

ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS IN PRAGUE  
**FILM AND TV FACULTY**

Masters Degree in Cinematography  
Cinematography

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**Conveying Meaning Through Movement:  
Using Handheld Vs Steadicam In Moving Point Of View Shots  
In Feature Films**

**ABRAHAM JOSEPH**

Thesis advisor: Michael Gahut

Examiner: Klaus Fuxjager

Date of thesis defense: 27 September 2018

Academic title granted: Masters Degree

Prague, 2018

(TRANSLATION VERSION)  
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**MASTER'S THESIS**

**Přenášení významu přes pohyb: pomocí handheld vs steadicam pro  
pohyblivý úhel pohledu v celovečerních filmech**

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Thesis advisor: Michael Gahut  
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## Declaration

I declare that I have prepared my Master's Thesis independently on the following topic:

**Conveying Meaning Through Movement : Using Handheld Vs Steadicam In Moving Point Of View Shots In Feature Films**

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

Prague, date:

Signature of the candidate

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis attempts to study two techniques used to shoot the moving POV shot in films--the handheld camera and the Steadicam--to analyse how they contribute to or enhance the 'realism' in a film. To do this, existing literature on camera movement is reviewed and an overview of the history of these two techniques is provided. This thesis also looks at how the moving POV shot has been captured in cinema till now. Drawing from this historical foundation, this thesis builds its theoretical premise, hugely aided by Andre Bazin's theory of cinematic realism and the films and ideas of cinema put forth by Robert Bresson. Finally, this thesis formulates a new classification of POVs and perspectives, and analyses two films (László Nemes's *Son of Saul* and Gus Van Sant's *Elephant*) that each use one of these techniques of filming the moving POV against it. The attempt to understand which of these camera movement techniques comes closest to attaining 'realism' and the idea of cinema as propagated by Bresson.

## **ABSTRAKT**

Tato diplomová práce se pokouší studovat dvě techniky používané při natáčení pohyblivého se úhlu pohledu ve filmech - kapesní kameru a Steadicam - k analýze toho, jak přispívají nebo zlepšují "realismus" ve filmu. K tomu dochází přezkoumáním stávající literatury o pohybu kamery a popsáním historie těchto dvou technik. Tato diplomová práce se také zabývá tím, jak byl pohyblivý úhel pohledu kinematograficky zachycován do dnešního dne. Na základě historického základu tato diplomová práce staví svůj teoretický předpoklad, mimořádně podpořený Andre Bazinovou teorií o filmovém realismu či filmy a představami o kinematografii, které uvedl Robert Bresson. Nakonec tato práce formuluje novou klasifikaci úhlu pohledu a perspektiv a analyzuje dva filmy (László Nemesův *Son Of Saul* a Gus Van Santův *Elephant*), přičemž každý používá jednu z těchto technik natáčení pohyblivého se úhlu pohledu. Tímto způsobem se pokouší o pochopení, která z těchto technik pohybu kamery je nejbližší k dosažení "realismu" a představě kinematografie, jak je šíří Bresson.

Dedicated to my dear wife, the pillar of my life.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>07</b>	
 <b>CHAPTER TWO: DECONSTRUCTING CAMERA MOVEMENTS</b>		
<b>2.1 Camera Movement: Research stands still.....</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>2.2 Motivation versus function.....</b>	<b>12</b>	
<b>2.3 Movement in numbers: Statistical studies.....</b>	<b>15</b>	
<b>2.4 Conclusion.....</b>	<b>16</b>	
 <b>CHAPTER THREE: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE</b>		
<b>3.1 The humble beginnings.....</b>	<b>18</b>	
<b>3.2 The handheld era.....</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>3.3 Direct cinema &amp; Cinema Verite.....</b>	<b>24</b>	
<b>3.4 The Steadicam arrives.....</b>	<b>26</b>	
 <b>CHAPTER FOUR: SHOOTING POINT OF VIEW.....</b>		<b>32</b>
 <b>CHAPTER FIVE: FROM BAZIN TO BRESSON.....</b>		<b>38</b>
<b>5.1 The Bazinian cinematic realism.....</b>	<b>39</b>	
<b>5.2 Nature versus natural.....</b>	<b>42</b>	
<b>5.3 The Cinema of Robert Bresson.....</b>	<b>44</b>	
 <b>CHAPTER SIX: METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS</b>		
<b>6.1 Formulating a framework for analysis.....</b>	<b>49</b>	
<b>6.2 A taxonomy of POVs.....</b>	<b>51</b>	
<b>6.3 POV versus perspective.....</b>	<b>53</b>	
<b>6.4 Analysis.....</b>	<b>56</b>	
 <b>CONCLUSION .....</b>		<b>67</b>
 <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>		<b>71</b>

## INTRODUCTION

*The camera is the eye of the motion picture. It is not merely a mechanical thing that records an image on film. Rather, it is an artistic tool — like a painter's brush or a sculptor's chisel. In the hands of an artisan it becomes the instrument through which a dramatic story can be placed on film — so that later, in darkened theatres all over the world, vast audiences can see the film, react to it, and be entertained.* — Herbert Lightman, Cinematographer

What sets the medium of film apart from its front runner photography is the novel possibility it presents of moving images. Unlike other visual arts, which are lit and composed, it is only in film that one is able to reframe a continuous image. As legendary filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard puts it, such movements are not without its motivations, and these motivations are what turns film into a unique work of art.

Ever since the early 19th century, filmmakers have tried out various possibilities of exploiting this advantage of the medium. From moving images shot with static equipment, they started exploring the possibilities of shooting 'in action', i.e. by moving the camera from its fixed base.

The moving camera allowed for dynamic visual composition over time. It doesn't come as a surprise that the Lumiere brothers were perhaps the first to experiment with this technique when they affixed a camera to a moving train in Liverpool in 1897. In the silent era, many filmmakers and cinematographers used dollies, tracks and cranes to introduce different kinds of camera



movements into the grammar of film. Karl Freund, the cinematographer of the 1924 F.W. Murnau film *The Last Laugh*, is known to have operated the camera from a bicycle and also to have strapped it onto the chest of an actor to simulate the point of view of a drunken character.

After this, Murnau went on to introduce what is possibly the first dynamic first person point-of-view (POV) shot in his Hollywood debut *Sunrise (1927)*. In one of the most famous shots in the film, the camera pans away from its protagonist The Man and takes on his perspective to look at another character, all while he walks through the marshes.

In the late 50s, a new sensibility of filming using portable cameras arose in Wisconsin, led by Robert Drew and his team of cinematographers called Direct Cinema. It was the French New Wave filmmakers who then adapted these tenets to fiction filmmaking, often referred to as Cinema Verite, which led to a surge of interest in the use of handheld camera movement. Used without concern for stable images, the effort was to convey a sense of realism, intimacy and urgency. Up until the early 70s, filmmakers and cinematographers fell back upon the handheld style to film the moving first person POV shot. However, the shaky images produced as an outcome of such shots were not appreciated and adopted by all.

In the early 1970s, American cinematographer Garrett Brown had a simple, but revolutionary idea: to make a device that could smooth out handheld action shots. The result was the Academy Award-winning Steadicam®, which made its feature film debut on the movie *Bound for Glory (1976)*, and rose to prominence

in films like *Rocky (1976)* and *The Shining (1980)*. “I love moving the camera, but I intentionally disliked shaky, handheld shots,” said Brown. “I have the instinct that when we walk around, we see a stabilized image. When you walk, you see what looks like a dolly shot.” This was the reason that led him to create this game-changing piece of equipment.

Steadicam became one of the most sought-after tools used by filmmakers thereafter, but ironically most of them use it to realise an objective point of view, which was quite contrary to what Brown intended it to be used for in the first place. The shaky, jittery movement of the handheld camera is still commonly used to convey the sense of the moving POV in feature films.

### **Motivation and structure**

Cinema is one of the youngest art forms that exist in the world today and it is still evolving in terms of its language and techniques. Looking back, there have been a few critical turning points in film history that brought about a dynamic change in the way films are made, like the introduction of montages, camera movement, sound, colour etc. I consider both the emergence of the handheld camera movement and the invention of the Steadicam as two such defining moments in film history, where you can draw out a clear before and after variation.

As cinema continues to evolve, it is being driven by technological innovations so much so that such gadgets shape our narratives more than we realize. They determine how stories will be told due to their influence on the making process

itself. As an ardent student of film and cinematography, and being a practicing cinematographer, my attempt has always been, albeit selfish, to find a way to strip the films I shoot of the baggage of unwanted technical excess. I believe, much like many others who have actively theorised it before me, that, at the end of the day, cinema is about conveying a feeling or communicating an emotion to the audience. So my quest has always been to find the most basic and the most essential way to get to this goal while making a film.

This thesis is a one more step in that direction. This thesis attempts to study how and to what extent a camera movement technique/technology like handheld or Steadicam adds to the way a film is finally read and engaged with. And, how they contribute or enhance the 'realism' in a film. Both these techniques have been used to film dynamic subjective shots, which makes it even more interesting for this study.

To do this, the existing theoretical literature on camera movement is studied to understand the relevance and need of this study. Then, the history of how these two techniques of filming the moving POV evolved over time is studied. This thesis then attempts to develop a premise to base its analysis on. Here it draws largely from the ideas of Bazinian realism and from the work and ideology of French filmmaker Robert Bresson. Based on these two pillars of thought, a framework or classification will be formulated, against which two selected films--*Son of Saul* and *Elephant*--are studied to find out which of these techniques of shooting the moving POV comes closest to attaining 'realism' and the bare bones true 'essence' of cinema.

