Live(li)ness and Network Publics in Post-Liberalization Indian Popular Films

Abhijit Roy

One

One house, ten contestants, thirty cameras, forty microphones, one murder…and no evidence. Ben Elton's breathtaking whodunit *Dead Famous*[1] takes the special challenge of revealing the murderer right within the last episode of the reality TV show 'House Arrest', 'live' on day sixty-three, starting 9.30 pm. But there's a little problem: despite inspector Coleridge's conviction that it is none other than the producer of the show, Ms. Geraldine Henessy who has killed Kelly Simpson, one of the inmates, there is no evidence, nothing. The only way out for the investigator is to push the assassin to a confession by gradually unfolding an elaborate and piercing logic, by making 'Banquo's ghost' appear at the feast, as inspector Coleridge, a lead-role aspirant for *Macbeth*, puts it. While the ghost waits in the wings, we watch and hear Coleridge perform with great confidence, putting his own 'honest theatre' up with concocted videos, moments of suspense and unfailing doses of moral persuasion. What transpires is that Ms. Henessey killed Kelly in the lavatory 'live'…but not quite. Her accomplice, the ace editor of the production house 'Peeping Tom', fed into the live flow of images the video in which she herself acted as the victim. While the audience believed that this was a live image, Henessy went out of the editing room to the lavatory, killed Kelly within the duration of the video and came back to the edit room at a time when Kelly was still seen sitting on the commode. The audience across the world, along with the killer, watches the murder on screen a little later than the moment of the real murder.

The novel offers some significant cues for re-examining the debates on live television or the phenomenon of liveness in general. The first of course is that the synchronicity of the moment of viewing with the moment of recording is not a necessary condition for a scene to appear as live. In order

for a scene to appear as live, it has to *look* and *sound* live, which surely depends as much on a certain audiovisual configuration as on the moment of watching. This brings us to the second point: it is more the 'moment of watching' than the 'moment of recording' that determines the 'sense of liveness'; since it is possible to imagine a disjunction between these two moments. The moment of watching is definitely the moment of transmission, in the case of TV. This, however, not only involves a technological edifice but also an epistemological framework, the knowledge that the two moments are same. As long as this knowledge shapes the viewer's engagement with the scene, the sense of liveness flows unhindered. What is crucial is a network of audience bound by the information that 'this is coming live to us'. If this temporality is inalienably attached to a certain trope of knowledge, surely this is a discursive construct embedded in politics and is not exclusively determined by the actual technological condition that classically produces liveness. But more than anything else, the novel, like many of its contemporary fictional works, demonstrates a third point. Liveness invokes also a certain trope of morality and a 'value'. Otherwise, how does persuading thousands of people to believe a theory without evidence work perfectly, not only for inspector Coleridge, but also for Sivaji Rao in *Nayak* (Shankar, 2000), for Ajay Bakshi in *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindusthani* (Aziz Mirza, 2000), for DJ in *Rang De Basanti* (Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, 2006), for the reporter in *Mumbai Se Aya Mera Dost* (Apoorva Lakhiya, 2003) or for Munnabhai in *Lage Raho Munnabhai* (Rajkumar Hirani, 2006)? On all these occasions the whole nation is brought to clear conviction over a debatable issue requiring evidence by sheer emotional rhetoric and moral persuasion. Liveness seems to have a mimetic charge that dichotomously disavows the need to prove a point by argument and proof, a temporal framework that empowers the protagonist with the invincible prowess of addressing the whole nation at a time, of binding a community with the 'instantaneous' or, as one can possibly say, the 'moment of the Global'. Apart from such orders of engagement with a de-territorialized and networked public by actually objectifying television or radio, films have increasingly started employing a

certain representational form of liveness or, to be more precise, news television. This paper wishes to read the order of the 'televisual' in contemporary Indian, particularly the popular Hindi, films not in the manner of simply tracing 'influences' or locating aspects of television represented in films, but of focusing exclusively on the issue of liveness that engenders a certain temporality and ideology and that, I propose, can be explored by cinema. The purpose is to investigate how post-liberalization popular cinema in India positions itself vis-à-vis the emergent public that is networked by the temporal grid of simultaneity. Television figures in this paper as an apparatus that forces a reconsideration of the ways in which the categories of publicness, globality and networks of dissemination have been theorized in Film Studies. Film, with or without the 'televisual' order, has to renegotiate these categories as much as the consumerist satellite television has to. The location of such categories in the increasingly fashionable discourses of speed, efficiency, answerability, authenticity, evidence, etc. helps us understand a cinema that wishes to redefine itself vis-à-vis the emergent porosity of audiences.

Two

Liveness has been projected both by the television industry and many of its theorists, as the essence of television, despite the same capability of radio in this regard. This is possibly due to television's ability to offer the visual and thereby an enhanced authenticity for 'information'. We would, however, keep in mind the limitations of any theory of 'specificity of the medium' and concentrate on the ways these specificities are historically constructed, in how, for instance, the myth of 'liveness' as the essence of television has gained currency in popular discourses. In fact the 'network', which we will eventually try to establish as a key determinant of the impression of liveness, works perfectly in the same manner in radio as well. But since the functions of the networks of deterritorialized publics have been much intensely exploited for consumerist purposes in Globalization the *claim to liveness* is more of an imperative for and appears more substantial on satellite

television, the most effective mouthpiece of consumerism. Hence more than a particular medium, it is the 'network' of consumer publics and also possibly the form of the 'flow'[2] that, with their historical liaison with the Global market economy, emerge as key determinants of the perception of liveness. Since the privately owned popular FM radio in India exhibits a somewhat similar degree and quality of the exploration of these two elements, 'liveness' of this form of radio can perfectly occupy contemporary popular fictions. We would shortly see that when fictionalization of a certain image of the consumer public becomes necessary for film, both TV and radio can provide the requisite space for dramatization of the moment of transmission. In fact, a film like *Lage Raho Munnabhai*, that presents a broadcast public and not a telecast public, is equally contextual to our argument since it is the distance, the deterritorialization, the transmission and the network or rather the consumerist functions of them, and not the medium *per se* that shape the 'public' we are trying to understand here. Television figures in our discursive scheme not as the object of study, not definitely as the exclusive determinant of these functions, but as an apparatus that most remarkably characterizes these functions at this historical juncture. The dangers of the theoretical trope of 'typification'[3] can hopefully be avoided, since we attribute a reasonable degree of contingency to this whole process of characterization and prefix no telos to the trajectory of these functions. And since we wish to focus more on the televisual aspects of film for the simple reason that contemporary films refer more to television than radio, always keeping in mind that radio also performs those 'televisual' functions, we possibly don't need to mention radio every time we mention television. Our understanding of 'network' can be explicated and reasonably complicated by the way 'televisuality' has been theorized in a recent formulation by Anustup Basu as something that has essentially nothing to do with the instrument called television. Televisuality, according to Basu, 'involves the social production of the various cultures and practices of viewership, dissemination of images and sounds through various technical means like television, as well as accompanying transformations in habits, existential attitudes, and

psychologies of peoples. But more than that, it has something to do with architectures of visibilities which are immediately, and not in a mediated sense, applications of power. By the simple term televisuality (as it is with telephonicity), one could mean a simple mechanism of projecting and receiving visibilities and sounds across distances'.[4]

Before we elaborate on the discourses on the liveness myth, let us try to schematize the representational form and conditions of liveness. If liveness is indeed a myth, it certainly enters fictions in various other media. The following classifications would help us take the first step towards understanding the peculiar ways liveness can be explored by other media, particularly by film.

