KARNATAKA TO SET UP CHALCHITRA ACADEMY AND GIVE GREATER SUBSIDY FOR CHILDREN'S FILMS A Report by our Roving Film Critic B.B. Nagpal



Bangalore , 24 January: The Karnataka Government is to set up aChalchitra Academy shortly to help the Kannada film industry and will also seek to increase the budgetary grant for promotion of good cinema in the next financial year.

Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa said during the Third Bengalooru International Film Festival here that his government was also considering doubling the number of children's films to which it gives a grant every year. At present, only two children's films are given a grant of Rs 2.5 million each every year.

The Chief Minister also said the state government was drawing up an appropriate programme to mark seventyfive years of

Kannada cinema.

Festival Committee Chairman V N Subba Rao, noted filmmaker Girish Kassarvalli, and others sought greater help from the State Government to help the growth of good Kannada cinema. Others present on the occasion versatile actor Prakash Rai, Kannada film stars Ramesh Arvind and Puneet Raj Kumar, Mr. Jayaramaraje Urs who is Secretary (Information, Kannada and Culture), former Film Federation of India Vice-President A. R. Raju, and Karnataka Film Producers Association President K. C. N. Chandrashekhar. Dr. Vijaya, Associate Chairperson and Mr. N. Vidyashankar, Executive Director of the Festival, were also present.

A total of more than 150 films from about thirty countries were screened in various sections of the Festival, in six screens spread over four venues.

The Festival was organised by the Suchitra Cinema and Cultural Academyin collaboration with the Karnataka government, and was supported fully by the Kannada film industry.

The Kannada section of the Festival, a highlight of which was a two-hour long DVD film on the evolution of Kannada film music over the year, was inaugurated yesterday by the noted singer and music director, C. Aswath, at a function presided over by former Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce President K. V. Gupta.

The Indian Panorama Section was inaugurated by Prakash Rai – who has starred in the film ‘Kanjeevaram’ by Priyadarshan which is part of the Panorama -and K. V. R. Tagore, Additional Director General of Police, who presided. Mr. Suresh Heblikar, noted actor, director and environmentalist, inaugurate the Documentary and Short Films section, in the presence of Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh, Additional Director General of Police, who is himself a filmmaker.

The four-day Animation Workshop organized by ABAI and ANTS,

was inaugurated by noted actor director Ramesh Arvind and Mr. Ashish Kulkarni, CEO, Big Animation, presided.

As part of the Festival, six children's films were screened and this section was inaugurated by Master Kishan, who directed the film 'Care of Footpath' and entered the record books as the youngest Indian director. The screenings had been organized for school children from designated schools. In all about 1200 students watched films. Discussions about the films viewed were arranged after every screening. Distinguished personalities who work with children took part in the interactions.

A Photo Exhibition on 75 years of Kannada Cinema compiled by the Department of Information of the state Government was inaugurated at the main venue Vision Cinemas by the celebrated cinematographer Mr. V. K. Murthy.

To mark the platinum jubilee of Kannada cinema nearly 40 landmark films, both in 35mm and digital format, were screened in all the festival venues in vision cinemas, K. H. Patil Auditorium, Badami House and Suchitra, Twenty Eight documentaries – all from India – and nearly a dozen children films from various countries, are also being screened during the festival.

Entry to the public was by delegate passes for Rs. 500 for the entire Festival, while students of journalism and communication in all colleges and film schools and members of all film societies can get entry at a concessional rate of Rs. 300.

The Sense of an Audience- Keval Arora's Kolumn

Most discussions – *and* demonstrations, now that the next edition of the Bharangam is upon us – of what ails contemporary theatre rarely take into account the role of the audience. In an environment where the audience's contribution to the making of meaning is barely acknowledged, it is unlikely that its responsibility for the state of the theatre will ever be admitted. Audiences do of course get noticed, but only in the context of dwindling attendance at plays, or strategies to entice spectators back to the theatre. Such 'concern' for the audience masks a worryingly patronising attitude. It sees spectators as little more than passive receptors of other people's intention, dry vessels waiting open-mouthed for the filling. One may as well not invoke the audience for all the insight that such invocations offer.

At first glance, it seems logical to exclude the audience from analyses of the theatre, for the audience does not concoct the brew being poured down its gullet. In fact, it often resists being bottle-fed and sometimes even resents the after-taste. So, on the face of it, no audience can be held *directly* responsible for the spectacle that theatre often makes of itself.