## CHAPTER TWO

### DECONSTRUCTING CAMERA MOVEMENT

#### 2.1 Camera movement: Research stands still

Despite being one of the most controversial filmmaking techniques ever, camera movement is a surprisingly under-documented and under-studied aspect of film theory and film studies. David Bordwell in his book, *On The History Of Film Style* (1997), said that “camera movement has usually been too elusive to be analyzable”. Not much later, Vivian Sobchack wrote in *Towards Inhibited Space: The Semiotic Structure of Camera Movement* (1982):

[although it is possibly the kind of movement most central to our primary understanding of the cinema as a semiotically expressive form of human communication, camera movement has unfortunately seemed to elude the descriptive and interpretive grasp of traditional and contemporary modes of theoretical reflection.

Even in the years that followed, not much progress has been made in regard to how film scholars theorise camera movement. Some studies have come close to examining the principles of cinematic movement, but they haven't been able to strike a good balance between the philosophical and practical matters concerning camera movement.

Although there aren't many book-length studies on camera movement, it is one of the aspects of filmmaking that is often written and debated about. Be it in craft journals, film magazines, critical essays or even books on film aesthetics, camera movement finds a mention.

One of the main reasons for this elusiveness is touched upon by both Bordwell and Sobchack in their respective works. They say that, in order to analyse the movement, the movement itself has to cease to exist. This line of thought traces its origins back to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945). This becomes clearer if one contrasts camera movement with the well-researched act of montage in films. Montage, or the amalgamation of short shots to condense time, space and assumed information, is grounded by a strong, firm and explicit sense of relation, which makes it easier to analyse using the yardstick of semiotics. But camera movements are about fluidity. It deals with flowing developments and gradual shifts. Or simply put, the mechanics and semiotics of an edited scene can be explained with a series of stills, but to study the underlying meaning of a pan or a track-in, a reproduction of the same movement is needed.

## **2.2 Motivation versus function**

Camera movement has been studied or observed through various perspectives. Prominent among them are writings and discussions about camera movement technology that appear in craft journals, like the *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* and *American Cinematographer*. Such journals help us trace the historical trends in camera movement.

While studying such craft literature, it is interesting to note that when filmmakers discuss camera movement, they almost always talk about it from the point of view of a workflow. The reasons behind executing a certain camera movement may sometimes just come down to the fact that it was the best possible and

feasible camera movement given that time, location and situations. Another interesting aspect is that filmmakers always explain or delve into the motivation behind using a certain camera movement. However, they seldom speak about the function or the purpose that movement serves in the bigger fabric of the film's narrative itself.

Conventionally, camera movement has also been analyzed as being obstructive and arbitrary, sometimes even deemed unnecessary by filmmakers and cinematographers alike. The general agreement over what constitutes a good narrative was that the camera movement is seamless. Harry Savides, who shot *Elephant* (2003) in a series of Steadicam shots, once said, "You move only to help tell the story". So no matter what the time period or technique used, camera movements that could be justified as borne out of a narrative motivation were the ones to be analyzed.

Herb Lightman, in his essay *The Subjective Camera* (1946), simplifies the theorisation of camera movement. He writes:

The theory behind the fluid camera is a simple one. The camera is the "eye" of the audience, and the spectator sees only as much of the action as the camera sees. But if the spectator were actually present in the situation depicted upon the screen, he would not just stand in one place and restrain his eye from moving about in an effort to follow the action. Rather, he would move around – drawing closer to view this or that bit of action, drawing back to get a better view of the overall situation. The camera, as his cinematic eye, has a right to follow the same course of movement – drawing in, pulling back, narrowing down to some significant segment of the scene. It is as natural for the camera to move as it is for a character in the scene to move about the set. (Lightman, 1946)

However, camera movements not only mimic the sensory movement of the human eye. Much like how editing to closer cuts have been justified as presenting the viewer with more than how his physiological perspective would look and trying to mirror what he would want to focus on were he actually present in that space, camera movement also can be motivated by the psychological perspective of a narrator or viewer.

Lightman has also distinguished between the camera as an 'observer' and as a 'participant' in a sequence. This observer perspective that he talks about is commonly referred to as the objective angle or the third-person perspective. In the participatory perspective, the camera becomes a part of the action or scene, either as an anonymous participant or as the viewpoint of a character.

In his paper, *Camera Movement in Narrative Cinema: Towards a Taxonomy of Functions* (2007), Nielsen explains these two kinds of camera perspectives using the boxing match sequence shot by James Wong Howe in *Body and Soul* (1947). When the scene begins, the handheld camera is in the middle of the action, but it feels more or less like an unidentified participant. Soon, the camera takes on the perspectives of both the fighters, punch after punch, to register each blow as it falls.

Apart from being considered as the viewer's eye, another perspective the camera can take over is that of being another character in the story in itself.

When speaking about his work on Coen brothers' films, Roger Deakins says:

The camera itself is very much a character in Barton Fink. We had some extremely bizarre shots, like the one that starts off under a bed, tracks through a room, goes into a bathroom and winds up going down into the sink drain. On Fargo, our approach

was very different because we wanted the audience to feel like observers. We moved the camera a lot, but never in the way we did for Barton Fink or The Hudsucker Proxy. (Deakins in Silberg 2003b: 53)

When seen as a 'character', the camera gets the freedom to navigate the narrative and the given scene in numerous possible ways. It can be voyeuristic, inquisitive and sometimes even temperamental. Such a distinction of the camera as an observer, participant and character in a sequence is crucial to this thesis as it will be looking at the use of Steadicam and handheld shots largely in the participatory sense.

### **2.3 Movement in numbers: Statistical studies**

Some film historians like Barry Salt have also tried to analyse camera movements using statistical methods. Having identified different movements of the camera like pan, track, tilt and zoom among others, Salt (1974) tried to analyze how the use of camera movement has evolved quantitatively over time. He did this by tabulating the number of shots involving movement in films across different times. With a quantitative study, Salt was able to map the relevance of a particular camera movement in a certain era and, also perhaps, the filmmakers and cinematographers who employed certain movements often to etch it out as part of their cinematic language.

Many others have followed on Salt's path to do similar statistical analysis of camera movements. But the limitation that presents itself in Salt's study is prevalent in all the rest that followed as well. Such studies fail to capture the speed and duration of the camera movements. Neither are there distinctions made between handheld shots and Steadicam shots, both of which are usually



clubbed together under a broader category of tracking shots. By ignoring the qualitative decisions and subjective motivations behind camera movements and the and emotional repercussions that it creates, it would seem like a dogma film like *The Idiots* (1999) and Max Ophulus's *Caught* (1948) employs camera movement in a similar way.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The moving camera is one of the major elements that distinguishes the art of film from other performing arts. It contributes greatly to how the images on the screen and the sounds that accompany it are engaged with. As a practicing cinematographer, given the huge gap in the literature regarding camera movements, it helps to study such movements and place them in perspective before actually making the stylistic choice of implementing them.

In his work on camera movement, Nielsen specifies five different functions of camera movement. Every movement made by the camera serves at least one of these functions, he writes. The camera either orients the viewer spatially; helps in pacing by ensuring that the film retains a certain cinematic rhythm; inflects shots in a suggestive, commentative or valuative way; focalizes the movement to the viewpoints of the characters or other entities in the narrative; invites spectators to engage with the artifice of camera movement; and sometimes even tries its hand at visualizing abstract ideas and concepts.

The first seed of curiosity for this study were sown during one of the masterclasses at the Camerimage International Film Festival. Leading the masterclass was Garrett Brown, the legendary cinematographer and the

inventor of what I consider one of the most major developments in film history itself, the Steadicam. He was introducing us to his oft-repeated argument against handheld cameras that drove him to invent the Steadicam.

The point is to let these storytelling shots show you what you—the viewer—ideally would love to see; where you would put your eye if you were standing on that set looking. We do this a million times a day. Human beings are fabulous camera operators of our own eyes, and our own eyes are superbly stabilized. When you run, you don't see a jerky shot. You see a very smooth Steadicam shot. We instinctively lean left and right, stand up and move around, to see what we want to see. I think that is a devastating argument against handheld: human beings don't see in the shaky way that handheld presents the world. In fact, it's stupid that your audience would see a shakier vision than your actors would see.

This argument brought about a curiosity in me about the link between a dynamic camera movement and depiction of 'reality'. Despite films being an accepted world of make-belief, filmmakers even today are trying to attain the most 'realistic' form of expression through the medium.

How then does camera movements influence this creation of verisimilitude in the minds of the viewer? Does the technique and technology used to compose and create that movement affect this? These were questions that brought me to this thesis.

To understand and analyze these questions and even attempt to piece together an answer for these, it is imperative to take a look at what went by. Why certain camera movement techniques came into being and how they've affected cinema as a craft and as an art form awaits to be studied.

## CHAPTER THREE

### A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

#### 3.1 The humble beginnings

The idea of a moving image emerged even before the birth of cinema. It was in May, 1880, that the Zoopraxiscope displayed the first parallel tracking shot with twelve consecutive photographs of a horse galloping in sequential order (Nielsen). This was the first representation of movement captured through imagery. Soon after that many filmmakers tried to attempt to move the camera to capture movement, but were largely limited as equipment that helped them do so wasn't available yet.

It was in 1897 that a realization, which would later shape the visual language of cinema in the years to come, dawned upon Eugene Promio, the Lumière brothers' camera operator (Ferrara). As he filmed the beautiful alleys of Venice riding on his gondola through the city's canals, he was caught by surprise by not just the visual beauty of the images, but also by the realization that a person's viewpoint cannot be represented from a single spot. This was something that had never been attempted before that point of time in cinema. He realized that to capture such a dynamic motion representing what a person sees, the camera should be able to move, rotate, elevate and descend. This wasn't the only requirement, though. It also had to be made sure that the camera is kept immobile or steady during such movement. This was the first ever use of the moving viewpoint.