Conditions of liveness:

1) Sense of synchronicity with the event.

2) Being at a distance, from where you cannot watch with the naked eyes. Otherwise, that will be 'close-circuit' TV.

3) A network of de-territorialized spectators who watch the transmitted programme. If a single person watches or if the audience is geographically territorialized in only a particular place, that is usually a case of surveillance or an exchange not meant for public domain.

The following can be said to enhance the perception of liveness:

1) The unpredictability of the trajectory of the event, the sense that 'things are not being controlled'. When things are predictable in a live event, it is usually a ritual, like the direct telecast of the sworning-in ceremony of ministers (not exactly though when there are last-minute surprises). While this is not the same as course of events taking 'unexpected' turns in television soaps which we can surely distinguish from a 'live and exclusive' sports event, a closer analysis of any live programme will reveal the

presence of almost all the cognitive components of what we loosely call 'fiction'. The distinction we make between fictional and 'real life' characters surely shapes our engagement with such programmes, but not to the extent of obliterating the order of formal analogy between the narratives that accommodate them. Since the content of live transmission is almost always a real life event having an informational value, one is tempted to necessarily connect liveness to non-fiction. But if the impression of the three conditions I have stated above is properly generated in a fiction-that this can be generated is precisely what this paper wishes to establish-the sense of something like liveness can be produced. What is crucial is the feeling of being part of a synchronous deterritorialized network. How a work of fiction can produce this shall be taken up later. For now, it is enough for us to propose that the impression of liveness is more likely to be produced by narratives that can offer shocks and surprises.

2) The extent of difficulty to arrive at the scene being transmitted live. In other words, the more difficult it is to catch a glimpse of the scene, the more special or more 'authentic' is the live image. Camerapersons compete with each other to get a better view of the scene making images and sounds gain a particular form. Frames irregularly shift between level and canted, bunch of hands and microphones obstruct the view of the centre of all interest, the much awaited audio gets subdued by noise; it is the chaos of the moment of recording that lends the scene the particular form of liveness, possibly a 'liveliness' that can bear the authenticity of live recording without being live. We can remember the 2001 arrest of M. Karunanidhi at midnight, or of many such media spectacles, the most common on television news being the image of convicts coming down from or entering the police van covering their faces. If I am viewing such a scene for the first time or as long as I am discovering new elements of knowledge/analysis in subsequent viewings, the charge of liveness is not lost.

Now, it seems that there can be primarily five levels at which liveness can be manifested in television.

1) Television itself as an apparatus that broadly evokes the sense of liveness, in primarily its ability to correspond to calendar and clock. What primarily operates here is the third condition of liveness mentioned earlier: the viewer's sense of being part of a larger network of public. More than anything else, it is the 'liveness' of the network that is elementary to the sense of liveness for the viewer. We need to theorize the invocation of such an impression and narrativization of such network publics in film. It is precisely this level of liveness that is explored mostly by popular film, and hence is of primary interest to us in this paper.

2) Certain programmes, news for instance, that claim and explore this level of liveness the most, i.e. the liveness of the moment of transmission but not that of the event. The sense of liveness emanates here from the appearance of the programme/information for the first time, from a certain air of 'freshness' that encapsulates the item for a short period. Serials may also invoke this temporality in the sense that the 'Diwali episode' is telecast on the day of Diwali but is made much earlier. The particular form of liveness claimed by such programmes is possible because of the temporal framework in which the apparatus itself is embedded, a level discussed in no.1.

3) Programmes that happen to be live as part of a recurrent set of events - sports, for instance.

4) Programmes on events that are caught live 'accidentally' - natural calamity, street accidents, fire, riots, etc.

5) Events that are usually not live but gain a great 'live' effect precisely because they are caught by a hidden camera. Pictures of corrupt politicians exposed by sting operations are examples of this. An intense combination of narratorial moralism and voyeurism and the sheer uniqueness of the element of 'discovery' in liveness, make this kind of representation perfectly conjure an impression close to liveness. Theoretically, these programmes can also be literally 'live', though something like that, as in *Teesri Aankh* (Harry Baweja,

2006) where the impossible task of exposing the socially powerful and highly connected blue-film trader can be accomplished only by live television, usually doesn't happen. But it doesn't make the scene less *live*ly; the 'first-time' expose by hidden camera almost always generates a strong association with the 'moment of recording'. Once again, the actuality of the synchrony of recording and transmission becomes less relevant than an overwhelming *perception* of synchrony.

It would possibly be an overstatement to say that the effect of liveness is most realized in a form that is essentially not live. But one can definitely suggest that the spectator's 'sense of liveness' depends more on a certain audio-visual form, mode of address, and crucially, on a deterritorialized public bound by the synchronicity of a network, than on the actuality of liveness. It seems that these conditions can be recreated in media other than radio or TV, in film particularly. I propose to categorize this filmic phenomenon as 'liveliness'. It refers to a state of relation between image, sound and network that makes possible the perception of a synchrony of recording and transmission. Before we problematize the question of network, transmission and publicness in cinema for a better understanding of the notion, let us examine some of the key positions in the study of liveness.

