

**A
Dissertation
On**

**AVANT-GARDE: FRAME BY FRAME
(RADICAL STILLS FROM INDIAN NEW WAVE)**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of
BA Journalism & Mass Communication program of
Navrachana University
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*has been submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirement of the Degree of
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Date: 15-05-2020

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation titled “**Avant- Garde: Frame By Frame (Radical Stills From Indian New Wave)**” is an original work prepared and written by me, under the guidance of Mrs/Mr/DrAssistant Professor, Journalism and Mass Communication program, Navrachana University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication.

This thesis or any other part of it has not been submitted to any other University for the award of other degree or diploma.

Date: 15.05. 2020

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Ayusri P.

signature

I whole heartedly dedicate this work

To

My friends, family and my guide.

ABSTRACT

Avant- Garde: Frame By Frame (Radical Stills From Indian New Wave)

Indian New Wave was not a phase of cinema in India. It was rather a reaction to Bollywood mainstream that went parallel with the latter. It was an avant- garde, started by some Bengali directors. Some of the films have marked their importance in Indian Parallel cinema in true elements of Realism and Surrealism. Films like these are less likely to be consumed by the common mass, being the reason that they adhere to the notion of dialectical materialism and radical notions, raise questions on social convictions and stereotypes in society, and goes against the idea of social validation. These films don't go by any set of standards. Their making was not an attempt to sell to mass, rather to present/ put forth a creation- combination of raw ideas of art and philosophy, reflecting on the society in different hues through films.

Keywords: Avant- garde; Dialectical Materialism; Indian Parallel Cinema; Radical; Realism; Social Convictions; Surrealism

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

People watch films made by Bollywood, unknown to the creations of Parallel Cinema, that gives an alternative to the viewers who wish to watch films that pleasures them intellectually, rather than mere entertainment. A passive viewer might not enjoy, rather would be left confused and bored, due to lack of spoon- fed information to their common-sense. Indian Parallel Cinema attracts active audience, who are able to catch the hints of metaphors and symbolism in the text of the film and are able to draw interpretations of the open- endings of such films.

This study shall make you familiar with the background of important film movements that marked the different styles of making films, pertaining to the analysis of features of Indian Parallel Cinema. It includes German Expressionism, Italian Neorealism, French New Wave, Japanese New Wave, Dogme 95, Indian Parallel Cinema.

Secondly, it gives a brief of grammar of film language, covering the aspects of Characterization, Narrative structure, Camera techniques, Semiotics and Frame composition in the text of any film. This helps our study form a basis in the process of analysis of text in any film.

Following to the literature review, would be the research done to put forth the point in context to the hypothesis of the study, and justify the significance of the same. The methodology chosen for the study is Content Analysis, which is a qualitative method for drawing Inferences and Conclusion on the matter subject. There are two films taken for the purpose of analysis, BhuvanShome

(1969) by MrinalSen, and Om Dar-B-Dar (1988) by Kamal Swaroop. The analysis of the films include scene by scene break-down, along the lines of characters and narrative.

1.1 German Expressionism

Before the First World War, German expressionism came into being as a phenomenon through art, theatre and architecture which spread into cinema breaking into a new style of film-making and genre. It came out to establish narratives that create a disconnection between subjectivity and reality, bringing out the aspect of duality of the human nature. The characteristics of the same are, the films were heavily influenced by art and painting; they used to have artificial sets; the theme were dark and dealt with the truth of the society but the presentation of had the element of surrealism; camera angles were particularly asymmetrical.

- **Mise- en- scene:**The arrangement of everything that appears in the framing – actors, lighting, décor, props, and costume – is called mise-en-scène. When you're analysing a film's mise en scène, you're judging the visual presentation and the story it tells. It helps create a sense of place, a sense of character, a mood. It communicates a lot to the viewer, often without them consciously realizing it.
- **Chiaroscuro:** Chiaroscuro, (from Italian *chiaro*, "light," and *scuro*, "dark"), technique employed in the visual arts to represent light and shadow as they define three-dimensional objects.
- **Avant- garde:** Experimental and avant-garde film is cinema made outside of the film industry on an artisanal basis, largely without regard to the structures and demands of traditional narrative film. The avant-garde are people or works that are experimental, radical, or unorthodox with respect to art, culture, or society. It is frequently characterized by aesthetic innovation and initial unacceptability.

1.2 French New Wave

A group of critics who used to write for a film magazine called, Cahiers du Cinema created French New Wave which broke the classical style of Hollywood, bringing forth radicalism in films. The new avant- garde manifested from the Camera- Stylo in 1948. The editing and camera- handling techniques were free- style. Jump cuts were used often to remind the audience that they were watching a movie. Natural locations and light were picked, with unprofessional actors. Storylines were kept open- ended to portray realism.

- Camera- Stylo: In 1948 Alexandre Astruc formulated the concept of the caméra-stylo (“camera-pen”), in which film was regarded as a form of audiovisual language and the filmmaker, therefore, as a kind of writer in light. He believed that cinema is just like literature; not just a particular art but a language which can express any thought.
- Auteur theory: The auteur theory was derived largely from Astruc’s elucidation of the concept of caméra-stylo (“camera-pen”), holds that the director, who oversees all audio and visual elements of the motion picture, is more to be considered the “author” of the movie than is the writer of the screenplay. The fundamental visual elements include as camera placement, blocking, lighting, and scene length, rather than plot line, convey the message of the film.
- `Cinema Verite: (French: “truth cinema”), French film movement of the 1960s that showed people in everyday situations with authentic dialogue and naturalness of action.

1.3 Soviet Montage

Sergie Eisenstein codified the Soviet Montage and its use. The Montage theory asserts a series of connected images allows for complex ideas to be extracted from a sequence. It constitutes to the film’s ideological and intellectual power. His plots were based on political struggle, revolution and dialectical materialism.

- Dialectical materialism: A philosophical approach to reality derived from the teachings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. According to them, materialism meant that the material world, perceptible to the senses, has objective reality independent of mind or spirit.

1.4 Italian Neo- realism

The films made in this era were known as “street film”. It was called the “The Golden Age of Italian Cinema”; it characterized stories set amongst the poor and the working class. The stories revolved around the Second World War, representing the change in Italian psyche conditions of everyday life, including poverty, oppression, injustice and desperation. There were no studios or sets, the films was shot on streets in natural lighting and non- professional actors, and low budget with minimal equipment.

- Leitmotif: It is a well- established technique set as a recurring piece of music (or at least melody) that represents a character, action, situation, idea or theme.