Nielsen says that for the moving viewpoint,

“...the viewing positions and the structure of movement were facilitated by the spectrum of available camera supports”.

This was the reason why, in the later years, the Lumière brothers used transportation vehicles, including escalators, boats and trains to bring dynamism to their shot design.

This idea of a moving viewpoint set the foundation for a film movement of its own. Cameras were boarded and fitted on trains to take two important kind of moving viewpoints: the panorama and the phantom. Shot from the side of a train, panoramas started being used in cinema to add scenic details about the mise en scene. Phantom shots were created by setting the camera right in the front of the train, thereby providing a novel visual experience unheard of till then. These shots were what initially shaped camera movement into an artistic tool in cinema. They were used not to exemplify realism, but to rather place the viewer in a position the filmmaker wanted to, in order to get a specific understanding of the narrative as a whole.

In the 1910s, there was a historic transition from cinema as a mode of exhibitionism to cinema as a mode of narration. Although the films made up to this point had storytelling elements in them, it was then that filmmakers started

giving thought into the psychology of the character and the narrator system was born. This brought the idea of every film having a driving perspective.(Nielsen)

With the birth of the narrator, camera movements received a profound purpose. In the decade that followed, camera movement began being used to visually explore a character's psychological state. This new revolution in camera movement originated among the filmmakers from Germany and France. They began using the moving camera to explore the "psychological or emotional state of a character". To accomplish this, filmmakers fine-tuned the point-of-view shot to reflect an emotive human movement. Filmmakers tried to mimic human movements with the camera. Nielsen writes that the camera then became a tool to convey not the physical movement of a person, but a sensory and psychological experience of a character to the audience watching them. Thus, soon, camera movement shifted from being a tool to tell a story to a strategy employed by filmmakers to evoke emotions and feelings in the audience. It began being seen as a director's style of filmmaking and organically found a place among other elements of the mise en scene.

### **3.2 The Handheld Era**

Although there was an artistic and aesthetic awakening about the need for camera mobility in telling a story, filmmakers were limited cinema technology that made it practically difficult to implement certain kinds of shots. For instance, the camera itself was too bulky that it wasn't easy to engineer solutions to move it easily. Nevertheless, there were technicians who accomplished the

unthinkable. The first known use of the handheld technique was in the 1911 film *L'Inferno*, an adaptation of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, which was followed by two handheld shots in Reginald Barker's *The Italian*. Another problem was the "100 per cent" recording style that was used in the films of that era. The camera was a noisy equipment to have on set and they would interfere in the sound recording process.

"Even the best of pre-talkie cameras were too noisy for sound work, and though they were completely remodeled, and every possible source of noise muffled, they were still loud enough to seriously interfere with the microphone," wrote William Stull (1929).

In 1924, F.W.Murnau used the handheld technique to pioneer a different kind of camera movement in *The Last Laugh*. The camera was strapped to the chest of an actor to simulate the point of a view of a drunken character. At that point in time, this moving first-person POV shot became quite revolutionary and opened cinema to the expressionist and modernist techniques, which were already used by its predecessors like painting, novels and theatre. In his paper, *Visuality and Power*, Jean-Pierre Geuens says:

"To share the handheld point of view of the drunken doorman in *The Last Laugh*, was to experience, even if only for a moment, the visual equivalent of the stream of consciousness pioneered by Proust, Joyce, and Woolf."

With the emergence of sound films, handheld shots took a backseat because film camera motors were too loud to record sync sound on set. Filmmakers and technicians found a rather unpopular solution to this problem with the introduction of camera booths, which were then referred to as ice-boxes. This

further isolated the camera operator from the real action of the scene and moving while stationed in a soundproof box became even more difficult to accomplish. Although further technical advancements, like the introduction of blimps, brought the camera out of the booth, it instead made them too bulky, sometimes even up to 135 pounds.

The next major turning point in handheld camera history was the introduction of revolutionary Arriflex 35 camera, the first reflex camera for motion pictures, in 1937. Weighing just about 12 pounds, the camera was well-suited for handheld usage and was used extensively in documenting the World War II.

Around the world, there continued to be momentary uses of handheld camera movements, but it was usually reserved for special scenes involving physical action or combat. It was used to lend the earlier discussed participatory perspective of the camera. Sometimes it was also used to give an effect of mystery or suspicion, like the shot in *Citizen Kane* that was shot handheld to make it seem like the footage was shot illicitly.

The New Waves of the late 50s and early 60s was a period of a revolutionary transformation in visual expression. Filmmakers started exploring a wider range of stylistic options, with the use of handheld camera movement being one of the most significant elements of this transition.

According to Salt (1992), although the Éclair Caméflex Standard 35mm camera (CM3), which was the biggest competitor to the Arriflex, was manufactured and made available in France since 1947, it did not have any immediate repercussions on the films produced there. Coupled with the Arriflex 32 cameras, the Cameflex found its footing as an important tool during the New Wave.

I was a film student from 1960 to 1965, during the height of the French New Wave, the international success of the Italian art cinema and the discovery of Eastern European cinema. What these movies gave us as film students was a sense of freedom, of being able to do anything [...] Now you no longer had to shoot a film in the traditional manner, which required a master shot, medium shot and close-up, with the camera tracking or panning to follow a character [...] In my first movie, not one shot was a matched cut. At the same time, [John] Cassavetes had used a lightweight 16mm camera for *Shadows* in 1959, so there were no more excuses. If he could do it, so could we! (Martin Scorsese in Christie & Thompson, 2003)

The use of handheld camera movements slowly extended to not just violent and mysterious scenes, but also to other types of scenes, thanks to the lightweight 35m cameras, Arriflex and Cameflex. Filmmakers started embracing the vitality and edginess that these cameras brought with them. The imperfections, jerks and shakes were considered as adding meaningful layers to their expression of 'realistic' cinema.

During this time, there was also an influx of a number of directors and cinematographers with a background in documentary filmmaking. For instance, Raoul Coutard, who later worked as cinematographer with the likes Jean Luc Godard and François Truffaut was once a war correspondent. Handheld



camera movements were accepted whole-heartedly by technicians and audiences alike during this period, so much so that, a film like *Chinatown*, which was nominated for a cinematography Oscar, has a romantic scene shot with a handheld camera.

### **3.3 Direct Cinema and Cinema Verite: Seeking truth in movement**

The other major influence that pushed the handheld camera forward into the psyche of the viewers and filmmakers were two important film movements called Direct Cinema and Cinema Verite.

In April, 1960, four documentary cameramen documented a young John F. Kennedy's presidential primary campaign. Under the guidance of ex-Life magazine producer Robert Drew, cameramen Richard Leacock, Don Pennebaker, Al Maysles and Terry McCartney Filgate shot the hour-long documentary film called *Primary*. Throughout the film, the cameras followed Kennedy from city to city via different modes of transport as he navigated fundraising dinners and campaign speeches.

It was a time when news cameras never moved from a tripod. However, this didn't stop these innovative technicians to take the camera into their own hands and shoot an ecstatic crowd of supporters at the Milwaukee rally, carrying the camera on top of their heads.

This was made possible by the engineering mechanics implemented by Drew and co to bulk down the 16mm Auricon camera. The original Auricon was a 30-pound, tripod-bound camera which used single perf. film stock . Drew used a million dollar grant from Life magazine in the project of converting the Auricon to half its weight. Leacock added a handgrip that would allow the camera to rest on his shoulder, while he supported it with his hand.

Apart from the technological innovation, the effect and the intimacy that shooting with such a camera lent to *Primary* was unprecedented. The film had no voice-over narrations or interviews. There were no scripts or set-up incidents. The goal, which later became seen as a characteristic of the 'Direct Cinema' documentaries that followed, was to take an unobtrusive fly-on-the-wall approach and watch and film real events in real time.

A month after *Primary* was shot, filmmaker Jean Rouch and sociologist Edgar Morin started shooting a feature-length documentary on the life of a group of young Parisians called *Chronicle of a Summer*. This film was what made Rouch one of the most notable influences on the future auteurs of the French New Wave. This direct, reductionist approach towards filmmaking influenced them to adopt a similar style of storytelling in fiction filmmaking as well. It was Rouch and Morin who later coined the term *cinéma vérité*.

However, there were some fundamental differences between the filmmaking approaches taken by *Primary* and *Chronicle of a Summer*. The latter did not follow a fly-on-the-wall approach, they were a part of the film, conducting

planned interviews on the street and also used voice-over narration and internal commentary on the actions on-screen.

Some scenes in *Chronicle of a Summer* were shot with a studio camera on a tripod, but the street scenes were shot by a prototype of Rouch's own innovative equipment. This was what would soon become the most sought-after 16mm camera in the world, the Eclair NPR, which revolutionized filmmaking in the years that followed. *Chronicle of a Summer* was also photographed by 4 cameramen, one of whom was Raoul Coutard, one of the usual collaborators of Godard and Truffaut. The cameras that were used in these two revolutionary documentaries underwent many changes and improvements in the future.

Pennebaker added a handle to the Auricon, which made it easier to rest the front heavy body on the operator's shoulder. And, in France, Eclair engineer Andre Coutant improved the lightweight prototype with a silent, slanted pull down claw. The Auricon, however, faded out of use, except among filmmakers like Andy Warhol who used it later. But the Eclair prototype evolved into the NPR, which remained an important documentary camera in the next decade. It is the legacy of this 16mm camera that set the tone for the democratized use of smaller digital cameras in recent times.