However, theatregoers cannot thereby wash their hands of the matter. The sense of an audience – an expectation of whom the play is being performed for – creeps into the decisions that performers make, both before and during the enactment, to such an extent that it shapes the final outcome as directly as if the audience had sat in on the creative process. This happens all the time, regardless of how accurate or credible the

group’s idea of its target audience may be. There is, therefore, a point beyond which audiences can no longer claim ‘innocence’. Spectators cannot escape responsibility for what is performed for them. Or, put more accurately, for what they accept as passable in performance. Complicity is structured into the relation between performers and spectators, even if the relation is a silent one.

Perhaps, the fact of complicity stems from such silence. No complicity is as demeaning as that in silent acquiescence. This is especially glaring in the theatre where performers and spectators inhabit the same physical space, and where exchange is immediate, tangible and therefore possible. It can be argued that it is naïve to expect a dialogue between patrons and performers when there is so little traffic between theatre groups themselves. Some groups attempt to reach out and ‘talk’ to its spectators beyond the footlights, but most are content or resigned to interpret their audience through ticket-sales and applause.

Nevertheless, I’d imagine that the responsibility for creating a stimulating theatre rests equally – if not finally – on those who dole out good money to see these performances. The failure of a play is often the failure of its audience, especially when spectators are unwilling, whether through politeness or indifference, to call a spade a spade. When was the last time a Delhi audience collectively protested against the quality of a production? In silently ingesting whatever is on offer – or, in protesting quietly and privately – spectators do a great disservice to those who have stopped going to the theatre, as also to those who stay away from it.

The argument that audiences are powerless to effect change is not as reasonable as it initially appears. Accomplices do not have power handed to them on a platter. What sullen accomplices do have is unlimited opportunity to seize power for change. ‘Ticket-sales’ and ‘applause’, for instance, are two vocabularies through which spectators can register their

protest. Theatre groups understand these vocabularies, for no group can afford to alienate that miniscule minority which still visits the theatre. Can you imagine any group churning out tripe, production after production, if nobody sat through it all? (As the old Sixties slogan ran: ‘Suppose they gave a war and nobody came¼’.) It is all very well for us high-minded types to have criticised Aamir Raza Husain and his theatre group Stagedoor for having inundated Delhi with a particular variety of prurient bedroom comedy a decade ago. The fact is that the Kamani auditorium had then run to full houses, and night after night, you couldn’t get tickets half an hour before the show. Husain was merely giving the audience what it wanted; it’s the spectators who turned out to be the idiots and the fools.

But Stagedoor is a soft target, one about which it is impossible to disagree. A less obvious arena of disaffection is the NSD Repertory. With most of its productions bearing the *chhap* of vintage years, several of the Repertory’s productions today seem like museum pieces that are not noticeably different from the memories of past productions enshrined in its theatre museum. Yet, the Repertory manages an audience, an army of the faithful that sees nothing wrong about being caught in a time warp. So, the NSD Repertory blithely continues on its narcissistic path of self-imitation.

In both these cases, the audience’s uncritical acceptance of the plays pre-empts self-evaluation. Surely the idea that theatre ought to reflect the aspirations of the people is not intended as a re-formulation within aesthetics of the law of supply and demand. But that is precisely how so much of so little worth gets by: after all, runs the argument, how can something be bad if the audience doesn’t think it so? That old argument of supply & demand turns a contingent moment into a principle, and confers virtue upon the opportunist. Whenever there is a demand, there will always be somebody willing to supply the need. As to which is the cause and which the

effect, you can argue yourself blue in the face and remain none the wiser. One way out of the trap, as some do-gooders have tried, is to unilaterally decide what is beneficial for the audience, irrespective of what the audience thinks is good for itself, and sanguinely offer just that for the edification and pleasuring of a benighted public. And, in the process, move from undermining the theatre from below to corroding it from the top.

Why should a group of seemingly normal people lapse into appalling taste when assembled? What is the combustion that makes otherwise alert individuals metamorphose into an uncritical, slumbering mass that is content to be led by the nose? A common explanation is that Delhi's theatre-going fraternity is a large club; and it is difficult to be honest, even with oneself, within these spiralling circles of friendship.

But social niceties alone cannot explain an audience's generosity of spirit when confronted by a poverty of imagination and taste. Of the other reasons, the feel-good factor is surely relevant. In the peculiar arrangements of our mainstream theatre, it is remarkable how a public that is lukewarm about the prospect of taking plays seriously, actually finds its anxieties evaporating into a careless geniality once it walks through the auditorium doors. The reasons for such geniality may vary. It could be a media-fuelled expectation of a good time, the grapevine recommendation of a place where "it's happening", or simply a forced attendance with obligatory smiles in tow. The consequence, however, is always the same: a frame of mind conditioned by expectation or habit into evading any kind of alert and critical response.