1.5 Japanese New Wave

This movement came into the picture like a phenomenon in 1960 under which number of trends and developments led to making of film plots based on reflection of the cynical political climate of the era and analytical, philosophical approach towards Japan's societal issues. With an emphasis on taboo subjects and experimental storytelling, Japanese New Wave cinema explored themes of violence, radicalised youth culture and the country's apparent delinquency epidemic. It experimented with innovative editing, composition and narrative techniques.

- Yakuza: Japanese yakuza (character of gangster in a film) would model themselves after their movie heroes. Although yakuza, like all gangsters, on film and in real life, tend to be ultraconservative, the classic yakuza heroes, portrayed by such stars as Tsuruta Koji and Takakura Ken, were very popular in the 1960s with left-wing student rebels, who admired the yakuza's romantic last stand against modern capitalism.

1.6 Dogme 95

A movement culminated in 1995, which produced a collective of films that included filmmakers from around the world. There were strict terms laid out that would determine whether or not a film could be considered part of the Dogme 95 movement, are as

follows: Shooting must be performed on location, without providing props or sets that don't logically exist within that setting; sounds must never be produced, such as music that does not exist within the scene; all shots must be handheld (movement, immobility and stability must be attained by hand); the film must be in colour, with no special lighting; there can be no optical work or lens filters; no 'superficial' action (such as staged murders, elaborate stunts etc.); geographical alienation is strictly forbidden, meaning the film must take place here and now; no genre movies; academy 35mm is the only accepted film format; directors must not be credited.

1.7 New Wave in Indian Cinema

Parallel Cinema is a film movement in Indian cinema that originated in the state of Bengal in the 1950s as an alternative to the mainstream commercial Indian cinema. It brought new grammar and ideology to Indian Cinema. Indian New Wave is marked with the emergence of the film *BhubanShome* by MrinalSen in 1969. The movement was initially led by Bengali cinema and produced internationally acclaimed filmmakers such as Satyajit Ray, MrinalSen, RitwikGhatak, Tapan Sinha and others. It was known for serious content, realism and naturalism in socio-political climate of the times. It clearly rejected the songs and dance numbers in films unlike the mainstream films. (*Gokulsing, K. M., &Dissanayake, W. ,2013*)

1.8 Background

Identifying the cinematic grammar of the films made during this period by different directors. Also, to understand the characteristic elements of the films made and how differently or radically they portray the society and characters in the narrative. Indian New Wave was not a phase of Indian Cinema, like other film movements, rather a reaction to the Bollywood mainstream cinema. It went in parallel with the mainstream; people who were beyond the ideology of the latter found an alternative in the Indian Parallel Cinema. Both cinemas cater to two different audiences. The significance of the study lies in identifying the features of Indian Parallel Cinema, through

analysis of such avant- garde films, which make them stand apart from the mainstream commercial films.

1.9 Hypothesis

The movement being a parallel alternative in the cinema, both the mainstream and the parallel cinemas can't replace each other. The characteristics of both are different. The alternative cinema carries freestyle experimentation in art and writing in context to themes which are unexplored, and techniques, which are mostly based on the dialectical materialism. The features of the parallel cinema put forth films that can only be understood or enjoyed by an active audience.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter shall brief you about the context in which the study is conducted on further aspects as a part of the research. To understand the background of the study of the subject matter chosen, the secondary resources pertain to the topic in sequence as it follows:

2.0 Grammar of Cinema

2.1 Theory of Semiotics

2.1.1 Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and their use of interpretation. Usually, semiotic analysis studies the roles of signs and the part they play on a social and cultural scale.

A sign is the smallest unit of meaning. The signifier is any material or physical form of the sign that exists. The signified is a cultural or social concept that a signifier refers to in order to resonate its existence in a setting or situation. There are three types of signs:

- Symbolic: The signifier (the physical/material) does not resemble the signified (concept), so the relationship between the two must be taught.
- Iconic: The signifier resembles the signified, so the relationship is obvious.
- Indexical: The signifier is directly connected to the signified, but the relationship is at the interpreter's discretion. (Semiotics, Britannica Encyclopaedia)

2.1.2 Semiotics in film

- Denotation – the most basic literal meaning of a sign. Denotative interpretations help associate the signifier with the actual definition of the signified
- Connotation - the secondary, cultural meaning of a sign. Connotative interpretations help associate the signifier with emotions, feelings, or cultural “stories” of the signified
- Ideology – a set of ideas that create a culture's expectations, goals, and actions; in semiotics, this relates usually to social or political issues

- Paradigm – a set of associated signified concepts or signifiers which belong to the same category
- Syntagm – a sequential chain that combines interacting signifiers and forms a meaningful whole within a semiotic text
- Mythology – the combination of paradigms and syntagms that make up a well-told story with regards to cultural association
- Semiotic situation – a moment when we try to make sense of our surroundings and interpret one aspect based on the signs of our situation

(Definitions of semiotic terms. The University of Vermont.)

2.2 Film Noir

Film noir is a stylized genre of film marked by pessimism, fatalism, and cynicism. The term was originally used in France after WWII. It literally translates to “black cinema” and French critics used it to describe Hollywood movies that were saturated with darkness and pessimism not seen before.

Film noir, (French: “dark film”) style of filmmaking characterized by such elements as cynical heroes, stark lighting effects, frequent use of flashbacks, intricate plots, and an underlying existentialist philosophy. *(The filmmaker's guide to film noir. 2019)*

2.2.1 Characteristics:

- Anti-hero protagonist
- Femme fatale
- Tight, concise dialogue
- High-contrast within a scene
- Often post-war disillusionment

2.3 Characterization

Characterization is the process by which a character becomes fully realized in a narrative. Both fiction and films employ characterization. It facilitates the idea of understanding and creating a psychology or mind-set that would manifest a believable character in the narrative.

2.3.1 Vladimir Propp's Character Archetypes

Vladimir Propp was a Soviet scholar who analysed the basic plot components of Russian folk tales to identify their simplest narrative elements. He also concluded that all the characters could be resolved into 8 broad character types in the tales he analysed: the villain, the dispatcher, the donor, the prize, the oracle, the hero/ victim/ seeker, the false hero. Femme Fatale characters are not one of Propp's character archetypes, but are very common as 'evil' female characters. They tend to be very beautiful and sexy, but dark and seductive.

2.3.2 E.M. Foster's theory of round and flat characters

In *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), E.M. Forster wrote on the idea of flat and round characters:

Flat characters lack depth or development; they continue to maintain the characteristics or familiar traits of a stereotype maintain one perspective or viewpoint. They help create atmosphere, mood, or comedy. They are vivid but simple, and predictable in terms of their behaviour. Therefore, they are easily recognizable by readers and remembered for these very characteristics.