### **3.4 The Steadicam arrives**

*Father Christmas's magic wand could create the instrument which is more important than any fortuitous outside aid: a camera that can move freely in*

*space. What I mean is one that at any moment can go anywhere, at any speed. A camera that outstrips present film technique and fulfills the cinema's ultimate artistic goal. Only with this essential instrument shall we be able to realize new possibilities, including one of the most promising, the 'architectural' film.* - F.W. Murnau, in a letter written in 1923 to one of Germany's major dailies, found by film historian Lotte Eisner.

Although handheld camera movements introduced a sense of intimacy and immediacy, cinema verite wasn't fully successful in conveying its sense of realism. This was because the "eye" of the camera, as Lightman referred to it, itself seemed unrealistic. The human eye does not construct images in the shaky way that the handheld camera does. We never see a shaky scene or image with our naked eye unless in circumstances that our cognisance or visual sense is disturbed. Our brain is constantly correcting and adjusting our vision for body motions. For example, even if we were running aside a moving bus, we would still be able to read the print on its side. This paradoxical relationship between realistic cinema and camera movement led Garrett Brown to invent his path-breaking innovation, the Steadicam, almost as a very late gift from Father Christmas to Murnau.

In 1975, Brown revealed the Steadicam, an invention that brought together the intimacy and agility of the handheld camera, with the smoothness and steadiness of a dolly shot. Brown felt that there was too much of a celebration of shaky handheld shots, with them being hailed as the epitome of realistic cinema, turning filmmakers who employed them into auteurs. However, he felt

that they were doing a disservice by making the audience see an image that was completely unrealistic.

When you undertake handheld, everybody understands it looks shaky, and filmmakers tried to make a virtue out of that, as if that suggested something more realistic. I don't think so. If you shoot a scene with handheld, the actors in that scene see each other with greater smoothness than you're allowing your audience to see them. People see with immense smoothness; you walk or run, and it's like a Steadicam shot.

Brown's Steadicam provides complete stability, mobility and portability. It frees the camera operator; they can run, hop or move whichever way they wanted and still be able to capture seamlessly steady images. The Steadicam 35 system used a modified Arri IIC as its basic camera mechanism. A hard front was also installed to be able to use Canon aspheric, super-fast lenses. When using the Steadicam, the operator wears a body brace, which is a padded tight-fitting jacket, in order to distribute the weight of the camera evenly across the operator's body. Attached to the breastplate of the jacket is an exoskeletal-type articulated support arm, which parallels the operator's arm in any position, and almost completely counteracts the weight of the camera system with a carefully calibrated spring force. The camera system attaches to the support arm by means of a free-floating gimbal. In this manner, the camera operator is able to pan or tilt the camera at will, and move it up or down, or side-to-side, in a free-floating manner. For instance, the camera operator can boom up or down nearly three feet, he can pan a full 360° or tilt up or down 60°, and he can accomplish all this while he himself is in motion. He can even run forwards and shoot backwards.

As it would be impossible for an assistant to follow-focus in the normal manner, a highly sophisticated servo follow-focus system that meshes with the standard BNCR-type lens follow-focus gear, which can be operated by a remote electronic control box either through a thin flexible electrical cable or by wireless transmission was developed alongside the camera.

The Steadicam made its debut in Hal Ashby's film *Bound For Glory*. From then it has captured some of the most landmark moments in the history of cinema. Visually, the Steadicam can achieve everything that handheld camera does, but with more stability and taking lesser time and effort for the crew. It also lends a film visual dynamism.

There are many things that make the Steadicam unique. Geuens lists three major advantages it has over the technology that preceded it. First, the camera can now be hard-mounted on a vehicle and it would absorb all the jerks and shakes of whichever terrain the vehicle runs on. Second, unique combination shots can now be attempted and achieved. For instance, in one of the most famous shots of *Bound For Glory*, photographed by Haskell Wexler, the camera cranes down to a migration camp and when it hits the ground, the operator coolly steps out of the crane and follows the actor into the crowd. Third, the Steadicam can follow actors in all given situations--be it through tight alleys or running up stairs.

Although Steadicam was used in many films before that, it was Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, that used it as a creative tool to the fullest. Brown regarded Kubrick as the first person to really understand what the Steadicam could do: rather than just allowing for little tricks and embellishments, the Steadicam could create a world of its own. Kubrick created a world of his own inside the Overlook Hotel and displayed the power of what cinema can accomplish. He brought in a perfect blend of flowing camera movements and excellent sound design. For instance, when Danny pedals through the Overlook Hotel on his three-wheeler, he keeps going off the carpet and hitting the linoleum. Every time the surface changes, there's a jarring sonic shift. It's a brilliant example of the use of sound and image to create a compelling rhythm.

The introduction of the Steadicam also changed the way that we tell stories. It was one of the most important innovations in portraying the first-person perspective. The Steadicam implies a subjective camera's gaze: in other words, it expresses a perceptive and active grasp of reality, and therefore it manifests a living, lived, ongoing process of experience, made by an embodied subject.

Thanks to its ability to clean and stabilize frames and the ease at which it enables shooting long takes makes the Steadicam the closest apparatus to Andre Bazin's aspirations for cinema as "objectivity in time".

After *The Shining*, another film that used the potential of the Steadicam to the fullest was Gus Van Sant's *Elephant*. The film comprised almost entirely of Steadicam shots that glide down the long hallways of a high school. The camera takes turns following individual students on their everyday passages

from here to there. It is only later in the film that we realise that we're watching the same moment over and over again from different points of view. We will delve deep into the motivations and meanings of this operation technique in *Elephant* in Chapter 4. But before that we need to examine in detail the art and craft of the POV in narrative cinema.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### SHOOTING POINT OF VIEW

The cinematic approach of using the camera lens to represent a character's eye or visual perspective is termed as point of view or POV shot. But the POV shot is not just about what is being seen through a perspective. It involves a lot of technical decision-making, like framing, distance, angle and lens among others.

Over the years, filmmakers have used the POV shots and sometimes even extended them to create a heightened empathy for their characters, like in *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* and *Enter The Void*, and even as artistic experiments, like in *Russian Ark*. With the advent of editing, early filmmakers trained viewers to understand a shot that contains a POV. So if there is a person looking out of the window, the scene cuts to the image outside the window and then back to the person looking out. Such subjective shots soon picked up steam and films that devoted a large chunk of their running time to capture the real essence of that character's perspective started being made.

The first attempt to extend a subjective camera throughout a film is Robert Montgomery's *Lady in the Lake*. Except for a few shots, the entire film was shot from the main character's POV. The film was hailed as a "revolutionary innovation in film technique" and a "milestone in movie making" in its trailers and posters. However, a 1947 review in *The New York Times* said:

After all, the movie makers, for all their ingenuity, can go just so far in the quest for realism. As the star and director, Robert Montgomery permits the camera to do most of his "acting," the result being that his image is only observed when it can naturally be reflected through a mirror. And, since the story is a first person affair, the camera on occasion observes the detective seated at a desk relating his tortuous and exciting adventures in locating the missing Mrs. Chrystal Kingsby. In making the camera an active participant, rather than an off-side reporter, Mr. Montgomery has, however, failed to exploit the full possibilities suggested by this unusual technique.

Another film that released in the same year that used a similar technique was *Dark Passage*. Starring Humphrey Bogart, the film's story revolved around an escaped con artist who was imprisoned for murdering his wife. After his escape from the prison, the character undergoes plastic surgery. This time, the POV was used for a majority of the pre-surgery scenes so that they could get around the challenge of showing Bogart's post-surgery transformation. More than a narrative decision, it was almost a work around to 'fix' a technological limitation the makers faced at that point.

It was almost 60 years later that another film called *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* got nominated for 4 Academy Awards including Best Cinematography largely due to its subjective camera work. Based on the life of French author and editor Jean-Dominique Bauby, the film depicts his life after he suffered a massive stroke that left him with a condition known as locked-in syndrome. The POV was used to convey his inability to speak and the experience of being locked in his own body. This journey of the POV shot from being a new

innovation to an award-worthy technical achievement itself shows the progress in the way critical opinion about it evolved.

Many filmmakers who are now considered auteurs have employed this element in their narratives for various different reasons. For instance, Alfred Hitchcock uses the POV shot in his films like *Vertigo*, *Rear Window*, *Psycho* and *Strangers on a Train* not to convey a character's perspective, but to bring the spectator closer to the film universe he was creating.

POV shots also started becoming more popular in horror and action films to create a sense of dread or helplessness in the victims from the point of view of the monster or killer who was about to kill them. It wasn't until Kathryn Bigelow's sci-fi thriller *Strange Days* that the POV shot was used as a complete cinematic experiment. In the film, Ralph Fiennes plays an ex-cop who deals with recordings of other people's memories. Bigelow made the huge decision to film the scenes where characters were thrust into other's memories from the POV of the memory holder.

These scenes involved an armed robbery, an execution and an assault among many others and they were shot with a lightweight SL cine camera, a prototype SK sled and great coordination between the camera operator, James Munro, and the stuntman whose body parts appeared in shot. Bigelow's use of POV or the subjective point of view wasn't merely for an effect for the action sequences, but it was to replicate the experience of someone experiencing another person's experience.

Gaspar Noe made the hugely famous subjective camera experiment *Enter the Void* in 2009 after being influenced by *Strange Days* and Alexander Sokurov's *Russian Ark* (2002). Shot from the perspective of Oscar, an American drug dealer living in Tokyo, *Enter the Void* is a technical masterpiece and at times, a visual assault. When alive, we are in Oscar's skin as he indulges in drugs, observing his hallucinations before joining his 'spirit' after he's shot dead as it floats through Tokyo, scenes cutting away violently to traumatic events in his life.

POV shots, thus, are a rare convergence of both image and word. It not only shows us what a character sees, but also how they see it. It embodies a complex relationship between not just the viewer and the character whose perspective we are watching, but also with the character who is being watched in that POV.

