Intermediality

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Intermediality implies *between* media. This in-betweenness has functioned variously as metaphor, concept and method to evaluate media. In this way, the term 'intermediality' has acquired a variety of meanings while being part of the critical vocabulary of film and media studies. Some of these meanings include (a) to suggest crossings between two or more media forms. This may include the movement of narrative from one medium to another, for example, in the form of filmic adaptations of novels. Or it may be a part of multimodal media forms such as video games or storytelling across media forms, which also draw upon multiple sensory registers (touch, hearing, vision, for example). Intermediality may also emerge through a seemingly single media form being understood as multisensory, that is, affecting the visual, olfactory and haptic together, as in print media or relying upon hearing and viewing but also invoking touching and smelling as in cinema (Marks, 2000). Meanings may also include, (b) designating the relationships between media forms as 'convergences', that is, industrial, technological and aesthetic consolidations (Jenkins, 2006) and (c) indicating one kind of media being present in and through another, that is, to be remediated, whether through *ekphrasis* or web 2.0. Intermediality has also been considered, in literary/cultural critical thought, as being resonant with intertextuality. The latter term, of course, underscores the network of meanings in which language/texts are embedded and accordingly, also allows us to view intermedia, similarly.

In this keyword entry, the focus shall be on South Asian considerations of intermediality; formulated primarily through an engagement with Indian cinema, which, as we shall see, employs several of these meanings. Indian cinema, provisionally, may be treated as a synecdoche for South Asian film and media by situating it amidst (a) the colonial legacies and commonalities of media infrastructures across India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanamar, (b) the (extra) legal traffic in and circulation of images, sounds, film and televisual forms, and media objects across porous national borders and (c) the continuities and contiguities of cultural forms, languages and expressions in the region. Such strategic deployment also draws upon intermediality's use in thinking about film and media in other South Asian nations; for example, in framing Pakistan's televisual output (Vasudevan et al., 2019). Before proceeding to these critiques, however, let us briefly consider how intermediality traverses the

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ground between film theory and media theory, by engaging with a foil: medium specificity.

Medium specificity emerges in early film theory and implies the ability of cinema to do something (artistically) that is intrinsic to its own medium, that is, to do something that no other medium (example: photography, theatre) can. This has been traditionally associated with the visual form of the moving image (the use of the camera's move-ments) and the work of editing. Thus, it is primarily in a negative relationship to other art forms (cinema not literature, cinema not theatre) that medium specificity has been argued. The most vociferous claims for medium specificity initially dovetailed with arguments for the 'purity' of cinema. André Bazin's spirited defence of cinema's impu-rity was one of the earliest modes of referencing the intermedial, by invoking cinema's relationship with other forms. Further, in film theory, medium specificity has been contrasted with medium-as-*dispositif* (apparatus).[1] Briefly, such an approach allows for the coming together of the ideological, the technological, the discursive and so on, by grounding them historically, rather than through medium specificity. In order to avoid an impasse between these terms, Maras and Sutton (2000) draw upon *assemblage*[2] to argue for new ways of thinking the medium specific; this allows them to focus on the differences between media forms while at the same time, not holding onto any 'pure' sense of the medium.

Such a reframing is aligned with Sudhir Mahadevan's (2015) work on the origins of Indian cinema. He argues, in this work, for the bioscope-*as*-assemblage, a metaphor for the shaping of film history, culture and form. Mahadevan powerfully counters the imaginary that medium specificity presents by arguing that cinema is fundamentally medium agnostic. He elaborates this argument by looking at varied elements: from cinema's status as mass culture to exhibition practice. Disaggregated into images, sounds and text, cinema functions along with other media texts, objects and practices-from theatrical forms to matchboxes with star images to photography studios and techniques. It also, often, folds into its own body, these techniques and aesthetics, for instance, through the film poster, which often lines city walls, cinema halls and bill-boards. Through the example of the film poster, we may also see cinema and everyday life as collocated to indicate that intermediality emerges precisely because of the medium agnosticism. Such a reading gathers greater valence when placed alongside other inquiries in Indian cinema, particularly for cinema in the early decades (Mukherjee, 2020) because the challenge being mounted by this body of research, cumulatively, is both theoretical and methodological. It not only positions cinemas through intermediality but also queries the contours of that intermediality. In this way, cinema is reframed in relation to other media forms and practices, arguably, in two moments of scholarship on Indian cinema. The first, which positions cinema in relation to the other arts: music, theatre, visual and popular art and the second, which relates cinema to technologically and industrially oriented mass cultural forms such as print and sound media like the gramophone and radio. The former can be seen through an engagement with poetics in the first wave of scholarship on Indian cinema as seen in the *Journal of Arts and Ideas*. Consider, for instance, Phalke's relationship with the arts or the formulation of **darshan** as a gaze that cut across the registers of various art forms: calendar art, popular religious worship and the filmic form of the mythological (Kapur, 1987; Rajadhyaksha, 1987; Vasudevan, 1993, 1995) or the prevalence of

