting the body; you aren't helping the body to a natural response. I think there is also – and that is one of the underlying currents of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* – a politics in it on which I take a serious position. On the basis of my serious reading of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, I think that Bharata is scared of the different *lokāyatas* and loukik performances – the *lokadharmīs* – because it is such an independent spontaneous embodiment which can be dangerous to the authority of the state. So you have to codify it, to bring everything within control, to bring the body to extremely predetermined defined expressions. So this *rasa* has this expression, this *bhāva* has that, other *bhāvas*, the subsidiary *bhāvas*, even the hierarchy of *bhāvas*, this massive controlling machinery is power-driven, is authority-driven which is strongly reactionary. I deliberately use the word 'reactionary', it doesn't allow freedom of the body. Your responses to natural stimuli creating different forms, you don't allow that. In the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the form of the body is virtually taped and measured and linearized, even your

complexion. It is a strongly state-oriented reactionary system. You have to read the politics of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. I'm sorry to say very few people have read the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. They read only certain sections of it which are very quotable. And then you have the nṛtyabhangis and karaṇas which the dancers have taken up. *Nāṭyaśāstra* has been fragmented conveniently by different interpreters.

GM: Suman Mukhopadhyay further says that the Body contains marks of civilization which can be historically read. For example, while urban codes align a person's body in a particular way, the moment one gets away from there into, say, rural areas, realignment of the body starts which also realign emotions. In the process, one starts getting a different perception of reality altogether. In this sense, the body has a deep philosophical and political significance.

Will you like to comment?

SB: I very strongly think about the body, I've written about it also. Let's read a portion from my article 'The Cultural Body of the Community' from *Our Stage: Pleasures and Perils of Theatre Practice in India* (Eds. Sudhanva Despande, Akashara K. V, Sameera Iyengar, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2009, pp. 35-40):

> There was a time when we were thinking a lot about a single Indian theatre and how different regional idioms could contribute to this Indian theatre. That agenda has been toppled in the last few years, but fresh attempts are now being made to reconstitute the old agenda and bring it back under a different guise, under different pretensions. Performances travelling from one part of the country to another and travelling abroad, there seems to be a slowly building up politics that India should have a single theatre that has a certain pattern that becomes more easily understandable. There is a certain pattern of theatre, a certain kind of theatre that would get audiences; the same kind, class, and taste coming from audiences in all the different cities of India and also abroad that would be the best choice. In fact Sadanand Menon has been reminding us again and again of the new situation that there is a National Knowledge Commission which proposes to bring in something called 'Creative Industries' under the category of 'Tourism' rather than the category of 'Culture' or 'Performances'. So culture and performance has been thrust aside from the knowledge system. If you have to send things abroad or bring people

down to watch things, they should be easily understandable to an international clientele, a standardized clientele – let them have something called 'Indian'. As this pressure grows, it becomes important to take a stand, that every region, however small it may be, not just Bengali or Marathi or Manipuri, but even within each, there would be different performance cultures. I'm very deliberately not using the word "idiom" because, in the earlier scenario, idioms added up to one single theatre language.

Talking of performance cultures, they are not necessarily growing out of the performance and its practices but grow from a larger field of cultural experience and cultural protection. Under these circumstances, a matter of Indian theatre is itself a strategy of defense and resistance. Of the distinctive locales of Indian theatre cited at points where the performance body forms a seamless continuum with historical body of a community. If theatre performance is the product/expression of the actor's body so that the body is the product of a culture defined as a way of living. The body that has to negotiate with the slush on which we walk to make our way to the lecture theatre uses them and bears them in a way which is very different from the practice and habits of a body which is more accustomed to a paved floor. That is only a simple and quite basic instance of the body's ways and means. Even when the body is trained in skills, gestures, and styles that are not elements of habit or natural practice, it needs to retain forms of the primary stimuli to bring forth the look of familiarity that makes first contact with the body of the community. The wide range of elements that go into making the actor's body includes the daily acts of the means of living, his or her diet, and the way he or she eats, he or she wears, he or she speaks, in his or her natural surroundings. Even when the body acquires a style, it doesn't quite abdicate itself; rather it accommodates the style.

I'm harping on this point for quite some time now that the body is local; it is very, very culture-specific when it comes to performance. And this conscious attempt to standardize is a market attempt, is a globalizing attempt. To me that is a standard body, a standard practice. Even this evocation or the reinsertion of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in our discourse is part of this forced standardization process. And even these references to Barbas and Artauds because that is the international clientele and they would love it if you can standardize it. The entire body experience is just stored in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* for them to de-codify and read it for the market.

