

A Critical Analysis of Robert Gardner's

Forest of Bliss

Pursuing a Pragmatic Approach to Ethnographic Film

Ian Scott Mullin

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of

Arts in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology,

Faculty of Arts, Australian National University.

2001

DECLARATION

I, Ian Mullin declare that this thesis contains original work derived from my own research, except where otherwise stated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Mullin', is written in a cursive style.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thankyou all around...Chris Gregory for his patients and guidance as supervisor...Mark Pinoli for his computer skills and animated discussions...Rod and Guy for being Rod and Guy...Leigh, Ian, Monte, Anne, Linda Clare, Ali, Sasha, Rob, and all the others who have been a part of my life for the last two years...and a big thanks to my parents Pat and Bob for their love, support, and Monday morning phone calls.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the possibility of film becoming a recognised medium of anthropology. Pursuing a *pragmatic approach* to ethnographic film – one that consists of analysing and interpreting films in light of the medium’s history, method of construction and communication, and theoretical foundations – I provide a critical analysis of Robert Gardner’s *Forest of Bliss* (1985). I argue that *Forest of Bliss* offers a method and means of exploring social phenomena and expressing anthropological knowledge that is distinctive from written ethnography. The implication of my argument is that a pragmatic approach to ethnographic film may lead to the creation of new conceptions of ethnography, thus, challenging prescribed notion of ethnographic form and content.

Table of Contents

Introduction	Pursuing a Pragmatic Approach to Ethnographic Film	1
	Chapter Outline	4
Chapter I	Creating an Anthropological Cinema	6
	From Footage to Film	6
	Robert Gardner and Cross-Cultural Interpretation	11
Chapter II	Cinematic Convention and <i>Forest of Bliss</i>	15
	A Modernist Project	15
	Content	16
	Form	21
Chapter III	<i>Forest of Bliss</i>: A Film in Five Acts	29
	Act I: The Prologue	29
	Act II: Birth	36
	Act III: Death	55
	Act IV: Regeneration	75
	Act V: A Final Benediction	83
Chapter IV	“Reading” <i>Forest of Bliss</i>	88
	The <i>Forest of Bliss</i> Debate	88
	<i>Forest of Bliss</i> as “Abnormal” Discourse	93
Conclusion	What Becomes of a Pragmatic Approach?	99
Bibliography		102
Filmography		107
Appendix A	<i>Forest of Bliss</i> Shot List	108

Introduction

Images and texts not only tell us things differently, they tell us different things (MacDougall 1998:257).

Pursuing a Pragmatic Approach to Ethnographic Film

Recent interest in ethnographic film has centred on the possibility of film becoming a recognised medium of anthropology. This view of ethnographic film emerges in the context of a debate concerning the production of anthropological knowledge. The tenor of the argument is that ethnographic film can provide the discipline of anthropology with an alternative to the medium of the written word.

Mainstream anthropology, however, is reticent to accept such a proposition. In what Margaret Mead called “a science of words” (1976:5), film remains marginalised to record making and didactic functions. Ethnographic films have been viewed, as George E. Marcus explains, primarily as “supplemental and naturalistic” – able to visually “confirm an insight, argument, or ethnographic commonsense that has been established through writing and discussion”, but unable to create such intellectual capital (1994:38). Films are thus discussed in terms of written ethnography – by how they succeed or fail in producing a knowledge supplemental to, or analogous with, written ethnography.

The reluctance to discuss ethnographic films on the level of their own construction has, as David MacDougall points out, creates a kind of *paralysis* in the relationship between film and anthropology (1998:63). When anthropologists review films they tend to view them as visual variants of anthropological writing, searching the film for content and form analogous to written ethnography. As a consequence, ethnographic films fall into one of two categories: visual expressions of something written ethnography can do better; or aesthetic productions lacking in anthropological authority. It is evident, argues MacDougall, that unless there is a radical change within the expectations of the viewer, the

understandings communicated by film will always be inherently different from those of anthropology and equally unacceptable to anthropologists (1998:192).

Advocates of the possibility of film becoming a recognised medium of anthropology, therefore, promote a radical distinction between ethnographic film and written ethnography (Loizos 1993, MacDougall 1998, Nichols 1991, Warren 1996). Film, it is argued, has its own history, method, and theoretical foundations distinct from those of anthropology and should be recognised as such. Anthropologists are, thus, prompted, as Akos Ostor notes, to begin “analysing and interpreting films, all film – fictional, documentary, and otherwise”, in order to better “understand the medium and its integration with anthropology, both in the making of films and in the contemplation of films” (1990:722). Such an approach emphasises cinematic conventions – the socially constructed agreements between filmmaker and audience as to how a film is structured (Perez 1998:21) – over prescribed notions of what ethnography should or should not be. The implication is that, when left to their own devices, film and the written word offer *exceptionally different* means of exploring social phenomena and expressing anthropological knowledge.

Such an approach, however, remains undeveloped. The majority of literature, possibly because it often comes from outside the discipline, tends to rely too heavily on implication and elliptical references to actual films, assuming the anthropological readership to have a greater knowledge of film construct and theory than is warranted. The lack of detailed analysis and interpretation of films has a limited effect on the paralysis it attempts to address. Likewise, anthropological filmmakers, as MacDougall notes, are “notoriously reluctant to explain the anthropological value of their work, partly because they feel no need to justify it, but also because it is very difficult to justify in the usual anthropological terms” (1997:293). Perhaps the best-known example is Robert Gardner’s reluctance to enter into a dialogue concerning his 1985 release, *Forest of Bliss*. In a letter to the editor of the *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter* (Fall 1988), Gardner maintained that he saw “no useful purpose” in contributing something to the debate centred around his film since the criticism of anthropologists such as Alexander Moore contained “so

many factual misstatements” and laboured “under such a burden of ignorance about the medium” it addressed (1988:3). The paralysis continues

The aim of this thesis is, therefore, to *develop a pragmatic approach to ethnographic film* that will address the impasse that has long paralysed ethnographic film in its relation to anthropology. A pragmatic approach consists of analysing and interpreting films in light of the medium’s history, method of construction and communication, and theoretical foundations. More precisely, it emphasises how a film’s structural units – shot, scene, and sequence – are organised in order to communicate to an audience. Individual films are, thus, “broken down” according to their structural units in order to demonstrate the way in which the medium of film has developed a communicative logic quite distinct from that of written ethnography. The purpose of such an approach, as Robert Gardner proposed as early as 1957, is “to see what pictures do well, to find their special qualities, and to use them accordingly” (1957:348). The desired outcome is that a better understanding of the constructed nature of film will allow anthropologists to make more informed decisions concerning the role of film within anthropology.

For this study, I pursue a pragmatic approach to Robert Gardner’s *Forest of Bliss* (1985). The film, an exploration of the theme of death and regeneration in the mythic Indian city of Banaras, is problematic for many anthropologists. Devoid of words and commentary, *Forest of Bliss* relies on the combination and juxtaposition of images to communicate ideas. Since the film relies primarily on visual strategies to communicate to an audience, many anthropologists face unfamiliar forms of anthropological representation. The concern within anthropology has, thus, been with the possibility of deciphering the film and its meaning in the absence of verbal narrative. The literature concerning *Forest of Bliss*, in two issues of the *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter* (Fall 1988, Spring 1989), an edition of *East West Film Journal* (Vol 8, No 2 1994), and in four recent volumes on ethnographic cinema (Loizos 1993, Taylor 1994, Warren 1996, and Ruby 2000), centred on the film’s formal strategies. Those critical of *Forest of Bliss*, I argue, share two primary assumptions endemic of the disciplines’ view of ethnographic film: the visual in ethnographic film must be accompanied by an expository verbal

narrative produced by, or in consultation with, a professional anthropologist (Ruby 1989, 2000); and ethnographic film must concern itself with the same sociological facts as written ethnography (Moore 1988, Parry 1988). These critics fault the film for its inability to communicate on the same level as written ethnography. It might be argued, however, that by focusing solely on what the film lacks in relation to written ethnography, critics are guilty of ignoring the film itself.

A pragmatic approach to *Forest of Bliss*, in contrast, ignores concern over “first principles, abstractions, and initial conditions” (Ostor 1990:715) in order to address the constructed nature of the film. Providing a shot-by-shot critical analysis (see Appendix A), a pragmatic approach to *Forest of Bliss* isolates the film’s structural units in order to more clearly portray the film’s unique method of exploring social phenomena and expressing anthropological knowledge. I propose that a critical analysis of *Forest of Bliss* demonstrates the film’s reliance upon cinematic convention as inherited from literary and dramatic traditions. Filmmakers such as Robert Gardner, I argue, apply literary, dramatic, and cinematic conventions to the previously exclusive domains of written ethnography in the hope of not only expressing anthropological information differently, but also in the hope of expressing different anthropological information. Contrary to those critics who observe the film as a “jumble of incomprehensible vignettes” (Ruby 1989:11) that evoke “the intense frustration of initial incomprehension” (Parry 1988:4), a critical analysis reveals the complex communicative logic inherent in the film. The implication of my analysis is that the constructed nature of film differs greatly from the constructed nature of written ethnography. I take this as the starting point for further discussion concerning the role of film within the discipline of anthropology.

Chapter Outline

Chapter one provides a discussion of what David MacDougall calls the “alternative tendencies” (1998:179) that have dominated the development of ethnographic film. These tendencies, one derived from the illustrative projects of social scientist Felix-Louis

Regnault and the other from the more revelatory cross-cultural works of filmmaker Robert Flaherty, define the two, often conflicting, notions of the role of film within anthropology. It is evident, I argue, that the tendency, as it emerges from Flaherty, owes as much to changing cinematic convention as it does to anthropological method and theory. Contemporary filmmaker Robert Gardner is thus discussed in terms of the Flaherty tendency, emphasising Gardner's integration of cinematic convention with the anthropological interest in cross-cultural interpretation and representation.

In chapter 2, I explore the notion that Gardner's *Forest of Bliss* is best "read" as a modernist work of art. It is my argument that Gardner's interest in universals and his method of filmmaking share more with the conventions of modern art than mainstream anthropology. In this chapter, I demonstrate how his experiments in technique and theme reflect the earlier challenges to representation found in the works of modern artists like Yeas, Eliot, Joyce, Picasso, and Eisenstein.

Chapter 3 is a critical analysis of *Forest of Bliss*. The critical analysis explores ways in which the cinematic structural units of shot, scene, and sequence are organised according to the literary, dramatic, and cinematic conventions that inform the film's construct. *Forst of Bliss*, I argue, is a film in five acts structured along the classical dramaturgical lines of exposition, inciting moment, rising action, conflict, climax, reversal, falling action, and resdution. Gardner, in conjunction, adopts the dramatic and literary devices of simile, meaphor, allusion, simultaneity, parallel action and retardation in order to construct meaning within this general framework.

In chapter 4, the literature concerning *Forest of Bliss* is assessed in light of the above critical analysis. A pragmatic approach to ethnographic film is proposed as an alternative to, what I observe as, the rather limited approaches to ethnographic film expressed in the liteature. In conclusion I summarize the ways in which a pragmatic approach to ethnographic film may enable anthropologists to benefit in some sense from film without concern over the possibility of the medium diminishing the authority of written ethnography.

Chapter 1

Creating an Anthropological Cinema

From Footage to Film

Ethnographers should make themselves familiar with contemporary film theories and abandon the notion that the camera purely and simply shows reality (de Heusch 1962:25).

Cinema, like photography in the years before, was introduced to the discipline of anthropology during a moment in intellectual history when the visual was considered “the apotheosis of scrutiny, knowledge, and control” (MacDougall 1998:64). The success of the natural sciences and their commitment to the analysis of observed phenomena created an intellectual climate where a special sort of certainty was associated with visual perception. In 1895, when Felix-Louis Regnault filmed a Wolof woman making a ceramic pot at the West African Exposition in Paris, photography, illustration, and the commitment to evoking the visual in words were already prominent features of ethnological monographs. Anthropologists were immediately moved by the seemingly transparent relationship between cinema and the material world. Film, said Regnault, “preserves forever all human behaviours for the needs of our studies” (cited in Weinberger 1996:139). He regarded the camera as a laboratory instrument, arguing that ethnography could only attain the precision of science through the use of such instruments (Rouch 1975:437). Likewise, A.C. Haddon, organiser of British anthropology’s first fieldwork based expedition, advised other ethnologists to include a cinematic camera among their scientific instruments. He exclaimed: “You really must take a kinematographe or biograph or whatever they call it...It is an indispensable piece of anthropological apparatus” (cited in Grimshaw 1997:41). Film, for these early proponents of the medium, remained relatively unedited footage to which anthropologists could return to again and again in the

hope of deciphering anthropological information. Such cinematic footage was considered a visual record that corresponded objectively to the social scientists' field setting.

Despite this early enthusiasm, however, the use of film failed to become part of standard ethnographic procedure. Cinematic historian Emile De Brigard cites the excessive technical difficulties inherent in the new medium, as well as the change in anthropology's emphasis from material culture to the more internal "psychologicistic mechanisms" of social structure, as the primary factors contributing to film's neglect within the discipline (1975:17). Most anthropologists who continued to shoot, as MacDougall notes, did so "in much the same spirit as they took still photographs – occasionally, and often almost in respite from what they considered their legitimate work" (1998:181).

While the cinema remained marginalised within the discipline of anthropology, commercial film companies explored the medium's potential by producing an ever-increasing number of one-to-two hour fiction films. The genre of fiction film provided an environment that rewarded the innovation of film techniques. Between 1910 and 1920, the work of filmmakers like D.W. Griffith, Chaplin, and George Melies (a guest at Lumiere's first public display of cinema in Paris, 1895) created new genres for the medium. As well as initiating narrative structure, these pioneers of cinema (particularly Griffith) took advantage of the mobility of the camera (Grimshaw 1997:45). The camera did not passively absorb the world before it, but explored (however limited by today's standards) through pans, close-ups, and multiple perspectives. Footage, that in the context of anthropology would have remained a mostly unedited record, was edited into complex stories implementing techniques such as flash-back, cross-cutting, dissolves, and montage.

Anthropology and fiction film, though, had and continue to have moments of integration and cross-fertilisation. The sub-genre of "fictional documentary" arose as filmmakers sought to combine the footage of "real" people with the narrative structures and innovative film techniques of fiction film. The most notable early example is the 1922 release of Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North: A Story of Life and Love in the Actual Arctic*. The film follows the activities of the protagonist, Nanook, as he struggles to carve

out a daily existence in the harsh Arctic environment. Flaherty combines the mimetic imagery of the actual ethnographic events with a narrative structure derived from literary and dramatic convention. Although the film contains scenes of “ethnographic value”, such as the hunting of seals, these scenes are usually scripted reproductions of archaic activities. Flaherty said of his own work that “it seems to me that it is possible to record the life of primitive people in such a way as to preserve the scientific accuracy and yet make a picture which has vivid dramatic interest” (cited in Ruby 2000:86). Well known for remarking “sometimes you have to lie...One often has to distort a thing to catch its true spirit” (cited in Weinberger 1996:142), Flaherty produced a style of film that was not interested in depicting the ethnographic details of daily life in the same way as Regnault or Haddon, but in revealing the universality of human experience. “Scientific accuracy”, for Flaherty, was not located in the notion of data, but in the depiction of those characteristics and actions that displayed the human-ness of his subjects. The desired effect was that the audience would have an emotional experience analogous to that of the protagonists of the film.

Flaherty’s style is both particular and general in its attempt at cross-cultural representation: particular in its depiction of local expressions, and general in its ability to evoke the universality of human experience. The film, argues MacDougall, is fundamentally different from other fictional films of its day (1998:179). Flaherty did not emphasise the sophisticated dramatic conventions of his contemporaries but instead relied on a “procession of loosely linked observations, centred around themes of cultural dignity and ingenuity” to propel the narrative (MacDougall 1998:179). Although Flaherty was only considered a *gifted amateur among anthropologists of the day*, his films were some of the first to suggest the potential of film as a medium for anthropology. A film such as *Nanook* moved beyond the limited context of record making to offer a work that is an engagement with the world. *Nanook*, MacDougall notes, may be viewed as an “exploration of the society itself” that guides “the viewer through its intricacies” (1998:179).

The work of Regnault and Flaherty, as MacDougall points out, defines “alternative tendencies in ethnographic film” that have persisted to the present day (1998:179). For those working in the tradition of Regnault, images are regarded as data “to be elucidated by means of spoken commentary or as visual support for verbal statements” (MacDougall 1998:184). Such films are recognised within the discipline for their record making and didactic functions. Timothy Asch, the most well known filmmaker of the Regnault “tendency”, has written in reference to his Yanomamo project: “I was ambitious. I wanted to make films that would be valuable for research as well as for instruction and curriculum development” (cited in Weinberger 1996:152). In order to be valuable for research and instruction, however, a film must correspond to, what George E. Marcus calls, the “classificatory realism” that has shaped the genre of mainstream ethnography (1994:38). In other words, films are viewed as illustrations of a verbal argument shaped by the conventions of the written ethnography. Such a perspective, I argue, tends to treat the cinematic image as being analogous to the still photograph, thus ignoring the significant ontological differences between the two mediums. Limiting the use of film to the illustration of verbal argument fails to recognise contemporary film theory as well as the thousands of films that have been made demonstrating the communicative logic inherent in the constructed nature of cinema.

