

Speaking through Troubled Times

Moinak Biswas

I would like to talk about the encounter between cinema and a moment in our political history in this essay. Is it possible to identify the voices that cinema sifts out of a time, and make them narrate to us a story that was there in the films but not told? I would like to ask that question about the cusp of the nineteen sixties and seventies.

1.

There now exists a sizeable literature on the relationship between history and cinema. Academic historians have looked at the relationship mainly in terms of representation of the past. The fragile status that facts attain in a popular medium was the starting point of historians' serious engagement with film, the more sophisticated version of which took up the issue of concretization of the past on screen, the process of giving body to a time that is gone, and the necessary ambivalence that it brings on. The other focus of the discussion has been narrative of course, the relationship of the events in history as they appear on screen. Since the larger historians' debate had narrative as the cardinal point of contention - narrativity as a category came to problematize the entire question of truth-telling in historiography in the wake of semiotic criticism - the filmic imperatives of sequencing of events from the past has been another cause of concern. Professional historians such as Natalie Davis and Robert Rosenstone have written on these questions quite extensively^[1], as have Daniel Walkowitz, R. C. Raack and Robert Brent Toplin, all of whom have developed strong ties with film and television production, as advisors and screenwriters^[2]. There were earlier instances of engagement between the historian and the cinema from Europe (the writings of Marc Ferro for example^[3]). History journals since the seventies have occasionally organized special issues on the subject. Film historians have joined these debates in

their turn. They have offered conceptual inputs from Film Studies regarding the status of the historical experience in film^[4]; reflected on the construction of memory through cinema^[5], or alternately, presented the instance of film history itself as an illustration of the problem history in film^[6].

There is a third way that would have pleased Gilles Deleuze. One where we shift our attention from the dualism of reality/history and film to the conjunction itself, to the 'and' in film and history. I suppose one consequence of such a shift, if it were to occur, would be to treat the cinematic events as part of the same weave of reality which contains other signs of history, including the ones held in documents and history books. Once it is admitted to the flow that joins with the present, the cinematic writing of that past can be deflected from its truth claims and placed in a field of writing - the contest over the past, the ongoing work of undoing received images. Rather than focusing on ossified relations and absolute claims about that-was-how-it-was the film can then be treated as what it always is - an attempt at projecting itself into another space and time. Its durations and movements, its specific modes of joining acts into a sequence - rather than the sequence itself - can reveal the connections of history that we are yet to explore.

I would like to do something different yet not very far from this in this essay. I would like to look at the possibility of cinema working on the documentation of a time, where the document is not given in representation in the direct sense, and is possibly not even identifiable in the film at the moment of its arrival, but becomes available when the film is brought into contact with another time, our time. This will be an inquiry not about the relationship of cinema and the past, but between a time and its own films, a time that is close to us in history but that we now feel belongs definitely to the past; we experience a break with it. The historians have also turned their attention to cinema's spontaneous documentation of its own time and space, not only of the past. But I am thinking of the possibility of 'becoming evidence' of things through cinema - things that are, paradoxically, not presented as objects or

bodies, but are nevertheless inscribed in the body of the film. I would like to ask if a number of (Bengali) films from the turn of the of the sixties now conjure up for us a figure in history, an entity that was not central to that history, but was its essential product, a presence that can only be given a volume from the perspective of the present.

What we call 'the seventies' in the India stretch from the late sixties to the early years of the following decade. For Bengal, one could mark a beginning with the hunger marches of 1966 and the end, nationally, with the lifting of the Emergency in 1977. The intervening years were marked by waves of militant peasant and student movements and ruthless state retaliation. It synchronized with revolutionary eruptions across the globe, from China, Australia and Sri Lanka to France, Germany and Mexico, from Czechoslovakia and Italy to England and America. In most of these places the moment is called 'the sixties'. The revolution dreamt of a new order, but what really became a new source of enunciation was not a society or a regime, but the rupture itself, brought on by the uncanny synchronization of the revolt of the youth all over the planet. Thirty years on, the cinema that succeeded in incorporating the rupture in its body seems to hand us the remains of the times in unexpected shapes. I shall be concerned in this essay with these shapes as voices. The cinema that bore the traces of rupture was in effect much wider than the films which we can call Brechtian, the disaggregated form found in the politically committed minority cinema of the time. We should think about the more intriguing phenomenon of the effect of disintegration across the spectrum of filmmaking.