Apart from the physical attributes, POVs are also largely shot to convey a moralistic, ideological or psychological shade or mood of the character. Especially in a moving POV, the camera movement allows the viewer to feel and get a sense of the three-dimensionality of the space that the character inhabits. This brings them closer to the character and makes them feel what the character is going through. This kind of a subjective perspective shot is called the narrative point of view. A narrative point of view refers to the degree of subjectivity that a camera represents in any given shot. In a film, the audience determine whose narrative the camera is showing using many different ways. Typically, if a film wants to represent the point of view of a specific character,

sufficient information will simply be conveyed to the spectator so that he or she may clearly understand whose point of view is being represented. In his paper, *Formal Permutations of the Point of View Shot*, Edward Branigan explains the structure typically used in classical cinema in order to introduce an image shown from the subjective perspective of a particular character (an image Branigan simply calls POV):

Subjectivity in film depends on linking the framing of space at a given moment to a character as origin. The link may be direct or indirect. In the POV structure it is direct, because the character is shown and then the camera occupies his or her (approximate!) position, thus framing a spatial field derived from him or her as origin. [...] What is important, therefore, in determining subjectivity is to examine the logic which links the framing of space to a character as origin of that space.

In his paper, *Le Point de Vue*, Jacques Aumont talks about a different kind of point of view as well--the critical point of view. This represents the point of view of the author or narrator in relation to the filmic text. This idea of a critical point of view comes from the thought, which was echoed also by Branigan, that every image that appears on screen is there for a reason and that it represents an attitude or viewpoint. So if not of the characters, then the point of view represents the perspective of the author and/or the narrator.

How these POV shots are captured also creates a huge impact on how they are read and engaged with by the viewer. What we earlier discussed about the motivation and function of a camera movement becomes important in determining the techniques that will be used to execute such a shot. The

decision to use a particular technique and the effect it brings forth will be discussed in the upcoming two chapters.

Next, we will briefly look at two texts that will form the basis of the theoretical framework that this thesis is based on. The first text is Andre Bazin's *The Ontology of the Photographic Image* from which we would be borrowing the ideas of realism in cinema. The second is a cinematic text or a reading of French filmmaker Robert Bresson's films. Based on these two texts, this thesis attempts to create a framework, which will serve as a yardstick against which two films-- László Nemes's *Son of Saul* and Gus Van Sant's *Elephant*--will be analyzed. The former features moving POV shots captured with a handheld camera and the latter features moving POV shots captured with the Steadicam. These films will be analyzed against this framework to find out which of these techniques of shooting the moving POV shot is closest to attaining 'realism' and the idea of cinema as propagated by Bresson.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FROM BAZIN TO BRESSON: IN SEARCH OF CINEMATIC TRUTH

*“If the plastic arts were put under psychoanalysis, the practice of embalming the dead might turn out to be a fundamental factor in their creation. The process might reveal that at the origin of painting and sculpture there lies a mummy complex. The religion of ancient Egypt, aimed against death, saw survival as depending on the continued existence of the corporeal body. Thus, by providing a defence against the passage of time it satisfied a basic psychological need in man, for death is but the victory of time. To preserve, artificially, his bodily appearance is to snatch it from the flow of time, to stow it away neatly, so to speak, in the hold of life. It was natural, therefore, to keep up appearances in the face of the reality of death by preserving flesh and bone.”- Andre Bazin*

As I mentioned earlier, my cognitive exploration into this topic came with a statement by Garrett Brown, the inventor of Steadicam, at the Camerimage International Film Festival. He said that he was triggered to invent the Steadicam because when we walk, we do not see the world as through a handheld camera, shaky and unstable, instead we see it with the steadiness or stability of an inbuilt gyroscope. His idea was to invent a

machine which would help capture a moving image as close to reality as possible.

As a practicing cinematographer, my attempt has always been to find the ideal cinematographic way to lend maximum believability to the material I shoot and to try and bring the audience closest to the truth of the film I am shooting. And, that is the reason why I turned to Bazin and his theory of cinematic realism to explore this further.

### **5.1 The Bazinian cinematic realism**

As mentioned in Bazin's words at the beginning of this chapter, one of man's selfish struggles has been to make the mortal immortal or in other words to fight against the eroding power of time and death by propagating his idea and creating an everlasting legacy. Bazin points out that all artists who produced artistic works before photography has attempted to represent themselves and the world they lived in in some way or the other.

Man's other perennial struggle has been to find the truth in his own life. One of the ways that man tries to achieve this is not just by seeking on his own, but also by trying to communicate his ideas to his fellow beings, hoping that they are understood, accepted and carried on. According to Bazin, all forms of art is a manifestation of this innate struggle. However, he holds photography and cinema at a more superior plane than, say, painting or sculpture, because they fall short in expressing or portraying the 'physical real'. Although the best works of painting can portray the 'emotional' and



'spiritual' real, the physical aspect expressed in a painting is only limited to the artist's interpretation of what is real.

No painting is objective, he says, but he wasn't naive to argue that photography is free of such subjectivity. In his understanding and argument, the subjectivity in a photograph only exists when the photographer selects what object or scene they will capture. Although the final image might be a reflection of his thoughts, it is still created in his absence. This, Bazin believed, enabled images--both still and moving--to depict what was in its true 'physical' form.

'Photography and the cinema... are discoveries that satisfy, once and for all and in its very essence, our obsession with realism. No matter how skilful the painter, his work was always in fee to an inescapable subjectivity. The fact that a human hand intervened cast a shadow of doubt over the image'.

Here, the operative word is *realism*, which is the first pillar on which the theoretical analysis in this thesis rests.

Bazin saw cinema as "objectivity in time". In his paper, *On the Impression of Reality in the Cinema* (1991), Christian Metz builds on this argument on Bazin. Metz identifies the unique quality that movement brings to films, which translates into an impression of reality. He referred to photographs as "the trace of a past spectacle" and said that even though film takes place in the past, the spectator conceives it as being in the present.

Throughout the history of cinema, realism has been designated two distant approaches of filmmaking and cinematography. The first refers to the degree of “verisimilitude of a film” in creating believable characters and events. And, the second takes into account the camera’s mechanical reproduction of reality. Auteurs of cinema have introduced many visual techniques to express or attain this aspirational standard of realism. For instance, Bazin ties realism in cinema to techniques like long takes, depth of focus and panchromatic film. These techniques, thus, create a new grammar in how to see the world.

To attain a realistic portrayal, Bazin felt that montage sequences should be kept to a minimum. He was an ardent supporter of the long take. He found it far more realistic than montage and believed that while watching a long take, the spectator can experience time passing as it does in real life. In Bazin’s film vocabulary, depth-of-field stands in for montage. It is no wonder then that Bazin considered Italian neorealism as the most extreme case of realism, with the absence of montage and the casting of non-actors. He also did not forget to make the distinction between reality and realism. According to Bazin, reality was meaningless. And, the role of art was to take the effort to take something meaningless (reality) and create something meaningful out of it (realism).

Bazin’s theory and arguments about cinema being the art form that is closest to achieving realism has influenced this thesis by giving a foundation to build the testing framework on and in the selection of the two

films that will be analyzed against this framework. According to Bazin, "The reality produced by the cinema at will and which it organizes is the reality of the world of which we are part and of which the film receives a mold at once spatial and temporal." Therefore, the selection of films to be analyzed is based on the believability of the world in which the characters exist and the method using which the film itself has been shot.

## **5.2 Nature versus natural**

Nature is the phenomenon of life and our acceptance of what is around as real. Natural, on the other hand, is a style or something that resembles nature. Natural acting, thus, refers to a style of acting that we interpret as real, but that doesn't imply that it is representing the real experience of the character in that moment.

Even if an actor employs *method acting* techniques to achieve the most natural and lived-in performance, it still is not free of the training of the actor, his sense of self, the ambience created by other elements of the filmmaking process and the actor's understanding and interpretation of the character and the situation. It then becomes almost impossible to get to the truth by devoiding yourself of all the training. Also, it is impossible for the audience to forget the charm of the known professional actor and see just the true experience of the character. Therefore, this takes away the feeling of truth from the character and it becomes harder for the viewer to empathise with the character.

In his book *Notes on Cinematography*, French filmmaker Robert Bresson talks at length about using non-actors or models in films. As a filmmaker who practices what he preaches, Bresson's way of using non professional actors (or models) and making them as few gestures as possible brings us, as the viewer, closer to the truth. Because this makes the audience accept the 'form' of the film and then they begin to concentrate on the action of the model, the exact words spoken (and not the way they is said), the composition of cinematography and the sound design.

Even in cinematography, an oft-used phrase to describe realistic visuals is "natural lighting". This so-called natural lighting is nothing but the cinematographer's interpretation of the real world lighting for each scene according to the mood he wants to create, which he hopes to bring close to reality as possible. It is common for cinematographers to take the liberty to embellish their imagery to make it more attractive or dramatic. Some of these embellishments are done by tools like unmotivated lighting, Hollywood style backlighting, dramatic camera angles or camera moves.

Only the impassive lens, stripping its object of all those ways of seeing it, those piled-up preconceptions, that spiritual dust and grime with which my eyes have covered it, is able to present it in all its virginal purity to my attention and consequently to my love.- Andre Bazin, *The Ontology of the Photographic Image*

Bazin's words doesn't imply that the cinematographer should be a non-participant. Instead, the idea is to arrive at form or technique that

allows one to get rid of all the filters and burdens of unnecessary aesthetics and be able to turn the camera to the simple truth. And, hopefully capture the real and full essence of it.