Three

Academic interventions in the field have lately been more-or-less unanimous in suggesting that liveness as the ontology of television is nothing but a myth. Elena Levine remarks: 'Despite substantial institutional, technological, and aesthetic developments in U.S. television, certain myths about the medium's essence persist. One of the longest lasting is the myth of *liveness* as television's ontological essence. This myth has circulated widely throughout television history.'[5] The most cited and critiqued pro ponent of the liveness ontology, with whom the debate seems to have started, is the production theorist Herbert Zettl. In 1978 he suggested: 'Each television frame is always in a state of becoming. While the film frame is a concrete

record of the past, the television frame (when live) is a reflection of the living, constantly changing present.' Live television, to him, 'lives off the instantaneousness and uncertainty of the moment very much the way we do in actual life. The fact that television can record images and then treat them in filmic fashion in no way reduces the aesthetic potential and uniqueness of television when used live.'[6] Jane Feuer, in one of the meticulous critiques of the liveness myth, debunks Zettl's theory by rightly pointing out that 'Zettl's phenomenology of television echoes Andre Bazin's "realist" ontology of cinema without admitting, as Bazin does, that "realism" is based on "artifice". To equate "live" television with "real life" is to ignore all those determinations standing between the "event" and our perception of it-technology and institutions, to mention two.'[7]

Feuer takes a step forward to demonstrate the ideological functions of the liveness ontology: 'Network television never truly exploits its capacity for instantaneous and unmediated transmission. Only the ideological connotations of live television are exploited in order to overcome the contradiction between flow and fragmentation in television practice.'[8] What can be most effective in Feuer's study for our purpose is to mark how the *perception* of liveness is an ideological construct involving issues in artifice, technology and institutions, how it can be generated by videotape which is 'perceptually equivalent to "live" transmission'[9] , how the effect of liveness can be *quantitatively* compared with the illusion of reality in film ('television (and videotape) look more "real" to us than film'), how a certain knowledge can produce the sense of liveness ('..it is possible that we perceive video as more "real" because the industry tells us it is "live"').[10] All this suggests that liveness is not the exclusive domain of television or broadly the broadcast media. Surely, in order to discredit any theory of medium-specificity, what is necessary is to show that other media can also exhibit that quality. But she doesn't-as there is hardly any scope-carry these tangential references to any substantial point. Instead, quite contrary to her critique of the ontology of televisual liveness, she seems to attach a great value to television's potential

for unmediated live communication. Similarly, John Thornton Caldwell's critique of the liveness ontology, of what he calls one of the 'most cherished mythologies of television', confines itself to how this popular notion is sustained by the television institution and some of its theorists alike, by other media like video art, but it doesn't take that crucial next step towards a serious research agenda: if the exclusivity of television in generating the perception of liveness has been successfully questioned, where else and how liveness can get manifest, with what effect?[11] Caldwell's account, however, greatly helps us to trace the career of this myth from its origins in the pre-tape 1950s when television was indeed live, in McLuhan's celebration of television's 'all-at-onceness', to the recent practices. Here too liveness figures more as an 'artifice': 'In recent American television, liveness is frequently packaged as artifact. As often as not, pictorialism rather than realism, rules the context in which liveness is flaunted and seen.'[12] Caldwell's definition and theorization of 'televisuality' has to, as it does, finally lead us to consider the 'stylistic possibilities of liveness' underlined, for instance, by the historically 'live' televisual genre of stand-up comedy that 'involves traits one associates with liveness: improvisation, snafus, and spontaneity.'[13]

Televisuality, according to Caldwell, is a phenomenon connected with the decline of network television since the 1980s that ushered in 'an aesthetic based on an extreme self-consciousness of style.'[14] The situation in the era of satellite television in India is not exactly the same, but if televisuality is broadly seen as a process of increasing "stylization" and "exhibitionism" in the face of competition between channels that are sprawling everyday, then surely televisuality is a global process including India. Caldwell's elaboration of the idea helps us further relate the notion to our understanding of popular culture in an inter-media context: 'In fact, this self-consciousness of style became so great that it can more accurately be described as an activity-as a performance of style-rather than as a particular look. Television has come to flaunt and display style. Programs battle for identifiable style-markers and

distinct looks in order to gain audience share within the competitive broadcast flow….With many variant guises-from opulent cinematic spectacles to graphics-crunching workday visual effects-televisuality cut across generic categories and affected some narrative forms more than others.'[15] No doubt, in such a competitive market environment, looking for distinctive styles would definitely draw on the huge repertoire of formal and stylistic possibilities that other media offer. Caldwell particularly talks of the 'cinematic' as one of the two "stylistic worlds" that television exploits: 'The cinematic refers obviously to a film look in television…cinematic values brought to television spectacle, high-production values and feature-style cinematography.'[16] What should be interesting here is to probe how then the 'cinematic' also starts to, as it must, look like television in a possible process of interpellation. To me, 'televisuality' primarily conjures an all-pervasive inter-media context of popular culture where the stylistic and formal transactions lend a certain air of vibrancy and contemporaneity to any practice that consciously underlines such a transaction. Before we delve into how film deals with the particular stylistic device of liveness in such a context, let us return to the liveness debate in television studies.

Paolo Carpignano's critique of Feuer, where the term 'liveliness' actually appears, clearly shows how Feuer's notion of liveness is rather fluid in its emphases on issues in style and mode-of-address. Carpignano suggests 'For Feuer, the live is primarily a form of interpellation, a mode of addressing, that invites the viewers to perceive what they see as real, as long as it is presented as live. The result is that much of television is permeated by what we could call a style of liveliness that pretends to set the medium apart, and represent its uniqueness. Thus the connotation of live is not restricted to transmission in real time, but is extended to a "circuit of meanings" that can apply to all kinds of situations and programs that accentuate the immediate, the spontaneous, and emphasize the vitality of television.'[17] Carpignano, like Feuer, restricts himself to television, but it doesn't take much strain to see the possibility of applying such an aesthetic and ideological framework in

the study of fiction that can present 'live-like situations', to use Carpignano's phrase. He continues his critique of the 'ontology as ideology' argument in the following way:

> Increasingly, the word "live" written at the bottom of the screen seems to have lost its denotative function, lost in a flow of live-like situations. The markers of live-like situations could be as simple as the obsessive use of the word "eyewitness" in all kinds of programs to create the feeling of presence, or the emphasis on the unpredictable, from news stories that catch the unexpected, to programs that are constructed around out-takes and "bloopers", to shows that try to provoke unforeseeable reactions (*Candid Camera* and its many clones). But the live-like situation paradoxically applies even to fictional programs which are scripted as live events. A classical example is the 1950's program *You Were There*, where historical events were presented as live news stories. In more recent years a particular style of camera movement and editing has tried to convey the feeling of spontaneity and live-like situation.[18]

But the problem with Carpignano is that despite his acknowledgement of the role of a 'documentary style' in creating 'live-like situations, where the live becomes fictional and the fictional is presented as live', and of the possibility of creating 'the spontaneity of live action by pretending, at times, to be shot with a camcorder', he refuses to see the distinction that Feuer makes in her essay between the 'live' *per se* and the perception of liveness through certain stylistic devices, what Carpignano calls 'liveliness'. He says: 'In fact, "the live" has little to do with representations, distorted or not, and instead it is defined by its temporality of presence. Not that Feuer is underestimating the importance of simultaneity in the live telecast, but she reduces the significance of real time transmission to the relationship between the event and its presentation'.[19] It is not exactly the 'real time transmission', the *real* live marked with the synchronicity of recording and transmission, but a certain artifice *claiming* liveness that Feuer connects with representation.