The most prominent instance of politically engaged experiments were Mrinal Sen's films. His use of self-reflexive techniques took a decisive shape in *Bhuvan Shome* (1969), the film that signaled the onset of the 'New Wave'. The seventies saw the second and more successful wave of the film society activity in India, which was at that time the only base for serious film criticism. The debate on political cinema took on a special intensity in the film society magazines and seminars. Sen's *Interview* (1970), *Calcutta 71* (1972),

Padatik (1973) and *Chorus* (1974) served as an impetus for this critical discourse. One also remembers the startling shift to a Brechtian idiom in Ritwik Ghatak's *Jukti Takko Ar Gappo* (*Arguments and Stories*) in 1974 (released in 1977). However, we can now see what eluded the film society debates at that point - a much wider ripple of change across films, beyond the confines of the art cinema. The forms that had stabilized over the previous fifteen years or so came to a crisis at that moment, making space for new, indeterminate ones. If one is thinking of film and history connections it is important to look for the traces of dissonance left on the cinema that did not have any apparent political purpose.

Something rather curious happened to the popular melodrama. The core of the genre split and gave rise to a number of hesitant but highly interesting attempts at formulating a response to the political and social upheaval. To follow this process one should perhaps look at a star persona rather than filmic enunciation directly. The star in question is Uttam Kumar, who, while still lending the Bengali melodrama its primary identity, undergoes a significant transformation. I have in mind such films as *Nabarag* (1971), *Ekhane Pinjar* (1971), *Bikele Bhorer Phul* (1974), *Jadubangsha* (1974), *Baghbandi Khela* (1975) or *Nagar Darpane* (1975) where he suddenly becomes old, appears in the actual or putative role of an 'elder brother'. Around the middle of the 1950s, the new bourgeois melodrama in Bengal tried to synthesize a 'vernacular' version of the citizen, largely, I would like to suggest, by refracting the urban experience through the 'body' of Uttam Kumar. The project at hand was to anchor the cosmopolitan figure in a region, in a dialect if you like, but also to gather the affect of the city into the actor's extended presence. In my research on this period I have been trying to find out a way of talking about the elements that went into the making of the star's body. One can sense, for example, how important Uttam Kumar's voice was in that construction, how it lent materiality to a fantasy figure of the middle class Bengali male. One could talk about diction, about the melodic specificity of that voice, and certainly about the compound entity it

created in conjunction with the playback singer Hemanta Mukherjee – perhaps the most enduring of the ephemera that shaped the fantasy figure, the cultural class identity, in question. But it is not easy to isolate such things from the totality of the effects of presence on the screen. And it is even more difficult to figure the voice itself in its purity, as something that is not speech, not any specific use of the voice, and yet can be abstracted from all its uses. I shall try to speak both about speech and this other dimension – the voice – in what follows.