GM: Soumitra Chatterjee in a recent interview to me has said that three different types of acting was available in Bengali theatre during 19th-20th century Bengal viz. *nāṭyadharmī* or exaggerated formal performance, *lokadharmī* or natural, realistic performance, and a third variety in-between the two. He, thus, claims that both Satyajit Ray's realism and Ritwik Ghatak's formalism were already deeply rooted in the tradition of Bengali performing arts.

Will you like to comment?

SB: I'm again not convinced about that. In my knowledge and in whatever I've studied, it gives me another impression altogether. It is a very, very complex range of styles and conventions. For example, what about the local performances that have also made their way into theatre and cinema? What would you call that? If he says that *lokadharmī* is a realistic thing, so many of the performance modes even in West Bengal has this easy movement between singing and dancing and verbalizing. This distinction of the verbal theatre where the speech dominates is a completely Victorian importation. Even in European theatre history, even in early British theatre history, the convention was that there was no distinction between music, dance, and the verbal theatre. So speech and the dancing body, they were enmeshed together. It was one single thing which has stayed on in the Opera. And later on when the music part takes over in the Opera, it accommodates theatre within the music. And in Ballet, while the verbal thing gets thrown out, the music is literally incorporated into the body of the dancer as part of the corpus. But the verbal theatre, the speech-dominated theatre separated from these, becomes the art thing. It also becomes the urban mode. You go back to the *gambhira*, to the *alkaps*, where the music, the dance, and the verbal all go together. To bring the music and the dance into the verbal, you can't have the so-called realistic acting. You are working at different levels at the same time which survives in the Jatra. What about that? I would call that *lokadharmī*. And the realistic theatre is a completely European importation which we acclimatize of course. I never say go back to the so-called purity because there is no purity in performances; they grow. The body changes with changing circumstances. As I said, if you walk on the slush and walk on a paved surface, your gait of the body, the pressure points within the body, all become different. The body becomes different in the process.

And then you have to relate to your cultural body, your social body, the body of the people around you, the body of the community around you. The way you talk to them, your gestures, your voices become part of your bodily expression. If you have to survive, you have to speak in a certain manner, and then you speak in another manner below and above your level. So a hierarchy comes into play through your body. This kind of realistic theatre is also there. So these distinctions between *lokadharmī*, etc, don't mean much to me. I'm sorry. In fact, *lokadharmī* is a much, much wider concept.

GM: In fact Suman Mukhopadhyay was telling that he took his entire theatre group to Purulia and made them walk and sit on the sand. He says that the entire urban setting of straight footpaths, circles, sitting on chairs generates particular meanings and emotions. He had also noticed during a short course in America that one was made to drop his jaw for a whole day and watch the reaction of people around him.

SB: Yes

GM: One last question. Will you like to comment on the current crop of Bengali films? Do you think they are socially relevant?

SB: What I feel works at two levels. There is a feeling that Bengali cinema has lost out to Bombay cinema anyway. So we can only survive at the level of these Inoxes, etc, through small audiences which is a kind of a spill-over. I travel to a lot of moffussil and district towns where there are practically no cinema houses. In several towns, I found very, very shabby cinema halls – even in places like Purulia or Baharampore. People watch films on the dvds which are pirated. Producers don't get any money out of that. So they make as much as one can from whatever is being screened at the moment in big city malls or Inoxes. It results in two things:

a) A cushy audience which goes to have their popcorns and relax and are comfortable. In the meantime, let the images come and go, that kind of a thing.

b) As part of a larger consumerist politics, show life lived in great comfort and lush splendor and make them a little bit jealous – well, if I could have that, etc, etc. This becomes embedded in all the films that I've watched. Do people watching them really live in that kind of comfort?

There is a strange kind of unreal world in which these films circulate. I don't feel drawn to watch these films except when somebody tells me that an actor has done a good piece of acting or there is a good idea in it. I've lost interest; I watch only 3 or 4 films a year now. Not interested – it is a sad state of affairs.

GM: True. It is indeed sad.