Watching a play is not an autonomous activity. Peter Brook defines an act of theatre as, "A man walks across [an] empty space while someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged". But his

definition leaves out the vital dimension of community that characterises the theatrical experience. (Isn't that why watching a play all alone in an auditorium leaves you feeling so terribly lonely?) The act of collective viewing has its own rhythm, which is distinct from, say, the rhythm of watching the TV by oneself. We've all sensed, as part of an audience, how our responses have been imperceptibly but steadily shaped by the responses of others in the auditorium. This is exhilarating when you are one with everybody else, but it can become enormously repressive should you find yourself out of sync with the rest of the crowd.

In non-consensual situations, collective viewing constricts free response by jostling and eroding individual stances of resistance to the performance. The invidious push 'n' shove between people of different persuasions and profiles reduces an audience's collective potential for reading a performance against the grain. This is why the spectator, as a member of that amorphous collective, has less interpretative control over the text than the single reader engaged in a private act of reading. Sanity is restored only when the individual spectator withdraws into looking upon his neighbours as another kind of text.

Surprisingly, spectators are often unwilling to exercise even a minimal control: witness our readiness to vocalise our appreciation of plays but not our dissent. Laughing and applauding are okay, but booing is out. By a similar compact, spectators happily exchange evaluations of the performance's technical features – acting, costumes, etc – but are far more circumspect in reacting to the meaning of the play.

Nowhere do we find a better instance of such degradation of individual spectator response than in the mass hysteria evident now when an entire nation of TV-gazers has been turned into one huge audience of the grand theatre called Mumbai 26/11. Such is the pressure of the people's response (as selectively promoted through privately-owned media channels)

that the bloody, messy business of killing and revenge has been cleansed and glorified through the quavering rhetoric of patriotism and sacrifice into a superior civilisational activity. (Interestingly, the hawks talk of killing, while the doves talk of sacrifice. The distinction between the two remains blurred because for both, war as a routine response is here to stay.) There are a few sane voices that refuse to be swept up in this general feeling. But where are these to be heard in the clamour of the warmongers who glibly espouse counter-violence as a simple solution to complex problems?

Be it the larger theatre or the small play, failings in public discourse can usually be traced back to the failure of audiences – and, to our irresponsible habit of lapping up whatever is served. So much then for our audiences' ability to make sense.

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News Flashes

As they Happen

the following events at Habitat World, IHC this month have been cancelled:

Jan 24th |7:30pm|**THEATRE**|Theatre World & The Valaya Magic Foundation present Untitled, a solo performance by Lushin Dubey. Dir. Arvind Gaur. Music by Dr. Sangeeta Gaur.

Jan 29th |7:00pm|**DANCE**|Kuchipudi Dance Academy presents Omkaram Viswarupam.

IHC regrets the inconvenience caused.

Osian’s launches the Publishing House with the release of Bachchanalia: The Films and Memorabilia of Amitabh Bachchan



Osian’s Connoisseurs of Art is announced the official launch of a full-fledged Publishing and Design House. The first publication to be launched post this announcement is Bhawana Somaaya’s and Osian’s Centre for Archiving, Research & Development‘s *Bachchanalia: The Films and Memorabilia of Amitabh Bachchan*, a book dedicated to the life and works of arguably one of the greatest personalities of Indian and world cinema – Mr. Amitabh Bachchan. The book is a collector’s item and a unique documentation of the megastars filmography

illustrated through rare and exclusive film posters from the Osian's Archive Collection.

The Osian's Archive & Library research team has put together this most comprehensive visual homage to the supreme energies of the actor by representing his aura through all the 150 odd films he has acted in, in the last forty years. Osian's archives hold the largest collection of Indian and world film memorabilia as well as the largest collection of popular cultural art inspired by Mr. Bachchan.

An exclusive exhibition of film memorabilia associated with Mr. Bachchan will be on display at the launch. The experience of being in such close proximity to some of the finest original film posters, lobby cards and photographs of the legend will be unique and unparalleled.