The star suddenly grows old in the new films, grows a brooding, melancholy presence as he is presented in confrontation with a younger, disaffected lot. We witness in the process a dispersal of what the star body assimilated in the early phase of composition. Uttam Kumar, as we mentioned, is often an elder brother, a 'dada' in these films. This figure emerges in the process of a generic shift, where the lone romantic hero gives way to groups of drifting, despairing, angry youth in a number of films; the street protagonists occupy the screen. Tapan Sinha's *Apanjan* (1968), *Ekhoni* (1971) and *Raja* (1975) come to mind as the most familiar examples of this shift; but Purnendu Pattrea, Dinen Gupta, Parthapratim Chowdhury and Yatrik also need to be mentioned. Besides the films already cited one could think of *Ajker Nayak* (1972), *Chhera Tamsuk* (1974) and *Chander Kachhakachhi* (1976). The moments where Uttam Kumar comes to confront another generation, mostly the disaffected youth, in these films show that the standard melodrama was indeed undergoing a transformation. Some memorable instances of such confrontations are to be found in *Jadubangsha*. One can remember the scene where Dhritiman Chatterjee and his gang come to Gana-da's shop to demand the money that the latter owed to them. Gana-da, Uttam Kumar, was their boyhood idol in the small town, the leader they looked up to. He used to organize morning processions with them on the Independence Day. Now he owns a rundown store of oil and soaps, and looks the pathetic loser he is. His disciples gradually drag him down into abject humiliation. They become fully aware of what they have achieved once they leave the store having extracted

the last two five rupee notes from the man. Then we see Gana-da in a long shot sitting at the counter, surrounded by stacks of worthless commodities, his head buried in the old typewriter. Conversation, face to face exchange, takes on a new vividness and intensity in the films from the period, of which we see here a particularly poignant instance. The star adopts a new speech, brings a new timber into his voice, accentuates his age as he faces a generation that has come to question every legacy of its forebears. We shall see such encounters, and meet this elder brother, quite a few times.



Jadubangsha

2.

For political film criticism, largely centered in the film societies, the choices narrowed down. Mainstream cinema was denounced for its conformism; on the other hand, the figurehead of the realist alternative, Satyajit Ray, was seen to be failing to speak to the present, falling short of the political

commitment that the hour called for. Chidananda Das Gupta, Ray's close colleague, wrote in 1966 that "(T)he Calcutta of the burning trams, the communal riots, refugees, unemployment, rising prices and food shortages does not exist in Ray's films"^[7]. This soon became a widely shared opinion in the left-wing circles, and was not entirely without its reasons. The moment certainly had its own demands to make on the artist; but Ray as an artist was in no position to practice a political cinema of the kind the new political passion demanded. For us the more interesting question, however, is how his cinema felt its own crisis, felt it to be real. As we set about reading the traces of the times, it is important to see how he both stayed away from a certain politics and also opened his carefully nurtured form to the invasion of an explosive present.