For Flaherty and his followers, film is recognised as a medium not only adept in recording human behaviour and social aesthetics, but also in communicating the meaning inherent in such cultural particulars. Films of this tradition do not rely on a verbal exegesis to communicate to an audience but communicate instead through the sophisticated nature of their construct. Unlike the Regnault tradition, these films do not depict the same sociological facts as traditional ethnography but instead emphasise what Edgar Morin locates as “the emotive fabric of human existence”. Morin explains:

There is the rest, the most difficult, the most moving, the most secret: wherever human feelings are involved, wherever the individual is directly concerned, wherever there are inter-personal relationships of authority, subordination, comradeship, love, hate – in other words, everything connected with the *emotive fabric of human existence*. There lies the great *terra incognita* of the sociological or ethnological cinema (1962:4).

Such films, as Peter Loizos argues, are about “insight and illumination, observing the human condition manifested by people in their natural habitats” (1995:315). In brief, it is argued that the dramatic structuring of film through cinematic convention enables the filmmaker to communicate to an audience, not through a sociological checklist, but through revelatory ways more akin to the arts. Films of the Flaherty tendency tend to emphasise the universals of human experience, as portrayed through social dramas, in contrast to the “trope of classification” required of traditional anthropological research (Marcus 1994:38). It is hoped that the audience of such films may feel, in the words of Robert Gardner, “its humanity is confirmed” (cited in De Brigard 1975:36). This tradition promotes the notion that the filmic image can be much more than simply a visual record when “read” in relation to the constructed nature of a film. In other words, cinema – by way of its own communicative logic – can be a pathway to the non-visual aspects of human experience. Although such a tradition cannot be said to constitute a genre, films such as Merian C. Cooper and Ernest Schoedsack’s *Grass: A Nation’s Battle for Life* (1925), Luis Brunuel’s *Land Without Bread* (Las Hurdes) (1932), Basil Wright’s *Song of Ceylon* (1934), Harry Watt’s *Night Mail* (1936), and more recently the works of filmmakers such as David MacDougall *Tempus de Baristas* (1993), Trinh T. Minh-ha’s *Naked Spaces: Living is Round* (1985), and Robert Gardner’s *Forest of Bliss* (1985) can be said to constitute an emerging canon.

Although both “tendencies” in ethnographic film are most often viewed as inadequate examples of ethnography (Ruby 1989:11), professional anthropologists are more likely to distance themselves from those productions that stem from the Flaherty tradition. Whereas the didactic productions of a filmmaker like Timothy Asch are considered rather harmless visual expressions of something written ethnography can do better, films of the Flaherty tradition are often viewed as a threat to anthropological discourse. Critics argue that cinematic conventions are inappropriate for anthropological research, maintaining, as Ruby insists, that “anthropologists do not regard ethnography in the visual mode with the same or analogous scientific expectations with which they regard written anthropology” (1975:104). As a consequence it is believed that the information

communicated by a film is either incorrect or arbitrary. Endemic of the discipline is the notion that if such information is accepted as “anthropology” it could “obliterate whatever unique qualities anthropology has as a means of generating statements about the human condition” (Ruby 2000:111). This perspective, I argue, is both a limited view of the discipline of anthropology as well as the medium of film. The majority of the filmmakers within the Flaherty tradition, as I demonstrate through my discussion of Robert Gardner, are interested in producing statements about the human condition that, as MacDougall points out, not only tells us – the audience – things differently than the written ethnography, but also tells us different things than the written ethnography (1998:257). It is this distinctiveness from ethnographic writing that needs to be explored if film is to become a recognised medium of anthropology.

Robert Gardner and Cross -Cultural Interpretation

Ithnographers worship a terrifying deity known as Reality, whose eternal enemy is its evil twin, Art. They believe that to remain vigilant against evil, one must devote oneself to a set of practices known as Science. Their cosmology, however, is unstable: for decades they have fought bitterly among themselves as to the nature of their god and how best to serve him. They accuse each other of being secret followers of Art; the worst insult in their language is “aesthete” (Weinberger 1996:137-138).

Robert Gardner is a controversial figure in the histories of anthropology and film. Marked as “the Recording Angel who fell” (Loizos 1993:140), he has repeatedly turned his back on the scientific observational approaches to filmmaking that are so often associated with anthropological research. Referred to as a “symbolist” (Loizos 1993:140) and “ethnopoetic” (Weinberger 1996:162) filmmaker by some critics, Gardner’s innovative style has continued to redefine anthropology’s relationship with cinema. In “The Impulse to Preserve’, his contribution to *Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction Film* (1996), Gardner reveals that as early as 1961 he had “abandoned any thought of a life in social science” (1996:173). He recalls his “bewilderment” with “such dismal notions as structuralism and

functionalism” that “overlooked people entirely” (1996:173) and describes his anthropological interest as a “longing to capture human reality in ways that might reveal its essence or significance” (1996:172).

Working in the tradition of Flaherty, Gardner’s films are not “data” to be evaluated by professional anthropologists or visual support for verbal argument, but are instead highly structured works capable of constructing and communicating through their cinematic elements. Like Flaherty, Gardner’s “longing to capture” the “essence” of a reality shares more with the domain of the arts – whether the visual arts, literature, or theatre – than the categorical requirements of mainstream anthropology. It is evident that the contents of his films are more concerned with shared human experiences, those that cross cultural and historical boundaries, than the daily ethnographic elements of an “exotic other”. Gardner is on record as saying that his interest is “more in the universals of how we are human than in the specific exposition of these ways” (cited in Ostor 1994b:81). In discussing *Dead Birds*, he explains:

I seized the opportunity of speaking to certain fundamental issues in human life. The Dani were less important to me than those issues...My responsibility was as much to my own situation as a thinking person as to the Dani as also thinking people. I never thought this reflexive or value-oriented approach was inconsistent either with my training as a social scientist or with my goals as the author of a film...I saw the Dani people, feathered and fluttering men and women, as enjoying the fate of all men and women. They dressed their lives with plumage, but faced as certain death as the rest of us drabber souls. The film attempts to say something about how we all, as humans, meet our animal fate. (1972:2-35)

Other examples of Gardner’s interest in universal themes are not hard to find: gender power relations in *Rivers of Sand* (1975); sexuality in *Deep Hearts* (1978); and death and regeneration in *Forest of Bliss* (1985). Gardner’s intent as filmmaker, then, is to locate and depict local expressions in ways that reveal their universal qualities.

Robert Gardner’s ideas about the role of cinema within anthropology are most systematically articulated in his 1957 article ‘Anthropology and Film’. Cinema, argues Gardner, is a medium that can offer “some correction or support” to the difficult and “inexact” task of cross-cultural interpretation and representation (1957:345). Gardner suggests that a kind of cross-cultural empathy can be forged if the audience can be made to

have vicarious experiences paralleling those of the protagonists of a film. Such cross-cultural empathy, however, is forged through the conscious and creative reconfiguring of that reality by the filmmaker. The images, according to Gardner, are the record of “a personal confrontation with reality” (1957:349). It is the record of phenomena “seen through a selective and often distorting eye, through a mass of apperception composed of unique experience and cultural background” (Gardner 1957:349). Although the record of the phenomena is a “vision grounded in the world as it is” in that it does present a mimetic depiction of the material world (Gardner 1994:36-37), it is also a “very shaped vision”, an image of the world “filtered through the sensibilities” of the filmmaker (Gardner 1994:36). Such films, argues Gardner, are able to “suggest relationships of the various elements of any reality through an unreal manipulation of the pictures which relate the reality” (1957:349). In brief, Gardner is arguing that the medium of film communicates according to its construct. The viewer must then read the “unreal manipulation of the pictures” not as reality but as a constructed representation of that reality dictated by cinematic convention.

Cinematic conventions, though, are not recognised as established rules, but instead as historically situated sets of agreements between filmmaker and audience that are constantly being redefined (Perez 1998:21). Ethnographic filmmaking, particularly of the Flaherty ilk, owes as much to cinema’s continually evolving forms as written anthropology does to the styles of literary and scientific discourse that have developed over the past century (MacDougall 1998:184). The nature of film is thus not something given or essential, but is, as Perez argues, “something variable and amenable to different kinds of construction, something to be defined through the concrete work of filmmaking and the conventions it develops in transaction with the audience” (1998:26). A film is, therefore, an event where the filmmaker and viewer meet inside the form, where a historically rooted act of constructing a film is confronted by the historically situated act of comprehension of the audience (Nichols 1988:59). Although poised, as Perez argues, “between the documentary and the fictional aspects of its medium, between the documentary image the camera captures and the fiction projected on the screen” (1998:49), the ethnographic film must be read as a fiction film whose form is dictated by a wide range of cinematic

conventions that have developed in an intellectual environment separate from the discipline of anthropology. Ethnographic films, thus, do not follow a particular prescription. Ethnographic films, like fiction films, need to be read and discussed on the level of their own construction, according to the conventions that organise the transfer of meaning. Since each film depends on different and multiple conventions in order to construct its meaning, film should not be discussed in the abstract, but in reference to individual works. The following discussion of ethnographic film is centred on Robert Gardner's *Forest of Bliss* (1985).

Chapter 2

Cinematic Convention and *Forest of Bliss*

A Modernist Project

Representation depends on convention (Perez 1998:21).

Forest of Bliss, I argue, contains what literary critic Daniel R. Schwarz locates as the two essential elements of modernist art. First “it self consciously and knowingly uses a web of signs, a condensation that renders what the artist sees as the essential nature of things; that condensation is mediated by conventions and, often, by a sense of audience expectations” (1997:2). Second, it embraces “the view that the response to the nature of things needs to be personal and engaged – a mixture of what the mind perceives and what it creates” (1997:2). In an intellectual climate that rejects any notion of realist representation, the modernist artist relies on a “web of signs...mediated by conventions” to connect oneself to the rest of the world.

These two essentialisms of modern art are readily apparent in T.S. Eliot’s notion of “tradition”. For Eliot, tradition meant writing with a historical sense that:

compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order... No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. (1960:4)

The modernist artist in turn constructs works by means of allusion to prior works, both in form and in content. A prior work may offer a particularly useful “web of signs” or, what

Eliot calls, an “objective correlative”. Eliot describes an objective correlative as “a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events” which can act as a type of formula for expressing emotion and ideas (1960:124-125). Understanding is thus made possible by the “certain basic equivalences” (Gardner 1957:347) in our experiences as human beings expressed through the continuities inherent in the traditions of language and culture. Such a notion of tradition, however, condemns mere imitation and values innovative works that heighten and extend insight into what is most durable in that tradition (Sitney 1990:1). P. Adam Sitney, scholar of modernist aesthetics, points out that the modern artist aware of this tradition mines the great works of the tradition “for irreducible structures which can be made to support new works...once a stylistic, generic, or syntactical element has been isolated, it becomes the matrix for generating” innovative works that can assert their autonomy (1990:1-2). Innovative works, then, do not usually stray completely from prior convention, for they still must gain the audience’s agreement – must be accepted as convention – if the audience is to understand the work (Perez 1998:22).

In order to make sense of the many accompanying and often competing lines of development present in a modernist work, an analysis must provide, as Sitney suggests, a “modernist criticism” (1990:1). Modernist criticism entails identifying and evaluating the historical and cultural sources of the various networks of allusion that have lead to the completed project. Partaking in what Sitney calls “poetic archaeology” (1990:2), I identify and evaluate the “web of signs” and “irreducible structures” that Gardner uses, and remark upon the innovations that make the film distinctly his. These diverse historical and cultural sources are present within the work in both form and content.

CONTENT

Anthropological Accounts

Forest of Bliss is a complex and demanding work that constructs a good deal of its meaning through allusion to a diverse range of historical and cultural sources. It is evident through

a close analysis of the film that Gardner draws on Western literary tradition, anthropology, Indology, Indian mythology, and contemporary film theories while shaping the film. In 'Forest of Bliss: Film and Anthropology' (1994), Akos Ostor, the co-producer and anthropologist for the film, recalls the importance of various anthropological accounts:

We were not clear about what kind of film we would make in Benares¹, but we had many ideas and probed these separately and together. We had ideas about renunciation, death, and liberation; we had ideas about ritual; and we read many books. We read Saraswati's (another of the film's consultants) internal, anthropological probings of Benares tradition, the outside, social-anthropological accounts of Jonathan Parry, Diana Eck's book about the history of religion, and Mina Koushik's essay and dissertation on death rituals. We had also, by December 1984, several months of intensive work behind us by Saraswati and myself (1994b:75).

Although, as Gardner explains, the expert anthropological accounts of individuals such as Jonathan Parry or Diana Eck were largely ignored during the *moment* when the camera and world meet (1996:178), it is evident that they did play a part when choosing shot locations or isolating important cultural elements. For Gardner, timing is everything: "the life of the nonfiction filmmaker is really a search for ways to be there *before* something happens" (1996:178). The filmmaker, by being familiar with anthropological accounts of their subject matter, is better prepared to be there before something happens and to understand what that something is. Since anthropological accounts *inform* the filming process instead of acting as the *content*, these anthropological ideas realised in the film are often presented to the audience in an "indirect, metaphorical, and evocative way" (Ostor 1994b:78). Such allusions to prior anthropological works are often difficult for the audience to recognise, particularly if they are reading the film in expectation of those sociological facts included in written ethnography.

Gardner's debt to the social scientific accounts of Baidyanath Saraswati and Jonathan Parry are particularly evident in *Forest of Bliss*. Saraswati's discussions of the sacred aspects of the city of Banaras and Parry's research on the cosmogony of Banaras inform Gardner's treatment of the mythic city and the choice of individual characters. Gardner's use of

¹ Jonathan Parry's spelling – Banaras – is adopted throughout the text. My source for this spelling is Parry's *Death in Banaras* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

prior anthropological accounts corresponds to George E. Marcus' claim that "experimental ethnography depends on pre-existing more conventional narrative treatments and is parasitic of them" (1994:45). Marcus remarks that "part of the experimentation is in revealing the intertextual nature of any contemporary ethnography – it works through already constituted representations by both the observed and previous observers" (1994:45). The viewer's ability to comprehend the film, of course, depends to a certain degree on his or her ability to locate such allusion to prior works. The degree to which the accounts of Saraswati and Parry inform the film is discussed in more detail during the close analysis of *Forest of Bliss* in chapter 2.

Myth

Anthropological accounts make their way into the film by their association with Gardner's emphasis on the mythic qualities of Banaras. For Gardner, the mythic qualities of Banaras are often universal expressions that can also be found in the Western literary tradition. Throughout the shaping of the film, Gardner continued to think in terms of "Greek sources and ideas" (Gardner 1994:2), thus experiencing this foreign landscape through his own personal background. He observed that the visual motifs inherent in the Banaras geography had a Greek mythological context as well, thus offering a "connectable reference" for a Western audience (Ostor 1994a:2). Gardner's strategy of emphasising "those familiar figures in the landscape" (Gardner 1994:2) creates a balance between the "Indianness" in the film and the notion that the film belongs to the West and "came from [Gardner's] personal history and personal vision" (Ostor 1994a:6). The film is an expression that is personal and universal, autobiographical and historical.

Gardner's emphasis upon myth, I argue, reflects the modernist convention of the "mythical method". T.S. Eliot, in "Ulysses, Order, and Myth" (1923), describes the application of the mythical method in James Joyce's work:

In using myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him. They

will not be imitators, any more than the scientist who uses the discoveries of an Einstein in pursuing his own, independent, further investigations. It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history (1975:177-178).

Eliot, however, celebrates W.B. Yeats as the “first contemporary to be conscious” of the mythical method and to incorporate it into his work (1975:178). Yeats’ application of the mythical method extends beyond “manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity” to manipulating a continuous parallel between cultures. In the introduction to his co-translation of the *Upanishads* (1937), Yeats stresses the cross-cultural as well as trans-historical potential of such a method. He cites how, in modernist works, the reader studies “Confucius with Ezra Pound” and how the Christianity of Eliot is a “convenient symbolism for some older or newer thought” (1937:10). Yeats, like Nietzsche before him, believed that myth provides a solid foundation for the process of aesthetic creativity by which all cultures live: “myth is itself a mode of thinking; it communicates an idea of the world, but as a succession of events, actions, and suffering” (Nietzsche 1983:236). Yeats is interested in the universal qualities of myth and locates a common “system of thought” that “once overspread the world” in doctrines of the East and the ancient West and North” (1937:11).

Similarly, Gardner uses the mythical method in his attempt at cross-cultural interpretation and representation. Like Yeats, Gardner locates a common “system of thought” in myth. Myth, in a similar vein to Eliot’s objective correlative, is seen as containing “a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events” which are the formula of an emotion or idea. Revealing the commonalities of myth is seen as a way to transcend cultural borders and observe the universals of being human. Gardner’s emphasis on Yeats (the quotation from Yeats at the start of the film is the only verbal element within the work) draws a parallel between his intentions as a filmmaker and Yeats’ intention as co-interpretor of the *Upanishads*. Yeats, in the introduction to the *Upanishads*, notes that his project is an attempt to find a universal voice in humanity’s “religious instinct” (1937:11). As Yeats turns towards the East in his translation of the *Upanishads*, he cannot help but feel that he is also turning towards the ancient west and north: “that our genuflections

discover in the East something ancestral in ourselves” (1937:11). Likewise, Gardner is turning towards the East in an attempt to a universal voice in humanity’s religious instinct.