Surely, Feuer acknowledges the order of the actually 'live' in television programming, but that doesn't mean that it is not presented with the ideological baggage of liveness. So the distinction that Carpignano discovers in Feuer's essay between a 'real' live and an 'ideological' live is not true as much as the one between the actual live and, say, a 'make-believe' live, both being 'ideological' in their location in the larger mythoscape of televisual liveness. Carpignano, however, while devaluing the importance of representational issues in the 'perception of liveliness', points towards a necessary condition of the impression of liveness, towards the 'temporality of presence' or 'simultaneity of live telecast'. He argues, 'The relevance of live, instead, is not in the form of its presentation, but in the very event of watching. The question is not how true to the event the live telecast is, but what kind of common occurrence it represents. It is, in other words, the act of watching simultaneously that makes the event, and the presence of the audience has as much to do with the outcome of the live event, as the presentation provided by the televisual apparatus.'[20]

I will take one further step to suggest that what constitutes the necessary condition for liveness, intertwined with the 'representational strategies', is the 'network', a network of audience embedded in the temporal framework of simultaneity. This is not, however, the same as being simultaneous with the telecast 'event', but, more crucially, with *each other* in the network, in congruence with the televisual clock-time. In other words, to have the perception of liveness, a member of the audience-network should necessary have the feeling that s/he is watching the programme in synchrony with the other members of the network. When the 'breaking news' of a natural calamity or a train accident is flashed on television, we hardly watch the event as live, but the phenomenon that makes it a 'media event' is that people start sharing the shock, disgust, fear, memories, predictions, jokes and analysis *at the same time*, the duration ranging from a week to, at times, a month. That we all simultaneously follow the news every hour at this time (at other times too), makes possible the resonance and cacophony of a

set of discourses; discourses that can stage the pulse of not a geographically comprehensible community, but of one that is deterritorialized, that gain their appeal by emerging out of an *everywhere*, by making the members of the network come closer to each other over an issue. Patricia Mellancamp's study of catastrophe hinges almost upon such a notion of liveness.[21] But according to her, the liveness associated with catastrophe coverage is not only special, it marks a discontinuity with what she calls 'TV time' or 'TV continuity time'. She argues that 'successive, simultaneous time, measured by regular, on-the-half-hour programming…indefinitely multiplied by cable and satellite transmission, hypostasized by familiar formats and ageing stars in reruns and remakes, trivialized by scandals and gossip, is disrupted by the discontinuity of catastrophe coverage. So-called heterogeneity or diversity ceases as do commercials and TV continuity time as we focus on a single event'.[22] While it is true that catastrophe coverage marks an exception from ordinary television in its ability to temporarily suspend or defer the circular nature of TV time, in its ability to divert attention from a range of diverse events to a single one, the function of the 'live network' that defines the moment of transmission continues to act as a crucial condition for the effects of catastrophe coverage or of any 'media event' as such. In fact, the perception of liveness of the network, along with the associated senses of televisual clock time, of distance and relationships, of questions of morality involved in the event and in its coverage, of identity and difference with both the expert and commonsensical comments on the event, are intensified at such moments. This is however not to suggest that the difference is only *quantitative* as in 'intensification', but the *qualitative* order is marked more by the nature of the event that dictates a change in the style of the coverage too. A plane hitting any building surely doesn't make '9/11'; it has to be the 'twin towers', a design and not an accident, and most important of all, a set of political discourses bustling at a particular historical juncture that makes the event special. The quantitative aspect of such an event like the death-toll has without doubt many parallels in Sudan, Palestine and Iraq.

Whatever constitutes a major media-event outside the TV time, it is the 'liveness of the network' more than anything else that stages itself with great élan at every moment of the event. Even when there is no event being telecast live, the liveness of the network exists in the form of studio's or the recorded programme's correspondence with the transmission or clock time. What gains a great narrative importance in the films of our concern is this liveness of transmission. Mellencamp's largely psychoanalytic account doesn't take into account the efficacy of this order in the usual 'TV time'. Instead, in the 'TV time', Mellencamp discovers what she calls 'simultaneity' which according to her is not exactly liveness. Caldwell says that in Mellencamp's schema '..television is no longer seen as simultaneous with *live events*, but as simultaneous with itself and with *other programmes* that happen at the same time.'[23] Liveness theorists in general have ignored the order of the network since they are exceedingly concerned with the question of whether what is being claimed as live is *actually* live or not. The ideological critique generated around this question can be highly productive as in Feuer, but can also take overtly moralist dimensions ('if it is not truly live, it must be a fraud', as simple as that) ignoring the more important question of what the *condition of possibility* of such a claim to liveness by the televisual apparatus may be. I think the boundaries between 'simultaneity' and 'liveness' that Mellencamp constructs needs to be amply blurred to investigate the ramification of 'liveness' as a thematic category in films. The issue of network, however, poses a problem to the impression of liveness in films. While network comes as almost intrinsically attached to television, for film its perception has to be generated. To what extent and in what ways this can be done, how this is connected to the emergent modes of reception of film and whether we need to reformulate our idea of cinematic publicness in this regard are questions we need to ask.

Four

To start with, we can mark three orders of filmic engagement with 'liveness' or broadly with television and its publics. Considering each of these levels in

isolation is difficult not only because they remain intertwined and inter-constitutive in the narrative, but also because an examination of 'publicness' in our era demands looking at the politics of instantaneous connectivity and of a certain 'everyday' that binds all these three levels together. But one can't possibly explore the multiple relationships between them without acknowledging the discursive necessity to instantiate them separately.

a) The audio-visual configuration of what we have called 'liveliness'

In the earlier sections we have tried to show that the generation of perception of liveness requires form, style, mode-of-address and conditions of viewership that are not essentially connected to the medium of television. Apart from examining the instances of liveliness in films, what needs to be primarily investigated now is to what extent the other condition of liveness, the 'network', can come to play in filmic spectatorship.

b) The level of narrative at which the films constantly invoke television

i) as a quotidian object, part of the domestic or other spaces, ii) as the signifier of the 'media value' of an event through TV news, presenting a 'general public' aware of the event, iii) as the connecting informational link between realms that cannot communicate with each other (the police and the underworld for instance), iv) as an instrument that makes possible reading the reactions of characters and the 'public' to the televised event, v) as signifying the moment of explosion of the 'private' into the 'public' and vice versa (the time when a set of information moves from a vertical and hierarchical structure to a 'know-all' horizontal one). This order has become particularly effective in popular Hindi films now. Along with the TV set, what frequently appear in some films are a bunch of reporters and camerapersons keeping track of a course of events capable of drawing great public interest. Films involving themes of crime, political systems and corruption are particularly prone to using in the narrative the TV as the grand agent of surveillance and of dissemination of information. Some of Ram Gopal

Varma's films like *Satya* (1998) and *Company* (2002) aptly instantiate this level of engagement with the televisual.

c) The level of directly narrativizing television or radio. Here network and liveness are dramatized in such a manner as to attribute a certain agency to the phenomenon of transmission and its publics in the narrative. Recent examples could be *Mumbai Se Aya Mera Dost, Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindusthani, Raghu Romeo* (Rajat Kapoor, 2003) *Nayak, Rang De Basanti and Lage Raho Munnabhai*.