SB: Very, very sad indeed. It is not reflecting any reality at all. There is only the possibility that something coming out of the blue like *Pather Panchali* or even I remember in case of *Subarnorekha* which had problems with the distributor and was lying in cans for years which made Ritwik babu more and more alcoholic, more frustrated. Then when it comes, it is such a thrill. It circulates, people talk about it and there are literary magazines which run debates on it, there are 4 or 5 articles on it which you don't see about any film now. The whole institution of film reviewing is also out; it is only story-telling now. Earlier whether we agree with them or not, there were film critics who had their strong positions. Even in the big institutional press whether it is Sebabrata Gupta or Probodh Bandhu Adhikary and in The Statesman, of course, Amalendu Dasgupta. Now film actors do the reviews. It is sad indeed.

GM: Thank you very much for this in-depth interview.

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Annexure 6

Interview

Dr. Ashish Avikunthak, Lecturer, Dept. of Filmmaking,

Rhodes Island University, USA

GM: Thanks for granting this interview. I'm conducting a series of interviews of academics, philosophers, and film personalities in connection with my PhD thesis at the University of East Anglia, UK dealing with the applicability of phenomenology and classical Indian theories to cinema. The focus is on the question how much of embodiment underlies our intellectual understanding of cinema. You have been an experimental filmmaker who is also deeply interested in Indian philosophy. Your films are literally representations of some of those philosophical principles. Will you like to give me an idea about your interest in this area?

AA: My films didn't emerge from an interest in Indian philosophy. I look at my cinema as a way that has opened a world for me. I came from a political background, from Gandhian politics which is also a fundamentally metaphysical form of politics. However, when I made this film on *Kalighat Fetish*, I realized that while my films are very unconscious, they are made consciously. The idea is to make something that you have never seen. There are two kinds of filmmakers. One kind makes a film that is already in your head and you produce it. I find that kind of filmmaking pointless. I'll rather make films that I've not seen. You go through a process and then when you see the film, it starts talking to you; it is as if your unconscious is talking to you in a Freudian sense. However, I look at my own cinematic texts as a conversation with myself. For me cinema is a way through which I negotiate my being in the world. Even my earlier one-shot films that I made during 1994-95 had very strong philosophical roots, they are existential films. Then the Kalighat film happened during which I became deeply religious. I realized that some kind of a strong Tantric thing was happening. That's when I started reading and subsequently most of my films are negotiating some kind of an Indian philosophy which I would call ritualistic. I'm more interested in philosophy's ritualistic basis, could be Tantric but I'm not sure.

GM: This is an interesting point. What do you mean by this ritualistic aspect? Things that we see our Purohits and Pandits keep doing?

AA: No, no. You know when I look at any act, I understand that there is an ontological basis to it and that ritualistic and epistemic worldviews are involved. I'll try to frame it for you. What happens in India I think is that India being faced with modernity received a powerful onslaught of ideological inputs in a very violent way. Lord MacCauley said that we want 'brown sahibs' who would be Indians in flesh and blood but think like the British. This makes thinking epistemic and being Indian ontological. What modernity has done is to transfer our epistemology into a modern space. Thus, we speak English but eat our dal-bhat ('rice and gravy'), we think in English but listen to Hindusthani classical music. So what I think has happened in India – which hasn't happened in China because that was a different trajectory altogether – is an interesting hybridization where the subjectivity of an individual has been split between an epistemic and an ontological self in which epistemic is modern while ontology remains pre-modern (for lack of a better word). Thus, ritual has an ontological root within which also there is a further division between epistemic and ontological in the sense that Sanskrit texts remain epistemic whereas rituals remain ontological. With 200 years of modernity, even our own understanding of the Sanskrit epistemic world has been mediated by modernity. For instance, I and you wouldn't have read Upaniṣad if it wasn't translated in English. Gita, for instance, becomes an essentially modernist text because modern Britishers, the Brahmo Samaj and a whole branch of Hindu modernists picked it up. Gita is also very interesting because it is almost structured like the New Testament, like the parables, Jesus talking, etc. It is interesting why Gita becomes important in our contemporary times because the modern Britishers decided to translate it. Our own understanding of religion – as modernity and post-modernity would tell you – is mediated by ideas coming from a modern framework. I would even argue that even the Sanskrit College here or in Madras was set-up by the British. The way we speak, I would argue, is also modern. There was a great story of Bengali Pandit from the Sanskrit College had gone all the way to Cambridge to meet Max Müller. When he enters Max Müller's office, he offers a *prasasti* [eulogizes] to Max Müller in Sanskrit who could not understand because Max Müller could only read Sanskrit but not speak the language. Our understanding of pre-modern has also been corrupted by modernity; it is only the ontological which is not corrupted. This ontological space in its most