Knowing For Sure Without Knowing For Certain: How I Make Films by Paromita Vohra – A film maker's presentation at the IAWRT Asian Women's Film Festival

I admit to being embarrassed about making a presentation about how I make films. I feared it would be a pompous thing somehow and that my body of work is not substantial enough (which it's not) to talk about. But as I began to think about it, I realized in some ways it was an opportunity to valued, if one

could speak with both an honesty and seriousness about intent.

The reason I value it more is because it's very difficult to be a documentary filmmaker. Not because of money, because of lack of sufficient exhibition and distribution structures – these problems will remain because we will always want more money and more audiences. The nature of any work which is independent and not part of the mainstream makes those things a given. But the reason I think it is difficult is because there is so little discussion around us about documentary films – and even less about it as a film, not only a political statement (although in essence the two are not different).

Sometimes people ask me what I do. When I say I am a filmmaker I see their eyes lighting up and when I add that I make documentaries I see the light go out, their voices peter out into a "oh accha, I see." If someone asks me what I have been doing recently and I say, well I just finished a film, their voices go up in delight – oh? You made a film?! And I add, yes, it's about this incident in Meerut that.. and they say, deflated, oh, you made a new documentary, I thought you'd made a *film*.

The fact is, no one really takes documentary films seriously as filmmaking – sometimes not even filmmakers themselves. No one writes about it in the film reviews column in the press. Academics and critics develop increasingly sophisticated ways of talking about mainstream culture but a language and framework to assess the contemporary alternative culture seems not to coalesce. And in the absence of that language it becomes hard to clarify one's own craft and thinking, for it to grow stronger.

Even as we stand at a moment that has seen a real surge in the popularity of the documentary film, it appears that documentaries are still invisible even to those who watch them – as films.

As any documentary filmmaker, I could not but be conscious of the marginality of the form. As one who began work in the mid-90s, just as the media landscape was undergoing a seismic shift, I was all the more keenly aware that the relationship with the language and the style of this form was a sporadic one. I lay all this out because I think, what I have come to realize on reflection is that a large part of my goal in a film is to make people think about filmmaking as a language and to talk about it.

Why do I want to do this – besides reasons of vanity of which there's always some part in any artist's repertoire?

I am not very sure if younger people today feel what I felt when I was young. I wanted to make documentary films at a time when there were far fewer filmmakers around than today. Of those, the ones who didn't have beards, wore far more serious clothes than I did (or do now that I am no longer young). Although this sounds a bit facetious I say it only to indicate that in some senses a lot of the filmmakers working then came from a largely common (despite disagreement and dissmiliarites) political and filmic tradition.

To quote from an interview with the well known feminist documentarian Deepa Dhanraj which appeared in *Deep Focus*, although I read it years later, anthologized elsewhere:

"We saw films as a way of documenting and expressing a certain thinking. We also saw the making and viewing of films as an emotional experience for other women. Why we chose films specifically as the medium as opposed to the theatre, we really were not clear about. We were unhappy with the films around us and we did feel the need to reach out and generate images that never existed and could counter the negative portrayals and manipulations of women in the media. India having such a strong audience tradition, films seemed to be a good medium to enable us to go into community and draw people together. That we were not going to screen these films to a

neutral audience was very clear, so our audience was fixed. The whole process was an alliance with the people who helped us to make the film. So both in production and conception, the themes and concerns of these films originated with the activists of that area."

Therefore, there seemed to be an implicit understanding which indicated what was political and what wasn't – for the filmmaker and the viewer. In the context of that commonality – it is hard to describe how uncertain and how ill-equipped I felt to make films. I felt like a pretender and I found it very hard to show my ignorance because it usually aroused shock. People were shocked that I didn't know everything about the *Narmada Bachao Andolan*, the Naxal movement or the Mathura rape case. I felt an instinctive relationship with the political impulse and ideas in all the documentaries I watched – from Bombay our City to Something Like a War. But because they were ideas I couldn't see clearly articulate – in terms of an easily accessible historical record – I felt very nervous because I didn't know any of this for certain although I in my heart felt that I knew it for sure.

What resulted from this was something I can only call a hectic political anxiety.

I was a middle class kid who had gone to a couple of rallies and felt supportive of many leftist positions. I remember being excited when I went to the first big NBA rally in Bombay – but I hadn't as such been a part of an organization and I didn't really want to be – I wanted to be a filmmaker. However, I constantly felt that that would not be political enough. If I wanted to be really political I could do it only if I were somehow attached to a movement of some kind and if my film were somehow interlinked with these issues. And yet….Why did this not convince me? Was I scared of my own ignorance? Was I too entrenched in my middle class identity to want to abandon it? I am sure these things played some part but the fact is there was actually not enough discussion

happening around documentary film making having a political space of its own, as art, and there wasn't really much of a space to talk about all this and so, come to some understanding from which I could move on. I felt political – but how to express this politics? Would I have to become a naxalite? Or work in the Naramada valley? But I didn't think I could, I didn't even think I should. Was it as simple a matter as voting? Obviously not. What is it then that films want us to do – and by extension, should I ever get to make films- what was I supposed to tell people to do?