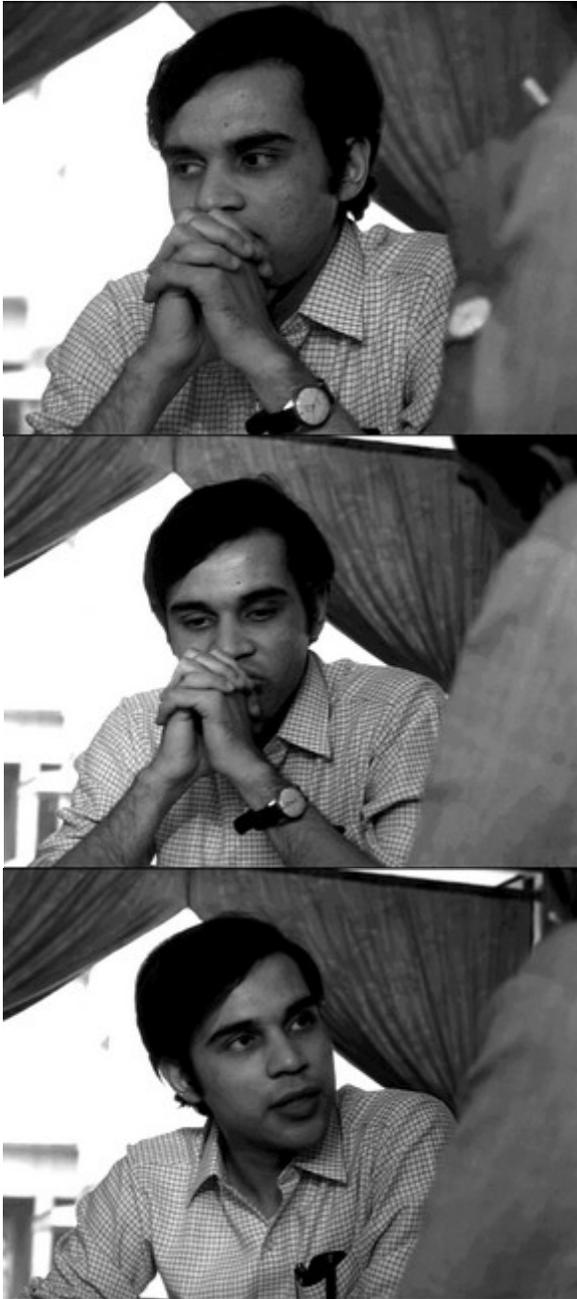
As Ray returns to the city in *Pratidwandi* (*The Adversary*, 1970) his art seems to suffer a kind of decomposition, something that looks symptomatic now. The unemployed protagonist appears in the film as an unanchored, floating being. Through what looks like an accumulation of effects rather than a chain of unified action, he is put together before our eyes as an anatomical entity. And the film underscores this procedure by citing anatomy lessons from the hero's unfinished medical education. Limbs, faces, fleeting gestures connected to the street, the crowded bus, the random assembly, cafes and terraces - the narrative is nothing but a record of a wandering through moments of suspension^[8]. This progression is precisely where the city leaves its mark. This city-cinema contact is not reducible to an object-image relation; it is not merely a question of cinema representing the city, but of one form mimicking another. I would like to call the temporal object that cinema faces at such moments the 'city as the present', where space manages to emit signals of time, acquires the charge of a fraught moment in time. It often entails a loosening of the grip of narrative discipline over naturalist dispersal. The style of Ray's city series, *Pratidwandi*, *Seemabaddha* (*Company Limited*, 1971) and *Jana Aranya* (*The Middle Man*, 1975), was more or less unpopular - he was not saying enough, it was thought. On the

other hand, it also seemed he was losing his familiar formal elegance. It now looks more useful to see at what was happening to his language rather than his scheme of representation.

Speech in its ordinary sense comes to take on an uncanny function - if we take the word 'uncanny' in its sense of 'homelessness'^[9]. Ray's technique at this point is only a symptom of what becomes an obsession over many films: dialogue tends to break up into a number of non-dialogic items. I shall identify three of them: speech as demagoguery; the job interview; and the one-way conversation. The demagogue's harangue is meant to be one-sided; and the political orator makes frequent appearances in the films. At times the loudspeaker helps the voice step beyond the ridiculous body of the speaker. In Tapan Sinha's *Apanjan* one has an early example, where the leader's quotation of a Tagore poem reaches the highpoint of farce as the last words of the verse ("Adh morader gha mere tui bancha") come from the loudspeaker at an election rally rather than the gesticulating figure on the stage that the camera had been watching till then. The interview is also re-ordered as one-way speech: a series of speakers on the other side of the table, sometimes within the same frame, lending each other's words an echo so that the whole room becomes a sonic chamber of torture. Mrinal Sen made an entire film on the build-up to an interview (*Interview*); *Pratidwandi* and *Jana Aranya* place it at important narrative turns; Tapan Sinha's *Ekhoni* has a version where the board of selectors lapse into a multi-language game as the candidate looks on; nobody knows why.

Towards the end of *Pratidwandi* comes the speechless reaction to this sonic set-up for the job-seeker. The waiting, sweating, tautened Sidhartha is suddenly - as if by the stilled time itself - galvanized into action. He barges into the interview board room and starts turning the furniture over in blind rage. This is at the second interview in the film. At the first one he chose to be quiet, accepted the fact that his honest answers were useless. He answered what he thought was a political question, only to find out it was a matter of General Knowledge. In the scene following that first interview,

Siddhartha meets an older acquaintance in a café. He wanted to spend some quiet time with a cup of tea. This gentleman spots him and joins him. From their conversation we come to know he is Naresh-da. He sits with his back to us as he talks to Siddhartha, we never see him properly. The figure is that of a leader, a dada at large. His person is here one of those many obstacles in the line of sight that in general determine the re-directed vision as the city enters the cinematic frame. His voice is largely skewed away from the speaking mouth, so that what we receive is what Sarge Daney has called a 'through voice'^[10]. It overlaps at times with Siddhartha's inner speech as we hear the latter's comments voice off. Dialogue becomes elusive: on this side, presence not wholly visible, on the other, speech not fully articulated.