Hindustani classical musical structures, *raga*s in film (Bhaskar, 1983). Embedded and embodied (arguably) in the inquiry on poetics is an intermediality through remediation born at the intersection of literature, cinema and art history.[3]

The second wave is one that emerges through a reconsideration of practices such as screenwriting (Sengupta, 2018) placed amidst print, theatre and writing or the importance of convergences between sound media such as the gramophone and cinema through the film song (Hughes, 2007) or radio's and print's inclusions of cinema (Ravikant, 2016). Thus, cinematic practice too cannot be thought without the practices of adjacent industries, with whom it often exchanges labour, expertise and influences. A later moment that is an intermedial site par excellence is the configuration of the **Bollywood** behemoth. By drawing together complex industrial and media configurations to include television, the internet, radio, live performances, dance and fashion (Dudrah et al., 2013; Punathambekar, 2013), we witness Bollywood and new media formations building on older networks and consolidating as a global industrial formation. Arguments about intermediality, across these two foci, predominantly indicate (a) the intertwined industries and the attendant movements of labour and capital, (b) movements of narratives across media (for example, adaptations from novels or plays), (c) formations of audiences, fans, and public culture and often (d) stars as they move across media forms. Such articulations foreground other conceptual coordinates such as (a) the constitution and training of the sensate public body and (b) the production of an affective public in and across the network of these media forms. Both of these concerns emerge through the scholarly literature of the field but also through an examination of materials and filmic elements that move far beyond the diegetic world, including sonic elements such as film dialogues, accented phrases and songs (Sundar [in press]; Duggal, 2015) or material elements such as film costumes being remade in tailor's shops to be worn by Indian audiences (Wilkinson-Weber, 2005) or gestures, in the form of dance moves or a star's on-screen bodily action, for instance, Dev Anand's head bobs or posters on city walls in Dhaka which allow the wall to become medium (Hoek, 2016), rendering urban infrastructure both performative and cinematic. The circulation of these filmic elements allows us to further re/frame the questions around intermediality with respect to cinema, particularly in South Asia. Looking at intermediality through such elements foregrounds the question of transmission of form and cinematic affects (sonic, material, gestural, etc.). For instance, we note the movement of the sounds, gestures, costumes etcetera themselves through various technologies (audio playback, video, etc.), small and big industrial formations as well as audiences and everyday life.

In the above ways, arguments stemming from Indian cinema and more broadly, South Asia force a revision of key concepts of film theory and film history. Thus considered, intermediality indicates the coeval nature of cinema: adjacent to old and new technologies and media forms, cultural sensibilities, habitations and techniques. These harken different temporal orders from the linear, teleological perspective oft afforded to us by western film histories and allow us to set up conversations with other postcolonial and post-socialist states (Larkin, 2016). But beyond this, arguments about intermediality from South Asia set up an ontological challenge to the manner in which cinema is thought by arranging various kinds of practices including artistic and musical ones, technologies and media forms in historical, material and industrial terms.

To conclude, thinking intermediality in and through South Asia allows us to fore-ground relations between media forms, techniques of engaging with them, everyday life and so on as demonstrated above. As an evaluation of the scholarship on Indian cinema shows us, it allows us to formulate a theory of relations that thinks *both* the local and technics, together: whether in the placement of cinema with other art forms (as against distinguishing cinema from them) or cinema with other mass media forms. In other words, when South Asia asks the question 'What is cinema?' we find a theory of relations and thus, intermediality.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Notes

1. Foucault positioned the *dispositif* or apparatus as a network across disparate elements including the discursive, the institutional, the technological among others. This is always grounded historically, and a strategic manipulation of relations, foremost amongst which are relations of power and knowledge and their intersections. For a further evaluation of the term, see Agamben 2009. Some scholars see apparatus theory, as articulated by Jean Louis Baudry and others, as extending and transforming medium specificity in producing 'a subject-effect' through a constellation of the camera, screen and spectator (Doane, 2007). However, as Elsaesser (2016) argues, from the perspective of media archaeology, re-reading the concept of *dispositif* allows for the inclusion of a variety of (re)arrangements that eschews an understanding based on either *dispositif* as technological apparatus or as psychic appara-tus producing a 'subject-effect' (in psychoanalytic terms). It is this last evaluation of the term that is often seen in continuity with the assemblage, stepping outside of Foucauldian terms as well.
2. A term drawn from Deleuze and Guattari, assemblage has a few accepted elements as part of its definition. Borrowing from Thomas Nail's (2017) discussion, assemblage is considered, first and foremost, an arrangement of various elements that yield multiplicity, not unity. In other words, the assemblage is neither part nor whole, and thus it eschews the logic of essences, and underscores the importance of relations, which may be ever-changing.
3. Mahadevan and Jain's (2017) reflections upon narrative and formal questions, across Indian cinema and other art and media forms, allows us to further underscore the relationship between intermediality and poetics.

Key Readings

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