Interpretation and representation for the modernist artist, it should be recognised, are thus creative projects. Although the modernist position is deeply rooted in the Kantian notion of the aesthetics of genius, whereby the revelatory works of the artist can produce universally recognised truths, it doubts the possibility of immediate, empathetic understanding – hence the necessity to construct meaning through allusions to a “tradition” or to the continuities of language and culture.

Philosopher Hans-George Gadamer, in *Truth and Method* (1960), has discussed this modernist notion of interpretation within the human sciences. Gadamer, in a similar vein as the earlier work of Wilhelm Dilthey, is concerned with what he regards as the incursion of the methods of modern natural science into the study of the social and cultural world. Gadamer argues that “the hermeneutics developed here is not...a methodology of the human sciences, but an attempt to understand what the human sciences truly are, beyond their methodological self consciousness, and what connects them with the totality of the experience of the world” (1975:xiii). The historical and cultural sciences, he argues, have “maintained a humanistic heritage which distinguishes them from all other kinds of modern research and brings them close to other, quite different, extra-scientific experiences, and especially those proper to art” (1975:xvii). Gadamer develops Dilthey’s (1976) notion of an “active” or “creative” interpretation in a language less steeped in the mysticism of the *Geist*. For Gadamer, interpretation is a necessary part of our interaction with any object in the world since we are separated from those objects by time and space. Whereas Dilthey claimed direct access to the *Geist*, Gadamer holds that the interpreter’s access to the inner human world is limited by his or her own historical and cultural position. Since the interpreter cannot obtain direct access to the object of interpretation, the task of the interpreter, then, is to make the object of interpretation intelligible to himself and to the audience for whom it is intended (Megill 1985:23). This point of view reveals a notion of interpretation that is not concerned with reproduction but instead with creation informed by convention. The artist or filmmaker, thus, becomes as much an

interpreter of cultural knowledge as the social scientists, although, be it perhaps of a different kind.

FORM

Montage

A film is recognised as containing three structural units: shot, scene, and sequence. A shot is a single piece of film, without cuts, exposed continuously. A scene is a series of shots (or in some cases a prolonged single shot) that takes place at a single location or deal with a single action. And a sequence is usually one or more scenes that form a natural unit. These structural units, I argue, are organised within *Forest of Bliss* according to the cinematic convention of montage.

The aesthetic of montage is most systematically articulated in Sergei Eisenstein's discussion of what he called the "montage of collision". Originally working in dramatic theatre under Vsevolod Meyerhold, Eisenstein adapted many of the dramatic conventions of the day to the new medium of film. The montage advocated by Eisenstein divides the theme or actions of a film into a series of significant moments and reassembles them in order to produce a particular effect upon the audience. The fragmentary construction seeks meaning from the relationships between individual shots or individual scenes that do not follow the realist notion of a single inevitable line of events. These shots or scenes are often disparate and conflicting, but are connected through associations. For example, in *Forest of Bliss*, the image of a tiger statue circled by birds of prey and the image of Dom Raja (a sacred specialist) (shots 40-41) are juxtaposed to create an image association of "predator/eater" (see fig. 2.1).

Figure 2.1



The essence of film art and montage form, for Eisenstein, always consists in evoking image association (Yongsoo 1992:271). Montage form, according to Eisenstein, attempts to draw the theme from image association rather than from the causal progression of a traditional narrative. Thus, the first premise of montage of collision for Eisenstein is a collision or conflict between parts. The second aspect is that the collision of two given factors gives rise to a new concept. Eisenstein explains the thought process behind image association in the 1929 essay "The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram". For Eisenstein, film structure is not unlike the representational quality of the Chinese hieroglyph (written character). He explains that "the picture of water and the picture of an eye signifies 'to weep'; the picture of an ear near the drawing of a door = 'to listen'" (1957:30). The "point of copulation" of two hieroglyphs is to be regarded "not as their sum but as their product...each, separately, corresponds to an object, to a fact, but their combination corresponds to a concept" (1957:29-30). This, maintains Eisenstein, "is exactly what we do in the cinema, combining shots that are depictive, single in meaning, neutral in content – into intellectual contexts and series" (1957:30).

In a 1938 essay titled "The Film Sense", Eisenstein reaffirms the notion that "the juxtaposition of two separate shots resembles not so much a simple sum of one shot plus another shot – as it does a creation" (1975:7). Citing Ambrose Bierce's story "The Inconsolable Widow", Eisenstein discusses the way montage works in literature: "take a grave, juxtaposed with a woman in mourning weeping beside it, and scarcely anybody will fail to jump to the conclusion; a widow" (1975:4).

These early works on the nature of aesthetics stress the active participation of the reader and/or viewer in the production of meaning. The montage form, as all modernist art, relies on the audience to be creative both intellectually and emotionally. Like

Meyerhold, Eisenstein observes the audience as a “creator” (Yongsoo 1992:234-239), whereby the imagination of the viewer filled in the gaps left by the fragmentary construction. Montage form, whether in film or the Chinese written character, is “a matter of producing a series of images that is composed in such a way that [it releases]...the operations of the thought process” (Eisenstein 1988:199). The audience must be able to make the jump from observing the collision of images to the formation of a concept. This process of passing from the seen to the unseen is recognised by Eisenstein as analogous to the process of metaphor (1991:33-34). Metaphors or image associations, though, do not spring from arbitrary subjective processes, but are possible, notes literary scholar and aesthician Ernest Fenallosa², “only because they follow objective lines of relations in nature herself” (1920:377). The process of metaphor, for Fenallosa, Yeats, Eliot, Joyce, and Eisenstein, as well as Gardner, is the *way* we experience the world. Concepts are thus acquired from repeated experience of the world’s regularities. The task of the artist though is to use images that are expressive of emotion and can be recognised by the audience. Eisenstein provides as example the use of “midnight” in Maupassant’s *Bel ami*: a man waits for his lover while several city clocks strike twelve, then one o’clock. Eisenstein explains:

When Maupassant needed to impress on his readers minds the *emotional significance* of midnight, he did not limit himself to simply letting the clocks strike twelve and then one o’clock. He made us experience the perception of midnight by having twelve o’clock struck in various places by several clocks. Combined together in our minds, these distinct sets of twelve strokes have merged into a general impression of midnight. *The separate depictions have fused into an image* (1991:303-304).

² Ernest Fenallosa’s ‘The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry’ has a most striking resemblance to Eisenstein’s discussion on montage and the hieroglyph. Written sometime before Fenallosa’s death in 1908 and published posthumously by Ezra Pound in 1920, the essay stands acknowledged as a major influence on modern aesthetics, particularly in the realm of modernist poetry. Like Eisenstein, Fenallosa suggests how the hieroglyph can be used to explain the thought process behind aesthetic phenomena.

The world, maintains Fenallosa, is “full of homologies, sympathies, and identities” that act as the bridge whereby the human intellect is able to “cross from the minor truth of the seen to the major truth of the unseen” (1920:377). In brief, metaphor and montage are both processes that use “material images to suggest immaterial relations” (Fenallosa 1920:376).

Eisenstein, it should be noted, extended his notion of montage to include “episodic construct”, whereby, the larger structural units of scene and sequence are also combined through fragmentary construction. Episodic construct, where “episodes or acts...succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence” (Aristotle 1907:39), develops its meaning as the fragmentary units build up associations with each other in relation to the whole of the work. In this type of construct, notes film scholar David Bordwell, a theme will often be found as much in the “expressive and metaphorical dimensions of the text as in the literal narrative situation” (1993:142).

As a modernist, I argue that Gardner, thus, finds an “irreducible structure” in Eisenstein’s theory of montage and its method of narrative jumps rather than continuity. August W. Staub, in “Holding up the Mirror: The Twentieth Century Director as Self-Conscious Artist” (1978), points out that the modern artist is a self conscious artist who seeks to lay bare his or her techniques of construct (1978:72-82). The artist avoids the impression of verisimilitude, thus, drawing attention to the work of art as a constructed object. A work of art, according to Staub, “holds the mirror up – not to nature but to its art” (1978:82). The discontinuity of montage and episodic construct is analogous to both Cubist collage and modern narrative. Cubism in painting, and the modern narrative in literature, both present an experience as fragmented elements rearranged to form a new synthesis, or whole. In an intellectual climate that rejects any notion of realist representation, the modern artist looks for ways to reconfigure reality. The finished work is often viewed as an illuminating distortion of the material world. In this way, the modern artist draws attention to the constructed nature of his or her work, thus, stimulating the imagination of the viewer to create meaning in light of the artistic methods.

The Western Dramatic Tradition of the Five Act Structure

It is important to note that the fragmentary construct of montage cinema does not ignore the conventions of the traditional narrative or “story” completely. The function of the story in montage construction, as Yongsoo notes, is “to serve as a path of associations, through which the spectator attains certain concepts” (1992:282). John Kevin Newman, in *The Classical Epic Tradition* (1986), points out that Eisenstein organised *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925) as a five-act tragedy along classical lines (1986:430). The tradition of discontinuous construction – whether in Aristotle’s epic construct, the Elizabethan dramas of Shakespeare, or Eisenstein’s montage films – has frequently relied on a five-act structure to provide aesthetic order and historic pattern. Gardner, following the irreducible structures of his “tradition”, likewise relies on the structure of the five-act play to serve as a path of associations through which his audience can attain certain concepts.

Forest of Bliss, I argue, is constructed along the lines of the five-act drama. The convention of the five-act drama, much like fragmentary construct and montage, has developed within the Western tradition from Greek tragedy through the Elizabethan drama up to modern theatre and film. Aristotle, in chapter twelve of *Poetics*, discusses the formal structure of Greek tragedy in five sections: prologue, parodos, episode, stasimon, and exodus (1957:362). This Aristotelian division, argues Yongsoo, is an early form of act division (1992:142). Each section tends to be constructed around a particular theme or episode where several scenes can be grouped together as one unit. Yongsoo provides an example through an analysis the structural division of *Agamemnon*:

The first episode is constructed around the announcement of Clytemnestra; the second episode around the news of victory; the third episode around the confrontation of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra; the fourth episode around the prophecy of Cassandra; and the exodus around the aftermath of Agamemnon’s murder. (1992:142)

Aristotle’s emphasis on formal structure led him to insist that the plot “is the first essential of tragedy, its life blood”, for “there could not be a tragedy without action, but there could be without character” (1965:40). The characters, thus, take “the second place” (Aristotle 1965:40) in the formation of tragedy. For Aristotle, a dramatic tragedy is thus:

a representation of an action that is worth serious attention, complete in itself, and of some amplitude; in language enriched by a variety of artistic devices appropriate to the several parts of the play; presented in the form of *action*, not narration (my emphasis) (1965:38-39).

It is through the depiction of action that the plot moves, themes are drawn, and characters are developed. Eisenstein, likewise, develops this dramatic tradition within cinema by locating “the episode” as the unit by which the filmmaker can best portray a dramatic action (Bordwell 1993:142). For Eisenstein, the task of the filmmaker is to locate the essence of a dramatic action, then to interpret and depict the central emotional point or theme. Once this discriminative process is complete, “all the expressive means of spectacle can be deployed in order to manifest it in a forceful way” (Bordwell 1993:143). Such a perspective can easily be compared to Flaherty’s method of episodic construct that sought to catch a subject’s “true spirit” through a selective process of linking observations “centred around themes of cultural dignity and ingenuity” (MacDougall 1998:179), as well as Gardner’s notion that the success and failure of an anthropological film is “largely a question of the discriminative power of each investigator” (1957:344) to supply the audiences with “glimpses of humanity” in a way that the viewer will be able “to exercise their sharing capacity to get meaning from them” (1957:349). Gardner’s method of construct, I argue, is simply a matter of using the tool best suited for the job. Gardner adopts a method of construct historically suited for depicting the universal aspects of human experience.

The German critic, Gustav Freytag, in *Technique of the Drama* (1863), further developed Aristotle’s notion of dramatic tragic form in order to illustrate the conventions established by Elizabethan drama (cited in Morner and Rausch 1991). Focusing, like Aristotle, on the importance of plot and formal structure as an element of drama, Freytag provided a terminology to explain the convention of the five-act play. His terminology remains widely adopted to illustrate the plot structure of contemporary novels, dramatic theatre, and films. Freytag’s terminology is thus utilised in the subsequent close analysis of *Forest of Bliss*.

Forest of Bliss, I argue, is a film in five acts, structured along the classical dramaturgical lines of exposition, inciting moment, rising action, conflict, climax, reversal, falling action, and resolution (see fig.2.2). Gardner, in conjunction, adopts the dramatic and literary devices of simile, metaphor, allusion, simultaneity, parallel action and retardation in order to construct meaning within this general framework.

In order to better equip the reader for the subsequent close analysis in the third chapter, I provide two figures (fig. 2.2 and fig. 2.3) that will acquaint the reader with the general outline of the film. Figure 2.2 is a linear model of the film's progression according to the dramaturgical line consistent with the modern convention of the five-act drama, while figure 2.3 (p.28) provides some narrative and visual reference for such terminology.

Figure 2.2

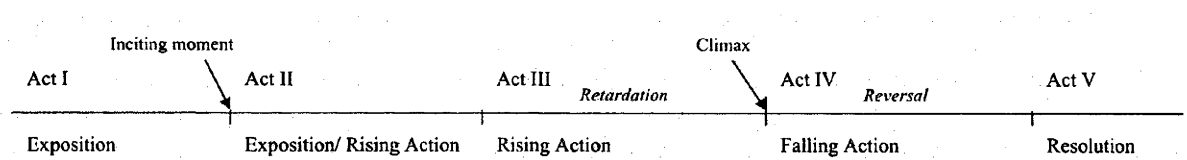







Figure 2.3

Dramaturgical Line	ACT	Narrative and Image
EXPOSITION	ACT I: Sunrise	<p>The 'far shore' is introduced: images allude to association between Indian and Greek mythological geography (eg. Ganges/Styx, dogs/Cerberus, far shore/Hades). 'Eater-eaten' quotation from Yeats establishes the theme of the cycle of death and regeneration and acts as INCITING MOMENT.</p> 
EXPOSITION (cont) / RISING ACTION	ACT II: Morning	<p>Introduction to sacred specialists, the Banaras pilgrim, and the inanimate characters (eg. Marigold, Wood, Sand, and Bamboo) as they begin journey towards ghat. The simultaneous and parallel action of the pilgrims and the inanimate characters allude to the metaphorical qualities of their relationship.</p> 
RISING ACTION (cont)	ACT III: Midday	<p>Pilgrims and inanimate characters continue journey to the burning ghats to be 'eaten'. Gardner's use of RETARDATION builds up intensity of rising action at the ghat. The ending sequence – the shattering of pots, breaking of a skull, and the dismembering funeral litters - acts as CLIMAX.</p> 
FALLING ACTION	ACT IV: Sunset into Night	<p>REVERSAL of action depicted by reversal of direction of boats; reversal of theme death to life depicted by life-affirming imagery such as children playing with kites, fields of marigolds, etc.</p> 
RESOLUTION	ACT V: Sunrise	<p>Association is made between the ritual preparation of food for the deity and cremation at the ghat. Both are forms of sacrifice in order to regenerate the cosmos: death is life in the city of Banaras.</p> 

Chapter 3

Forest of Bliss: A Film in Five Acts

All discourse is misunderstanding. The only insight is in the work itself (Cézanne 1996:46).

Act 1: The Prologue

THE BURDEN OF INITIATION

Gardner has been quoted as saying “there is an enormous amount to be said about something as singularly as important as the first shot of a film” (1994:1). *Forest of Bliss* begins with a long fade-in from black leader to a dog trotting along what Gardner calls the “far shore”. The “far shore” is the eastern bank of the Ganges and lies across the river from the city of Banaras. It is a haunting image: a dog trotting along a barren landscape in the grey light of dawn (see fig. 3.1). The camera pans from left to right following the action.

Figure 3.1





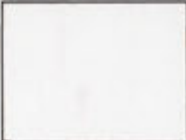


The image is accompanied by an enhanced audio track of a dog's patting feet, distant bells, and the early cries of waking birds. It is the first shot in a sequence of eleven opening shots that act as a prologue to the film. The scene or sequence concludes with the only verbal element in the film – a quote from Yeats' co-translation of the *Upanishads*. “Everything in this world is eater or eaten, the seed is the food and fire is eater” (Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, Book I) (see fig. 3.2).

The opening shot of any film carries with it a particular burden of initiation. The viewer is introduced to the world inside the film, a world constructed by the filmmaker. The barren landscape, menacing canine, and distant tolling of bells present a mimetic representation of the material world, but also establish a mood and a sense of understanding from visual and audio association. In *Forest of Bliss*, this burden of initiation, however, extends to the whole of the film's prologue. Functioning as part of the dramaturgical line of *exposition*, the Prologue is an introduction to the setting, tone, and cinematic style of the film, as well as other background information needed for understanding the plot. *Forest of Bliss*, argues Ostor, is clear about its intentions from the very beginning: "the mood and direction are quite clear; this is going to be a film of ideas, of interpretation, which while dealing with actuality, is structured through the vision of the filmmaker" (1994b:79). The exposition in *Forest of Bliss* is a combination of the first and second acts (see figures 2.2 and 2.3, chapter 2).