Pratidwandi

What does the voice offer as salvation? Three options: Why not join the party? Why not become a factory hand? Why not find some small job away from the city? This is a more or less exhaustive catalogue of Sidhartha's choices in life, as also of his incapacities. He says later that he wants to join the revolution once it starts but cannot work for it now unlike his militant younger brother. He cannot, as a true member of his class, accept the factory worker's life. And finally, he cannot leave the city even though it is

increasingly becoming a nightmare. All these answers come out in the course of the film. Ray started to explore this immobility in *Aranyer Din Ratri* (1969) in terms of ethical inaction and compromise. In the city films it takes on increasingly dark dimensions. In *Jana Aranya*, the fixer Natabar Mitra, in a grotesque version of the café conversation, subjects the protagonist Somnath to a chilling series of questions from across the table. By now, with middle class radicalism already in disarray, the catalogue of choices has become one purely of incapacities: "Can you lay down your life for an ideal?" Natabar asks Somnath, "Can you work as an errand boy in a firm?"; "Do you have the resolve to work as a labourer in a factory?" Three questions pretty similar to *Pratidwandi*, the difference being all of them are followed by a 'No, you can't' from the interrogator himself. The big question on the table is if the hero should not act as a pimp to bag a lucrative supply order. Natabar (played by Rabi Ghosh) shows how it is not a matter of morality, but of being not able to act.



Jana Aranya

Conversation with the dada/leader is thus the third item in this sonic series of unsettled unities. Once again, a number of films across the stream feature such scenes. *Jana Aranya* has a dumb leader talking to the unemployed hero and his friend. But the real climax comes with Parthapratim Chowdhury's *Jadubangsha*: the lumpen protagonists meet a local notable to ask for a job. It is discovered after some conversation that the 'brother' is deaf. Is it on a pure whim that Ray used his own voice for the present-absent interlocutor in

that café in *Pratidwandi*? Or was it a moment when the author owned up to his position in the conversation with another generation, found the figure in the frame which would approximate his own, exposed its fragile authority? Whatever it was that led Ray to the decision of dubbing for Naresh-da, the logic of dissociation, the unusually restless style of the film, or what we called the openness to the invasion of the times, did prepare a space for the author to step in and say he does not fully understand the new protagonists.

Michel Chion has famously called the voice without an apparent source 'acousmatic' - a term that he borrows from a Greek practice in which the new disciples of Pythagoras were obliged to spend five years in silence listening to their master speak from behind a curtain before they could see him. The entity that emerges with such unanchored source of enunciation is the 'acousmetre'. Chion considers the voice wandering over the surface of the film, "awaiting a place to attach to", one that is neither inside nor outside the figure or the scene, to hold the "real and specific power" of cinema. In classical construction "the presence of a body structures the space that contains it"; Chion and his colleagues in the new sound theory would say "the presence of a human voice structures the sonic space that contains it"^[11]. And the voice torn away from the speaking person makes us aware of its existence beyond the individual acts of speaking - as a general aural dimension, so to speak. It belongs to the Other in that sense, as does the gaze, which is a general dimension of vision rather than a specific look belonging to a person. In *Voice in Cinema*, Chion shows how the acousmetre can function as a controlling entity in the plot. In the films at hand, the political demagogue often presents the comic and hideous version of the monopolist of speech. We have good demonstrations besides Tapan Sinha - in Ghatak's *Jukti Takko Ar Gappo*, and in *Pratidwandi* itself. As Sidhartha and his girlfriend watch from the top of a commercial high-rise building, the voice of a political orator envelops the squalid lay of the city below. The panorama from the top introduced the city as a narrative horizon in many films of the time; now this cloud of a voice hangs over it. In other instances

the camera would leave the orator and focus on the loudspeaker - the most enduring acousmatic instrument handed down to us from the age of revolution.