One of the very early examples of liveliness in Indian cinema is possibly the first scene of the much discussed film *Roja* (Mani Ratnam, 1992). Not only because the hand-held camera chasing the 'terrorist' Wasim Khan inscribes a certain technology to explore the temporality of instantaneous address very much different from the cinematic device of 'real-time', but more effectively because of the scene's capability to embody the gazes of the emergent forms of both the Market (the lightweight recording gadget) and the State (the vigilant gaze). But these two agents do not really 'add up' to constitute the gaze; the particular gaze in operation here is that of an institution to which these two sites lend their powers, a sphere where the historical liaison between the State and the Market or, to put it more precisely, between democracy and capitalism, is demonstrated almost perfectly. This is the 'Media' in its singularized popular sense, in the sense that immediately brings to mind the privately-owned satellite news television channels, a sensationalizing mode-of-address, an unhindered accessibility into all walks of life, the pace and corporate efficiency with which the 'Media' judges the sub-judice, informs the public, exposes corruption, stands by the nationalist ethos of hatred for the 'enemy country', and thus engage in a quasi-State activity. An economy of gaze in which the subject-object relationship is written with equations of power between the Indian army and the 'terrorist', is never reversed in this sequence of *Roja*. The extent to which the camera accesses the whole combing operation of the army, catching glimpses of both the chaser and the chased, being almost part of the operation as

demonstrated in the last shot of the sequence where the camera literally stands among the guns that encircle Wasim Khan, locate this gaze, and broadly the cinematic, at a particular instant of history. This is the time when the reality-effect of a filmic representation has to incorporate yardsticks of 'authenticity' that characterize the emergent claims of the Media in post-Liberalization India. This is the time when cinema, for meeting the increasing need to figure the Media in any representation of an event of 'national interest', encounters the limits of its own regime of realism. What is particularly important in this sequence is the way Wasim Khan's image is frozen with the words "*khunkhar atankbadi Wasim Khan giraftaar*" ('dreaded terrorist Wasim Khan arrested') appearing below, thus referring to a newspaper headline or a 'top story' of television news. This shot clearly underlines the mediatic gaze not so much by referring to the actual presence of television camera during the army operation, as by foregrounding the need to clearly specify the representational style as that of news media. This I think is symptomatic of the early years of cinematic realism's interface with the televisual, where you need to overtly refer to news television or broadly to the Media to claim veracity of the content (beyond a particular structure of relationship between moving image and sound, it is indeed, more than television, the popular image of the Media. Remember the ease with which the televisual sequence transforms into a newspaper headline.). This *act of clearly identifying* the Media as the one which is succouring the film to reformulate the latter's mode-of-address becomes rare over the years as film gains a relative autonomy in exhibiting traits of liveliness, as liveliness becomes increasingly possible within the very horizon that film claims to be its own. Certain sequences in films like *Satya*, *Company* and *Khakee* (Rajkumar Santoshi, 2004), or in the whole range of 'disaster' films, don't have to necessarily point towards the news media as the repository of the gaze that lends itself to the filmic, though the Media is inevitably present in these narratives as a sort of moral watchdog. Nevertheless, irrespective of whether the films acknowledge the Media in this fashion or not, they can't really represent an 'event with media value' without the form and mode of

address of 'liveliness'. And liveliness is as much about the gaze of news television as about what is inalienably attached to this gaze: a network of audience to which the event is 'news', across which the news has to disseminate in a grid of simultaneity and always for the 'first time'.

In fact what makes this mode of address sensational to the viewer is the sense that 'I am *discovering* this *simultaneously* with everybody', a sense that is always moralizing in its capability of forcing the viewer to take a position vis-à-vis an assumed dominant position of the 'public', of evoking questions of morality associated with acts of surveillance and voyeurism. The public sutured by an electronic-commercial network is different from the erstwhile public in many senses. The most important difference is the way one can now imagine and represent the 'public' as an entity, as a social body of agents. The erstwhile public found a major constituency of its representation in the 'crowd' that was utterly *territorialized* in filmic fictions, shown as the 'public' of the locality standing around a street-fight. This crowd pointedly looks at, remains witness to (though refuses most of the times to act as witness in court) and occasionally participates in whatever event the film makes happen in public. Since the history of the 'crowd' in Indian popular films is yet to be written, we possibly can not conjecture about it much except that the imagination of such a public is certainly different from the one that makes possible the pro-filmic public of *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindusthani*. In a film like *Phir Bhi*, the people who witness the deeds of the protagonists do not know each other precisely because they are strewn over a space that is bound by a network of dissemination of information. This public definitely inhabits particular 'places', where historically constituted territorial specificities can be located, but over the representational stretch of satellite television (and this has been taken to an extreme in the Internet), the 'public' emerges as a lump of masses utterly deterritorialized; it intersects a historical moment when the effacement of territoriality as the condition of possibility for popular imagination of 'public' is intensified. Consumerist television aspires to echo the democratic order of the State by

representing the 'public' as a consolidated body of agents in social processes, as a public that votes in large numbers on TV shows messaging from mobile phones across the country, that elects and decides. But it differs from the institutions of electoral politics in that the latter makes possible visibility of territorial trends in voting. The now famous supreme court judgment ('airwaves are *public* property') on disputes over 'live telecast' could so effectively articulate the changing order of publicness in India because no other medium would allow imagining of the public as a deterritorialized, almost floating entity, as a body that owns the airwaves.

The public molestation of a married woman outside the Tollygunj metro station in Calcutta in Rituparno Ghosh's *Dahan* (1997) exhibits traits of liveliness not by sheer adherence to the audiovisual strategies of news television (recording from a distance until the molesters are gone, marginal visibility of the scene on a rainy day, moving buses and trams obstructing the view) but by pointing to a public that invokes the televisual, literally, 'visions of distance'. It is not the public that gathers around the scene in the street - that could indeed have been more 'naturalistic' going by conventions in film; it is a public that is shown as moving and crisscrossing the scene, presenting various layers of a network that is bound by the gaze of the Bhadralok or broadly of the Bengali middle class. We see a couple in a cab returning from cinema, wrangling over a situation in the cinema hall, a pair of gentlemen inside an airconditioned car discussing sound pollution in Calcutta and Seattle, Tom Hanks and Star Movies, an old man complaining to a fellow passenger inside a passing auto-rickshaw about how the local boys from the political party in power have encroached upon his land. The home where we watch TV, the land we buy from our savings, the cinema hall or the taxi where the little drama of marital suspicion takes place, the car that the upwardly mobile middle class owns-all point towards how the middle-class primarily move within certain territorial confines to create their own complacent world, how they can carry their little homes almost everywhere. In the loop of these stories of territorialities, the sequence implodes the