Figure 3.2

Act 1 Sequence: The Prologue

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
1	25.79	Fade in to running dog.	Dog		On far shore
2	20.38	Mist and boat on Ganges.	Boat		View from far shore
3	2.58	Bird of prey on far shore.	Bird of prey		On far shore
4	23.50	Mist and boat on Ganges.	Boat		View from far shore
5	14.21	Sand-workers on far shore in mist.	Sand		On far shore

6	4.83	Boy with kite on far shore.	Kite		On far shore
7	5.71	Rising sun from far shore.	Sun		View from far shore
8	8.04	Corpse at Manikarnika ghat on steps.	Steps / corpse / bird / dog		View from far shore
9	12.58	Boat on Ganges sails left to right.	Boat		View from far shore
10	6.46	Sacred fire from far shore.	Fire		View from far shore
11	15.54	Dogs fight on far shore.	Dog		On far shore
12	44.00	Fade in titles and Yeats' quote.			

IMAGE ASSOCIATION

The Prologue contains a sequence of eleven shots connected “not by their proximity but by their resonance” (MacDougall 1998:70) (see fig. 3.2). In a construction analogous to Eisenstein’s “intellectual cinema” (1957:30), Gardner draws the theme (or abstract conclusion) from image association rather than from the causal progression of a traditional narrative. As Eisenstein maintained:

Filming abstract ideas through an image...we have done this, not by translating an idea through some kind of anecdote or story, but by finding directly in an image or in a combination of images (1988:199).

The image association, developed through montage, communicates, as Ostor points out, in an “indirect, metaphorical, and evocative way” (1994a:78). The process of montage, in

this instance, should be understood as the use of “material images” to suggest “immaterial relations” (Fenollosa 1920:376). Montage has then, as its very essence, selection. These images must not be chosen at random, but in such a way that they evoke the wholes from which they are taken. “A detail correctly chosen in this sense offers a colossal economy of the means of expression. Here is where it is truly possible with six fishes to feed six thousand men, with six correctly chosen details to give the feeling of an event grandiose in scale” (Eisenstein 1964, cited in Newman 1986:422). In order to evoke the whole from which they are taken the images must be, in the words of Gardner, “metaphorically loaded” (1994:7). The viewer, thus, must be able to follow and read the process of metaphor as it is expressed in the daily life of Banaras.

Gardner selects those images that correspond to his application of the mythical method. The Prologue, as well as the majority of the film, emphasises those objects, locations, and emotions that are able to take on meaning beyond the local ideologies of Banaras. The Banaras geography, he argues, presents a parallel between “a Greek and a Hindu or Asian idea” (Gardner 1994:2). Gardner depicts the “interesting convergence” between the “histories, mythologies, and places” of the East and West (eg. Ganges/Styx, dogs/Cerberus, far shore/Hades) by selecting what he calls “those familiar figures in the landscape” (Gardner 1994:2). Similarly to Ezra Pound’s ideogrammic method, the film relies on the use of montage and the recurrence of universally recognisable symbols to locate itself within mythic time where “all ages become contemporaneous” (Weinberger 1996:160). For Gardner, this is a way to make sense of elements of Indian culture from a Western perspective as well as point out the universality of human experience. *Forest of Bliss* is, thus, as Ostor notes, an expression of Gardner’s personal experience in Banaras that seeks to suggest ideas to the viewer in the hope of revealing “a dialectic between cultures as well as individuals and culture, between the crafting of a work and what the film tries to make sense of” (1994a:81). The film is the record of “a personal confrontation with reality” (Gardner 1957:349) that makes sense of a unique experience through reference to the investigator’s own cultural background. *Forest of Bliss*, argues Ostor, is a coming together of “Indian civilizational ideas and realities, anthropology, and

Gardner's own personal experience" (1994a:80). Ostor rightly maintains that "the best monographs are also personal meditations between individual and culture, self and other" (1994a:81-82). Gardner's selection of images is an attempt at translating his experience of Banaras in a way that can be understood by a Western audience, although in an inexact way, through the viewer's active interpretation of the film. As Gardner says of the film: "We can't eliminate ourselves or India" (1994:7).

IMAGINATION AND AMBIGUITY

Gardner thus selects from the Banaras landscape those images that will release "the operations of the thought process" (Eisenstein 1988:199) by their mythic resonance. The depiction "those familiar figures in the landscape" act to stimulate the imagination of the viewer. The audience is, therefore, challenged in the Prologue, as throughout the entire film, to actively contribute to its meaning. Concepts, distinct from the life of the individual image, are born as images collide with each other in the perception of the viewer. It is evident that the structure of the film does not address Banaras in the usual anthropological way, but transforms "the act of viewing from one which follows the sequence of hearing, understanding and seeing, to a position of primacy in which viewing plays an active role in interpretation" (Chopra 1989:3). The viewer, as MacDougall notes, must read the film as depicting the symbolic world as it "extends into the physical behaviour of everyday life and then further into formal ritual" (1998:268). The social dramas that are depicted may be viewed as metaphorical gestures that portray the universalities of human existence. The complex interrelations demonstrated through the imagery of the film reveal how metaphor is "not only a feature of cognition and language but extends into visible social practice" (MacDougall 1998:269). By reading the metaphors inherent in these "social dramas" (Turner 1981), objects and place then become parts of complex wholes. Since – according to a phenomenological perspective – the synthesis of parts and whole are implicit in their relationship, the task of the anthropological filmmaker, then, is to *shape* the vision to make this clear. The point of a

film like *Forest of Bliss* is to bring the viewers attention to the realm of phenomena, the world as experienced, instead of the world as explained through the categorizing aspect of much anthropological study. The collision of such disparate and often ambiguous images as menacing dogs, boats shrouded in mist, birds of prey, and distant fires stimulates the viewer to build up associations and to observe patterns similar to these images in their own life experiences (see figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3



Menacing dogs



Boat in mist



Bird of prey



Distant fire

The 'collision' of these distinct images provides the audience with a sense, as Gardner says, that perhaps "this is the side of the river where bad things happen" (1994:5). For Gardner, this opening scene "conjures up images of the underworld, of sinking into the abyss, darkness" (1994:5). He remarks how the prologue is "almost a warning" for the audience that they are "going to see life unvarnished, unsparingly" (1994:5).

Ambiguity plays an important part in the communicative logic of the Prologue. The fragmented construction alerts the audience that this will not be an expository film but a film of revelation. Although the images contain mythic resonance and communicate by creating a particular mood, there is also a great deal of uncertainty. Gardner points out that elements such as the mist are terribly important in the film. He explains how this "artifact" of weather forces the viewer to wonder "what this thing is that's gliding through the mist and what it is that's on the other side of this mist. What is the mist concealing?" (1994:3). The viewer must confront these types of questions as the meaning of the film develops over time. The experience of the viewer is perhaps much like that of the filmmaker, making sense of their experience as they go along. It is this mood that Gardner hopes continues through the whole film until "there is a real clarity and the mystery gets solved" (1994:5).

LEITMOTIF

Visual motifs like the boats, birds, dogs, kites, and steps, first depicted in the prologue, continue to reappear throughout the film. As the film develops, objects and locations take on metaphoric and symbolic meaning. As a self-consciously modernist artist, Gardner uses the imagistic motifs as a central organising principle in the film. The motivic construct of *Forest of Bliss* allows for the thematic implications of an image to be present throughout the entire work. The motifs of objects and place bind together in a way that alludes to thematic concepts. For example, objects such as bamboo, wood, sand, and marigolds are all repeated throughout the film in a construct that draws thematic association between them and the journey of the Banaras pilgrims.

Gardner's use of leitmotif, though, also extends to audio elements. The sound of bells, birds, creaking oars, and the chopping of wood are enhanced to play on the senses of the viewer. These recurring sounds, such as the above-mentioned objects, also take on metaphoric and symbolic meanings within the film. Discussing the audio of a felled tree that accompanies the Yeats quotation, Gardner claims that "it has extended meaning in the well-known metaphor suggesting death" (1994:7). He concludes, "as far as the film is concerned, this sound will carry a pretty heavy meaning" (1994:7). The sensual nature of each image is aided by enhanced natural audio. For Gardner, as for Eisenstein, "a motif of the content may be played not only in the story but also in the law of construction or the structure" of the film (Eisenstein cited in Bordwell 1993:50).

THE YEATS QUOTATION

The opening sequence concludes with the quotation from Yeats' co-translation of the *Upanishads*. "Everything in this world is eater or eaten, the seed is the food and fire is eater" (Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, Book I) (see fig. 3.2). The quotation calls attention to itself as the only verbal elements within the film. The Yeats quotation, Gardner observes, is "a key to comprehending" the film and provides a form of explanation as to "what the

film is about” (1994:6). Similarly, Akos Ostor points out that it “says much in the way of summing up what has been seen until now [in the film]... and what will be seen later” (1994a:7). The Yeats quotation accomplishes two important tasks within the development of the film. First, it alludes to the mythical method inherent in the film’s content, and second, it introduces the major theme: “that the nature of the world is such that things don’t survive forever but, instead, are destroyed in any number of ways typified by burning or eating and that then everything is brought forth again only to have the same thing happen over and over” (Gardner 1994:6).

Act 2: Birth

RISING ACTION

The second act begins the dramaturgical line of *rising action* (see figures 2.2 and 2.3). Whereas the first act centred on establishing mood, visual motifs and cinematic style, the emphasis within Act 2 is action. The quotation from Yeats at the close of Act 1, thus, may be recognised as the *inciting moment* that begins the rising action of the film. “Inciting moment” is a term used to describe the incident or impetus that sets the rising action of the plot into motion.

Act 2 is also substantially more observational in style than the prologue. It offers a great deal of detail in order to, according to Gardner, “allow an audience to begin to orient themselves, to find their feet, in the “Geertzian” sense, with this new culture” (1994:12). Each scene, Gardner maintains, is “framed very carefully” (1994:8) in order to include many of the objects and locations that continually recur throughout the film. Continuing with the process of leitmotif begun in Act 1, these objects and locations are “meant to be stored away in the viewer’s head” and produce a sense of interconnectedness between objects, characters, and place (Gardner 1994:9).

As part of the exposition, Act 2 introduces the main characters (see fig. 2.3). Characters are introduced not through monologue, but instead, as Aristotle suggests, through action:

if someone writes a series of speeches expressive of character...he will not achieve the proper effect...; this will be done much better by a tragedy which is less successful in its use of these elements, but which has a plot giving an ordered combination of incidents (1965:40).

Characters are depicted through their participation in the sacred journey of the Banaras pilgrimage. The sacred journey (pilgrimage), notes Indian anthropologist Baidyanath Saraswati, has been an integral part of Indian civilisation and is inseparable from the Hindu religious tradition (1984:35-77). The sacred city of Banaras remains one of the most popular and important pilgrimage sites in India. Banaras is one of the seven sacred cities of India. Manikarnika ghat, in Banaras, is the site where Lord Visnu performed his “cosmogonic austerities”, burning with the fire of his asceticism, in order to create the universe (Parry 1981:337). At once the metaphysical location of all of creation, Manikarnika is also the most celebrated cremation ground in India. Anthropologist J. M. Parry, in ‘Death and cosmogony in Kashi’ (1981), argues that this is no coincidence, for “by entering the pyre the deceased revitalises...the creative heat of Visnu’s ascetic austerities by which he engendered the universe” (1981:340). Parry maintains that “since cremation is a sacrifice, since sacrifice regenerates the cosmos, and since the funeral pyres burn without interruption throughout the day and night at Manikarnika ghat, creation is here continually replayed” (1981:340). It is evident that the depiction of the Banaras pilgrimage develops the theme initiated by the Yeats quotation, thus corresponding to the dramatic convention of the rising action following the inciting moment.

While death in Banaras provides the “seed” for creation, however, it also enables the individual to attain liberation from the ever-recurring cycle of rebirth. Parry maintains that those who die within Banaras join the sacred time of the city, thus existing in “a kind of eternal present” (1981:353). This “eternal present” is “perpetually reactualised on the ghat” (Parry 1981:339). He cites M. Eliade’s discussion of sacred time: It is, writes Eliade:

a primordial mythical time made present...and represents the reactualisation of a sacred event that took place in a mythical past, "in the beginning"... Hence sacred time is indefinitely recoverable, indefinitely repeatable (cited in Parry 1981:347).

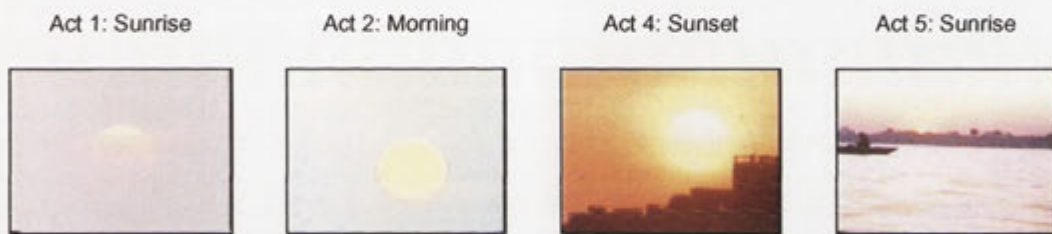
Since Banaras is locked in the moment of creation, it contains all of creation that has emanated from the source. Parry argues that Banaras, believed to be suspended in the sky above the remainder of the earth and immune to the degeneration of time, is not only separate from, but is superior to, and contains the rest of space (1981:342). This mythic sacred city is not as it literally appears, and as Indian sociologists Radhika Chopra notes, must be seen with "different eyes" (1989:3). Banaras, maintains Parry, exists in "a time and space that is radically distinct from the time and space that pervades the rest of the world" (1981:340). He explains that according to the *Kasi Khanda*, the city is suspended in the sky, a reality that can only be seen by those with the "divine sight of the yogi" (1981:342). Likewise, the notion that Banaras is preserved from the "ravages of time" is supported by the resolution that it "is not Kashi (Banaras) itself which has degenerated, but man's ability to perceive it" (Parry 1981:344). In this way, Banaras is a sacred manifestation of the cosmos. The Banaras pilgrimage may thus be read as a metaphor for the cyclical journey of life, death, and regeneration of all of existence. Indian thought, as Parry points out, "postulates a homology between body and cosmos" (1981:339).

It is in this homology that Gardner locates an archetypal pattern that occurs in both the mythic elements of Banaras and in the Western mythic tradition. Distinguished by Northrop Frye as "the rhythm of the total cyclical mythos" (1973:54), this "common system of thought", as Yeats would call it, has two main rhythms: the life and death of the individual (human body), and the infinite cycle of life only visible to the gods (cosmos) (Frye 1973:55). The infinite cycle of life only visible to the gods (cosmos) is evident in the sacred time of Banaras, while the cycle of life and death of the individual (body) is evident in each individual cremation. Gardner identifies the two main rhythms of the cyclical mythos in Banaras and expresses them through the content and structure of the film.

COSMIC RHYTHM OF THE TOTAL CYCLICAL MYTHOS

Gardner represents the “cosmic” rhythm of the total cyclical mythos through his use of time. Time, in the narrative, is kept not by clocks or calendars, but by the cycle of the sun: narrative time existing within a revolution of the sun between two sunrises. This narrative parameter corresponds to Aristotle’s credo that tragedy should “as far as possible to keep within a single revolution of the sun, or only slightly to exceed it” (1965:38). In *Forest of Bliss* each of the five acts is performed within the parameters of a solar position: Act 1 = sunrise, Act 2 = morning, Act 3 = midday, Act 4 = sunset/night, Act 5 = sunrise (see figure 3.4). Although the film may literally come to an end, the second sunrise enforces the notion that the cycle continues infinitely. As Gardner observes, “the only permanence seems to be the necessity of beginning again” (1994:62).

Figure 3.4



Three of the film’s main characters are located within the “eternal present” of sacred time. The sacred practitioners – Mithai Lal, Dom Raja, and Ragul Pandit – are “citizens of Banaras” (Gardner 1994:61) and, therefore, inextricably linked to the sacred city. They are less individuals than phenomena integral to the functioning of Banaras. Gardner maintains that it was never his intention to do “so-called ‘portraits’” (1994:51) of any of the main figures. For him, “the very idea of finding a way to reproduce some reality that can be called another person is, on its face, a total absurdity” (1994:51). As Gardner’s claims: “had Mithai Lal not come along, someone else would have and the film would not have been terribly different as result” (1994:12).

Anthropologist Baidyanath Saraswati discusses the role of sacred specialists in *The Spectrum of the Sacred* (1984). Saraswati explains the relationship between sacred specialists, pilgrims, and place in his discussion of “the sacred complex” (1984:20-35).