On the other hand, round characters appear natural, with multiple aspects to their personalities.

They are convincing and rich in character with flaws and qualities; and have potential to change and develop throughout the story. Audience gets a point of view of the character and its psychology.

2.4 Narrative Style

2.4.1 Roland Barthes' Narrative Codes

According to Roland Barthes, there is always more than one way to read a text. Within any given text there is a plurality of meaning rather than one correct reading. The plurality is found at

the semiotic rather than the narrative level. His theory of the five codes is a way of grouping signifiers according to the role they play in the text:

- I. Hermeneutic refers to any element in a story that is not explained and, therefore, exists as an enigma for the reader, raising questions that demand explication. It openly acknowledges that there is no answer to a problem. Most stories hold back details in order to increase the effect of the final revelation of all diegetic truths.
- II. Proairetic refers to the other major structuring principle that builds interest or suspense in the text. It applies to any action that implies a further narrative action.
- III. Semantic points to any element in a text that suggests a particular, often additional meaning by way of connotation, a correlation immanent in the text. One may say that it is an association made by the text-as-subject within its own system.
- IV. Symbolic is very similar to the Semantic Code, but acts at a wider level, organizing semantic meanings into broader and deeper sets of meaning. This is typically done in the use of antithesis, where new meaning arises out of opposing and conflict ideas.
- V. Cultural designates any element in a narrative that refers "to a science or a body of knowledge". In other words, the cultural codes tend to point to our shared knowledge about the way the world works, including properties that we can designate as "physical, physiological, medical, psychological, literary, historical, etc. The "gnomic" code is one of the cultural codes and refers to those cultural codes that are tied to clichés, proverbs, or popular sayings of various sorts.

2.4.2 Gerard Genette's Narrative Discourse

Genette has developed a theory of narrative poetics that may be used to address the entire inventory of narrative processes in use. According to him, every text discloses traces of narration, which can be studied in order to understand exactly how the narrative is organized.

The theory defines three fundamental entities: story, narrative and narration. The story generally corresponds to a series of events and actions that are told by someone (the narrator),

and represented in some final form, producing a narrative. Narratology looks at the internal mechanisms of narrative, to form a narrated story. (L. Guillemette & C. Lévesque, *Narratology*.)

In the field of narrative discourse, we attempt to discern what relations are possible between the elements of the narrative/story/narration triad. These relations operate within four analytical categories: mood, the narrative instance, level and time.

- Mood is whose point of view does the narrative take, while voice is who the narrator is, which are two different questions. Mood leads to a kind of focalization, meaning how the narrative is focused. A narrative may be focused internally, through a character, but it may also be focused externally, onto a character.
- Distance: Distance helps us to determine the degree of precision in a narrative and the accuracy of the information conveyed. Whether the text is a narrative of events (tells what the character is doing) or a narrative of words (tells what the character is saying or thinking), there are four types of discourse, each demonstrating progressively greater distance taken by the narrator with respect to the text, *Narratized speech*, *Transposed speech- direct and indirect*, and *Reported speech*.

Genette lists five functions that also reveal the degree to which the narrator intervenes in his narrative, based on the desired degree of detachment or involvement.

1. The narrative function: The narrative function is a fundamental one. Any time we have a narrative, this role (detachment) is assumed by the narrator, whether present in the text or not.
2. The directing function: The narrator performs a directing function when he interrupts the story to comment on the organization or articulation of his text (involvement).
3. The communication function: The narrator addresses the respondent directly (that is, the text's potential reader) in order to establish or maintain contact with him or her (involvement).
4. The testimonial function: The narrator affirms the truth of his story, the degree of precision in his narration, his certainty regarding the events, his sources of information, and the like. This

function also comes into play when the narrator expresses his emotions about the story, that is, the affective relation he has with it (involvement).

5. The ideological function: The narrator interrupts his story to introduce instructive comments or general wisdom concerning his narrative (involvement).

2.4.2.1 Narrative Instance

The narrative instance is said to be the conjunction between:

(1) Narrative voice: (i) Heterodiegetic is when one with the narrator absent from the story he tells; (ii) Homodiegetic is when the narrator is present as a character in the story he tells.

(2) Time of the narration:

- Subsequent narration: It is the most common temporal position where the narrator tells what happened in some past time.
- Prior narration: The narrator tells what is going to happen at some future time; this kind of narration often takes the form of a dream or prophecy.
- Simultaneous narration: The narrator tells his/her story at the very moment it occurs.
- Interpolated narration: This complex type of narration combines subsequent and simultaneous narration.

(3) Narrative perspective: Genette distinguishes three kinds of focalization:

- Zero focalization: The narrator knows more than the characters. He may know the facts about all of the protagonists, as well as their thoughts and gestures. This is the traditional "omniscient narrator".
- Internal focalization: The narrator knows as much as the focal character. This character filters the information provided to the reader. He cannot report the thoughts of other characters.
- External focalization: The narrator knows less than the characters. He acts a bit like a camera lens, following the protagonists' actions and gestures from the outside; he is unable to guess their thoughts.

2.4.2.2 Levels

Various reading effects result from shifts in narrative level, traditionally known as embedding. Within the main plot, the author can insert other short embedded narratives, told by other narrators from other narrative perspectives.

- Embedded narratives: Narration of the main (first-level) narrative occurs at the *extradiegetic* level. The event-story being narrated on this first level fills a second-level position, known as *intradiegetic*.
- Metalepsis: A process in which the boundary between two narrative levels is breached so as to deliberately blur the line between reality and fiction. It is a way of playing with variations in narrative level in order to create an effect of displacement or illusion. This would be a case in which a character or narrator from one level appears on the scene at a higher level, whereas plausibility completely excludes this possibility.