### **5.3 The cinema of Robert Bresson**

Robert Bresson was considered an *ascetic*, even by the greatest, for his almost religious like belief in cinema and his quest to attain the purity in its form. This is reflected in filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky's words about Bresson:

"(he) has always astonished and attracted me with his ascetics. It seems to me that he is the only director in the world that has achieved absolute simplicity in cinema. As it was achieved in music by Bach, art by Leonardo. Tolstoy achieved it as a writer."

Bresson believed that film as an art form had to devoid itself of other arts and he was sure that it had the capacity to do that. He detested the use of theatrics in cinema and that was not an insult to theatre, he said. Neither did he want the beauty of the photographic art for he believed that, in cinema, each shot has a relation in coexistence with the shot that comes before and after. No shot should be an end in itself.

Bresson had great faith in beauty but he also believed that beauty only becomes so when it is new. This is what prompted me to use Bresson's films and writings as a benchmark to build my framework for analysis. I believe that each film should have a cinematographic form that is exclusive

to itself, but at the same time not exist only for the sake of form. A simple analogy being that every film has its own truth just as each of us do.

Regarding sound, Bresson wrote in *Notes on the Cinematographer*,

If a sound is the obligatory complement of an image, give preponderance either to the sound or to the image. If equal, they damage or kill each other, as we say of colors.

During his time and after, Bresson's films were often described as cold, remote, over-intellectualized and geometrical. But all he wanted to achieve was that harmony, a purity in simplicity.

Jonathan Griffin, who translated the filmmaker's *Note on Cinematography*, says that Bresson uses the word 'cinematography' to refer to a creative filmmaking that thoroughly exploits the nature of film itself. This is not to be confused with the work of a cameraman. *Not to use two violins when one is enough*, writes Bresson. The idea here is to weed out all the excess and find the bare minimum to reach harmony or in other words to achieve simplicity. This put together with his idea of cinematic purity is what forms the crux of what I hope to find. Bresson believed in the idea of cinema as a language which can stand by itself, just like we are able to use words to describe the subtle and the supple.

Praising Bresson's work in the film *A Man Escaped*, Legendary film critic Roger Ebert wrote,

Watching a film like *A Man Escaped* is like a lesson in the cinema. It teaches by demonstration all the sorts of things that are not necessary in a movie. By implication, it suggests most of the things we're accustomed to are superfluous. I can't think of a single unnecessary shot in *A Man Escaped*.

The film and such a performance forces you to lean in and participate, by not making the actor connote any emotion through his theatrics and get the audience attached in an overtly exaggerated way. This is perfect as the audience is not drawn to a character because of the performance of an actor, who may have been influenced by his own experience and cultural history, but by the situation itself.

Cinema is often referred to as a universal language that transcends all cultures to convey an idea to everyone without any differences. By using this method, the filmmaker is not forcing any kind of artificial or preconceived cultural gestures and thereby avoids the possibility of eliminating the inefficiency of that filter. Instead, he gives the audience the option to lean in and participate and allows them to imagine their own situational emotion.

In the film *Au Hasard Balthazar*, Bresson's actors "portray lives without informing us how to feel about them," says Ebert. "...forced to decide for ourselves how to feel, forced to empathize, we often have stronger feelings than if the actors were feeling them for us." By using the actor as just a tool, Bresson completely avoids the possibility of any superficial or external attachment to the actor (because each actor can have varying charisma) and thus helps the audience not get away from the feeling of the situation in which the character is in. As there is no seduction of 'performance' by the actor (Bresson called his actors *models*), it allows the audience to be alert

and absorb all the other formal elements like the composition, set design, costumes, sound and foreground and background elements.

Bresson suggests that we are all Balthazars. Despite our dreams, hopes and best plans, the world will eventually do with us whatever it does. Because we can think and reason, we believe we can figure a way out, find a solution, get the answer. But intelligence gives us the ability to comprehend our fate without the power to control it. Still, Bresson does not leave us empty-handed. He offers us the suggestion of empathy. If we will extend ourselves to sympathize with how others feel, we can find the consolation of sharing human experience, instead of the loneliness of enduring it alone. - Roger Ebert

Bresson's characters are not built on *scripted* or defined characterizations, but on a chain of actions and circumstances, which opens up the possibilities for a person to react in any way. If one thinks about it that is how it is in real life as well. Armed with certain preconceived judgements about a person, it is possible to imagine that they will react in a particular way in a hypothetical situation. However, in reality their actions are unpredictable as the factors affecting his reactions on that day are unknown.

"...his aim, I would imagine, is not to keep hot emotions cool so that intelligence can prevail. The emotional distance typical of Bresson's films seems to exist for a different reason altogether: because all identification with characters, deeply conceived, is an impertinence—an affront to the mystery that is human action and the human heart,"- Susan Sontag on Bresson.



And, this was what Bresson himself had to say: "The thing that matters is not what they show me but what they hide from me and, above all, what they do not suspect is in them."

## CHAPTER SIX

### METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

#### 6.1 Formulating a framework for analysis

To analyse the two films that I have selected, I have formulated two broad classifications which will act as conceptual yardsticks in this thesis. These classifications were made to find out how close one can bring the audience to experience the true feelings as an outcome of the actions filmed. Using these classifications, this thesis will analyse the moving POV shots in the selected films.

The first classification is based on the real world spatial and situational vision, which is usually represented through how we use camera components like lenses, how the camera is placed, the equipment used for operating the camera and so on. All these may depend on various factors like the physiological build of the person, the space where the character is placed, situations he will be facing etc.

An important factor that will be analysed here is whether the POVs are meant to be in relation to the character and their actions in the film or the scene shown. This stems from the idea of making the audience get as close to the viewpoint of the character and make them organically feel what the character is perceiving.

We perceive human behaviour as an expression of their inner desires, intentions, beliefs and feelings. We *interpret* patterns of these behaviour as

having a certain sort of psychological significance. Often, however, a total pattern of expressive behaviour includes finely nuanced physical reaction almost impossible to perceive. Here, the idea is to bring the viewer to the vantage point of the character and be a participant in the action. The politics of this is to be noted as the camera is a tool that has been often used to manipulate the viewer. Therefore, the intention should be to strip the scene of any and all false propaganda and try to be as true to the situation as possible.

To elaborate this, art critic John Berger's explains, in his famous book called *Ways of Seeing*, how the manipulation of the point of views have even constructed social conventions. For example, he studies the way women have been represented over time in European paintings as an object of desire for the male gaze. Even in those paintings that may represent the action of sex, the woman and her body would usually be placed not as a participant in the act, but in a way as if she is presenting herself to her true lover--the male viewer looking at the painting. This, says Berger, is widely seen in a large segment of nude paintings. He also goes on to differentiate between the nude and the naked. According to Berger,

"To be naked is to be oneself but to be nude means to be seen naked by others and yet not recognized for oneself. A nude has to be seen as an object in order to be a nude."

My intention here is then to understand a way to use the camera as an honest tool, stripping it away of all tricks and manipulation.

## 6.2 A taxonomy of POVs

*'When a camera with a fixed lens moves, it not only approaches the subject, it also continuously shifts the plane of focus along the way. The focal plane is literally moving through space. It's a very subtle shift, but you sense that you are moving through space with it. Movies are compositions in time. A moving plane of focus defines time through space. That's why zoom-ins as opposed to tracking shots feel synthetic; the image simply enlarges without any basis in physical movement.'* Paul Schrader, Cinematographer

Before we go further, it would be relevant to point out that for the purpose of this classification, this thesis treats both first-person POV and third-person shots (both frontal and from behind) to the same effect. Also, as zooms break the idea of realism, they cannot be used for POV shots except when its established that the POV is through a video camera as a form of narrative.

This thesis has, for the purpose of analysis, distinguished between four different types of POV shots.

1. **The normal ground POV:** This is the field of vision of a person on a normal surface without any external vision-disturbing hurdles like earthquakes, a moving train bogie, a collision or any kind of physiological damage. In this situation, the perspective of a person should be as steady and smooth as possible. So if its a static person, then the POV should be equivalent to a camera perspective on a tripod and in the case of a moving person, then the POV should be as smooth as a well-operated Steadicam.

2. **The imbalanced ground POV:** Here the field of vision of a person should be analysed according to the ground he is standing on and which is not in balance. For example, a person is in a collision, in a moving rough train bogey, is in an explosion etc. Under these extraordinary circumstances, it should be justified to use a handheld jerky motion shot. In this situation, the usage of Steadicam will be unnatural as a collision to a Steadicam will result in an immediate jerk similar to what a human experiences. However, the gyroscope mechanism tries to cancel out the jerk giving the image a wavy effect.
3. **The narrative object POV:** Here the character in the film establishes an object, like a video camera, in the narrative as a form of POV. In this situation, the view depends on the character operating the camera and also the situations he will be in.
4. **Relative POV:** This can be considered a psychological subjective point of view of a character in the film. This will depend on the physiological built of the character and other things like:
  - the physical height in relation to the other
  - recuperation physical strength of a person even under imbalanced ground perspective. For e.g., an adult person's vision impacted by an explosion and recuperated versus a child's
  - the emotional built and the situational factor of each scene.

This is an important POV when it comes to both lensing and the camera movement. A person whose character has been built up to be emotionally stronger and psychologically consistent could recuperate faster than a

person who has less capacity. Here one should also consider on what the character focuses on. Depending on the emotional condition of a person in a particular context, the focus of that person may shift.. He may concentrate just on another person and their gestures or actions; he may concentrate just on the atmospheric sound; or he may be emotionally unstable which shackles his concentration and thereby his field of vision as well. The last maybe because of overwhelming emotions like anger, anxiety or any kind of heightened emotion. Sound also can work as a big tool here.

### **6.3 POV versus perspective**

The difference between point of view and perspective has been widely demarcated in literature, but not clearly in film theories. In conventional filmmaking, POV shots are made through a layer of interpretation of what the situation connotes or what the filmmaker wants to establish about the character's feelings. But as per the premise of this thesis, this is a kind of manipulation.