The sacred complex contains three interrelated phenomena: sacred geography, sacred specialists, and sacred performance. Within Banaras, sacred geography is further classified into zones, segments, and clusters of sacred centres (Saraswati 1984:20). The sacred border of Banaras is marked by the *panca kosi* pilgrimage route which extends for nearly 50 miles (Parry 1981:338). Once the pilgrim arrives in Banaras, as Parry notes, he or she move through a circumambulatory pilgrimage route of a series of concentric circles which increase in sanctity as they decrease in size – Manikarnika ghat located within the innermost circle (1981:341). Thus, Gardner emphasises the movement towards the ghat throughout the film. The sacred geography is evident in Gardner’s emphasis upon such locations as the ghat, the Ganges, Mukhti Baven, and the many shrines and temples of Banaras. In Banaras it is said, there are “thirty-three hundred million shrines, a half a million images, and at least, three hundred and thirty living temples dedicated to various gods and goddesses” (Saraswati 1984:21).

Sacred performances are linked with sacred centres such as the Ganges, temples, and ghats. These may be analysed, notes Saraswati, into “floral offerings, meditational exercises, oblations, libations, artistic performance, and religious donations” (1984:10). Sacred performances tend to enter into *Forest of Bliss* through the rituals of the three sacred specialists whose actions are followed throughout the film (Oster 1994:78). Saraswati maintains that the sacred specialists of Banaras are connected, on the one hand, with the sacred centres and performances, and on the other with the pilgrims (1984:10). As mentioned above, the sacred specialists provide pilgrims with access to the majority of ritual elements of Banaras. Act 2, thus, appropriately opens with the introduction of the film’s three sacred specialists: Mithai Lal (scene 1), Dom Raja (scene 2), and Ragul Pandit (scene 3) (see fig. 2.3). As part of the sacred complex, the sacred specialists await the arrival of the Banaras pilgrim. The sacred specialists provide the link between the profane world outside the city and the sacred rituals within Banaras.

In *Forest of Bliss*, these three characters are associated with particular roles within the sacred complex. Through Gardner’s use of simile and leitmotif the audience learns of the role inherent to each of these sacred specialists. Each sacred specialist is associated with a

particular object or action. In the case of Mithai Lal and Ragul Pandit, individual shots are framed to include particular objects and actions that recur in relation to each character throughout the film. In Mithai Lal's introductory sequence he is associated with steps and ritual, while Ragul Pandit is associated with the pouring of water and ritual (see fig. 3.5).

Figure 3.5

Mithai Lal



Ragul Pandit



In the case of *Dom Raja*, Gardner relies on the more dramatic effect of montage or, what he refers to as "intercuts" (1994:12), to build image association (see fig. 3.6). The recurring image of a tiger statue and circling birds of prey will accompany *Dom Raja* throughout the film.

Figure 3.6

Dom Raja




Although rather ambiguous in this early part of the film, these associations become quite clear as they are developed throughout the film.

Mithai Lal is a healer and diviner. Mithai Lal, Ostor explains, has set up seven temples of the goddess Kali at the Ram Ghat and offers ghee (clarified butter) into the sacrificial fire (homa) to celebrate the goddess (1994b:86). It is Kali he calls upon when healing those pilgrims who seek him, for although he can summon the goddess, it is Kali who does the healing (Ostor 1994b:86). Gardner's emphasis on the steps and Mithai Lal's laborious morning journey, coupled with his intense ritual, may be read as an allusion to his role as a pilgrimage guide (see fig. 3.7).

Figure 3.7

Mithai Lal Opening Sequence

Act 2, Scene 1

Shots	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
13-21	87.97	Mithai Lal travels from home down steps towards Ganges past wood scale and pile of wood	Steps / scale / wood		Inner city to Banaras shore
22-26	71.63	Mithai Lal at river's edge / boat sails by right to left and pilgrims make offering of marigolds	Steps / marigolds		Banaras shore to Ganges
27-32	121.29	Mithai Lal swimming and worshiping during sunrise as boat glides by and dog gnaws on corpse.	Dog / corpse / boat		Ganges
33-34	22.17	Mithai Lal climbs out of water and lustrates deities.	Steps		Ganges to Banaras shore









Dom Raja is the king of the Doms, a low-caste community with hereditary rights in the Harishchandra and Manikarnika funeral ghats (Ostor 1994b:88). He supervises the sixty-odd families who share these attendant and economic rights within the city of Banaras (Ostor 1994b:88). The nature of such a position is alluded to by Gardner's "intercuts" of the statue of the tiger accompanied by the overhead circling of vultures. Gardner uses simile to associate Dom Raja with the predatory nature of death. Likewise

the well-known metaphor, suggesting the stifling of life, is alluded to through the depiction of caged birds (see fig. 3.8).

Figure 3.8

Dom Raja Opening Sequence

Act 2, Scene 2

Shots	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
35-37	4.00	Ringling bell at Dom Raja's.	Bells		Banaras shore
38	8.50	Tiger and vultures at Dom Raja's.	Bird of prey / tiger		Banaras shore
39	13.96	Dom Raja being massaged.			Banaras shore
40	10.50	Tiger's mouth and vultures.	Bird of prey / tiger		Banaras shore
41	11.96	Dom Raja closer shot.			Banaras shore
42	10.13	Man sets out birdcage.	Birds in cage		Banaras shore
43	39.79	Dom Raja sleeps- cigarette burns.			Banaras shore
44	4.75	Birds in cage.	Birds in cage		Banaras shore


Ragul Pandit is a priest. Similarly to Mithai Lal, Ragul Pandit begins his day with a morning ritual at the edge of the Ganges. The long introductory takes of Ragul Pandit worshipping with water draw attention to his role as the purifying and regenerative specialist

(see fig. 3.9). Ragul Pandit, Ostor notes, worships at the Ganga Devi temple, offering water, flowers, and a selection of cooked and uncooked foods (1994b:82). Ragul Pandit's offering of food to the gods is analogous to the pilgrim's sacrifice of their own flesh "to regenerate the cosmos".

Figure 3.9

Ragul Pandit Opening Sequence

Act 2, Scene 3

Shots	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
45-46	100.37	Ragul Pundit at river-prays.	Bells		Banaras shore

BODY RHYTHM OF THE TOTAL CYCLICAL MYTHOS



Whereas the "cosmic" rhythm of the total cyclical mythos is depicted through the notion of an "eternal present", the "body" rhythm is evident in the portrayal of the individual life cycles of particular characters. The human life cycle depicted by the Banaras pilgrimage is mirrored in the life cycles of the Marigold, Bamboo, Sand, and Wood. These four inanimate objects become "characters" in the film and take on symbolic and metaphoric qualities. Such "characters" of the film are "born, flourish, and die" only to be "sacrificed" at the ghat just like their human counterparts. As Gardner follows these "life cycles" of the inanimate objects the audience observes how their journey through "life" is analogous to the path of the Banaras pilgrim.

The rising action develops as these characters begin their journey towards the Manikarnika ghat. Following the first four scenes and their emphasis upon the sacred specialists, Gardner introduces the four inanimate characters at their "birth" location. In scene 5, Marigold is picked in a field outside the city parameters (see fig. 3.10).

Figure 3.10

Marigold Opening Sequence

Act 2, Scene 5




Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
65-68	33.7	Marigolds picked in field.	Marigolds		Outside city
69-71	40.63	Travelling shot woman carries marigolds.	Marigolds		Outside city to city

Scene 6 depicts Wood as it is loaded then carried up river towards the ghat (see fig. 3.11).

Figure 3.11

Wood Opening Sequence

Act 2, Scene 6

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
72-79	93.12	Workers carry logs onto barge.	Wood		Outside city
80-82	14.62	Travelling shots of barge being rowed up river	Boat / wood		Ganges to ghat
83-84	8.63	Sky and vultures. Corpse floats in river.	Bird of prey / corpse		Ganges

Sand, much like the travelling shot of the wood, is portrayed during its journey up river to its destination at the ghat in scene 9 (see fig. 3.12).

Figure 3.12

Sand Opening Sequence

Act 2, Scene 9



Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
96-98	31.17	Travelling shot of sand boats going up river / callisthenics on ghats.	Sand from far shore		Ganges to ghat
99-100	13.54	Sand workers carry sand ashore. Drowned dog foreground / sand boats in distance.	Sand from far shore / dog		Ganges to ghat

In scene 12, Bamboo is viewed in an early stage of development as bamboo poles are constructed into carrying platforms for human corpses (see fig. 3.13).

Figure 3.13

Bamboo Sequence

Act 2, Scene 12

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
114-122	107.58	Bamboo worker constructing ladder.	Bamboo		Inner city
123-125	28.5	Props ladder against wall. Bamboo worker smokes. Man sleeping on bamboo poles.	Bamboo		Inner city

Through repetition of the life cycle/ pilgrimage theme, Gardner alludes to the metaphorical and symbolic nature of the inanimate characters. It should be relatively clear to the audience that these characters are all beginning a certain process, however ambiguous that process may be for the moment. This ambiguity, this mystery, plays an important part in the film. The viewer is encouraged to search for connections, common streams that will allow for the mystery to be solved. Scene 13, the final scene of Act 2, provides some assistance. Dedicated to the character of the Banaras pilgrim, the positioning of the scene promotes an understanding of the relationship between the





inanimate characters and the pilgrim. It should become apparent that the inanimate characters are embarking on a journey analogous to that of the Banaras pilgrim.

The pilgrims, themselves, have come to Banaras to prepare for death at the Mukhti Bhaven (see fig. 3.14). The Mukhti Bhaven is a house established for those pilgrims who want to die in Banaras but cannot afford the cost of a commercial establishment (Ostor 1994b:92). It is a place for rest, contemplation, and prayer before the final procession to the ghat that will provide liberation from the endless cycle of rebirth.

Figure 3.14

Pilgrim Opening Sequence







Act 2, Scene 13

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
126	14.13	Outside Mukhti Bhavan dog prowls.	Dog		Mukhti Bhavan
127	33.04	Washing courtyard Mukhti Bhavan.			Mukhti Bhavan
128-134	126.66	Start of visit to dying women, waving of flame and giving of Ganges water.	Steps / fire		Mukhti Bhavan
135-137	72.24	With another dying woman. Attendants descend stairs – cross courtyard.	Steps		Mukhti Bhavan

In summary, Act 2 introduces eight main characters: four animate (Mithai Lal, Dom Raja, Ragul Pandit, and the pilgrim) and four inanimate (marigold, bamboo, sand, and wood). Inanimate characters are distinguished from mere objects by their participation in a type of “life cycle” analogous to that of the pilgrim. Act 2 contains 13 scenes, each scene distinguished by its focus upon one of the eight characters. A change in scene is made apparent by an obvious change in character. As Kim Yongsoo points out, this corresponds to the structure inherent in the Elizabethan drama where “the scene concludes with the exit of all characters and commences with the entrance of other characters” (1992:200).

Figure 3.15 (p.49-50) displays the order of introduction, location of scene, and the number of scenes dedicated to each character.

Figure 3.15

Scene	M. Lal	D. Raja	R. Pandit	Marigold	Wood	Sand	Bamboo	Pilgrims
1	 From home to river							
2		 At ghat						
3			 At Ganges					
4	 From river to home							
5				 From field to town				
6					 Up river toward ghat			

Scene	M. Lal	D. Raja	R. Pandit	Marigold	Wood	Sand	Bamboo	Pilgrims
7	 At home							
8				 In town				
9						 Up river toward ghat		
10				 Across town				
11			 In temple					
12							 In city	
13								 At Mukhti Bhavan

PARALLEL ACTION


The scenes in Act 2 are not connected through the realist construction of following a single inevitable chain of events, but instead through the editing strategy of simultaneity. Simultaneity, in which two or more actions that are going on at the same time are cut into each other, replaces the causal sequencing of scenes. The parallel actions of these characters are cut into each other using montage. Whereas Gardner juxtaposed individual shots in the prologue, his method of montage in Act 2 is applied to series of shots recognised as scenes. These rather disparate scenes are connected by their repetition of the theme of life cycle/pilgrimage. Association is drawn between characters and scenes based on like actions. Referred to as “mirror scenes” by Shakespearian scholar Hereward T. Price (1948:101-102), such scenes do not advance the main action of the play but portray central themes and ideas through repetition of similar action.

It should be noted that the notion of simultaneity is a dramatic device associated with episodic construct. Aristotle, in *Poetics*, discussed simultaneity as the ability to construct a plot that imitates “several lines of actions carried on at one and the same time” (1907:92-93). This allows for the parallel actions of multiple characters to be portrayed at the same time. It is evident that the two features of episodic structure - fragmentary construction and simultaneous action - are important elements within Gardner’s construction of *Forest of Bliss*.



Gardner, however, does not eliminate the causal sequencing of scenes altogether. Causal sequencing is evident in the depiction of both Mithai Lal and the Marigolds. In these episodes of simultaneity where other parallel actions are cut into them, causal sequencing acts as an organising principle. The viewer observes Mithai Lal’s morning ritual as he laboriously travels back and forth from the Ganges to his home (scenes 1, 4, 7) and marigold as it travels from the fields of its growth to the inner city of Banaras (scenes 5, 8, 10) (see fig. 3.15). For example, in the sequence concerning Mithai Lal, scene 4 logically continues the action of scene 1 by returning to Mithai Lal as he climbs from his morning swim to begin his journey home, while scene 7 completes the action as it follows from the earlier scenes (see fig. 3.16).

Figure 3.16


Act 2, Scene 1

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
33-34	22.17	Mithai Lal climbs out of water and lustrates deities.	Steps		Ganges to Banaras shore

Act 2, Scene 4

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
47-53	98.29	Mithai Lal starts home up stairs.	Steps		Banaras shore to inner city
54-64	150.63	Mithai Lal gives to beggars, adorns linga, sand bangs head on stairs as he continues home.	Steps		Inner city

Act 2, Scene 7

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
85-88	134.09	Mithai Lal worships in his house: blows conch shell and bangs head on floor. Marigolds on deities.	Fire / marigolds		Inner city

Likewise, in the sequence concerning the Marigolds, scene 8 follows the flowers as they are converted into garlands upon entrance in to the city, while scene 10 completes the journey from the growing fields to a symbolic death in the mouth of a sacred cow (see fig. 3.17).

Figure 3.17



Act 2, Scene 5

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
69-71	40.63	Travelling shot woman carries marigolds.	Marigolds		Outside city to city

Act 2, Scene 8

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
89-95	37.46	Puppy dog at marigold stringing. Woman stringing marigold garlands. Puppy gnaws marigold blossom.	Dog / marigolds		Inner city

Act 2, Scene 10

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
101-104	16.59	Travelling shots of marigolds: bundle on bicycle, rickshaw, carried on head through city.	Marigolds		Through inner city
105-107	23.09	Cow eats marigolds. Procession in distance as cow walks past camera.	Marigolds		Inner city

This form of causal sequencing, although discontinuous, provides a strong sense of narrative progression and supports the reading that, although currently in the beginning stage, each character will be completing a similar journey from life to death.

THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE

It is apparent through the process of leitmotif and image association that objects and locations, like the characters themselves, take on metaphoric and symbolic relationships with one another. The audience should, according to Gardner, “see the connectedness of events not only as elements in the physical space they occupy but in their significance as phenomena linked by meaning” (1996:180). For example, as mentioned above, the first scene featuring Mithai Lal places an emphasis on the steps that lead from his home down to the Ganges. These steps take on a metaphorical quality in their allusion to the theme of the sacred journey/pilgrimage. Since this theme is the unifying element in Act 2, Gardner dedicates a good deal of time to this opening sequence with Mithai Lal. For Gardner, these steps provide a sense of not only going from “one elevation to another but also from life to death” (1994:8). Gardner’s emphasis on the sacred qualities of Banaras, through the selection of recognisable symbols and themes, transforms, as Weinberger notes, “the idiosyncratic into the archetypal” (1996:160).

The viewer realises that the Ganges, although literally a river, is also a Goddess. It becomes both “a thing and something that transcends the thing” (Ostor 1994a:11). Mithai Lal (shots 27-33) and Ragul Pandit (shots 45-46) pray within its waters, while elsewhere along the river, pilgrims offer marigolds to the Goddess Ganges (shot 26). Gardner notes that in this instance “the river becomes something more than a place to bathe” (1994:10). *Forest of Bliss*, Weinberger notes, thus may be read as both a study of “the mechanics of death (the organization of Banaras’ cremation industry) and a map of the Hindu cosmology – almost entirely presented through iconic images” (1996:164).

The way in which many of the characters, objects, and locations take on qualities in both the sacred and profane realities may be seen as analogous to Saraswati’s discussion of non-dualism (Advaita). Saraswati argues that the Western Durkheimian tradition of the sacred/profane dualism is challenged by the Hindu metaphysical notion that implies a continuum between the sacred and the secular (1984:4). According to Saraswati, the sacred and the secular are dialectically rather than dichotomously related: “The sacred-secular continuum is not merely an ideational principle, a philosophical speculation, it is

an empirical reality that can be observed at critical moments in life, particularly in the organization of sacred traditions” (1984:17). In a sacred location such as Banaras, in the organization of its space, in the performance of rituals, and in the profession of ritual specialists, it is almost impossible to make a clear-cut distinction between the sacred and the secular (Saraswati 1984:xviii).