2.4.2.3 Time

- Order: Order is the relation between the sequencing of events in the story and their arrangement in the narrative. The term Genette uses to designate non-chronological order is *anachrony*. There are two types of anachrony:
 - (i) *Analepsis*: The narrator recounts after the fact an event that took place earlier than the present point in the main story.
 - (ii) *Prolepsis*: The narrator anticipates events that will occur after the main story ends.
- Speed: Genette identified four types of speed, taking theatre into reference, which are, Pause, Scene, Summary, Ellipsis.
- Frequency of events: This defines the relation between the number of times an event occurs in the story and the number of times it is mentioned in the narrative. These four possibilities imply four kinds of frequency relations, which are: Singulative, Repeating, Iterative.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction:

In this chapter of the study, content analysis method is chosen in respect to the movies selected which are considered as a part of Indian Parallel Cinema. To define them as what sets them into that frame, content analysis aims to identify the characteristics of the former. The following aspects are targeted to analyse the films, them being the elements of the same:

3.1.1 Characterization

3.1.2 Narrative Structure Analysis

3.1.3 Mise- en- scene Analysis

3.1.4 Semiotic Analysis

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Movie:BhuvanShome

Year of Release :1969 (India)

Directed by:MrinalSen

Duration:1 hour, 36 minutes

Characterization:

BhuvanShome is a rigid man of discipline and career life. He is a widower and his son doesn't stay with him. But, when he is out in a foreign place for his hunting trip, his behaviour expands, where he is shown humble, and more observant.

Gauri is a charming, witty young girl, who has established to have a good presence of mind, bold in behaviour and mature enough for her age in the narrative. She is dealing with her life better than the protagonist.

Gauri's father is a simple farmer. He underestimates Gauri to be immature and innocent of the world outside, which can be a contradiction to narration of the character of his daughter in the text.

Jhadav Patel is Gauri's husband; the fact is not revealed to the narrator, the protagonist and the audience till the moment of delivery of information. He's into wrong/ unlawful practices in his job at Railway. He would send letters to Gauri promising a 'together' in the near future.

Narrative Analysis:

It is early morning, when the first scene opens. A railway employee, Jhadav Patel gets a firing from his senior, called BhuvanShome. The latter is his at a higher post. He's the lead protagonist who is on his way to out of station. He decides to take a break from his routine and go for a hunting trip.

05:44 Frame size changes or shrinks as shown the protagonist thinks something to himself

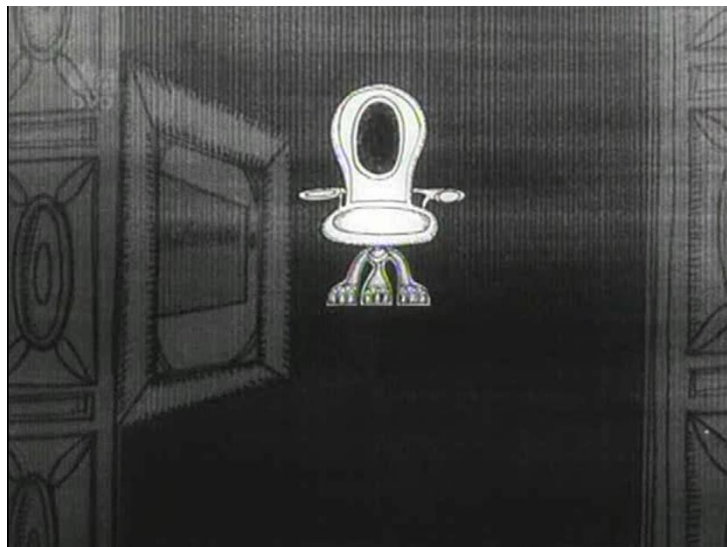
(thought is in a form of dialogue) there is a narrator in the background who stalks critically of the protagonist Bhuvanshome. It seems narrator is the alter ego of the protagonist (until both

become one in the text of the film).



(fig. 1)

08:03 Narrator is talking about the protagonist's life. He says, everyone is scared of the latter; hence, people pretend to be good on the face- value but curses him at his back, as soon as he turns away. All the while the frame is in stop motion. The protagonist is going left and then right, and then left again the clothes he is wearing changes. And back to previous while going right. This implies the change in the behaviour of people.(fig. 1)



(fig. 2)

10:30 An animation starts on the screen to describe Shome's routine life (surrealism). I believe the animation was used for the following two reasons, first, a new technique was tried at that time without the software by using hand- drawn pictures as animation; and secondly the definition of visual drops to low, that is, going from 3D to 2D to describe his vision small routine life not free. Also the animation includes the elements of his life in the frame but chooses to keep the protagonist invisible implying there is no recognition to self except for

work or routine. After the animated scene, first frame is of the same setting as the animation but now the protagonist is visible, where the narrator says that the former felt bored office routine life.(fig. 2)



(fig. 3)

12:20 "Aurpakshivisheshagayahogaye", the narrator says in the background of a scene where Shome is studying a book on birds as animated birds are flying around his head, mixing two levels of definitions in the same visual, that is, iconization and symbolism.(fig. 3)

The storyline proceeds to a morning, where Shome is on his way to hunt, commuting by a bullock cart with the driver. They enter a village, Motigaon; they come across the women of the village.



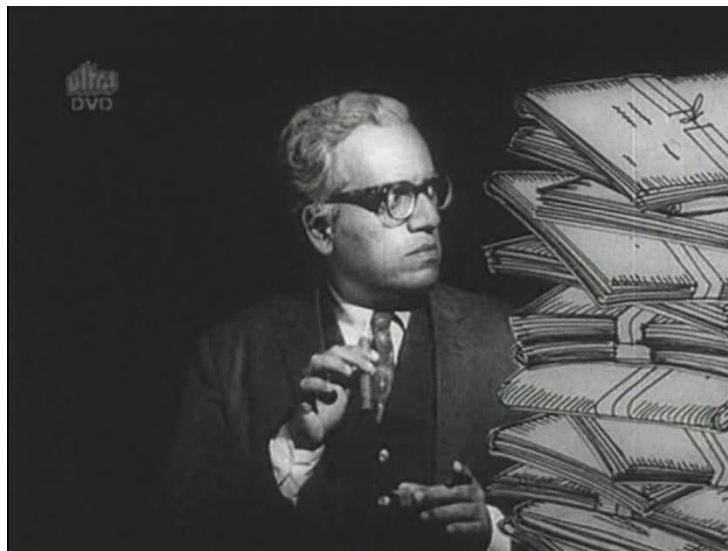
(fig. 4)

22:09 Women and small girls are walking in a group with two or three pots on their head. Both

the protagonist and the driver pause and watch those women and glance at the other man simultaneously watch the women. This implies how both the men are judging the character of other.(*fig. 4*)

24: 54 The bullock cart is passing through the fields freshly harvested where women were working. These two men are passing by the world of women (of that village).

They reach a place with the rough higher terrain. They halt facing a bull too dangerous. The next scene is of lot of running and escaping from the potential threat.



(*fig. 5*)

27:30 The scene consists of a timelapse. This draws a context to a video- game (originated in 1969) with a like music in the background. A frame of animation pops up colliding with the real visual, depicting a signifier of emotion of panic in Shome.(*fig. 5*)

The girl, Gauri is introduced in the narrative. She is the owner of the bull and takes it away with her. The men are safe now and the protagonist is left alone.