uncorrupted form is the ritualistic. For example, in cinema, we see Ghatak catering to that ontological space in *Ajantrik* where he sets this very interesting juxtaposition between the technological apparatus in the form of a car and the Adivasi space in Jharkhand where he shoots the film. I think Ghatak is the first filmmaker who signals to that ontological ritualistic space in the form of fissures into his modern text which Ray does right in his last film *Agantuk* where Utpal Dutt is eventually sitting among the Santhals who are dancing. My argument is that ritual is the uncorrupted, the less sullied by modernity. When I was working among the Adivasis in Narmada, I saw that kind of unsullied-ness, uncorrupted-ness. I think this whole ritual fixation comes to me from my days in Narmada.

GM: It is also the archaeological aspect of your work.

AA: No, the archaeology happened a little later. Pre-cinema, I was doing a particular kind of work among the Adivasis. So I look at ritual as the only space that hasn't been penetrated by modernity. I find ritual space as a place of solace where I can have a conversation with my past.

GM: Tell me what are you trying to find really? Isn't it a good thing that certain modern thoughts have percolated into our studies? We are able to rediscover our studies in a new light; new meanings are coming out of it. On the other hand is your idea of this completely unsullied ritualistic space. Don't you think there should be some kind of an interaction between the two?

AA: I'm not interested in discovery. My whole cinematic journey is not about discovery, it is a journey. I don't know where I'm going. I'm not an anthropologist in that sense. I think I'm interested in me as a chronicler, a traveler in a certain journey; not journey to discover, but journey for the sake of journey. Journey itself becomes an important act, an important fact rather than reaching a particular point. I think what has happened with me is a disenchantment with modernity. It might have come from my work in Narmada Bachao Andolan where there is total disenchantment with a big dam produced by a post-colonial state. The whole idea of this post-colonial modernity is a very problematic space even in its most democratic form, in its most beautiful form. So I would rather be someone else. This is where I found Ghatak very useful. The big difference between Ghatak and Ray is that Ray's cinematic ideology is an

apology for post-colonial modernity in a very base way. He holds that modernity has happened, it has been thrust upon us and it has been tragic. Look at any films of his, it is a tragic modernity. Take his *Apu Trilogy* at the end of which Apu throws his novel into the ravine, the novel which epitomizes the most high form of modernity is being discarded, it is tragic. Or look at *Kanchenjungha* or *Mahanagar*, you may look at his whole Oeuvre including his last *Agantuk*, the figure of Ray as a subject is a tragic figure. But the tragic figure has always also been a ray of hope. So, for Ray, post-colonial modernity is tragic but there is also hope. In case of Ghatak, because he comes from a partition framework, post-colonial modernity isn't only tragic, it is also devastating. There is no escape. It is the end. He doesn't give you any hope. However, what he does – and that is very important for me – in his films he gestures towards these spaces which haven't been tragic. What you see in the case of *Ajantrik*, while there is a tragic end, you also have the Adivasis. What you see in the last film *Jukti Takko ar Gappo*, you have the Chow dance. In his films he gives these openings which I think is very useful, which gives me hope. I think Ritwik Ghatak is more useful than Ray. In Ray, there is hopelessness – the tragic hero is the hopeful hero, but there is nothing else other than being completely modern. The fact that in his music he is hugely inspired by German and European modernity…whereas if you look at Ghatak, because he comes from a partition framework, in the end there is no way out but then there are those moments of rupture. These moments of opening can give you a certain sense of foundation. The fact that I come from a partition family in Punjab, I think I relate to this complete sense of devastation – what you may call the Refugee Mentality – has survived in me. In this context, what I think happens with cinema or, modernity in general, is that the ontological space becomes a space for a very useful conversation. I think my cinema moves in that direction.

GM: Actually you are trying to find some kind of a hope. But the picture seems to be very bleak. Are you unconsciously trying to find out what it is?