But the Naresh/Ray voice in the café should not be reduced to a controlling agency deliberately non-dialogic in nature. As he joins the table the older man says he has been watching Siddhartha for some time. We do not know from where; and we are barred from looking at him by his very presence in the frame - quite an unusual thing to happen in a Ray film. Siddhartha's soliloquy says, "Please do not give me a lecture". But this is also a voice that tries to connect, even to sympathize with Siddhartha. It does not really choose to be one-sided, it rather *fails* to talk to him. A parallel can be drawn with Ritwik Ghatak's own presence among the Maoist militants at the end of *Jukti Takko* - another instance of the author stepping into the frame to expose his fraught relationship with the new protagonists. He also fails in the conversation; the technical failure of synchronization in the scene, ironically, enhances the effect of soliloquy that ensues as a consequence. What Nilkantha/Ghatak says does not seem to succeed in getting across the gulf of darkness in the frame to his captor listeners. This failure throws into relief a figure from the other side of the age divide so central to these films. The older man, often held responsible for the whole predicament, fails to have the conversation he desperately seeks, not the least because he has begun to recognize his own hand in the destruction of the young. Naresh-da facing Siddhartha; Siddhartha facing his brother Tunu in turn; Nilkantha Bagchi facing the Naxalites; Gana-da facing the lumpens. The elder brother rather than the father, this figure is the intimation of a story that the films could not tell.

Ray left his star Soumitra Chatterjee to cast new actors in his city films (even though, in *Tin Bhubaner Pare*, 1969, Soumitra played the role of the leader of a group of street youths). An already consolidated star persona did not seem to suit the mode of articulation that these films adopted. We have mentioned earlier how the central star of the industry undergoes a

transformation as he confronts the youth, younger actors or moral opposition. It is remarkable how the star finds it hard to maintain his overbearing persona, and is afflicted with failure, desolation and even madness in films like *Jadubangsha*, *Ekhane Pinjar*, *Nabarag*, *Baghbandi Khela* or *Nagar Darpane*. Here, in the more impersonal cinema, it is not the director but the star as author who steps in, stands across the divide.

One has to extend Chion's definition a little for the cafe scene in *Pratidwandi*. The figure is not really absent; it is more accurate to say that the sonic method betrays a distrust of the one who is present. It is a moment where one might want to pause to think of the history of a director who placed so much value on what is available to perception. Chion's inventory of the acousmetre across periods and genres in *Voice in Cinema* leaves out the task of identifying specific historical constellations - those moments in twentieth century when the acousmetre returned, haunted the screen more powerfully than ever. This political history can be studied over the individual career of a director or through films converging on a given moment. Such approach would also call for a reading of the extension of the meaning of a single technique - say, the unanchored voice - into others, to all those that rend the Imaginary apart.

3.

A little before he identified himself with the sixties Maoism, Jean-Luc Godard made *La Chinoise* (1967), a film about a tiny group of urban revolutionaries who spend a 'Marxist-Leninist vacation' in an empty apartment. The film looked like a caricature of revolution, but was later considered uncannily prescient about May 68 and its aftermath. The philosopher Jacques Ranciere, in his recent book on cinema, calls this 'Marxism as "object lesson"', whose method, he says, can be summed up by a statement of Louis Althusser from the preface to *Reading Capital*:

I venture to suggest that our age threatens one day to appear in the history of human culture as marked by the most dramatic and difficult trial of all, the discovery and training in the meaning of the 'simplest' acts of existence: seeing, listening, speaking, reading – the acts which relate men to their works, and to those works thrown in their faces, the 'absences of work'.^[12]