Similarly, the Indian sociologist Radhika Chopra argues that the profane activity of daily life in Banaras is intrinsically connected to the sacred mythical context of Banaras (1989:3). She maintains that “even to the untutored eye it is apparent that the world of mundane activity does not intrude upon sacred space but is part of it” (1989:3). “One of the first things you encounter in Benares”, notes Gardner, “is the coexistence of vultures, dogs, kites, cows, and what not, together with the people and the river. There is no sharp division between these realms” (1994:3). For Gardner, there is the feeling of a “balance of nature, humanity, and divinity” (1994:3).

Act 3: Death

THE CLIMAX

Act 3 follows the dramaturgical lines of *rising action* and *climax* (see figures 2.2 and 2.3). The *rising action* progresses through the development of the theme of life cycle/pilgrimage. The third act deals primarily with the action of the four inanimate characters and the Banaras pilgrim as they continue the “body” rhythm of the total cyclical mythos. The cyclical nature of the theme of death and regeneration that was alluded to in the first and second acts is now clearly depicted through the repetition of the cycle of life-death-regeneration as it is observed at the great burning ground. Gardner’s strategy of repetition is an example of the dramatic device of *retardation*: the slowing down of the progressive movement in time to intensify the action and build up suspense. Much like “mirror scenes”, retardation does not advance the main action of the film but emphasises central themes. Act 3 consists of 20 scenes dispersed within five individual cycles followed




by a final sequence. The final sequence depicts a release from the cyclical repetition and may be recognised as the dramaturgical line of climax. The climax is a structural element of plot in which the action changes direction or intensifies as the fortunes of the protagonist are decided.

CYCLE 1

The opening cycle in Act 3 is a transitional element within the film. In what may be read as a summary of the previous two acts, as well as a preview of what is to come, the initial cycle portrays the movement from the “far shore” in Act 1 to the ghat in Act 3, thus traversing the whole landscape of the sacred geography of Banaras. The cycle begins with imagery reminiscent of Act 1 developing Gardner’s use of leitmotif. Scene 1 returns to the “far shore” with the visual motifs of menacing dogs, sand workers, and boats. Further associations between the inanimate characters and the Banaras pilgrim are developed as the parallel actions of the sand barge (shots 140 and 141) and the transport of a corpse (shot 142) are portrayed (see fig. 3.18).

Figure 3.18

Act 3, Scene 1, Cycle 1

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
138-139	16.75	Dog gnaws carcass far shore.	Dog		On far share
140-141	18.59	Sand workers load sand far shore. Sand barge on Ganges left to right.	Sand from far shore / boat		Ganges
142	9.58	Corpse on a boat going to ghat.	Corpse / boat		Ganges



Scene 2, then, corresponds to an action depicted within Act 2. In a movement reminiscent of Mithai Lal's descent towards the Ganges (Act 2, scene 1) (see fig. 3.7), the scene opens with the image of an elderly man descending a stairway (see below).



It is evident, however, that unlike Mithai Lal, the man is blind. This stands in opposition to the “seeing” power of Mithai Lal. The notion of blindness, coupled with the subsequent imagery of dead animals being dragged down a set of stairs towards the river, alerts the audience that this part of the film is portraying another side of Banaras. In contrast to Mithai Lal's exuberance and intense worship, they are now confronted with images of death: dead animals (shots 145-148), human corpses (shot 155), acts of eating (associated with the Yeats quote and death) (shots 150, 153), and birds of prey (also associated with death) (shot 154) (see fig.3.19). The scene ends with the pitiful image of a dog defecating on the steps (shot 158) (see fig.3.19). Gardner's claim that the steps provide a sense of not only going from “one elevation to another but also from life to death” (1994:8) is now more evident. In many ways the transition from Act 2 to Act 3, the movement from outside the city to the ghat, is a movement from life to death.

Figure 3.19

Act 3, Scene 2, Cycle 1







Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
143-144	36.63	Blind man descends stairway.	Steps		Banaras shore
145-148	31.17	Dead donkey dragged down steps to river. Dead dog dragged to river.	Steps / dog		Banaras shore

149	13.67	Sweepers clean steps.	Steps		Banaras shore
150	16.96	Cow devours marigolds.	Marigolds		Banaras shore
153	3.08	Hungry dogs lap spilled milk.	Dog		Banaras shore
154	7.75	Vultures circle Dom Raja's house.	Bird of prey		Banaras shore
155	6.96	Procession down Manikarnika gully – distant.	Corpse		Banaras shore
158	6.79	Dog defecates on steps.	Dog / steps		Banaras shore

Gardner has thus prepared the audience to enter the ghat. Act 3, scene 3, cycle 1 is the audience's first introduction to the ghat. Scene 3 also clears up some of the mystery surrounding certain recurring images within the film. The audience is privy to the relationship between the wood scale, the wood, the human corpse, and the ghat. As Gardner points out, "this sequence is important because it is where the already much heard sound of wood being split is first comprehended" (1994:36). Comprehension arises from the connectedness of these objects and this recurring audio element. Gardner again relies on the editing strategy of simultaneity, in which two or more actions going on at the same time are cut into each other, to construct image association. Gardner's portrayal of parallel action, in this instance between the preparation of wood for the burning ghat and a funeral procession towards the ghat, reveal the relationship between objects, characters, and place. Pilgrims, wood, wood scales, the ghat, and the audio of splitting wood are thus associated through an A-B-A-B-A-A structure (see fig. 3.20).

Figure 3.20

Act 3, Scene 3, Cycle 1

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location	Parallel Editing
159-162	18.58	Dom sweeps wood. Dom splits wood. Child plays with wood scale.	Scale / wood		Ghat	A: Wood
163-164	11.58	Corpse on way to ghat – dog foreground. Corpse carried down stairway.	Corpse / dog / steps		Ghat	B: Pilgrim
165-166	23.21	Doms weigh wood.	Wood / scale		Ghat	A: Wood
167	2.79	Corpse carried down gully across screen.	Corpse		Ghat	B: Pilgrim
168-171	22.85	Piling wood after weighing. Loading wood onto a man. Wood-carrier descends stairs.	Wood / steps		Ghat	A: Wood
172	5.54	Empty scale swings.	Scale		Ghat	A: Wood

As the scale swings empty, there is the negation of closure, a beckoning call for the cycle to start anew. With the stubbornness of a skipping record, these cycles offer little in the way of release from cycle of life and death. The first, second, and third cycles end in a similar fashion: cycle 1, shot 172 “Empty scale swings”; cycle 2, shot 205 “Washing courtyard at Mukhti Bhaven”; cycle 3, shot 223 “Empty scale” (see fig. 3.21).

Figure 3.21



Shot 172



Shot 205



Shot 223

In reply to these beckoning refrains, a new cycle answers the call. Gardner signifies the transition to a new cycle by returning to the travelling shots of the wood barge being rowed towards the ghat. Cycles 2,3,4, and 5 open with this recurring imagery: cycle 2, shot 173 “Wood barge rowed up river”; cycle 3, shot 206 “Oar in water, wood boat”; cycle 4, shot 224 “Wood barge landing”, Manikarnika”; cycle 5, shot 268 “Oar in Water” (see fig. 3.22).

Figure 3.22



The recurring imagery, thus, signifies a return to the beginning of the life cycle/pilgrimage, the movement from outside the city towards the ghat. Gardner’s use of retardation builds the intensity of the rising action with each new cycle. The movement of the wood barge also supports the film’s temporal unity. The barge began its journey in the morning hours of Act 2 in shot 80 after the wood was loaded. Now in Act 3, Gardner revisits the travelling barge as it journeys through mid-day towards the ghat. Even though the repetition of these cycles seems to defy the forward progression of time, the journey of the boat continues the narrative progression through the more general structuring of the film between two sunrises.

CYCLE 2

In cycle 2, the audience is reacquainted with the characters of Dom Raja (scene 5) and Bamboo (scene 6). The earlier associations of Dom Raja with tigers and birds of prey are reinforced in shots 177 and 178 (see fig. 3.23). It should be noted that Dom Raja, except for a short interlude with Mithai Lal, is the only sacred specialist present in Act 3 (see fig.

3.48). Dom Raja's association with death is clearly portrayed throughout the act, particularly in cycle 5.

Figure 3.23

Act 3, Scene 5, Cycle 2

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
177-178	8.75	Dom Raja's house – vultures circle. Tiger and vultures from balcony.	Bird of prey / tiger		Banaras shore
179	7.21	Woman sweeps courtyard.			Banaras shore
180-182	80.29	Dom Raja and attendants. Dom Raja rises and leaves house. Dom Raja starts into city.			Banaras shore
183	5.17	Water buffalo descends steps.	Water buffalo / steps		Banaras shore

The sequence also alludes to the purification theme, portrayed throughout the film in images of sweeping and the pouring of water. Shot 179 is of a woman sweeping the Dom Raja's courtyard. This act is reminiscent of the washing of the courtyard at Mukhti Bhaven in shot 127 and the sweeping of the steps in shot 149 (see figure 3.24).

Figure 3.24



Shot 127



Shot 149








Shot 179

These actions are associated with the purification of an area associated with death and decay. Gardner, in an allusion to Western mythology, maintains that the image is "a little like Hercules trying to clean up the Aegean stables" (1994:38).

In scene 6, cycle 2, the life cycle/pilgrimage of the bamboo is resumed as it arrives at the Mukhti Bhaven in order to be used to carry the human corpses to the ghat. Just as cycle 1 clarifies the meaning behind the wood weighing scale and the sound of splitting of wood, cycle 2 clarifies the function of the bamboo ladder (see fig. 3.25). In a way that typifies Gardner's handling of the sacred and profane issue in Banaras, the bamboo ladder takes on sacred qualities. The connection is made, maintains Gardner, "finally and unmistakably, between death, bamboo ladder, and courtyard" (1994:39). Gardner's strategy to let the mysteries of particular objects and characters be solved over time is, in his words, a way for the audience to do "their own anthropology" (Gardner 1994:39). This method of construction, explains Gardner, "permits the audience to not only see but also think about what's happening" (1994:42).

Figure 3.25

Act 3, Scene 6, Cycle 2

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
186-187	12.88	Man arrives with ladder. Ladder against building.	Bamboo		Mukhti Bhavan
188-189	34.75	Travelling shot down stairway. Reverse shot of corpse carried downstairs.	Steps		Mukhti Bhavan
190-194	70.00	Corpse in courtyard. Ladder put down by corpse. Corpse lifted to ladder. Men tie corpse to ladder.	Corpse / bamboo		Mukhti Bhavan
196-197	30.75	Readying marigolds for corpse. Tying marigolds onto corpse.	Marigolds / corpse		Mukhti Bhavan
201-202/204	18.00	Relatives lift corpse. Corpse carried out of Mukhti Bhavan. Corpse being carried out into street.	Corpse / bamboo		Mukhti Bhavan

The location of Mukhti Bhaven provides Gardner with another chance to stress the cyclical theme. The sequence begins and ends with the allusion to purification as the courtyard is cleansed for the arrival of a new corpse (shots 184, 205) (see fig. 3.26).

Figure 3.26



Shot 184



Shot 205


Whereas Gardner drew an association between wood and a human corpse in cycle 1, the second cycle depicts the relationship between bamboo and a human corpse/pilgrim. Gardner develops such association between the four inanimate characters and the human corpse/pilgrim throughout the third act. The act is structured as such: cycle 1 = wood and corpse, cycle 2 = bamboo and corpse, cycle 3 = sand and corpse, cycle 4 = boat and corpse, and cycle 5 = marigold and corpse.

CYCLE 3





Cycle 3, thus, rejoins the life cycle/pilgrimage of the sand. The journey of the sand is clearly associated with the human pilgrimage to Banaras. The juxtaposition of the action of the funeral procession (scene 8) and the movement up river of a sand barge (scene 9) builds this association (see fig. 3.27).

Figure 3.27

Act 3, Scene 8, Cycle 3

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
209-210	13.09	Procession Manikamika gully. Child and calf watch.	Corpse		Banaras shore

Act 3, Scene 9, Cycle 3

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
212-215	40.12	Sand barge from the bow. Man poles sand barge.	Boat / sand		Ganges
216	12.63	Marigolds on bow of barge. Cargo of sand / man poles in background.	Marigolds / boat / sand		Ganges
218	2.75	Sand spills into river over gunwale.	Boat / sand		Ganges
219	23.33	Boat carrying child's corpse / body dumped.	Boat / corpse		Ganges

More precisely, the juxtaposition of the image of sand spilling off the barge (shot 218) with the dumping of a body into the Ganges (shot 219) provides the audience with a classic montage example of image association (see fig. 3.28).

Figure 3.28



Shot 218



Shot 219

CYCLE 4

Scene 13, cycle 4, develops the association between the wood and the act of cremation. Gardner portrays the wood as it arrives at the burning ground as well as at the end of the process: in a state of ash and burning embers. This may be read as the completion of the wood "life cycle". The parallel action in scene 13 follows an A-B-A-A-B-A-B structure (see fig. 3.29). Gardner's use of simultaneity alludes to the sacred time of Banaras, the eternal

present: the 'dead' wood and the 'live' wood are both present at this moment. The intercut of the water buffalo provides the scene with an additional reference to death (shots 228 and 234). As the film develops, the visual motif of the water buffalo takes on an almost totemic quality in its association with death.

Figure 3.29

Act 3, Scene 13, Cycle 4







Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location	Parallel Editing
228	20.75	Water buffalo at rivers edge – Manikarnika	Water buffalo		Ghat	Intercut
229	4.58	Wood scale foreground; child w/ kite in background.	Scale / kite		Ghat	A: Wood
232	7.21	Women pick over embers.	Fire		Ghat	B: Cremation
233	8.96	Man drops load of wood.	Wood		Ghat	A: Wood
234	3.62	Water buffalo looks over parapet.	Water buffalo		Ghat	Intercut
235	11.42	Weighing out wood.	Wood / scale		Ghat	A: Wood
236	10.29	Woman picks over embers.	Fire		Ghat	B: Cremation
237	17.54	Man drops load of wood.	Wood		Ghat	A: Wood

238	10.54	Dog sniffs embers.	Fire / dog		Ghat	B: Cremation
-----	-------	--------------------	------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------	--------------

Scene 14 continues the fourth cycle. Gardner once again portrays the parallel action of two seemingly disparate events in order to develop image association. Gardner recalls “that it was my intention to make a comparison by intercutting the launching of a ‘newborn’ boat with the offering to the Ganges of a ‘newdead’ person” (1994:44). The recurring imagery of marigolds and the pouring of water accompany the parallel action. Both the boat and the human corpse are draped in marigold garlands and ritually purified through water. The simultaneity can be observed in a twelve-section structure along the lines of A-B-A/B-A-B-A-B-A-B-A (see fig. 3.30).

Figure 3.30

Act 3, Scene 14, Cycle 4

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location	Parallel Editing
239-245	50.37	Carpenter displays tools. Marigolds. Assistant makes yellow handprints.	Boat / marigolds		Banaras shore	A: Boat
246	7.96	Procession, Manikarnika.	Corpse / marigolds / bamboo		Banaras shore	B: Pilgrim
247	8.67	Manikarnika – near repaired boat / swing pan to boat.	Boat		Banaras shore	A/B: Boat / Pilgrim
248-250	42.66	Yellow ochre on carpenter tools. Yellow hands on ground. Marigolds.	Boat / marigolds		Banaras shore	A: Boat
251	1.83	Corpse lowered onto pyre.	Fire / corpse		Ghat	B: Pilgrim
252-259	67.04	Carpenter makes offering. Bless boat with river water.	Boat / marigolds / pouring of water		Banaras shore	A: Boat


260	4.63	Pouring water on face of corpse.	Corpse / marigolds / pouring of water		Banaras shore	B: Pilgrim
261	23.00	Launching boat.	Boat		Banaras shore	A: Boat
262	14.33	Procession, Manikamika.	Corpse / bamboo		Banaras shore	B: Pilgrim
263	6.21	Rowing re-born boat.	Boat		Ganges	A: Boat
264	9.58	Immersing corpse, Manikamika.	Corpse		Ganges	B: Pilgrim
265-267	20.88	Reborn boat rowed into river. Marigold wreath on bow of boat in river.	Boat / marigolds		Ganges	A: Boat

CYCLE 5

The fifth and final cycle depicts the arrival of the pilgrim (corpse) at the ghat. The film follows the parallel action of a human corpse and the marigolds travelling towards the ghat. Gardner refers to this sequence as “a stream of death going down towards Minikarnika” (1994:47). The simultaneity follows a structure along the lines of A-B-A-B-A-B (see fig. 3.31).

Figure 3.31

Act 3, Scene 16, Cycle 5

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location	Parallel Editing
269-270	14.25	Corpse on roof of motorcycle taxi. Corpse carried through streets.	Corpse		Inner city	A: Pilgrim

271	4.54	Man on bicycle with marigolds.	Marigolds		Inner city	B: Marigold
274-275	14.75	Men carry corpse.	Corpse / marigolds		Inner city	A: Pilgrim
276-277	6.71	Marigolds carried on head. Marigold bundle through traffic.	Marigolds		Inner city	B: Marigold
279-280	20.00	Corpse carried. Same – different angle into gully.	Corpse / marigold / bamboo		Inner city	A: Pilgrim
283	12.63	Marigold sellers' procession passes.	Marigolds / corpse		Inner city	B: Marigold
285	28.21	Procession in gully – 2 corpses.	Corpse / bamboo		Inner city	A: Pilgrim

By “mirroring” the action of the corpse with that of the marigolds, Gardner alludes to the paradoxical relationship between life and death in Banaras. He claims it signifies “death in the very midst of life and life in the very midst of death” (1994:50). As anthropologist Rodikha Chopra observes, “the camera is witness to the processes of living with death, not a death solemn and separate from the energy of life but death surrounded by a cacophony of chants and bells and the color of flowers and fires” (1989:2).