AA: I think it is a very conscious act. I find Tantra very useful. Even within its epistemic framework – the books that are coming out on this – it remains the most unsullied by modernity. Although, we have to understand that modernity is inevitable. We are all modern. I'm modern in the most acute sense. I teach in an American university. I'm not escaping

modernity because there is no possibility of escape. But I definitely think that I want to have a conversation with the pre-modern world. And Ghatak opens up that space for me. Ghatak does, Mani Kaul does, Kumar does, *Om Dar Badar* does, *Kal Avirathi* does. They provide spaces where there is an opening. That's why I shoot at places like Kumbh or Vrindavan. That's why I think more than discovering, I'm struggling with a certain distinction between what I'm and what I can be or could have been. It's a struggle, it's a dead struggle. One can only be struggling. It's not a struggle to find a place. I think the struggle itself is more important than the journey. In the activist world, it is said that 'sangharsh karna jaroori hai' ('it is important to keep on struggling'). 'Sangharsh korne ke baad kya hoga, kaise hoga…' ('what will happen after the struggle…'); to keep struggling is more important than the end result. I'm happy that for me it's a struggle because I think struggle is important.

GM: You have taught in Yales and now you teach at the Rhodes Island University. The kind of person that you are, your very attire, your films, how do the Western students react to you?

AA: You know I've shown my films all over Europe, but I've only met with misunderstanding. One thinks that it is almost like a hermeneutical misunderstanding. Even though they think they have understood, but they haven't. That is something I find in India also. I find a perpetual misunderstanding happening everywhere.

Annexure 7

Interview

Soumitra Chatterjee, Film Actor-Dramatist

18th February, 2015, 11.30 – 1.30pm

GM: I thank you on behalf of myself and the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK for granting this interview. My research topic concerns the application of phenomenology, classical Indian theories, and embodiment to cinema in order to discover meanings that remain under its surface. In this connection, I'll like to have your reaction on the following issues.

According to some thinkers, a fundamental theory of Indian plays is that Indian characters have an 'inner nature' which always acts as an inner pull on them to restore them back to their original status. Western critics say that, in this sense, characters don't really *change* or *evolve* in Indian works; by virtue of their unchanging basic nature, they always remain what they have always been throughout the play. Under the circumstances, changes happen to them only at the superficial level, having been brought about by chance occurrences, or coincidences, or misunderstandings. Once these are cleared up, characters are invariably restored back to their original status. This is what happens in *Abhigyāñaśakuntalam* or *Mṛcchakatika*.

Where do you place this theory in the context of Indian cinema? Will you like to elaborate on the basis of characters you have played?

SC: I don't really agree with this. Anywhere where there is a narrative, whether in the two epics or the drama – say, for instance, Greek drama of Aeschylus or Euripides or Shakespearean tragedies – we find that there is always the chance of a character developing from one state to another. That is not only true in the case of Greek or Elizabethan drama but also true in the case of Indian drama. For example, the narrative of *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* is progressing from one phase to another. The sheer refusal of the King Duṣyanta to recognize

Śakuntala as his bride is a few steps removed from what was before. Not to accept Śakuntala is not just a betrayal, it also involves a difference of the classes although it is not as clearly defined as in a modern play. The beauty and harmony of Kālidasa's writing conceals this inner conflict between two different viewpoints of two different classes, the king's class and the ordinary class. Finally the King remembers although it takes the form of the symbolic *anguriya* (signet ring) found inside the belly of a fish. Coming on the back of remembrance is the resolution part in Gustav Frettal's pyramid structure of a play with the beginning going up to a climax and then resolution going down again. That way you cannot totally stamp it with characters having an inner compulsion to remain where they are. They change also. King Duṣyanta undergoes change thrice: when he comes to the forest and marries Śakuntala, then when he leaves her, and finally when he accepts her in a resolved relationship. In this sense, in *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, which is not historic and where the conflict is not so clearly etched as generally happens in an European play like King Lear or Othello, there is a struggle, there is class difference. Later on the kind of theatre that evolved in say Bengali theatre is an admixture of European theories and our traditional Jatra (Bengali folk form). But from the very beginning those who fathered Bengali theatre, chiefly Girish Chandra Ghosh, were steeped in European literature particularly Shakespeare. Girish Ghosh was also a scholar who used our epics very well. His writings became the mainstay of Bengali theatre which is, however, much removed from the non-secular plays written for the Jatra. In the Bengali theatre, the evolution of a character had to take place. Take, for instance, his play *Billamangal*. The main character there is not standing in one frame only. He is continuously evolving with the plot. Even on the day of his father's annual shraddha (ritual offering) ceremony, he most reluctantly comes back from a brothel. He finishes the ritual most nonchalantly and rushes back to his lady love in the brothel. His mental state is so enamored with her that he crosses the raging river in a stormy night by holding onto an old dead body thinking it to be a piece of wood. When he finds the brothel closed, he climbs its wall by holding onto a snake thinking it to be a rope. He doesn't even realize that he has an awful smell. His lady-love asks him to show her the piece of wood with which he had crossed the river. When she discovers that it is an old dead body, she says that she has entertained many customers, but not one like him. She tells him that instead of putting such passion in the service of a woman, if he gives it to God, his life will change. With that comment