What was important for me to understand was that I actually was in a different time and space than a lot of earlier filmmakers – that I wasn't actually operating in the same context and that some of my confusion about their responses was in itself a critique from which some new understanding was born for me about the kind of films I would eventually make.

In fact, later in the same interview quoted above Dhanraj says:

"In India, what has also happened is that we have got stuck with the form of socialist realism without the environment of revolution which bred this form in the first place…(as in say Chile, or the USSR)…Many film forms created (in those contexts) have become radical genres which 'political' filmmakers have used and are still using in toto. Here in India, the prevailing ideological climate is reactionary and we seem to have got stuck with these forms without the specific historical circumstances that bred them in the first place. *Today, by and large, these films only illustrate the individual filmmaker's politics and don't move into the realm of political activity.*" (Italics mine)

What does that mean – to move into the realm of political activity. This kind of discussion about filmmaking is important because it asks us to think about two things: the nature of politics and the nature of film as a medium of

political activity. Do we make films that faithfully illustrate our political position on a particular matter? Or do we use our political position to arrive at an understanding of the subject and try somehow to bridge the gap between what we see when we look at something thanks to our political perspective?

As I see it, with the political shifts of the 90s a lot of filmmaking was not necessarily happening within the context of particular movements. And as, in the last decade and a half, the urban and semi urban middle class has prospered and expanded hugely it has increasingly gone away from a lot of progressive political thought and in fact information which might cast a questioning light on their choices and their realities. For me in many senses it is imperative to draw this community back into the fold of a larger political discussion and I am going to speak very briefly about how the nature of intervention in my work is tied to my formal choices.

I was lucky that I saw the work of a few filmmakers that I think was also responsive to this pool of ideas – Jill Misquitta, Reena Mohan, Madhusree Dutta – strangely they were all women – which helped me in thinking about these things a lot, however associatively.

Then I was very lucky because I was asked to make a film about feminism – not an event etc. but a film about a political idea that would encourage people to engage with this political idea. So this was important to me because in fact I was struggling with these two questions myself and I had to find a strategy to deal with it.

While researching this film I found again and again the normal human contradictoriness in many ways – the way people acted and the ideas they had for instance did not always match. There'd be lots of people whose ideas I agreed with who would not behave well or be very rigid – i.e., not in accordance with the values they (we) espoused, whereas frequently, people

whose ideologies were anathema to me were the soul of human reasonableness and courtesy. I wanted, in the film, to try to communicate a sense impression of what I understood in the research process and I think a lot of the language I have since been using, evolved in the process of making this film.

I wanted to find a way to include the idea that I might both agree and disagree with something. So for instance in interviews, I decided not to ask about all the things someone notable had achieved, not to glorify, but, although I did not know them personally, to find a way to have a personal conversation while talking of political things.

One of the things I decided to do (and have done ever since) is not choose people who were in the film on the strength of their achievements but how the conversation with them answered my personal questions about some of the ideas (in this case feminism and the feminist movement). Also I think I tended again and again to choose people who inhabited a sort of middle space, or at least were willing to talk about the middle space. I basically began to be very interested in that which was not quite being discussed in public space – the interior, the quotidian, the emotional.

(CLIP OF VINA MAZUMDAR'S INTERVIEW WHERE SHE TALKS ABOUT HER PERSONAL SENSE OF INADEQUACY IN THE FEMINIST WORK SHE DID AND YET, SHARES A CERTAIN WISE, REFLECTIVE UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE NATURE OF MOVEMENTS).

I think what's important to me – is that within the narrative of a film, absolute positions not be taken vis-à-vis a person or event. However, clearly my position on the matter is clear and should be communicated somehow. This is the basic idea along which I structure my films: that my politics is clear in the way I choose things but I often talk to those (to use a lovely word I've learned from academic friends) who inhabit a liminal space – or at least look for that sort of space within the conversation.