(fig. 6)

30:25 The young girl tackles the situation better than them and has a presence of mind which they don't; hence the frame poses her as superior to them.(fig 6)

In the next scene, BhuvanShome is hiding in the mangroves, trying to hunt a bird he has spotted. Coincidentally the same girl sports the bird too. Both the girl and the man come across each other and the bird flies away. This was the protagonist's first attempt to hunt which failed.



(fig. 7)

39:44 A migratory bird is walking in the mangroves. The girl is walking and following that bird, quietly in the frame. It once again shows her knowledge or wisdom (about animals and birds) in contrast to the protagonist. It is an irony in play because the narrator earlier had called him up 'pakshivisheshagya' (specialist in subject of birds).(fig. 7)



(fig. 8)

40: 05 He is standing on a height but the angle is towards the top from the ground, portraying the inevitable sky and hill in comparison to the protagonist.*(fig. 8)*

Bhuvanshome comes across another local. He tries to talk to him in Gujarati, a language so alien to him. This draws attention to an expansion on the character of BhuvanShome. The another man helps him to find his way from there, a place so foreign to him, and is grateful for the same.

In the next relevant scene, both of them, Gauri and Shome are talking where the protagonist is trying to test the girl, but the latter impresses him with her witty replies and behaviour. The girl could speak Hindi in the times when education wasn't accessible in rural areas and much lesser to women in the society; speaking in Hindi was a sign of knowledge.



(fig. 9)

46:49 the frame consists of the girl's father and Shome both are talking about her but hold very opposite viewpoints about the same. In the frame the subject matter of the talk is sitting in centre, of the background.

The father of the girl invites Shome for lunch. The father tends to underestimate his daughter as being childish and mischievous but the protagonist thinks otherwise. He is told that the girl is married to a boy working in railway as ticket collector. Shome recollects giving a firing to an employee the other morning (*analepsis*). The father leaves for work leaving the host and the protagonist behind. Shome asks the girl about the boy she is being married to you but she refuses to talk about it instead tries to divert the subject to other things about her life which you probably might be doing so for herself.

Later he surprised and disappointed to find out that the employee is her husband. He disgraces the fact deeply. In revert, she broaches the subject of BhuvanShome as her husband's senior, unknown to the fact that the man is in front of him is the same person. A conflict arises, he tells her her husband is into false practices to which she denies. She tells him that this person called Bhuvanshome, her husband employer is a harsh person,he doesn't have a polite heart. Music in the background carries implication of the tension in the air between them.

She is being told by her father that she is supposed to accompany him during hunting and teach

him how to hunt in the local way. Hence, they leave for the hunt, she asks him to change his clothes into local traditional style. Along the way she takes him to an abandoned beach bungalow for royals.



(fig. 10)

1: 05:35 Gauri is narrating a story where she talks about a swing located there previously, and imitates to have sat on a swing with her hands in the air as if she is holding the invisible ropes. To create an illusion of real experience, the camera tends to zoom in and out of the frame; also, implying a time travel in the moment. *(fig. 10)*

Later they reach sand hills before the beach starts and where the birds fluttering in the water on the shore. She tells him to go ahead and make an attempt to shoot but his second attempt fails too.



(fig. 11)

1:14:24 Both of them are sitting on the sand hill after their second attempt is unsuccessful, while the girl is thinking something and comes up with an idea. One can note that both of them has a different perspective and reactions on the same event. (fig. 11)



(fig. 12)

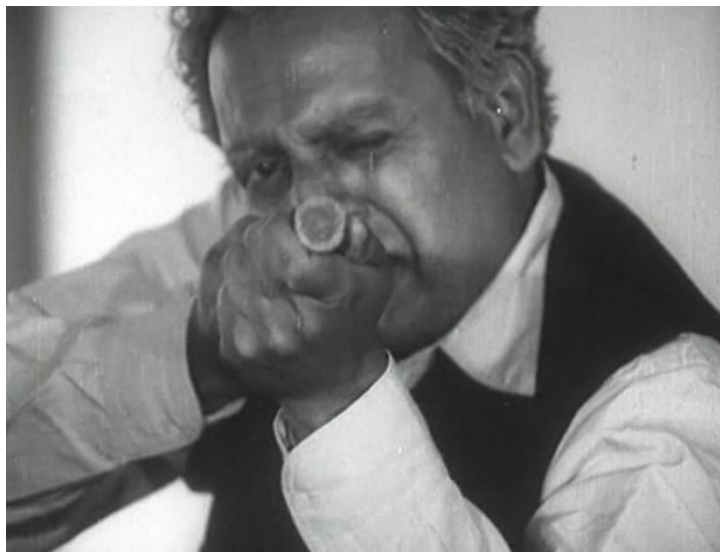
1:16:45 The frame shows both of them prepared for yet another attempt. The next frame is a montage of birds flying in the sky, in reference to the previous shot. This depicts the idea of hope, symbolically. But he fails this attempt too. The frame is in comparison to the next frame where the protagonist is looking in the mirror where one can say the mirror is reflecting him in his true conscience and which is why the character is smiling though he failed his purpose. They catch a bird but they find out it was not hit by the bullet, it wasn't dead. The girl tells him that it might have fallen down on the ground in fear of gunshot. (fig. 12)

Shome is happy even after his purpose was defeated but he found his conscience and he felt much calmer than before. The whole movie is based on his purpose of finding himself not on his mission of hunting.

Later she is walking him back to Motigaon. They come to the conclusion over their conflict on her husband's false practices and she asks him to ensure her husband is not fired. Gauri teaches him to say goodbye in Gujarati and then he leaves.

He is walking back with the bird alive. And he recalls the moments with her, and takes a U-turn to see her once again and give the bird to the girl and tells her to own it. In the next scene he returns to his routine life of work. Also he gives warning to her husband but doesn't fire him the scene depicts that show has started stepping out of his rigid life and breeds freedom thinking about her and his time spent there.

In epilogue scene(*prolepsis*), the narrator tells us that Gauri gets to join her husband in the end, as Shome does not fire him. The scene closes with a BhuvanShome finally feeling content in his life.