Billamangal starts changing. He questions what have I been doing so far? He becomes a mendicant in search of God. One day, when he was asleep on the banks of a river – the river keeps coming in the play probably as a symbol of life - he is awakened by footsteps to find an extremely beautiful married woman. Forgetting his search for God, he follows her to her house to find that she is married to a baniya (businessman). When her husband returns, he confesses to him that he is smitten by her beauty and will like to have her. Since the couple had vowed to Lord Kṛṣṇa that they will not refuse the desires of an *atithi* [guest] in line with the earlier tradition, husband agrees. In spite of strong internal resistance, when the lady comes to the bedroom, he changes again. He keeps looking at her and thinking that, if it is her flesh he desires, then it would become like the dead body he had encountered earlier, it is *maya* ('illusion'). He then asks for her hair-pin and tells her to go back and tell her husband that nothing has happened. With the pin, he stabs his eyes to become blind saying to himself that he will no more be misled by outer vision but look inside to find God. It is almost like the Greek tragedy here. It is a marvelous play where, despite being so classical, its character is not bound by any inner compulsion. He is moving from one kind of realization to another. In *King Lear* or in *Hamlet*, the problem is in action. Procastrination in the form of a soliloque 'to be or not to be, that is the question' brings out the inner turmoil of a dilemma. The suffering of this dilemma finally drives *Hamlet* to action even though at a very late stage. His killing of Polonius is not an action driven by thought, no; but avenging his dead father by killing his uncle is. Through the swordfight he resolves his procastrination, but it is too late.

GM: Do you think *Hamlet's* dilemma is different from Arjuna's?

SC: In a way they are similar because, for Arjuna, it is not only a question of whether to fight or not to fight, but chiefly one of taking up arms against his near and dear ones. Kṛṣṇa says that you have to get rid of weakness at the moment of crisis. That Arjuna couldn't asunder these bonds totally even when he was fighting them – dilemma remains unresolved in his mind to some extent – is revealed in later times when, at the end of the epic, he along with others is taken to hell while Yudhisthir is made to pass through there only once because he tells a half-truth. When he is finally asked to enter the heaven, he is aghast listening to the cries of misery and torment emanating from there. They are telling 'Raja, don't go away. Because of you, there is a cool breeze blowing which is giving relief from our agony'. He

then asks 'If I go what will happen to them?' He is answered that they will continue to remain there and suffer. Yudhisthir says that, in such a case, he will also remain with them; if he has to go to heaven, these people also will have to go. For his *puṇya* [virtue], they are also ultimately released.

GM: In the above context, where do you place Satyajit Ray's *Apu*?

SC: *Apu* – particularly *Apu* – is a little different in character because it is basically a saga. It is not a drama. It is the story of a child growing up, going into the world, and then entering *Apur Sansar* (World of Apu, 1959). 'Sansar' here doesn't mean immediate family, no; here it occurs in the real sense of the word, the world-at-large. That way, there are not many dramatic moments in the film, but there are umpteen number of incidents, various experiences through which this very intelligent, inquisitive, and sensitive man goes through life. His growth is so typical of an ordinary middle class Bengali who grows from being a village boy to be a part of the larger world. He is steeled through various experiences – he loses his father, mother and his sister, and finally his wife – who finally comes back to claim his son. Taking him on his shoulder, he goes to face the world as the river flows by his side.

GM: Can we say that Apu has evolved rather than being what he has always been?

SC: After the revolution that occurred with *Pather Panchali*, latter day plays and Indian cinema started being made in a very different way. A host of brilliant filmmakers like Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, etc, arrived on the scene at the same time whose works are somewhat different including their characters. They, however, had something very common in them. They completely moved away from the typical, traditional, non-secular works which primarily exhibited religious sentiments. However, some of these are more dramatic, more theatrical like Ritwik - he used his experience in theatre in an extremely fascinating cinematic style which sometimes worked and sometimes didn't. When you see *Titus Ekti Nadir Naam*, you can feel the pulse of theatre flowing under its plot. Some of his films even candidly use a theatrical plot like his film *Komal Gandhar*. This cinema is totally different from earlier films like *Sikandar*, etc. Even Bimal Roy's *Udayer Pathe* – although it is based on a literary work which concentrates on middle class struggle so different from religious works – is ultimately not as powerful as a *Pather Panchali* or *Ajantrik*. Cinematically they are so different.