street as an excess in its demand for action beyond the loop. The community that has long mastered the craft of protecting itself from the lumpen or from the chaotic possibilities of the street, and has been terribly amnesiac about its erstwhile leadership position in movements of social change, strains to intervene into the scene. The only way now for this community to associate with the disorderly events of public/media interest is to glance at newspaper or TV and derive pleasure from the reassuring gesture from the 'news' that things are happening far away and 'no way involve us'. The historically produced conditions of such a life tend to instill the belief, often with utter failure, that 'those things' happen in some other world, happen on TV that is. The little machine at the corner not only reciprocates by its routinized schedule or its resonance with the irreversible circular time of the clock echoing the rhythm of monotony of this life, but, more importantly, by mostly making flashes of excitement and shock in 'breaking news' *appropriated* in a quotidian flow. The catastrophic event on television, in such a life, thus predominantly purports to become unreal or a matter of imagination in the sense of its inability to evoke the corporeal and the territorial. So, when one man in a passing car tells another 'that's your imagination' referring to the molestation seen framed through the window of the car (or, in case of others, of autos and taxis), what is meant is not the creative order in imagination, but something that we see but don't really believe 'can happen to us'. But since this order of desire and belief is always coupled with the infringement of such order in our actual experiences of the public place which inscribes a dangerously corporeal regime of perception calling for action, what functions in a televisual gaze is a double-take of the deterritorialized and the territorial, of distance and proximity, to put it loosely. The televisual gaze can operate only until the young woman Srabana intrudes to rescue Romita the victim from the molesters, thereby 'territorializing' the event. We now see the camera getting close to the spot for the first time, as do the pedestrians. The absence of a crowd around the scene could look 'unnatural' from the conventional perspective of the plausibility order of filmic realism in which the bystanders surround the spot

lending a certain mimetic charge to the representation of the street. But the realism at work here derives its authenticity from a public that is never the 'crowd' assembled in a 'place', but a public that is strewn over a space connected by the overarching panoptic gaze of the satellite, a public that is always 'live' in its possibility of being imagined as a network of eyes and ears simultaneously glued to the TV, to broadly events flowing incessantly *in* the Media. The liveliness in this scene of *Dahan* draws literally on 'news' in its adaptation of a novel based on a newspaper report of an actual event on 24th June, 1992.

As the 'sensationalizing' rhetoric of reporting in TV and newspaper, primarily identified with the Globalized phase of electronic journalism, derives its appeal from the degree to which the report can possibly stir up heated discussion and debate across a network of viewers/listeners/readers *at a time* (i.e. for a reasonably short period of a day or two, a week, a month at most, after which the whole media hype fades off), the mode of address and perception of liveliness cannot be theorized without a certain idea of public as network. *Dahan* may have figured this public as the subject of liveliness helping us make the required connection between the two, but Indian popular films in general, which I think are increasingly trying to come to terms with the post-Liberalization order of publicness through liveliness, do not always *underline* in such a way the role of network publics in triggering liveliness. Every shot of the first scene of *Khakee* (Rajkumar Santoshi, 2004), where the 'terrorists' attack a prisoner van to snatch the prisoner away, springs out for instance from what would be a newspaper first-page photo or possibly a 'breaking news' visual in *Aaj Tak*, but the network public is not immediately presented as the subject of such liveliness, as we see in *Dahan*, which collates a particular cultural community with the informational network to explore the morality attached with seeing the unjust happen in public and escaping from it.

It is my contention that apart from an overarching sense of 'being simultaneous with informational flows' that characterizes our Global epoch,

the social institution of cinema itself, as it has lately evolved, has a lot to contribute to this emergent mode of perception. While a film is watched, the sense of connectedness with a larger public seems to be intensified now more than ever. One of the major signifiers of this spatio-temporal location of the new spectator is possibly the viewing atmosphere of the multiplex, where the audience is allowed to have the feeling of 'watching collectively': the lights are not completely gone, you can drink and eat and most importantly you watch a film as part of a large set of shopping options, including many other films that are running simultaneously in the multiplex. The new positioning of film within a chain of consumption patterns, having appropriated the pre-modern mode of cinematic reception, not only generates the sense of being part of a larger 'consuming public' in the spectator, it forces us to consider issues in spectatorship more in terms of the emergent forms of audienceship. Cinema's increasing presence in public life, in hoardings, advertisements, radio, television, Internet, cellphone ring-tones, etc., refer to an all pervading cinematic discourse that has a major bearing on the way we now look at film. The exclusivity of Indian cinema that has long been theorized around its ability to bear the extra-cinematic doesn't seem to be simply intensified in Globalization. Rather it's a certain connectedness with the Global ideologies of consumerism and cinematic reception that contributes to the enhancement of the 'sense of network'. Paul Willemen's formulation of the 'fourth look' in film can possibly help us understand the particular form of spectatorship at work here.[24] The way the spectators are invited to engage with the contemporaneity and now-ness of the film's social location, the way the spectators inscribe a larger 'discursive' moment of cinematic reception into the film helps us comprehend 'liveness' not necessarily as the instantaneous but as a way of making sense of a 'present' that binds a network of audience. Thus the new modes of dissemination of film that have literally de-territorialized erstwhile spaces of reception, from television to videos, portable digital discs and webstreams, don't really disturb the trope of liveliness but by actually being disjointed from a somewhat pure space of cinema (which in any case was always

porous) have facilitated the sense of the network. We are therefore not really talking of 'film as transmission', in the sense of telecast or web-streaming, but surely of the ability of a certain filmic address to emit a sense of being concurrent with a network of informational flows and its consumers, of resonating with a certain sense of the 'instant' that largely defines our liaison with the world. If the classical film predominantly imagines an individual spectator, trying to internalize him into a self-enclosed filmic space where the characters look at each other, if the 'primitive' mode or its formal ally in the post-colonial, in a pursuit for negotiating an unresolved modern, imagines the audience inside the theatre by being 'frontal', the mode of liveliness strives to imagine a realm of public way beyond the territorial confines of the space of exhibition. It invites the spectator to take a position almost 'up above the sky', to put it loosely, from where the gaze can lay bare the complex of social relations. This can be, but is not limited to, surveillance. It is more the desire to tear apart the interiority of the unexposed, something that possibly triggers in *Nayak* the top-angle shot of the traffic jam or the horizontal rendering transparent of the cityscape of Mumbai through the anti-corruption drive of Shivaji Rao; it is what constitutes the air of authenticity that emits from the films on the underworld. This capability of making possible an imagination of a large set of de-territorialized public, of inscribing into the screen a 'live public' that is never medium-specific but is part of porous, intertwining and mutually resonating flows, is precisely what I consider the 'televisuality' of a popular work. Since negotiating such a public increasingly emerges as a major imperative for post-Liberalization Indian film, what can be particularly effective is an investigation into how this public is narrativized, how popular Hindi film fictionalizes the social technology of liveness that canonically conditions such an order of public.