When we see a word we don't hear it, and when we hear an image we don't see it. Ranciere calls this the principle of the metaphor, the way reality is ordered for our apprehension. In his words, the political form "gets us to hear words and see images in their dissociation, though not via some sort of utopian separation, but by keeping them together in their problematic relation in one and the same frame."^[13]

Pratidwandi begins with funereal chants; Siddhartha's father's corpse is shown being carried out of the house in negative images. The film ends with another funeral chant, in Hindi. In between, there is a sound that weaves in a motif; it's a bird-call. Siddhartha tries to find out the name of the bird, once even tries to locate it in the bird market. At the end, this call is joined to the sound of the funeral procession. The bird chirping from a hidden source does not have much to do with dissociation; it can be used just to enhance the solidity of the backdrop. But why this uncharacteristic sequencing of sounds in the finale? Siddhartha arrives in a small town, having taken up a modest job. As he enters the town we hear his voice narrating a letter to his girlfriend. Towards the end it says he wants to talk about some 'ordinary' thing that has happened. The voice/letter then leaves off; we hear the bird-call. Is that what he was going to talk about? The bird fades into the ominous chant for the dead; and then we arrive at writing: an inscription from the letter on the screen, 'yours Siddhartha'. The director's response to the times is this rejection of the wholeness of speech, something that he had painstakingly learnt once. It is a movement from the word to sound to inscription, a figuring of the interval, something that another philosopher has specified as the real movement of cinema.^[14]

If one wants to talk about the reflexive form the most obvious example from the period would be the films of Mrinal Sen. I have not discussed them precisely because they have been recognized in terms of the technique of dissociation, concerned as we are with the cinema that was not recognized as political. It is nevertheless interesting to find that Mrinal Sen's films, the most familiar example of political cinema from the period, the closest parallel to Godard's, do not quite explore the body or the voice in this manner. What they use instead are commentaries, reflective voice-overs and subjective voice-off remarks. Is it because he could articulate a definite political position, could actually bridge the gulf as an author with the new protagonists of history? The reflective voice-over that he often uses is more suited to such a participatory mode than a voice that de-materializes the weight of presence. His use of loop sound for the documentary shots of the masses on the street (eg., *Padatik*) is also to be noted in this context. I say this without doubting the value of taking sides at that moment of reckoning, but the real destabilization of the form came in the films where the authorial voice hovers close not to the young hero, but to someone who is trying to connect, trailing in the shadows, falling behind. I am calling him the elder brother in an extended sense. Siddhartha's conversation with his militant younger brother in this sense presents the obverse of the café scene. If we extracted this voice from a clutch of films and placed it on a virtual axis of kinship we could perhaps glimpse the contending claims on bearing witness to a historical juncture. Are there other claimants to the place of the subject in that epoch? One has to abandon the project of putting in place a unified person or 'self' in order to recognize this particular struggle over history.

What becomes visible in the form from this perspective is a mode of capturing the interval, which, almost by default, leaves the space for immobilized figures to emerge into vision - for those who would live through the revolution, live in its shadows, will probably fail it, but will not remain the same. I understand that the figure can only be glimpsed with hindsight, but it is with some surprise that we find non-representative characters coming to

occupy the centre in late narratives about the 'seventies'. This began to happen once the first phase of portrayal of the decade was over. I am thinking of Akhtarujjaman Elias' *Chilekothar Sepai* (1987), a novel about the revolutionary turmoil in East Pakistan in 1969, where we see a man confined to his attic, unable to join the surging masses on the streets. The revolution implodes in him, releasing a radical mode of connecting historical phases of suffering and revolt through a delirium. Nabarun Bhattacharya's *Herbert* (1992, and Suman Mukhopadhyay's film, 2006) places an insane older cousin of the Naxalite rebel at the centre of a narrative that brings the events of the seventies to an unforeseen culmination in the present. The discomfort about the film among the left stemmed from this strange displacement of the familiar protagonist. Another remarkable example is the conman in Sudhir Mishra's *Hazaron Khwaishein Aise* (2005). As we come to the end of the historical account of the Naxalbari movement in the film we suddenly realize it is not the revolutionary characters, but the man without commitment, the manipulator who knew how to survive, has survived the worst, and bears the marks of injury most vividly. These figures remind us that the signs of an epoch are not always deciphered through its heroes. The voice skewed away from the body, from the speaking subject, holds the possibility of the incarnation in cinema of the others who live through such moments.