However much we may discuss the differences between Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak, what we forget is that none of them made political films which Mrinal da made. Satyajit's film which is political underneath is *Hirak Rajar Deshe* – it is a political allegory. Otherwise both Satyajit and Ritwik made social films. Social reality was their subject. They wanted to bring in social anomalies, social agonies, struggle between classes, etc, that people were suffering from. That way they are very much similar with almost all their films, except Satyajit's *Jana Aranya*, ending in hope. For example, at the end of *Titus*, where the river has completely dried up, Ritwik makes a child blow his bhenpu (whistle made of a leaf) which is such a powerful testimony to hope in future. Even Satyajit could have claimed the ending to be his!

Cinematically, however, Ritwik, because of his early life in the theatre, went on using theatrical elements, but Sayajit hardly did that except perhaps in his film *Sakha Prosakha* or, to some extent, in *Jana Aranya*. In fact, *Jana Aranya* is the only film of Ray which leaves a bad taste in the mouth. He made it deliberately so. I like the film enormously. It is unlike any other Indian film – it looks at us so critically. In *Aranyer Dinratri*, you will again find that, even though characters are encircled in their own lives, but they do evolve. They undergo experiences which make each one of them a new man. Particularly Ashim – who is the most educated, talented and capable of the lot – has some amount of meanness in him. He always wants to be the leader, behaves like one, and is also very snooty and snobbish. His sense of superiority is, however, crushed by this girl who teaches him a lesson of his life, how to be a man and not a leader. That's a wonderful revelation for Ashim who goes on the way of becoming a man. Although the film ends in ambiguity – although he takes her telephone number, nobody knows whether they are in love and shall meet again – so many possibilities are opened up. It is a beautiful ending.

GM: Do you think commercial film characters remain what they have always been in Indian cinema or do they evolve?

SC: Characters remain what they are, even though they have become more clever. Mumbai film industry, with the help of a retenue of scriptwriters and spin doctors, constructs plots so cleverly that you can recognize the characters to be coming from today's milieu but they are

generally similar to characters of thousand year old epics - larger than life and heroic, none of whom would sell a friend's sister like in *Jana Aranya*. Commercial films straightjacket everything in black and white.

GM: In contrast to Mumbai commercial characters, what do you think of Bengali commercial cinema?

SC: As already mentioned, even though, most of the time, Mumbai characters aren't ordinary or normal, sometimes they do, however, portray ordinary people, their way of life, their society. But, generally, they are formula films. In Kolkata, because they have to compete with Mumbai films, most of them, though not all, are literally made as Hindi films in Bengali language.

GM: Do you see Somnath of *Jana Aranya* to be a morally flawed character?

SC: He is a weak person. He doesn't have the courage of his conviction. That's why you know – I shouldn't say this – Ray had deliberately chosen Pradip Mukherjee to play the role. He is an extremely good-looking guy who looks rather imbecile at times. You will never think that he will stand up in support of a cause or he can fight an adversity. He will accept whatever is served on his plate. Ray's choice of actors are so revealing of his characters.

GM: In *Bicycle Thieves*, Antonio Ricci ultimately tries to steal a bicycle. Will you place him in the same category as Somnath?

SC: He is not morally flawed because life forces him to be a thief. He is not weak as Somnath. The essential transport of his livelihood having been stolen in midst of thievery going on all around him, he is forced to steal. He is not morally flawed like Somnath. In all fairness, I would have done the same under similar circumstances. I would have said to Ricci 'Ok, you have done well'. De Sica – despite being a matinee-idol himself in his time – how could he find such a man who almost epitomizes middle class struggle?

GM: In which category will you like to place characters you have portrayed in Bengali commercial films like in *Saat Paakey Bandha* or *Sansar Seemantey*? Do they stand apart from other commercial films?