(fig. 13)

1: 30:35 Two frames are alternatively played on the screen. One is of alter ego in the clothes of the localite given by the girl to wear and other of the present moment. I infer that he has found his conscience to align his reality with his alter ego. In the same scene, he is shown throwing animated papers in the air which earlier was used as a symbol of panic in his character. This depicts that he has found freedom to enjoy in his routine life. (fig. 14)

General observations & Overview:

The text of the narrative consists of element of realism, where it tries to breaks the clichés on social grounds and gender stereotypes in a subtle manner. We can see that the characters are round

characters (*E.M. Foster's theory of flat and round characters*); we find depth and development of their forms as the narrative proceeds. This can be interpreted as an attempt to realism in the same. The characters of Gauri and Bhuvan Shome share a relation that is an absurd friendship due to the wide gap in their ages, both of them come from different worlds; also, because they are opposite genders.

The narrator is involved in the beginning and the end of the narrative; it tends to become the narration otherwise (*Gerard's Narrative Discourse*). It fulfils the functions of directing the audience and ideological involvement in the text. In narrative's perspective, the narrator knows more than the character in focus (*zero focalization*). We find small texts in the narrative are a mix of past and present tenses (*Interpolated narration*).

We can find the use of symbolic and iconic signifiers to portray connotations, paradigms, syntagms and semiotics throughout the text of the narrative (*Theory of Semiotics*). We also identify semantics and symbolism used in the narrative to deliver ideas, indirectly to the audience (*Roland Barthes' Narrative Codes*).

In the narration, the observations are as follows:

Use of 2D animation- depicts element of surrealism; use of stop-motion and time lapse. Attempts to create illusions of real life-like experiences through use of camera and movements. Also, the metaphors and ironies in the text are depicted through the montages and frame sequences. We can recognise leitmotif for specific montage shot of birds flying in the sky.

Movie: Om Dar-B-Dar

Year of Release:1988 (Berlin), 2014 (India)

Written and directed by:Kamal Swaroop& Kuku

Duration:1 hour, 41 minutes

Characterization:

Om: A boy who grows up to be a rebel. His character has been given an ability to hold breath longer than average in humans. He is depicted to be very knowledgeable and witty, someone who lives on in his own terms, without caring about what people would think.

Gayatri: Om's sister is an open- minded girl, of decisive nature and strong- mindedness. She considers herself no different than men. Her body language is bold and free. She helps her father in his business. She in later narrative becomes more mature, learning how to move on in life.

Babuji Shankar: Om's father is an astrologer. He's literate and a non- conservative father/ man.

Jagdish: He's an ambitious guy from JhumriTalaiya. He's attracted to Gayatri. He is a non- conservative man, but lacks emotional maturity.

Phoolkumari: A young girl struggling to be an actress, has a weird persona. Coming from a city, she's literate and has good English- speaking skills. She is portrayed to have a tendency to be make-shifty.

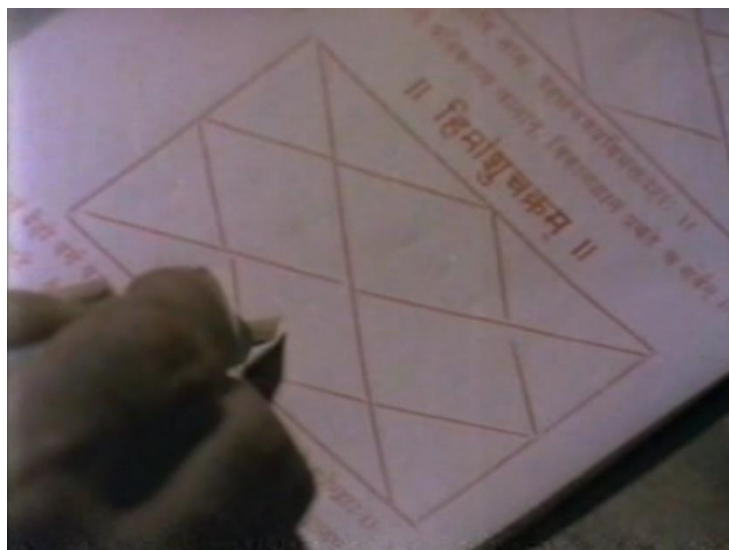
Analysis:



(fig. a)

00:20 Om is written on a wall and a small picture of satellite pops on the screen, symbol of religion and image for science. *(fig. a)*

Opening scene of a city this protagonist lives in. The boy is the narrator talks of a story saying them being previously recognised as Dalits, but later on after Partition, the situation make them call themselves Brahmins. This marks the timeline in which the narrative is set. The narration is continued to be narrated by his sister Gayatri who gives a small intro introduction on herself.



(fig. b)

03:22 An astrologer calculating the stars, is writing something but the ink is not visible. The dialogue in the background says why he named the boy as Om. "यमराजकीदृष्टिसेलापतारहेगा" Their father, Shankar is narrating on his idea of naming his son Om.(fig. b)



(fig. c)

05:40 Om has a trophy in his hand that he has won in a competition of holding the breath. He has come to a tiny bit of water which has a frog in it. These montages are the core elements of life of the character Om.(fig. c)

In the next scene, his father Shankar asks Om, "मेरेकमरेमेंरॉकेटकौनउडारहाथा?"

to which Om replies, "रूसऔरअमेरिका", once again describing the socio- political scenario of narrative having reached the era of Cold War. Also, this gives the viewers a wider perspective on Om's character as being witty and knowledgeable.



(fig. d)

07:23 Gayatri is sitting in the men's section of cinema hall. This frame is trying to break stereotypes on the impression of women in society. In the background, the film in theatre is playing a dialogue, "L for Lake of sorrow, O for Ocean of tears, V for Valley of death and E for End of life." Ironical to this, some guy takes a moment to catch up with her and mumbles 'I love you' to her, when people are exiting out of cinema hall.(fig. d)

Her trait of boldness attracts Jagdish from JhumriTalaiya, who starts dedicating songs to her on Vivid Bharti. Later on, we find the development in their relationship and which goes through changes that is given a subtle touch of realism.

Gayatri is reading a letter by Jagdish and a song plays in the background on radio -

"बबलूबेबीलॉनसे, बबलीटेलिफोनसे"

This song implies the time gap between the two people trying to capture the contrast between the two mindsets. After she completes the letter the song lyrics continue as, "zero hero fail ya pass?", delivering the question to the viewers whether the guy succeeded to impress the girl.

There is a narration by Om explaining how his father turned into a full-time astrology practitioner from the previously government job employee, dropping the hint of existence of heavy caste discrimination and stereotypes in the society. To this, in the same scene, we also find that the narrator changes to Shankar, who tries to justify his actions in the situation, giving the viewers his perspective of the same.