A detailed study in this area demands a separate treatise. We shall simply identify some of the key points to set an agenda for research.

1) Firstly, for some characters TV acts as a source of news of the events out of visibility. TV as a national information clock keeps everyone embedded in

a larger trope of visibility. In films that need to show both the underworld and its outside, television starts playing the very important role of constructing the binary of 'us' and 'them' in a context of one's limited access to and knowledge of the other. TV, as a site of self-announced objectivity, becomes for everybody a perennial point of contact with *them*, the police for the underworld gang and vice versa. In *Khakee*, the moment Anant Kumar's renegade police team disappears from the eyes of the corrupt police superiors, TV starts playing a crucial role in the narrative. It is only TV through which the parties in opposition can extract information or misinformation about each other making possible expressions and reactions that further dramatize the antagonistic relationship, as in *Tirangaa* (Mehul Kumar, 1992), where Gundaswamy, the chief of the 'terrorist' gang, breaks the TV set in disgust. In *Khakee*, it is a recording from TV news that acts as a clue to the final arrest of the underworld gang.

2) An analysis of the sphere of action of the mediaperson protagonist in many of these films - from *Dil Se* (Mani Ratnam, 1998) to *Nayak*, *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindusthani* and *Lakshya* (Farhan Akhtar, 2005) - can throw significant light on how the upward mobility of the middle class is inalienably connected with a certain idea of connectedness with the Global, how a lost leadership of the middle class aspires to reinstate itself within a 'national' terrain of Global consumerist aspirations. When Ajay, the mediaperson hero in *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindusthani*, whose affiliation to the emergent 'corporate' values reflects in his intelligence, presence of mind, efficiency and affability, and later in the narrative, his honesty, tells Pappu Bhai, the comical publicity-seeker: '*pure India mein world famous ho jayenge'* ('you will become world-famous in the whole of India'), what transpires is the kind of Global nationality which the middle-class wishes to attain and help others move towards. Liveness of the television network, by its ability to invoke Global times in local spaces, becomes a perfect playground for the new middle-class hero. The middle-class emerges in these films (and in many more that don't need to literally figure mediaperson-heroes) as perhaps the only class that is *narrativizable* in

the manner of figuring a trajectory towards the Global nation, as the only body that mutates and makes possible the story of a transition. One needs to thoroughly examine how the homogenization of the middle class across the nation by consumerist television is connected to the emergence of a neo-nationalist sphere of deterritorialized/televisual public, and how that forces a rethinking of the cinematic public both on and off screen.

3) Liveness is presented in these films as a 'moral framework' involving such questions of professional ethics and public morality that become finally decisive in narrative resolution. In *Phir Bhi*, live television becomes a space for displaying charisma where mistakes can never be rectified, a challenge that has to be met by the hero/heroine, a battlefield where the channels (K-TV and Galaxy TV) fight for TRP ratings and share of profit. It can also be a space of utter dishonesty, as we see young journalists faking a 'live' situation and being absolutely mindless about everything except money. The only way the hero can be redeemed is by acquiring the qualities of the 'morally right' offered and inherently borne as a possibility by the temporality and the 'social responsibility' of liveness. Many of these films launch a critique of the way the sensationalizing popular news television works, sometimes engaging in what can be called a spoof as in *Phir Bhi*, but never question the very premise of liveness that induces a desire to believe whatever comes live. In *Phir Bhi* the way Ajay Bakshi persuades the public to believe what he thinks is 'right' is exactly the same as the way the State persuades the public to believing the 'wrong' through TV. In *Khakee*, the TV news that misleads people also provides the final proof required for convicting the corrupt minister. Televisual liveness, as a social machine for manufacturing evidence and power of persuasion, is never subjected to conditions of history and politics. In *Phir Bhi*, the trust of the public that Ajay Bakshi, the reporter, has gained over the years by a fraud that he himself acknowledges, comes perfectly in use when by his familiar rhetoric he appeals to the people to 'listen only to the heart and not to the head'. Live transmission, almost as a rule, never fails to be convincing. What then remains a matter of concern for

such a representation is the fight over the legitimacy of the claim to this transcendental authority that echoes in many respects the fight over the state-form. The quasi-State Media in this terrain of power is comparable only to the judiciary, much more reliable than the government and the corporate houses.

4) The power that the social institution of the television network lends to the protagonist - the power to influence a large mass of people, is in many ways gendered. One notes the shift in the mode of representation of Ria Banerjee in *Phir Bhi* after she is able to grab and telecast a sensational interview with a jailed MLA. That the power is 'masculine' is represented in a dance where she dresses as a member of the Indian Army and the Indian cricket team, as the 'hero' with fellow-dancers wearing masks of Shahrukh Khan, as the male company executive, and so on. The horizon of the transformative capability of the woman seems to be limited by the finitude of masculinity at the end, while for men it is projected as infinite.

5) We should pay special attention to the way the self-image that post-Liberalization Indian cinema posits comes out through some such films, to the way the cinematic uses the televisual and simultaneously tries to conjure a specific space for itself. Cinema claims to present an order of knowledge that is impossible for TV to offer, giving us the 'real story' behind the news, stretching the news to two-and-half hours of analysis, taking us through the whole background and building-up of the moment of media consumption and following up (which Media in general is thought to notoriously ignore) the characters of news for months and years. The spectatorial pleasure at work here is attached to the desire to listen to the stories that the Media hushes up, to not always stop where the hype stops. In *Nayak*, the murder of Balraj Chauhan, the ex-Chief Minister at the end of the film by Sivaji Rao, the protagonist, remains unknown to the reporters; *Dahan* literally picks up a news-turned-novel and engages in what is projected as an epistemologically superior 'filmic' analysis along with a constant relegating of the newspaper and radio news in the background as mere reporters and at most moral

watchdogs but never equally capable of bringing out the truth. The cinematic even hierarchizes various forms within the Media, as in *Khakee*, where the small town newspaper 'Chandangarh Times' fails to expose the corruption. Even if it did through the post-mortem report which the honest editor of the paper wished to print and for which he was killed, it wouldn't have had the veracity of the videotape of TV news that ultimately helps track the culprit. The newspaper is indeed shown as a precariously tragic case in the field of establishment of Truth and evidence, of disseminating messages beyond a territory and hence of carrying out a social duty.