The scene concludes with a four shot sequence from 287-290 (see fig. 3.32). The imagery of urination, splitting of wood, and animal death reinforces the notion of death and decay through image association. As Gardner points out, “whenever one stops to look at something in Benares you can be reminded of death” (1994:47).

Figure 3.32





Act 3, Scene 16, Cycle 5 continued

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
287	2.58	Man urinates.			Inner city
288-289	11.83	Child splits wood.	Wood		Inner city
290	1.92	Dead puppy.	Dog		Inner city

Scene 17, cycle 5 follows the parallel action of (A) Dom Raja preparing to officiate the services at the ghat, (B) the arrival of corpses to the cremation ground, and (C) wood being brought to the ghat for burning. The editing strategy of simultaneity follows a structure along the lines of A-B-A-C-A-C-B-A-B-A (see figure 3.33).

Figure 3.33

Act 3, Scene 17, Cycle 5

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location	Parallel Editing
291	14.71	Dom Raja buttons shirt.			Ghat	A: Dom Raja
292	3.38	Corpse goes down stairs.	Corpse		Ghat	B: Pilgrim
293	13.46	Dom Raja puts on cap.			Ghat	A: Dom Raj
296-297	15.54	Arranging woodpile. Man drops load of wood.	Wood		Ghat	C: Wood

298-300	22.88	Dom Raja watches. Sparrow at Dom Raja's knee. Dom Raja speaks.			Ghat	A: Dom Raja
301	13.63	Dom sweeps handrail.			Ghat	Intercut
302	11.13	Water buffalo watching.	Water buffalo		Ghat	Intercut
303	17.96	Man weeps.			Ghat	Intercut
304-307	54.96	Carrying wood from barge. Man drops load of wood. Wood carried up stairs.	Wood/ steps		Ghat	C: Wood
308	26.67	Corpse past Dom Raja down stairs.	Corpse / steps		Ghat	B: Pilgrim
309	12.75	Puppy staggers upstairs.	Dog / steps		Ghat	Intercut
310	54.00	Dom Raja argues with mourners.			Ghat	A: Dom Raja
312	9.71	Puppy staggers upstairs.	Dog / steps		Ghat	Intercut
313	8.46	Corpse carried past charcoal gleaners.	Corpse		Ghat	B: Pilgrim
314-317	84.52	Dom Raja talks and drinks. Servant brings food to Dom Raja. Dom Raja eats.	Food		Ghat	A: Dom Raja




The simultaneity is interrupted by intercuts of images that have recurred throughout the film suggesting death and decay. The fifth cycle ends on a visual reference to the earlier quote from Yeats. As the Dom Raj eats among the dead, it is apparent that the film has reached an important turning point. The film has returned to the beginning with its mirroring of the introductory quotation from Yeats. It may be read as the end of an individual body cycle in the total cyclical mythos. As these characters meet their fate at the cremation ghat, they are simultaneously “regenerating the cosmos” and starting the cycle of life anew. Dom Raj is thus symbolic of the “eater” and the pilgrims the “eaten”.

FINAL REPRISE OF MANIKARNIKA GHAT: RELEASE FROM THE INFINITE CYCLE OF RETURN

The film has reached the important destination of the ghat and will remain here for the rest of the third act, with the exception of an interlude to Mithai Lal (see fig. 3.34).

Figure 3.34

Act 3, Scene 18, Mithai Lal Interlude

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
318-319	54.13	Mithai Lal at home healing patient. Mithai Lal holds flame.	Fire		Temple
320	43.46	Man worships Mithai Lal's shrine.	Fire		Temple
321-323	69.08	Mithai Lal begins to cure patient. Face of girl.	Fire		Temple








This interlude depicts Mithai Lal performing a healing ritual. The scene contrasts with the previous sequence of Dom Raja and its association with death. It is at this moment of cremation at the ghat that Mithai Lal's healing and guidance is needed most by the pilgrim and viewer alike. The positioning of the scene, as Ostor points out, “seems to both

develop him as a character, just like the Dom Raja, and also add a mythical aspect” of his character as he is juxtaposed with the Dom Raja (1994a:54).

Scene 19, part of what Gardner calls the final reprise of Manikarnika ghat (1994:57), is a re-intensification of the action. The scene is a montage sequence of cremation activities. A corpse awaits in shot 325, is immersed in the Ganges in shot 326, is placed on the steps to wait for a burning place in shot 327, is carried down to the sacred fire in shot 329, and is finally burned in shot 337 (see fig. 3.35). Intercut amongst this sequence are shots of the tasks of preparing the sacred fire: the gathering of wood, the building of the pyre, and the attainment of the sacred fire from the Dom.

Figure 3.35

Act 3, Scene 19, Final reprise of Manikarnika ghat





Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
324	7.00	Man drops load of wood – Manikarnika.	Wood		Ghat
325-326	53.96	Corpses at Manikarnika waiting. Immersing corpse in Ganges.	Corpse / marigold / bamboo		Ghat / Ganges
327	8.17	Dogs near corpses.	Dog / corpse		Ghat
328	10.79	Dom providing sacred fire. Dom Raja.	Fire		Ghat
329	11.21	Corpse down steps past Dom Raja.	Corpse		Ghat
330-332	22.55	Mourner carrying fire past Dom Raja. Building a pyre.	Fire / water buffalo		Ghat
333	5.50	A dog and young man scavenge in fire.	Fire		Ghat

334	30.13	Chief mourner lights funeral pyre.	Fire / boat		Ghat
337	13.46	Body burning.	Fire / corpse		Ghat

Scene 20 is a return to the Dom Raja and his activity as purveyor of rites to the ghat. It is an ironic sequence that, as Gardner notes, depicts the “merchant of death trying to keep his own ravaged body alive” (1994:57) (see fig. 3.36). In shot 343, Dom Raja is depicted receiving a medicinal needle placed into his bottom (see below).

Figure 3.36

Act 3, Scene 20, Final reprise of Manikarnika ghat

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
338-339/341	55.79	Doms scavenge clothing. Dom Raja being paid. Two bracelets near Dom Raja.	Fire		Ghat
342	9.29	Women mourn above burning ground.	Fire		Ghat
343	22.13	Dom Raja injected.			Ghat
344	4.96	Sparrows peck at seeds/ river background.	Birds		Ghat





The final sequence of the third act provides an end to the circle of “The Great Burning Ground”. The rising action has thus reached its point of climax. The climax, in this instance, takes on the form of a release in the tension brought about by the repetition of the circular motif. Scene 21, the final scene of Act 3, is centred almost entirely at the ghat and is void of allusion to cyclical activity. This concluding scene may be read as a

montage of images that suggest finality. Images such as the heaving of skulls into the river, the breaking of pots, the splitting of skulls, the dismembering a bamboo litter, a cow chewing a bamboo litter, a torrent of embers, and a corpse upon a pyre all flood the imagination of the viewer (see fig. 3.37).

Figure 3.37

Act 3, Scene 21, Final reprise of Manikarnika ghat

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
345-346	6.92	Mourner heaves skull into river. Dhoti drying over funeral embers.	Fire		Ghat
347	3.29	Chief mourner breaks pot on pyre.	Fire		Ghat
348	4.12	Doms split skull of corpse with bamboo pole.	Bamboo / fire		Ghat
349	2.83	Relatives dismember litter.	Bamboo		Ghat
350	4.17	Water buffalo and sobbing man.	Water buffalo		Ghat
351-352	3.92	Dom carrying pile of wood. Dom drops tongs by sacred fire.	Wood / fire		Ghat
353	2.54	Two men climb steps past corpses.	Corpse		Ghat
354	1.79	Cow chews abandoned litter.	Bamboo		Ghat
355	2.42	Mourner heaves marigolds into the Ganges.	Marigolds		Ghat

356	1.79	A torrent of dead embers.	Wood		Ghat
357	2.46	Wood scale rising.	Scale / wood		Ghat
358	1.38	Men place corpse on pyre.	Fire / corpse		Ghat
359	6.54	Chief mourner breaks pot.	Fire		Ghat

Act 4: Regeneration

FALLING ACTION




Act 4 follows the dramaturgical lines of *reversal* and *falling action* (see figures 2.2 and 2.3). As part of the structure of the plot, the reversal occurs as an element immediately following the climax. The climax, as discussed above, is a structural element of plot in which the action turns or intensifies as the fortunes of the protagonist are decided. The climax is, thus, the moment when the cremated body is freed from the eternal cycles of infinite return. The protagonist, in this instance the Banaras pilgrim, has reached his or her final goal of transcendence.

The dramaturgical line of reversal is a release of this tension or a change in the progressive momentum of the action of the work. The reversal, thus, initiates the falling action. This corresponds to the convention inherent in the dramatic structure of the five acts. The *climax* occurs in the third act, the *falling action* in Act 4, and the *resolution* in Act 5 (see figures 2.2 and 2.3). In the falling action the conflict is resolved and many of the questions that develop as part of the fragmentary construction are answered.

Although the fourth act opens with imagery reminiscent of the Prologue – two dogs menace each other on the far shore (shot 361) and boats sailing upon the Ganges (362-364) – it soon becomes evident that the actions depicted in the act are a literal reversal of the earlier events (see fig. 3.38).

Figure 3.38

Act 4, Scene 1

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
360	22.50	Travelling shot – birds on bamboo pole in river.	Boat		Ganges
361	6.04	Two dogs menace each other on the far shore.	Dog		On far shore
362-364	38.50	A sail floats past right to left from far shore. Hull of sand barge does the same.	Boat / sand		View from far shore

The movement in the river, as Gardner notes, is now moving in the opposite direction to the prologue; a detail he thought would “support the film’s cyclical structure by having the motion come back the other way” (1994:57). Also, in reversal of the prologues inclusion of a young boy letting out a kite, or as Gardner says, “pulling the sun up” (1994:58), the opening of act 4 emphasises the image of a young boy pulling in a kite, or perhaps pulling the sun down. The sequence, Gardner claims, “is meant to encourage the association between life, including death, and kites” (1994:58). Just as the transition from the second act into act 3 may be read as a movement from life to death, the transition from the third act into act 4 may be read as a reversal which moves from death to life. The sequence combines the life-affirming image of the child flying a kite with that of a child’s corpse being immersed into the Ganges in the dimming light of the setting sun. The kite, the corpse, and the sun may be as being simultaneously immersed in the sacred river. Gardner draws image association through the depiction of parallel action. The editing strategy of simultaneity follows a structure along the lines of A-B-A-B-A-B/A (see fig. 3.39).

Figure 3.39




Act 4, Scene 1

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location	Parallel Editing
365-366	13.29	Young boy flying a kite. Young boy pulling in kite.	Kite		On far shore	A: Kite
367	4.83	A boat sets out from shore with child's body.	Boat / corpse		Ganges	B: Corpse
368	5.83	A young boy intently plays with kite.	Kite		On far shore	A: Kite
369	15.58	Boat w/ child's body glides left to right on river.	Boat / corpse		Ganges	B: Corpse
370	6.67	Arm of young boy urgently pulling on kite string.	Kite		On far shore	A: Kite
371	20.54	Men drop child in river / kite falls behind the boat.	Kite / corpse		Ganges	A/B: Kite / Corpse
372/374	13.66	Head and face of water buffalo. Buffalo up steps.	Water buffalo		Banaras shore	Intercut

The sequence is a transitional moment within the film. It is a transition from the moment of death to the moment of regeneration. In a single image, the body is dropped into the river and the falling kite joins it, perhaps dragging the setting sun behind (shot 371). These contrary images, one displaying the despair of death and the other displaying the life-affirming image of a child at play, come to share the same moment. The subsequent imagery, however, of a kite returning to the air and the games of adolescent boys bring the film back to the life that goes endlessly on (see fig. 3.40).

Figure 3.40




Act 4, Scene 1

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
373/380	8.83	Child pulling in kite. Child runs with kite.	Kite		Banaras shore
381	6.79	Boys play stick and stone game.			Banaras shore
382	8.83	Boy running with kite.	Kite		Banaras shore

Scene 2 continues the notion of regeneration. Gardner returns to a time in the beginning of the marigolds cycle. In a restatement of the idea of “the circularity of things organic” (Gardner 1994:58), Gardner displays the irrigation, cultivation, and subsequent sale of the marigold (see fig 3.41).

Figure 3.41

Act 4, Scene 2

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
383-384	8.62	Men irrigating marigold field – distant shot. Closer arms and bucket.	Marigold		Outside city
385	3.08	Man cultivates marigolds.	Marigolds		Outside city
386-387	18.00	Traffic in front of Durga temple. Marigold seller outside Durga temple	Marigolds		Temple

The movement of the marigold from outside the city to its trade location in front of the temple connects the narrative progression with the next scene. Scene 3 provides an example of a life-affirming temple ritual within the city of Banaras (see fig. 3.42).

Figure 3.42

Act 4, Scene 3





Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
388	4.38	Hands ring temple bell.	Bells		Temple
389-390	15.76	Women worshipping, Durga temple.	Fire		Temple
391	2.42	Woman ringing temple bell.	Bells		Temple
392-393	11.54	Worshippers, monkeys and marigolds.	Marigolds		Temple
394	7.33	Worshipper and temple steps.	Steps		Temple
395-396/398	11.01	Worshipper sitting at the Durga temple. Distant shot Durga temple and worshippers.			Temple
399-400	28.83	Interior Durga temple – worshippers. Fakir over fire pit.	Fire		Temple

Gardner maintains of this sequence: “It was important to show that life is not just one loss or sorrow after another” (1994:59). Pilgrims, healers, and disciples come to the temple to renew their strength through worship (Gardner 1994:59). Gardner captures the vitality of such worship through a rather long take of a man prostrating himself over a fire-pit (shot

400) (see above). Such an image depicts fire as a life-generating element in contrast to its previous association with death.

In scene 4, Gardner returns to the youth and vitality of childhood games (see fig. 3.43). Just as the kite contains symbolic resonance, Gardner manipulates the Hopscotch sequence to allude to the game’s “conceptual and historic framework”: “like Parcheesi and Chess [this game]... is a cosmic paradigm” (1994:59). Gardner explains that his use of slow motion is meant to “underline the image, to say that this scene should be looked at slightly differently” (1994:59). He maintains that the hopscotch form is “a ladder up which one strives to reach heaven” (1994:59).

Figure 3.43
Act 4, Scene 4

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
401-403	15.88	Girl drawing hopscotch game.	Hopscotch		Inner city
404	4.38	Girl tosses stone for hopscotch.	Hopscotch		Inner city
405	9.25	Slow motion hopscotch.	Hopscotch		Inner city
406	6.00	Hopscotch – different angle.	Hopscotch		Inner city

As the “travelling” shots have continually done throughout the film, scene 5 propels the film towards a new sequence in the narrative (see fig. 3.44).

Figure 3.44



Shot 407






Shot 408

In scene 6, the sun sets (see fig. 3.45). The ending of the day signifies a new phase in the cosmic rhythm of sacred time, but just as the boat in shot 412 glides in and out of the frame there is the sense that life and regeneration continue on leaving the setting sun behind. The association of the kite with a crossover moment between life, death, and regeneration is further developed. The setting of the sun, so often associated with ending, death or despair, is in contrast with the previous regenerative and life affirming imagery of marigolds and worship, as well as the vitality of children flying kites. In shots 409-410 the young boy continues to reel in the kite/sun as darkness begins to blend into the sky. Shot 411 focuses on the rather surprising image of an evening sky filled with kites. Such an image captures succinctly Gardner's point that there is life in death and death in life. This sunset scene is reminiscent of the parallel action of corpse/kite in scene 1 (see fig. 3.39).

Figure 3.45






Act 4, Scene 6

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
409-410	13.50	Young boy reels in kite. Face and hands boy reeling in kite.	Kite		On far shore
411	6.88	Sun setting behind city / sky filled with kites.	Kite		Banaras shore
412	32.46	Sun setting behind building / monkey climbs parapet.	Kite		Banaras shore

Scene 7 is the concluding sequence in Act 4 (see fig. 3.46). Reminiscent of scene 3, the sequence demonstrates the vitality of worship in this sacred city dedicated to death and regeneration. In a similar fashion to the contrast between the flying of kites and the immersion of a corpse in the Ganges, scene 3 contrasts the fires of worship with the darkness of night. Just as shot 400 depicted the prostrating worshiper drawing energy from a fire-pit (see figure 3.42), scene 3 portrays a similar image emphasising fire that is full of energy and life force. The same fire that destroys the body also provides regenerative powers to pilgrims and sacred specialists such as Mithail Lal featured in shots 418-424. This sequence corresponds to the more general notion that the sacrifice of cremation regenerates the cosmos (Parry 1981:340).