A curiosity I had about why films also proceeded along certified political lines – was that they would become so repetitive. I came to understand that one of these reasons was that both politically and formal-ly, we know that we are marginal in some way and that the ideas we are working with are not in the realm of common knowledge, or even a common value system. Hence, an anxiety about stating and arguing our position in a peculiar mixture of indignation and dutiful proof emerged. In all of this film as a medium gets engaged with for its amplificatory properties, more than its performative ones.

But so much of art is a trick of performance. So, I decided rather consciously, that in a film, what if we assume not what is right or wrong – but we assume what matters and doesn't. We assume that our position does not have to be explained – either by proving someone wrong or by explaining why we are right. But what if we just assume it's fine to have the position we have and maybe make a little effort to present it clearly enough and not explain it.

To do that we need to rely on the nature of film as primarily a space of ambiguity where ideas may be clarified through constant presentation/examination.

In some ways I am particularly uninterested in the concept of expose, the concept of the sting for instance so I tend not to interview too many of the "accused" in the progressive framework. Because the truth is audiences don't share my values although those values may overlap. And if they shared those values then I wouldn't feel the need to show them a film. Furthermore I do feel that if the instruments of justice really worked in our society then the expose would serve a genuine purpose, which, following a natural path would lead to justice. But in the context of a rather cynical system and a disenchanted public, the language of the expose seems to reaffirm violence/injustice.

So I've become very interested in the idea of conversation – with all its attendant charms, points of convergence and divergence, as a means of changing ideas and for that I felt it was necessary to create spaces within the film where strong lines were not constantly being drawn. What are we really making these films for – to help people make more informed, more democratic decisions? Perhaps, I felt, a way to do this would be to allow them to inhabit a space for some time that would be a space of no absolute truth, no certitude and perhaps, take that sense away with them.

So I tend to use what I call a multiple window – which is not about providing different perspectives as much as a sort of more mischievous behaviour of jumping in from one window and then jumping out and then coming in from the door and just playing the fool a little bit.

I also tend to inhabit a persona and I try to keep it consistent – that is I see myself as an actor in the film and I make the film with that exact state of mind and way of asking questions – diff. for diff films.

This gives the films a sort of clear landscape for the viewer to inhabit, creating a sort of sensual journey of possibilities.

(CLIP OF BILQUIS' INTERVIEW IN Q2P)

The biggest issue has been what to do with things you really don't like? Do you not include it? I felt there was no need to waste a lot of time with stereotypes or those who propagate 'regressive thinking' because a film can't degnerate into a tu-tu-main main. I am uncomfortable with the black and white position – not so much because there is no right and wrong – actually I think there is, but the language of right and wrong is too polarizing. What do you do with stereotypical situations of which you are critical then?

I've tended to use fictional ideas for this. In Where's

Sandra? I used tongue-in-cheek song picturisations that typified the gaze with which people see the Catholic girl (the figure of whom the film was about). In Unlimited Girls I used fake advertisements for anti-feminist products to typify the prejudices about feminism. In Morality TV aur Loving Jehad: Ek Manohar Kahani I used a fake article written in the style of pulp fiction as a commentary (the film was about the language of tabloid news).

(CLIP FROM WHERE'S SANDRA – OF A SONG. ALSO, EARLIER, MORALITY TV HAD ALREADY BEEN SCREENED)

To do this, freely, but with the firm sense of making a political intervention I think I've had to trust that this is how I believe films work. Of course this is not absolute, it changes from time to time but we no longer look at films as absolute evidence. It's important to acknowledge that. Offering pleasure, knowing that film is a medium of pleasure and that is what draws people in but now allowing it to lull them, rather to wake them up to make them excited (not always pleasurably, but certainly in part through their senses) is a chance I feel all film-makers do take.

And in that sense I also see my work as a conversation with other filmmakers – I believe in knowing what they do and not doing the same thing. I am confident that this works as a composite movement and what one comrade in this endeavour is doing – is being taken care of – and that I need to not replicate it as an indication of solidarity, but I need to know about as much as I can and learn from other films and complement them.

It's obvious I have an interest in the way something is said and not exactly the thing itself although these two things are intimately connected. One of the things I am often accused of is leaving some things not quite said. I have to say it's deliberate – I think if you try to connect to the logic of the filmmaking aesthetics (not only factuality) in a film the

audience will get it in their heads and will need to talk about it as a way of expressing what they've sensed – because they will know it for sure, but not for certain. And in getting there, in conversation with the film and each other, they may get to other places. And I really and truly in my heart know both for sure and for certain that in this way (along with many others), a little bit, the world can slowly embrace change.