As I have already categorised POV shots, I would like to bring clarity to the second classification of different types of perspectives for the benefit of this thesis's analysis. These perspectives are based on the understanding of the narrative of the film as a whole. One should understand that POV shots put together can bring in the understanding of the perspective, but they are, of course, not the only tools to express this.

As Bresson's idea of cinema is one of the main pillars on which this thesis is based, I have used some of Bresson's films to better explain and provide clarity to this classification of perspectives.

1. **Single Person Character Perspective:** *A Man Escaped (1956)* is almost a pristine example of this. Throughout the film, we are in close proximity to the main character Fontaine. It is through him and what he sees, acts and perceives that we experience the film. Besides the image, sound is also used as a tool to show us what is happening. For instance, when Fontaine is imprisoned, it is shown that he tries to communicate with his fellow prisoner in the adjacent cell by knocking on the wall. But even in the first instance when the prisoner responds, the camera stays with Fontaine. It does not provide us an unnecessary shot from the second prisoner's vantage. Another example would be in a scene when he listens to the sound outside his field of vision. The camera stays with him and we are not presented with a shot of what he is listening to. When he works patiently on the door every single day, too, we are with him and are simultaneously aware of his senses and alertness, staying true to what the character senses and, thus, makes us feel his methodical discipline. Roger Ebert in his review of the film writes, "*Although men are killed in the prison, it doesn't happen on screen. No ominous set-ups. Just off-screen sounds. Therefore, most of what happens takes place in Fontaine's cell, as it must.*"

2. **Multiple Persons Societal Perspective:** *Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966) is a film which follows the life of a donkey from its birth till its death. This can be considered an example of the multiple persons societal perspective. Here we get an outsider's perspective on the people around the donkey through its eyes. All around it there are flawed people and their actions are reflected through the humble animal communicating and make us feel a kind of acceptance. In Bresson's own words, "*Au Hasard Balthazar* is about our anxieties and desires when faced with a living creature who's completely humble and holy and happens to be a donkey. It's (about) pride, greed, the need to inflict suffering, lust, in the measure found in each of the various owners at whose hands he suffers and finally dies. An animal which evokes eroticism yet at the same time evokes spirituality or christian mysticism. In a donkey's life, we see the same stages as in a man's." If the film was shown only through the donkey and its suffering directly then all we get it is a sentimentality or a feeling of sympathy for the other.
3. **Third Person Symbolic Perspective:** *L'argent* (1983) is an example of this. Even though we may consider Yvon, who gets cheated and is forced to turn into a criminal to support his family, as the main character, we realize that this is not the case soon. Yvon's story is shown through his the actions of others and also through his interactions with others around him. However, in all this the starting point is an object--money. It is not about the tangible cash per se, but the idea of money. The circumstances are shown through different characters in a non-judgemental way, as



things just happened organically. At no point are we fed with sentimentality or sympathy, instead we also participate with our senses and observe what these people do and how each situation leads to another. We keep following Yvon as he keeps committing evil acts. Although our innate tendency is to lean towards goodness or morality, when we follow Yvon's acts, we see the growth of evil, which means that his acts are communicating the evil in him. When Yvon commits murder in the film, we may think of it as an absurd character change based on our conditioning built on conventional filmmaking. In conventional films, a character is born on paper, and it is presumed that he would behave in a certain way. But then again, this reasoning is constructed through oral language. If we try to write about Yvon's situation, then we would need to provide a complex reasoning to explain his actions and while orally doing so, there is a high probability of slipping to sentimentality. Bresson avoids that by following these acts of different characters and finally makes Yvon communicate with the viewer to make them feel what he intentioned them to.

#### **6.4 Analysis**

Keeping in mind the above factors and classifications, I have selected two films for the analysis. These films were selected as they both adhered to the lighting factor described in the premise and also gives importance to the form of the film. The actors are either first time or non-professional. Also, both the films have been shot majorly in POV shots and without

conventional coverage. Lastly, they are celebrated films: *Son of Saul* won the Best Foreign Language Film award at the 88th Academy Awards and *Elephant* won the prestigious Palme d'Or and Best Director awards at the 2003 Cannes Film Festival. The main objective in the next part of this thesis is to analyse and understand if these films can adhere to the parameters listed in the section above.

#### **6.4.1 Son of Saul (2015)**

Original Title: *Saul Fia*  
Director: László Nemes  
Cinematographer: Mátyás Erdély  
Technical Specifications  
Aspect Ratio: 1.37:1  
Camera: Arricam LT, Arriflex 235  
Lens: Zeiss Master Prime Lenses  
Recording Format: 35mm (Kodak Vision3 500T 5219)  
Final Format: 35mm (Kodak Vision 2383) D-Cinema

*Son Of Saul* is a Hungarian film set in the Auschwitz concentration camp, during the World War II. The film follows a Hungarian Jewish, who is a member of the *Sonderkommandos* and is trying to find a rabbi to give a child a proper burial, for a day and a half,

The opening of the film starts with an out-of-focus handheld frame in an exterior location. A human figure appears at the distance and within a short time comes into focus in a close-up inside the handheld frame. The shot continues as the camera follows the character in the close -up as he walks around through a crowd, controlling them (we hear the ambience of a large group being organized and orders shouted out). At this time, he walks past his superior--his demeanor giving away the hierarchy--and in the end he

stops at an entrance of a building letting a long line of people walk past him. The entire shot is an almost two and a half minutes long single take shot focused solely on the main character, as we are to presume, everything else around fades out of focus unless it comes in the same plane of focus. Through this first long shot, the filmmakers are establishing the setting, situation of the character and the form of the film.

A majority of the film includes close-ups of the main character and then there were breaks when it changed to his first person field of view and then moves back again to his face. Under the subject considerations, the POVs are relative, going back and forth between the first person and third person close-up. As the camera is not leaving the proximity of the main character, it is a through and through Single Person Character Perspective.

### **Factors analysis**

The authenticity of the set and the lighting is fitting and there is never a conscious effort to create a beautiful photographic image. But there is something to ponder when it comes to the Bressonian factor.

Being a first person character perspective film, we could compare it with Bresson's *A Man Escaped*. In fact, *Son Of Saul* has a similar skeleton like that of Bresson's film. In *A Man Escaped*, the main character Fontaine is brought to a German-occupied prison. Once he makes a resolve that he would escape, the film becomes a perspective of his planning and going about methodically executing it, and in the end, he escapes. In *Son of Saul*, in the beginning we are shown the setting of the concentration camp and

Saul's situation. Then he comes across his objective of finding a rabbi for the burial. In the end, even if he wasn't successful in burying the body after the turn of events, he does come across a wandering boy in the forest, who his mind perceives to be his son, thereby attaining some sort of emotional liberation before his presumed death at the hands of the Nazis.

There is a big difference in terms of the form of the films. While Bresson works with static and short shots, *Son Of Saul* employs lengthy handheld moving shots. But what we need to understand is the essence of it. Once we accept the new form of long shots, we need to ask questions like whether it was justified to use handheld. Was it justified to use the handheld camera throughout or does it seem like a repetition of the same sentence instead, like in an oral language? Was the sound and camera working in harmony like in Bresson's pure *cinematography*?

In both the films we see that the camera is always close to the character, showing him and his actions. Bresson pieced together multiple shots of Fontaine, his actions and his interactions with others, and carefully crafted the sound to add to it. The precision in his shots mirrored the disciplined approach of Fontaine. When Fontaine listened to something, we were made to hear what he listened to, and when he implemented his plan carefully we were shown just what Fontaine would have thought necessary.

In Saul's case, the close-up with a shallow depth-of-field reflects the way the character went about in the camp, where he was like a robot going about his work without paying much attention to the things around. The

continuous torture had numbed his mind. The out-of-focus activities in the background is a reflection of Saul's chaotic and narrowed vision. The close-up long takes leaves most of the things around to the imagination of the viewer, always guided by the sound design.

The imperative question here, then, is: would it have been better to use the Steadicam? Considering the POV shot classification we did earlier, the answer would be no as there should be a variation in the effect of the shots in accordance to where the character is placed and what he is experiencing. In Saul's case, he is working on normal ground, imbalanced ground and constantly changing sensory experiences, which then has to be shown as Relative POVs. Then, the Steadicam would have been forced to go through all these POVs, including when he is beaten to ground during a long take, without ever being able to portray Saul's experience in the truest sense. Therefore, by establishing the sensory feel of a well-operated close-up handheld shot, the filmmaker is able to vary the relativity according to the situation, given the simple reason that the handheld camera is more agile than a Steadicam in this sense.

Also, Fontaine was a determined character who had his mind fixed right from the beginning. He had attempted to escape on his way to the prison. Although he was punished for it, his objective never changed. In fact, he became more focused and careful, and therefore the precision which Bresson uses in portraying his actions is completely justified. This is because this truly aligns with Fontaine's frame of mind. The viewer is then

allowed to focus on his flawless plan as if watching a craftsman working on his craft.

But when it comes to Saul, his objective was not something he devised from the beginning. Instead, it was a moral escapism his mind had involuntarily pushed him into for a release. Once he found his objective, he went about like a madman in a hell. So the inaccuracy of a handheld armed with a close-up lens was a dichotomy that makes the viewer feel the uneasiness that Saul felt. Yet, it forces us to be with him without allowing a release before he attains it.

Did it feel like a repeated sentence? No, because even in the long takes, the camera is not in a constant position with respect to Saul. Instead, its position varies according to what Saul is paying attention to. For instance, if Saul worked without paying heed to what happened around him, then we are mostly in front of him. If he felt like he was being followed, then the camera is behind him. When he looked at someone, the camera turns to over the shoulder or at times even in a first person POV, we are shown what or who it was, but all in accordance and in relation to the sound.