In the present timeline, a song is playing along with shehnai in some bridegrooms barat on the road, we find Jagdish dancing to it. This song lyrics talks about human world being an illusion, reflecting on the idea of love, money and fame as rat traps of this world which limits a person.

"मेरीजानएएए, मेरीजानबीबीबी, मेरीजानसीसीसी,

दिलटूटरहाहैजानजलरहीहै,

मिथ्याहैसंसारमायाहैसंसार" (relevant lines)



(fig. e)

19:32 Gayatri asks, "जगदीशक्यालड़कियांलड़कोंकेमददकेबिनाएवरेस्टचलसकतीहै?"

to which Jagdish replies, "पार्वतीजीचढ़ीथी" and suggests her, "तुमबी. ए. क्योंहींकरलेती?"

फ्रीहोनाऔरइंडिपेंडेंटहोनादोअलगबातेंहैं" (fig. e)

Jagdish starts working with her father as a typist, and also, teaches Gayatri to ride a cycle. One fine day Om takes the cycle for a ride and throws it off a cliff and tells Jagdish to retrieve it from the well. This part of narrative carries an element of magic realism, justifying the nature throughout the film, right from the start, where Om has a great ability to hold the breath for the longest than average human beings.



(fig. f)

23:45 Current news is playing on the radio, talking about the first time and astronaut shall walk on the moon. There is a social gathering where women are discussing the ‘trending’ definitions of social advancement and how mere wearing of a sleeveless blouse is a sign of women empowerment. This scene talks about the progress in technology and social development in the society, simultaneously in the text.

Om grows along with the story into a young boy, his character is evolved and is when introduced to the world of vices as an amateur. He starts to catch RanaTigrina (Indian bullfrog) and supplies them to school laboratories for biology experiments.

“उस काया नेपरिवर्तनकितिकटिकघड़ी, जबमेनकोनेपहनीथीघोड़ोंकीनाल, जहाजोंमेंकियाथासफर,ढूँढेथेनगर,
जहांसांपोंकाडरनहींथा।उस कायानेपरिवर्तनकितिकटिकघड़ी, जबअंगूठेपरछपाथाभविष्यपुराणतबटैडपोलोनेप्रणकिएथे, किसीअकलकीक्यावजहहै,
किसीशक्तकीक्यावजहहै, क्याइसहरिदारूरकीखालकेभीतरकिसीटैडपोलकामनबसाहै!
एकरोडलाइटकेभानपुरमेंजबबबलीकेपेटमेंगुमहुआ, उनजातियोंकीरिवर्सयात्राकेदौरानमेंउसआतंकारीटेडपोलोंकेसंपर्कमेंआया।वहांपरटरौंकासम्राटऔरकंप्यूटर्ज
कासाम्राज्यथा।सरजेरोमसिर्फनाइट्रोजनकानाशताकरताथा।आतंकारीटेडपोलोनेमेंडकबननेसेइनकारकरदियाथा।उन्होंनेनाइट्रोजनकेखिलाफहथियारउठालिएथे।औरउ
धरहाउसऑफटीग्रीनामेंटैडपोलोकोअपनेगुणोंसेअवगतकरारहेथे।” –narration by Om, he talks of the system, metaphorically.

The text emphasizes on the ideology of the system, where people are caught up to follow the authority and the rules that limit human minds to think freely. These people are called ‘frogs’ in comparison to the ‘tadpoles’ who turn out to be the rebels in the society. Om says he came in contact with the rebel in him a long time ago, before he took birth, but recently got introduced to the rebel within him.



(fig. i)

30:16 The boy in the frame is Om's friend, who wants to drop school. These kids are following the one who is being rebellious towards norms of society in the montage. This must have made Om reconsider on his life, now that he has grown up, that can be one interpretation to the significance of that text in the film.*(fig. i)*



(fig. j)

36:04 He is in a temple singing Hanuman chalisa wearing a Muslim cap and in the background the prayer of namaz is playing; an idea of secularism is been delivered to the audience indirectly. *(Indexical and Symbolical signifiers- Theory of semiotics). (fig. j)*

Meanwhile, a young girl, Phoolkumari from Bombay comes to visit his father, the astrologer.

She replaces Jagdish as typist as she carries no money to pay for her astrology readings.



(fig. k)

41:50 Phoolkumari is talking about her roles as an actress in mythological films and in the background the wall has a painting of mughal style of room. Holding a skull in her hand she says, “कुछबीताकुछबाकी”, posing for a picture. I infer the idea of ‘existentialism’ in relation to time in the text of the narrative here.(fig. k)



(fig. l)

50:15 "एकओम 15 वर्षकातोएकप्रकाशवर्षमेंकितनेओम?" -

"आउटऑफकोर्स", Om shouts in his dream sequence. The preceding frames consists of vivid imagination of Om walking door to door, all confused, croaking like a frog. This is a reference to the name of the film.(fig. l)



(fig. m)

56:02 Both the characters in the frame are composited very unusually. Positions of the characters are in reference to the widely worshipped Hindu God, Vishnu and his wife Laxmi, but here the places are interchanged, a female replaces male and vice-versa. In this scene Gayatri insists on getting physical with Jagdish and the guy is surprised as to it is very unlikely of women, in a society where sex is considered a taboo and women barely get to express about their sexual desires, breaking the cliché gender stereotypes.(fig. m)

One day, a businessman, Lala Lotamal delivers a shoe to Shankar, his astrologer. The sole of the shoe contains diamonds.

58:21 "मैं उतना ही अहिंसक होता जाऊंगा जितनी यह पिस्तौल हिंसक" says Shankar. The following frame shows a picture of Gandhi hanging on the wall sharing the same space as the character, depicting a symbolic contradictions in the text.

1: 02: 11 Another dream sequence of Om is playing; he is asked of his name, to which he replies, "ना अक्षरना मुहावरा". He is told, "अभी एक लाख गुब्बारा सांस बची है". In the whole narrative, he has never mentioned his own name.

One night Om runs away wearing the shoes, to Pushkar. There is a pond, Pretkund, as Om would call it (pond of spirits), has lot of sunken money at the bottom, that he would bring to the

surface using his ability to hold his breath. Hence, he is persuaded by a priest to use his ability to trick people at the pilgrim.



(fig. n)

1:06:28 "अगरतेरामुंतालाहैतोउसकीचाबीमेरेसपनेकोलगीहै" says Om to the priest who is half asleep, half awoken.

The following scenes consists of the priest having dream sequences, which strikes him with an idea of making easy money through Om.(fig. n)

1:14:43 The narrator of the story is now Phoolkumari who flees from the house on being accused of stealing the diamonds. She has leaves behind her one sandal behind as a cast of a spell on Shankar. We can contextualise this frame to the fairytale, Cinderella (17th century- *Cultural signifier*).