References:

¹ See, for example, Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Movie or Monograph? A Historian/Filmmaker's Perspective', *The Public Historian*, 25:3 (Summer, 2003) where Davis narrates her experience on the production of *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Daniel Vigne, 1983). Davis has a book on *Slaves on Screen: Film and Historical Vision*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000). See Robert A. Rosenstone, 'History in Images/History in Words: Reflections on the Possibility of Really Putting History onto Film', *The American Historical Review*, 93:5 (December, 1988), and 'The Reel of Joan of Arc: Reflections on the Theory and Practice of the Historical Film', *The Public Historian*, 25:3 (Summer, 2003). Rosenstone's latest book on the subject is *History on Film/Film on History* (Sydney: Longman/Pearson, 2006). According to him an important event in the American historians' engagement with cinema was the *AHR* (*The American Historical Review*) Forum on the issue held in 1988. The papers from the forum were compiled in the *AHR* issue cited above; see also contributions by Hayden White, David Herlihy, John O'Connor and Robert Brent Toplin (cited below) in the issue.

[2](#) See for example, Daniel J. Walkowitz, 'Visual History: The Craft of the Historian-Filmmaker', *The Public Historian*, 7:1 (Winter, 1985); R.C. Raack, 'Historiography as Cinematography: A Prolegomenon to Film Work for Historians', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18:3 (Jul., 1983); Robert Brent Toplin, 'The Filmmaker as Historian', *The American Historical Review*, 93:5 (Dec., 1988), and 'Cinematic History: Where Do We Go from Here?', *The Public Historian*, 25:3 (Summer, 2003).

[3](#) Ferro has a book in French on cinema and history; see his 'Film as an Agent, Product and Source of History', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18:3 (Jul. 1983).

[4](#) See for example, Tom Gunning, 'Making Sense of Films'
<<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/film/>>

[5](#) See Thomas Elsaesser, "'One train may be hiding another": private history, memory and national identity', *Screening the Past*, Issue 6, 1999

<<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/reruns/rr0499/terr6b.htm>>.

[6](#) See, for example, Roberta Pearson, 'Conflagration and contagion: eventalization and narrative structure', *Screening the Past*, Issue 6, 1999
<<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/firstrelease/fr0499/rpfr6g.htm>>

[7](#) Das Gupta, 'Satyajit Ray: The First Ten Years', in *Talking about Films* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1981), p. 72.

[8](#) See for a discussion of *Pratidwandi* Supriya Chaudhuri, 'In the City', in Moinak Biswas ed. *Apu and After: Revisiting Ray's Cinema* (London and Calcutta: Seagull, 2006).

[9](#) As in the German word 'unheimlich' that Freud referred to in his 'The Uncanny (1919, *The Penguin Freud Library*, Vol. 14, edited by Albert Dickson, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990)

[10](#) Daney, 'The Organ and the Vacuum Cleaner' (1983), in Denis Hollier and Jeffrey Mehlman ed. *Literary Debates: Texts and Contexts*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer and others (New York: New Press, 1999).

[11](#) Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), and *Audio-Vision, Sound on Screen*, edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman, with a foreword by Walter Murch (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

[12](#) Althusser, cited in Jacques Ranciere, 'The Red of *La Chinoise*, Godard's Politics', in *Film Fables*, trans. Emiliano Battista (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2006) p. 144.

[13](#) Ranciere, 'The Red of *La Chinoise*, Godard's Politics', p. 148.

[14](#) Alain Badiou, 'The False Movements in Cinema', in *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, trans. Alberto Toscano (Stanford : Stanford University Press, 2005).