The crucial way *Phir Bhi*, in its effort to negotiate the televisual, tries to reclaim popular cinema's historical investments in territoriality and in a certain metric organization of spaces (chase sequences and chance encounters for instance) is to turn a de-territorialized network public into a territorialized one. The conversion of a network of audience to a body of agents of meaningful action that is corporeal and territorialized, to the familiar staple of the popular, the 'crowd', can be accomplished by none other than television itself in the narrative. When, in *Khakee*, an appeal is made through the television channel *Aaj Tak* (This popular Hindi news channel, carrying the brand catch-line *Sabse Tej*, 'the fastest', and known for its sensationalizing rendering of investigative news in a mode close to that of crime thriller, is most frequently visible in Hindi popular film) to help trace the team of rebel police personnel, immediately territorialized is a public which assembles outside the house where the team has taken shelter. The angry mob, out with weapons to avenge themselves on the 'traitors', clearly says that its getting out into the streets was triggered by what they had learnt from TV. It is the same 'crowd of TV watchers' that prevents the public and 'live' hanging of the innocent Mohan Joshi in *Phir Bhi*, follows and helps Shivaji Rao wherever he goes to magically wipe out all the corruption within a day in *Nayak*, makes possible the uprooting of the age-old feudal power in a village in *Mumbai Se Aya Mera Dost*. A similar community of radio listeners in *Rang De Basanti* assembles in tea-stalls and colleges of identifiable cities -

Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta, Bangalore, Guwahati, Lucknow, to show an explosive outburst against the all-pervasive corruption in India 'now', when some Delhi University students have declared 'live' their involvement in the killing of the corrupt defense minister; in *Lage Raho Munnabhai* we see this public take loads of flowers to the dishonest builder Lucky Singh's house in the Gandhian gesture of s*atyagraha*. In this apparently easier mode of representing a 'national public' through live transmission, what becomes particularly complicated is the inter-constitutive bond between nation and family that is key to a melodramatic exposition. Does the melodrama in this film draw upon the semantic expansion of the 'familial' over spaces beyond the home, increasingly underlined in fictions of Globalization, or is it the imagined community of the Global nation made tangible by the electronic media that tends to strip the family of its burden of allegorizing the nation?

Conventionally, the mode of dissemination of pro-filmic information among the 'people' within the narrative in a film is vertical in nature. In Indian popular film, we can notice the word spreading by mouth over that abstract entity called *samaj*, people whispering in one another's ears and thus coming to know about a secret. The serial order of such a mode of dissemination is one of the basic premises of 'fiction' in the sense of an exercise in hierarchization of knowledge *over a territory*. What is interesting is that 'liveness' as represented in the films of our concern strongly impedes the seriality and unevenness of information that characterized the traditional pro-filmic public, and what emerges in effect is theoretically a horizontal and mono-planar epistemological field. Consequently, the receivers of telecast cannot be part of 'fiction' or the corporeal place of *movement* of information; they always remain 'outside' it in the sense of not having the capacity to intervene. The only way they can intervene into the narrative is by becoming a massified singularized body, a conglomerate of faceless beings physically acquiring places, traversing distances, and thus becoming 'characters'. On the one hand, in *Phir Bhi*, the need of the hour is to intervene physically in the Central Jail to stop the hanging of Mohan Joshi, an event signifying an

'excess' to the Law of the land where the corrupt politicians emerge as a Law unto themselves. On the other hand, the leadership rests with the Media that knows only a deterrtorialized public capable of merely sending millions of SMS messages to TV channels, by which a judicial or constitutional verdict can be made in favour of Joshi, but by which the actual 'territorial' act required beyond the abstraction of Law (the politicians refuse to accept the official order annulling the order of hanging) to reinstate sovereignty of the State can never be accomplished. The territorialization of the televisual public here, a literal turning of 'airwaves' into 'waves of people', not only resolves this contradiction, it makes possible the transfer of all the energy of the televisual public into the body of the hero who runs in slow motion, jumps and covers the distance to the death-rope just in time to save Joshi from going down the pit. The sovereignty of the State is restored by a new order of publicness that is simultaneously territorialized and televisual. The revolution may not be televised, but television, or rather, its public, represented as the repository of the new sovereign power is surely revolutionized by the cinema.

References:

1 Elton, Ben. *Dead Famous*, London, 2002. The opening sentence is from the back-cover of the book.

2 See Roy, Abhijit. 'The Apparatus and its Constituencies: On India's Encounters with Television', *Journal of the Moving Image*, No.4, 2005, for an account of a possible genealogy of the form of 'flow' of global television.

3 See Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford, 1977, p. 101-107, for an elaboration on the problems of 'typification'.

4 Basu, Anustup. '*Mantras* of the Metropole: Geo-televisuality and Contemporary Indian Cinema', unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2005.

5 Levine, Elena. 'Live! Defining Television Quality at the Turn of the 21st Century', http://cms.mit.edu/mit3/papers/elana_levine.pdf

6 Zettl cited in Feuer, Jane. 'The Concept of Live Television: Ontology as Ideology', in E. Ann Kaplan ed., *Regarding Television*, Los Angeles, 1983. p.13. Zettl's essay appeared as 'The Rare Case of Television Aesthetics,' in *Journal of the University Film Association,* 30:2, Spring, 1978.

7 Feuer, Jane. 'The Concept of Live Television: Ontology as Ideology,' p.13.

8 ibid., p.16

9 ibid, p.15

10 ibid, p.13-14

11 Caldwell, John Thornton. *Televisuality: Style, Crisis, and Authority in American Television*, New Jersey, 1995. p.27-31.

12 Ibid., p.27

13 ibid., p.30-31

14 ibid., p.4

15 ibid., p.5

16 ibid., p.12

17 Paolo Carpignano. http://www.newschool.edu/mediastudies/tv/channel6/index.html

18 ibid

19 ibid

20 ibid

21 Patricia Mellencamp. 'TV Time and Catastrophe, or Beyond the Pleasure Principle of Television', in Patricia Mellencamp ed. *Logics of Television: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Bloomington, Indiana, 1990, p.240-266.

22 Ibid, p.243

23 Caldwell,op cit., p.368

24 Willemen cites Jacques Lacan who described the fourth look as being 'not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other'. About the moral trope that the look involves Willemen suggests: '…as the viewer has to confront his or her sadistic voyeurism, the presence of the imagined look in the field of the other makes itself increasingly felt, producing a sense of shame at being caught in the act of voyeurism. By this time, the viewing subject has become the exhibitionist'. He further says: 'In fact, the presence of the fourth look has considerable implications regarding the social experience of film-going, and may offer an insight into the differences between the various subject/object/spectacle relations in cinema and theatre'. For an elaboration on the notion of Fourth Look, see Willemen, 'The Fourth Look' in *Looks and Frictions: Essays in Cultural Studies and Film Theory*, London, 1994, p.99-110. Ashish Rajadhyaksha's current work on the relation of this look to Indian cinema is collected in his forthcoming *Cinema in the Time of Celluloid: Indian Evidence 2005-1925*, New Delhi, 2007.