On a day, some girl at a school finds a diamond in the frog while dissecting it. The words spread and kids come to catch the frogs from the source, thereafter causing a chaos.



(fig. o)

1:16:36 The composition of the frame is juxtaposed with reference to the metaphor of frogs as the mass having lost their conscience to death in the narrative, in the timeline of scenario of ongoing global wars.*(fig. o)*



(fig. p)

1:26: 03 LalaLotamal dies on the spot the frog in the foreground; the frame is a visual mockery by comparing the character with the frog, whose population is less of one now. Soon enough, Shankar dies due to the cast of spell, leaving Gayatri alone in the house. In the following scene the era of Congress rule By Nehru is marked in the narrative, when the economy was structured as an open economy. Pushkarbecomes not only help of pilgrimage but also global tourism. The priest and Om keep up with their business of tricking people for money. One such day Om is not able to surface out of the water, and dies.*(fig. p)*



(fig. q)

1:32:48 The frame consists of the dead body of Om. The narrator of the scene, Om himself says, "मेरीसांसेहीलियममेंकबबदलीमुझेयादनहीं", describing it as yet another vivid dream sequence. In epilogue of the story, Jagdish returns to Gayatri only to find out that she has a baby now, and the household is renovated which marks the passage of time and latter is better off without anybody now. Both of them decides to commit suicide together but Jagdish does it first and by that time Gayatri changes her mind and chooses to move on with her life.(fig. q)

General observations & Overview:

This film carries characteristics of film- noir; the story is very dark and realistic, but the narrative and the narration of the same gives a twist in the perspective, which has been presented before the audience. We find elements of Realism (the relation between the characters), Surrealism (the dream sequences of the characters in the narrative) and Magic Realism (the super- ability of Om; the cycle found in well; the spell cast by Phoolkumari) in the text.

The narration is multi- perspective adhering to the different viewpoints of the characters of Om, Gayatri, and Shankar, in the same narrative space that they share (*Homodiegetic narrative instance, Gerard Genette's Narrative Discourse*).Hence, the narrator knows as much as the focal character in the scenes (*Internal Focalization*).In the narrative instance, the narrators tend to directly speak to the audience, and time and again, confirms to the occurrence of events and delivery of information.

Also, the view of characters are 360 degree, as they carry expanded personalities and develop throughout the text (*E.M. Foster's Theory of Round characters*).

We can identify Codes of Semantics and Symbols by Roland Barthes in the text of the film. There is a frequent use of hints dropped in the narration and narrative with the use of semiotics, including, Iconic, Indexical, Ideological, Syntagm, and Connotative signifiers. The dream sequences of Om, Shankar and the priest depict the syntagms.

Use of songs, news on radio, certain dialogues or conversations have been used very subtly to talk about the on- goings in society and world in parallel to the same timeline. The attempts to portray lot of contrasts, metaphors and ironies in the text through mise- en- scene, montages, frame sequences and dialogue compositions in context with each other.

4.2 Interpretation: (Summary of Content Analysis)

In the content analysis of this research, the following are the inferences that are drawn. The films analysed breaks the standards of the mainstream Bollywood commercial films. They don't necessarily have happy endings in the narrative, or flat characters. They tend to break stereotypes, clichés, and social convictions throughout the narrative without making it obvious. The narratives do not deliver easy and accessible information to the audience, rather tries to involve them in the process of contemplation to make sense of the text/ story. They are forced to push their mind and extend out to new fresh ideas and perspectives, which rather show or depicts a re-creation of brutal reality, attempting to not destroy or cover the rawness in the same. The narratives do not satisfy the viewers or make them feel comfortable in their blurred, limited zones with the idea of utopia.

We understand that the auteurs of Indian Parallel Cinema thrive on the idea of dialectical materialism, where the narratives of the films tend to ponder over the subject of meaning of life

and 'existentialism'; raises questions against the system and the society. We find characters that are realistic or life-like, have a depth in their personality. Also, they go through changes or development as the narrative progresses. A viewer receives wider perspective of the narrative that is more likely in relation to the characters. The scenes are open-ended many times and human minds are expected to extract varied interpretations of the text. We find different elements that have been presented are experiments to establish new radical ways of narration of the text, for example, the 2D animation, use of Syntagm in montages, and semiotics injected in between the lines of the narrative. Also, leitmotif has been used in a clever manner. The films do away with dance numbers, or songs, except for in the background pertaining to the narrative, but not as a separate element. We can identify the traits of film-noir in the narrative, where women are depicted as 'femme fatale', the storylines are extreme and dark, where the protagonists are not optimistic or a model of morals for the viewers. The dialogue compositions are unusual, and set carefully in the mise-en-scene.

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION

In this research study, two films by the auteurs of Indian Parallel Cinema were picked. Both of them decades apart, one in black and white (*BhuvanShome* by *MrinalSen*- 1969), and other in colour (*Om Dar-B- Dar* by *Kamal Swaroop*- 1988). The former was the film that is said to have marked the beginning of Indian New Wave, while the latter is a very experimental film which was released 25 years later.

After having studied the background of avant- garde film movements across the world which marked new ways of film- making, and grammar of cinema, we have carefully drawn inferences. The observations consist of interpretation of analysis of narrative structure, semiotics, and mise- en- scene, which points out the different aspects and features of Indian Parallel Cinema. These characteristics of the same makes it stand wide apart from the mainstream commercial films.

The observations point towards the new elements used in both the films, like giving the femme fatale twist to the women characters, and adding montages of 2D hand- drawn animation. The characters in these films carry depth in their personality, portrayed to have traits which are life- like and real. Also, there are subtle ways in which the narrative has been captured the lens of realism, surrealism and magic realism. We find montages and frame sequences that speak symbolically, through semiotics. One who has a wider perspective can connect the dots easily and might have fun watching films like these. Such movies are not meant to deliver any moral lessons or models to idolize, they simply portray life of certain characters/ people in different situations through a passage of time.

This subject has further scope of study. There are gaps identified in form of many other untapped aspects that can filled. Some of them are as follows:

- Comparison between the Bollywood and Indian Parallel Cinema
- Types of audiences and Indian Parallel Cinema

- The debate of today whether extremist films coming from Bollywood directors can be called a part of Indian Parallel Cinema (for example, Gangs of Wasseypur, Dev- D, Lunchbox)
- Experimental films made by anonymous or new film- makers (Catsticks by RonneySen)

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