So was it the perfect way? No, there were times it felt like a conscious effort and sometimes, because of lengthy walking shots, the camera loses its rhythm with the actor. In an interview, the filmmakers confessed about their plans varyingly falling apart because of this. So then why use lengthy handheld shots? Maybe it shouldn't have been so lengthy always. Was that the only hindrance? Why was the sentimentality of the torture, which is

often portrayed repeatedly in films, focused on? Could it have been replaced by something that conveyed more of Saul's truth?

This language or the way Saul's story was told makes the viewers lean forward and participate. When you are constantly within the form that the content becomes in a way irrelevant. The film starts off with the shocking content of people being brought to the camps, then the torture continues without a break, that it turns into sort of a grime that you are no longer thinking of. You put the pain around aside and start accepting Saul's madness as a grinding meditation.

The film is a spiritual journey of the main character to attain a certain redemption through a traditional ritual, which would have been an abode for his dismembered soul. However, the intermittent sentimentality crept in because of the theatrics of the other actors, which, at times, forces one to break away from the inexpressive Saul and concentrate on the other modulated voices and expressive faces that were trying to make us connect to a conceived idea.

One of the giveaways of this film is its narrative which breaks in to tell the story of resistance of his fellow Sonderkommandos. This comes as a form of release for the audience to lean back and take it in like a conventional film. I believe, if the form was given priority and kept a constant without bringing in any sentimentality, the end would have been an even better communicative transcendence. But it surely was a novelty, almost.

#### **6.4.2 Elephant (2003)**

Director: Gus Van Sant

Cinematographer: Harris Savides

Technical Specifications:

Aspect Ratio: 1.85:1 (cropped), 1.33:1

*Camera:* Arricam LT, Arricam ST

*Lens:* Zeiss Super Speed Lenses

*Recording Format:* 35mm (Kodak Vision 500T 5263)

*Final Format:* 35mm (Kodak Vision Premier 2393)

Elephant is an American film based on the 1999 Columbine High School massacre and follows a variety of teenagers at a suburban high school through a seemingly normal and uneventful day until the impending gruesome end.

In the film, right from the beginning till the end, we are constantly moving from one character to another with a detached motif of the camera. The form of the cinematography tends to go back to a style of having multiple wide-angle, third person POVs, which can be classified as Normal Ground POV shots trying to get a Multiple Person Societal Perspective but tending to give a Third Person Symbolic Perspective as well. This mix of perspective is largely due to the vagueness of the film rather than a purposeful one. The film, and its form, feels almost like a rambling. It is a take on a 'non-judgemental' (amoral) perspective on the school shootout. A journal that holds Gus Van Sant's film in high regard, writes:



For, like its use of multiple perspectives, it shows these influences without preference for one and without developing or analyzing them in a way that a conventional film would to show a direct causal relationship. Instead, by fluidly moving from one image to the next, as the film moves fluidly from one character to the next, it constructs a verisimilitude that so closely resembles reality.

But at the same time, Gus Van Sant himself has said (or rather confessed) in an interview, that his characters were just archetypes of high school students, which is a contradiction to the idea of being true or real.

### **Factors analysis**

The authenticity of the set and the lighting is not forceful and is endearing, but there is often an effort to bring about a forced poetic beauty making us admire the photographic beauty rather than the truth of what is happening in the film. Considering the Bressonian factor, on the surface, the film is almost like *Son of Saul* and even ticks off some of Bresson's boxes like the use of non-professional actors, following the actors without giving backstories and so on.

But unfortunately the film seems like an exercise of an ideological statement and theatre. From the beginning, the camera with a wide lens walks around, following different characters. This may superficially seem like a 'minimalistic' style, as opposed to the short takes and fast edits of modern movies. But this is only as far as it goes. In fact, this is not minimal, but rather an overdose. This style of cinematography covers a larger space in a continuous manner, and combined with the general 'naturalistic' style of ambient sound, only adds to the overall clamour, leaving the viewer

without enough focus points. Here I would like to come back to one of Bresson's statement about the use of sound with images:

If a sound is the obligatory complement of an image, give preponderance either to the sound or to the image. If equal, they damage or kill each other, as we say of colors.

The lack of focus in the cinematographic form is visible when Beethoven's famous Moonlight Sonata is played at regular intervals. Instead of adding to the overall fabric of the narrative, this beautiful tune hinders the communication as the viewer's mind focuses on the famous music as an artform in itself.

On the surface, *Elephant* may seem like a film without the conventional character building or narration, but what it does is use conventional art forms like beautiful photographic image, beautiful music and the always accepted normalistic style of theatre acting. It remains a mixture of art forms and the idea never transcends into finding a true cinematographic form.

Does this mean that the film is bad? Well, the problem is not that the film is bad, but it leaves the viewers as non-participants. Even if critics were to argue that *Elephant* indeed belongs to the *slow* or *contemplative cinema* genre that emphasizes long takes, is minimalist, observational and has no defined narrative and stays true to it, I would argue that even within such a genre, there is the possibility to use composition inside the frame, elements of sound and camera movements to ensure a more true form of expression. What happens here is that although it adheres to the *slow* style, it ends up becoming a walking theater with its 'non-professional' actors performing in a

naturalistic style and the sound being designed without much thought given to it. The use of Steadicam here, then, isn't justified in anyway and remains a mere superficial, stylistic choice.

## CONCLUSION

We had elaborated earlier how the Steadicam was invented with an intention of coming as close to the reality of human movement and vision as possible. However, it could still be the wrong tool for certain films and can end up remaining just as a stylistic element without contributing much to the 'realism' in the film. On the other hand, from the analysis of the two films, it can be seen that even handheld shots can be used to convey the truth of a narrative, if used with the right intention. This proves the age-old wisdom that technology should be subservient to man and not the other way around.

Technology would continue to improve with time. And, there would always be newer ways to crank the camera trying to seduce us as filmmakers and cinematographers. But our objective as filmmakers should be to communicate the truth. This is not a moral judgement on the purpose of cinema as an art form, but it is only emphasizing on a language we need to learn and be aware of its scope.

When tested against this thesis's analysis framework, *Elephant* ends up as a failure of the pure art form of cinema, even though it may be a good movie for consumption in festivals and is a much-awarded one as well. And, the analysis proves that *Son of Saul* almost gets close to the idea of cinema.

However, it is interesting to note that a film like *Son Of Saul* (which was relatively more participatory in a sense) is celebrated and awarded in the land of consumerism, where people prefer to lean back and consume. And, *Elephant*, which was a film that made a *statement* about the state of politics of the society, was easier to consume and was made by a relatively better-known and 'revered' director, was discarded and critiqued. Was it because Saul's 'story' was about the Holocaust--a perennial darling--shown in a novel form? Or, am I just being too judgemental? One may not understand this now because Bresson is yet to make a film about that! Maybe we could see the Academy Award given to *Son Of Saul* by the United States Of America as just another 'mysterious human action' as Sontag explains: "...all identification with characters, deeply conceived, is an impertinence—an affront to the mystery that is human action and the human heart.'

Having said that *Son of Saul* has almost spoken through the art form of cinema, it also makes me wonder if it was, indeed, the simplest way of telling that truth. Because after watching it repeatedly, I feel a heaviness of its form itself. I do not know because I am no Bresson nor have I achieved a mastery of his vision--the language of cinema--yet. But then form is what was felt while watching Bresson as well and I believe that the truth was told there.

In a 1966 interview, Bresson said:

I believe in cinema as a completely new art that we really don't yet quite grasp. I believe in the muse of cinema. *Degas said,*

*"The muses don't speak to each other. They dance together."* I believe is, or soon will be, a completely independent art and is not, as has been imagined, a synthesis of other arts.

After his time, Bresson was revered and idolised, but very few have followed his vision, which is why the idea that cinema is a new art stays the same in his eyes even today.

Bresson also stressed on the importance of feeling something rather than understanding something as a form of communication, for which he believed cinema was an important tool. He has shown it through his films. This, I believe, should not be discarded as a conceptual idea of a bourgeois or even a form of over-intellectualisation as Bresson was often accused wrongly.

Even studies in psychology echo Bresson's thoughts that how we feel when something happens can colour our memory and the way we process information as well. In a study conducted at Duke University, led by psychologist David C. Rubin, it was found that when recalling episodes in their own lives, people tend to recall emotional memories equally vividly regardless of whether they were happy, sad, angry or fearful at the time. However, Rubin notes, the detailed nature of such memories could be illusory. "After an important event, you tell a story about it, and you eventually come to believe your own story," he says. For example, many people talked for days or months after 9/11 about where they were and how they felt at the time of the attacks. As people fill in missing details, it can lead to a false sense of accuracy about a memory, notes Rubin.

At this point in my career, I may feel confident about my craft of cinematography, but what I need is a persistent disciplined practice of my mind to be in the path of Bresson's vision of making cinema as art. In Bresson's own words,

There is no reason that movies as entertainment shouldn't continue to exist. But I firmly believe in cinema as a serious art not as entertainment, on the contrary, as a way of taking a deeper look at things a kind of aid to mankind in delving deeper and discovering ourselves.

If only we are all able to learn the language of cinema, would we be able to communicate in a different way, possibly a better way, because as what Bresson's films showed or rather made us *feel* was a communication through the participation of both our senses of hearing and seeing. And, the advantage of cinema over other artforms is its ability to represent real situations in different spaces over time. But if we continue to make cinema as they are now--movies--then the form would continue as it is now, either as a tool for entertainment or as the statement of an idea, which is an end in itself. Alas, it's all about *l'argent*, isn't it!

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