SC: They do, *Sansar Seemantey* certainly. Ajoy Kar and Tapan Sinha, the respective filmmakers, are two people who are middle-roaders. They knew that their existence would be jeopardized if they went any further. But both of them were very efficient filmmakers having a lot of ruchi (culture), a stamp of taste and culture in them. They exercised an unobtrusive kind of amalgamation of both art and commercial cinema that were there at the time. Both Ajoy Kar, and more so Tapan Sinha, went on developing throughout their career. Tapan Sinha started with *Ankush* but then his filmmaking gradually started embracing more serious aspects of life. He developed from film to film in leaps and bounds. Just think of *Ek Doctor Ki Maut* – what a marvelous film. Then, *Admi Aur Aurat*, or even some aspects of *Atanka*, then *Wheelchair* – he went on making serious films without the garb of art cinema. Ajoy Kar's films were also firmly rooted in the soil of Bengali culture. They were not esoteric Hindi films.

GM: Since they primarily dealt with upwardly mobile middle class Bengali families, they are etched deep in our hearts.

SC: Yes. *Sansar Seemantey* is, however, a little different. It is better from these kinds of films because it almost crosses the demarcation line between a bold film, an artistic film, and a commercial film. That is because of the strength of its story. *Sansar Seemantey* is one of the finest short stories of Bengal. The story itself demands so much of realism. Even though there are a lot of dramatic and theatrical moments in the film, they have somehow mixed well with other intents of the film.

GM: You have touched upon both serious and commercial films. What is your opinion about the current state of affairs in Bengali cinema? The products seem to be so homogenized. There is a joke going around that if a modern lady is to be shown, she has to be seen smoking a lot, drinking a lot, and keep hopping from bed to bed!

SC: It has probably come away somewhat from that kind of a formula. Those who create such characters have no intention of making a modern film.

GM: Is it homogenization bred by globalization that is killing our creativity?

SC: No, it is not globalization that is doing the damage for Bengali films; it is rather the Mumbaization of our films. South Indian films are even a stage ahead of Mumbai films in this respect. Not even a Govinda can dance like a Prabhu Deva! While Govinda has timing and is pleasant, Prabhu Deva is pure dance. My daughter is a Bharat Natyam dancer. One day I saw her intently watching a video. She said I'm watching the best dancer of Mumbai, Prabhu Deva.

GM: You had once said that a history of evolution of film acting in Bengali cinema should be written. Will you like to elaborate on this statement?

SC: There has been some writing on acting in Bengali theatre but not on Bengali cinema. I've noticed that in Bengali films there have been distinct variations in acting. While some of them appear to be bad habits – like theatrical acting from old time Jatra or theatre – which have percolated into cinematic acting, it is but strange that a strong streak of natural or realistic acting have been a part of Bengali films right from the beginning. Rather surpirisingly, this line of acting came from theatre. In Bengali theatre, there were three very distinct streams of acting – I hate to call them schools. One was from the olden times coming from Jatra with chanting and ranting and what not but very efficient in their own way; another was a via media between realistic acting and theatricality involving Girish Ghosh and, even, to some extent, Sisir Bhaduri; the third stream consisted of realistic acting by Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi and others which was utterly naturalistic. There were a number of followers of Ardhendu's style, like Jogesh Choudhury or Manoranjan Bhattacharya, even Sisir Bhaduri himself. A great example of this style of acting is Kanu Banerjee who was selected by Ray for his first film role as Sarbojaya's husband in *Pather Panchali*. No one will be able to differentiate his acting from that of modern cinema. You also must have watched Jogesh Choudhury in old Bengali films like *Saap Mochan* or *Sesh Parichay* where Kanan Devi sings 'Toofan Mail' – her father's role is played by Jogesh Choudhury. Monoranjan Bhattacharya also you might have seen in Sambhu Mitra's *Pathik* or Bimal Roy's *Udayer Pathe*. Film actors who were typically suited for film acting became a blessing in disguise for Bengali cinema right from the beginning which saved it from a lot of theatrical rubbish. I'm basically a theatre actor, I love acting on the stage. But I don't want to mix the two things. When I act in cinema, my goal is to give the best of cinematic acting.

GM: Have you ever done something like method acting here?

SC: No, because my kind of naturalistic or realistic acting came from theatre to whom I've always remained loyal. There is, of course, some kind of an unconscious early influence from Hollywood cinema which I watched profusely during my school days. I even bunked classes regularly to watch them which were then freely shown all over Bengal. I was even caught by my parents and punished for that. Those films must have left some marks. I, of course, had my own matinee idols, like the actor who played in *Double Life* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. Later, it was Montogomery Clift, and, even later, Marlon Brando to some extent. But my idol in the Indian cinema is Balraj Sahani who will forever remain so for me.

GM: Thank you so much for this illuminating interview.

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