Figure 3.46

Act 4, Scene 7

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location
413	10.88	From the river the fires at Harischandra.	Fire		Banaras shore
414	16.54	Drummer and ariti, Durga temple.			Temple
416	23.41	Fire from shrine and devotees.	Fire		Temple
418-421	122.74	Mithai Lal begins temple séance. Mithai Lal above fire pit.	Fire		Temple
422/424	54.96	Mithai Lal's face chanting over fire.	Fire		Temple

Act 5: A Final Benediction

THE RESOLUTION

Act 5, similar to the third and fourth acts, opens with imagery reminiscent of the prologue: "Boat on Ganges sails left to right" (shots 9 and 425) (see fig. 3.47).

Figure 3.47



Shot 9

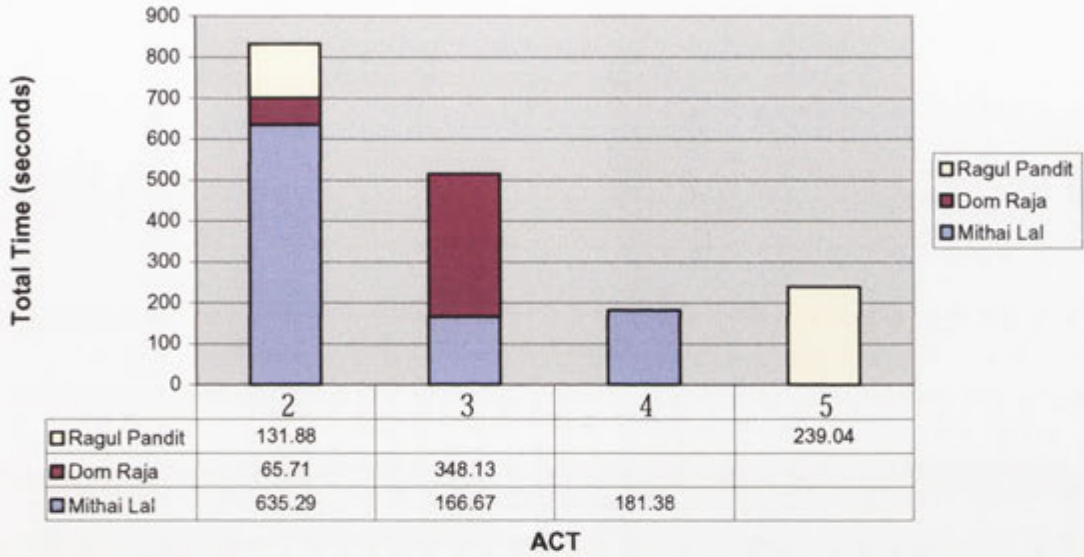


Shot 425

The movement in the river during scene 1, as well as the position of the sun, are now analogous to that of the Prologue. Whereas Act 4 depicts a reversal of motion to "support the film's cyclical structure by having the motion come back the other way" (Gardner 1994:57), Act 5 likewise supports the cyclical structure by returning the movement to its original direction. As the sun rises in Act 5, revealing the watchful gaze of the dogs upon the far shore, it is evident that the film has returned once again to where it began. Act 5 follows the dramaturgical line of *resolution* (see figures 2.2 and 2.3). The resolution is a structural element of the plot in which the conflicts and complications in the plot are finally clarified and resolved. Act 5, scene 2 is devoted to Ragul Pandit, "the cooler, the wiser, and the more worldly of the film's three citizens of Benares" (Gardner 1994:61). Gardner's emphasis on Ragul Pandit, at this point in time, corresponds to the specialist's role as priest. It should also become evident that Gardner's placement of each of the three sacred specialists throughout the film reflects each specialist's relationship to the sacred complex of Banaras (see fig. 3.48). Although the audience has not seen Ragul Pandit since the second act when the sacred specialists were introduced during the dramaturgical line of exposition, his insertion into the film at this point corresponds with his earlier portrayal as a practitioner of purification associated with the motif of pouring water. Likewise, Mithai Lal, healer and spiritual guide of the pilgrim, is continually revisited throughout the film leading up to the fifth act as he provides ritual assistance at various points in the

pilgrimage, while Dom Raja, with his association with death and the funeral ghat, is mainly relegated to the intensity of the third act.

Figure 3.48: Specialist Appearance Time per Act








The fifth act is, what Gardner calls, “a final benediction... not just to the people who are in the shrine, but... to everyone who is watching the film” (1994:61). Gardner concludes: “People in the audience have been through a relatively unsparing account of some of life’s fundamental issues, and they deserve it” (1994:61). In a ritual that mirrors the sacrifice of the corpse at the ghat, Ragul Pandit provides sacred ‘food’ for the worshipers as well as the gods. Parry, citing Eliade, notes that “any sacrifice is...the repetition of the act of Creation, as Indian text explicitly state” (Eliade 1965:11, cited in Parry 1981:340). The film has again returned to the quotation from Yeats: “Everything in this world is eater or eaten, the seed is the food and fire is eater”. There is an association between the Yeats quote in the prologue, the human sacrifice at the ghat, the imagery of Dom Raja eating, and this final episode of Ragul Pandit preparing sacred food at the shrine. As the fire has been the eater at the ghat, the food now becomes the seed that rejuvenates the cosmic rhythm of the gods.

The sequence with Ragul Pandit is cut into fragments with intercuts of previous imagery from various points in the film. The shot-by-shot montage of the ritual, intercut

by these previously recurring images, provides a swirling sense of the present. The whole film could be said to be present in this one moment: a new beginning, middle, and end. Imagery such as the prowling dogs with their association to the Prologue reflect the opening of the film; the movement of the wood barge and imagery of the wood weighing scale allude to the mid point of a process; while the dismantling of the bamboo ladder is depictive of finality. A Gardner points out, Ragul Pandit, in a way evocative of T.S. Eliot's "still center of the turning world" (cited in Gardner 1994:25), simply prays throughout these micro-cycles of time, providing the food by which the universe is constantly recreated. This faith in the face of mortality is where Gardner locates what Yeats refers to as the universal voice in humanity's "religious instinct" (1938:11). The montage follows a structure along the lines of A-A-B-A-B-A-B-A-B-A-B-A-B-A (see fig. 3.49).

Figure 3.49

Act 5, Scene 2

Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location	Parallel Editing
427-434	126.87	Ragul Pandit puts on dhoti. Ragul worships with candelabra.	Fire / marigolds		Temple	A: Ragul
435-436	67.71	Ragul breaks coconut. Ragul worships w/ coconut, water, conch shell, and wand.	Fire / marigolds		Temple	A: Ragul
437	4.21	Wood-weighing scale.	Wood / scale		Ghat	B: Wood
438	9.88	Ragul chanting.	Marigolds		Temple	A: Ragul
439	3.79	Dogs prowl / burning ground seen from far shore.	Dog		View from far shore	B: Dog

440	10.00	Travelling shot in shrine among worshipers.	Fire / marigolds		Temple	A: Ragul
441	6.75	Dog contemplates corpse in river.	Dog		Banaras shore	B: Dog
442	10.04	Ragul worshipping.			Temple	A: Ragul
443	3.17	Wood barge rowed right to left-from far shore.	Wood / boat		View from far shore	B: Wood
444	16.13	Ragul offers holy food.	Food		Temple	A: Ragul
445	3.21	Men dismantle litter at Manikarnika.	Bamboo		Ghat	B: Bamboo
446	4.29	Ragul offers holy food.	Fire / marigold / food		Temple	A: Ragul
447	2.00	Dog lopes on far shore.	Dog		On far shore	B: Dogs
448	11.50	Ragul offers holy food.	Fire / marigolds / food		Temple	A: Ragul
449	4.29	Laden wood barge at Manikarnika ghat.	Wood / boat		Ghat	B: Wood
450	8.71	Ragul prays.	Fire / marigolds		Temple	A: Ragul

Act 5, scene 3 is the final sequence of the film. In a single shot Gardner depicts the haunting image of a boat being rowed across the screen and out of sight (see below). This rather long, last shot of the film completes the circular motif and brings the film literally back to the point where it began. Gardner notes of this final image: "The only permanence seems to be the necessity to begin again, that and the sound of the oarlocks" (1994:62).



Chapter 4

“Reading” *Forest of Bliss*

The images [ethnographic film] on the screen are neither a reproduction of reality nor an illusion of it: rather they are a construction, derived from reality but distinct from it... Their picture of reality may be convincing, but in the way fiction is convincing, we respond to the picture not as we would to reality but as we respond to the constructs of representation. The images on the screen are a representation of reality – an imitation or mimesis in the Aristotelian sense – as a novel or a play or a painting is a representation (Perez 1998:17).

The *Forest of Bliss* Debate

The *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter* (SVA) (Fall 1988, Spring 1989) printed a number of commentaries in an attempt to promote a sustained debate concerning *Forest of Bliss* and its relationship to anthropology. The debate, although unsuccessful in many areas, did provide a clear sense of the divide between those critics aware of film's distinct communicative logic and those who, as Ostor notes, “fail to recognise the difference between film and ethnography” (1989:4). The debate was unsuccessful, in part because of the length restriction inhibiting film analysis. Articles often amount to little more than polemical arguments for or against the film's claim to anthropological knowledge. Likewise, reviews coming from outside the parameters of the SVA debate covered an area of limited scope. In other words, such articles, contrary to a pragmatic approach, lacked any detailed analysis and interpretation of the film. These critics, both for and against, might be considered guilty of ignoring the film itself.

Although I agree with the general sentiments of critics such as Peter Loizos (1993), Fritz Stall (1989), and Eliot Weinberger (1996) it is easy to see how their discussions of a film such as *Forest of Bliss* could fall upon deaf anthropological ears. Loizos, in 'Robert Gardner in Tahiti' (1993), promotes the notion that Gardner is a “symbolist” filmmaker drawing inspiration from the idea that “a complex reality can be appreciated through

metaphors, or symbols, isolated from the flux of events and particulars” (1993:140). Loizos argues that it is the inability of certain anthropologists to grasp this poetic intention that is to blame for a good deal of the confusion. He maintains that “the film is not about ‘ethnographic Benares’ or even about ‘Death in Benares’”; it is an “attempt to set us thinking about life, time, death, body, soul” (1993:162).

Weinberger, an essayist and translator of poetry, refers to *Forest of Bliss* as the film “most loathed” (1996:155) by professional anthropologists because of its “surrealist” construct through metaphor: “a superficial discontinuity revelatory of a profound unity” (1996:159). It is evident, he argues, that the revelatory nature of *Forest of Bliss* presents a type of information that lies “beyond” or in contrast to the type of information in a written monograph (1996:156). In a similar observation, Stall maintains that *Forest of Bliss* relies on “the rhythm and harmony of innumerable details that are woven together into a whole” (1989:14) to bring salience to a topic that often “eludes our comprehension” (1989:19).

Such observations, void of comprehensive referral to the actual film, lack potency in an already hostile intellectual climate. A pragmatic approach to *Forest of Bliss* discusses the film in such detail in order to make its jargon clear to an anthropological audience. Too often, articles in defence of ethnographic film are viewed as general musings written in an idiosyncratic tongue. Criticisms, addressed at least in part to an anthropological audience, I argue, should make concessions in their use of rhetorical language and provide concrete examples from the film in pursuit of their argument. A pragmatic approach, as I have demonstrated, provides a comprehensive analysis of *how* the film reaches the realm of the poetic, *how* the film uses metaphors and symbols, and *how* the film presents a type of information different from the type required by written ethnography.

The articles by anthropologists Rodikha Chopra (SVA 1989) and Akos Ostor (SVA 1989) concerning *Forest of Bliss* make headway towards such a method of criticism, but fall short of a detailed critical analysis. It should be noted, however, that the articles by Chopra and Ostor were important contributors to my “reading” of *Forest of Bliss*, as well as my subsequent analysis of the literature. Ostor is frequently referenced throughout my

discussions of both Gardner and the film. His response to the criticism of anthropologists Alexander Moore and Jonathan Parry is particularly useful.

Those critical of *Forest of Bliss*, as Ostor points out, fail to acknowledge the film's "medium, form and structure" (1989:7). Such critics, thus, fault the film for its reliance upon "only one perceptual mode, vision, to convey information" (Moore 1988:1). Anthropologist Alexander Moore, in 'The Limitations of Imagist Documentary: A Review of Robert Gardner's "Forest of Bliss"' (SVA 1988), rhetorically asks, "How much can I, or anyone, really see in a setting so totally foreign to one's life experience?" and "How can I be enlightened about Hindu culture without some use of my ears as well as my eyes?" (1988:3). The images, he maintains, go "far toward showing what life *looks* like in the holy city" but lack "the devices to make the beautiful images fully intelligible" as anthropological information (1988:1). Lacking what he considers to be appropriate explanatory devices, Moore argues that he is "left to figure the film out" for himself (1988:1).

Anthropologist Jonathan Parry, in 'Comment on Robert Gardner's "Forest of Bliss"' (SVA 1988), is equally as concerned over the film's reliance on the visual image. Parry believes that he "has some inkling" of what the film is about because of his "months of fieldwork", but he is unsure of how to "read" the film (1988:4). Ironically, Gardner and Akos Ostor list Parry's social-anthropological accounts of Banaras as important reference materials during the film's construction (Ostor 1994:75) (see p.18 of thesis). It is evident that Parry is searching the film for a particular type of data that corresponds to his own knowledge. He complains that the film does not address "the complex division of labor" present in the mortuary system and that the audience is "not even given a glimpse of the elaborate series of pre-cremation mortuary rites performed over the subsequent year" (1988:5). Without such "anthropological" information Parry claims to be left with the feelings of the "intense frustration of initial incomprehension" that he experienced during his first few weeks of fieldwork (1988:4). He concludes with a more general comment on ethnographic film. Parry reports that over the past few years he has become "increasingly irritated by the proportion of so-called 'anthropological' film which avoid commentary"

(1988:7). He declares, “such films can only be premised on the tacit and methodologically absurd assumption that meaning can be directly extrapolated from observed behavior” (1988:7).

Jay Ruby, in 'The Emperor and His Clothes' (SVA 1989), is concerned with the “seemingly uncritical acceptance of Gardner's films” (1989:9). He maintains that many films, including Gardner's, are too readily accepted on the notions that they are “ideologically correct” or “artistically satisfying” but not according to their ethnographic merit (1989:9). Since *Forest of Bliss* is void of a verbal argument or language translation, Ruby, much like Moore and Parry, claims he can rarely “figure out what the people are doing” and when he can, “the significance of the action” is lost to him (1989:11). For Ruby, the structure of *Forest of Bliss* is nothing more than “a jumble of incomprehensible vignettes” that “falsely mystifies” the city of Banaras and India (1989:11).

More recently, Jay Ruby has published a substantially revised and rewritten version of his 'The Emperor and His Clothes' (1989). In *Picturing Culture* (2000), Ruby extends his polemic on *Forest of Bliss* to cover all of Gardner's films since *Dead Birds* (2000:96). Gardner is taken to task for not conforming to “the theoretical concerns of mainstream cultural anthropology” (2000:96). Ruby is critical of Gardner's work on two fronts. The first point of attack is what Ruby refers to as Gardner's dependence on an outmoded and inadequate theoretical perspective (2000:96). Gardner is condemned for ignoring fundamental methodological and moral questions as he hides behind the defence of artistic licence. He is thus criticised for indulging in a form of artistic “orientalism”, whereby he transforms the lives of the people of Banaras into aesthetic objects that form the raw material for the creative process of art (2000:111). Ruby argues that Gardner's method of filming is based on a type of “salvage anthropology” (2000:104) that works to collect “data” (2000:104) of “authentic” (2000:105) culture untainted by the modern world.

Ruby is mistaken. Suffering from the same inability to decipher the film's cinematic construct as Moore and Parry, Ruby's criticism is missing the point of Gardner's film. As I have argued, Gardner is not concerned with notions of “data” or “authenticity” as they relate to the methods of salvage anthropology, but is instead concerned with the continuity

of human experience across cultures and through time. Gardner's strategy is to depict local expressions that evoke the universality of human experience. For Gardner there are "certain basic equivalences" in human experience: "people are born, flourish, and die. They all, in some way, love, hate, give joy, and grieve" (1957:347). This is what makes possible "the unity of humanity, despite the fact that all its members are separately motivated" (Gardner 1957:345). A cinematic account of some remote experience, thus, Gardner argues, "might reasonably be expected to produce reactions in those who saw it which, in meaningfulness, had some approximation of the feelings of those to whom the experience actually belonged" (1957:347). Such cinematic accounts, as I have argued, are highly constructed works dictated by cinematic convention, thus rejecting any notions of realist documentary.

Ruby's second point of attack is what he locates as Gardner's failure to utilise anthropological knowledge derived from ethnographic fieldwork to organise his films (2000:96). Although Akos Ostor has discussed the influence of ethnographic fieldwork and anthropological accounts on the making of *Forest of Bliss* (Ostor 1994), Ruby is apparently unable to recognise such a presence. In 'Forest of Bliss. Film and Anthropology' (1994), Ostor recounts the several months of fieldwork accomplished by himself and B.N. Saraswati during the time before Gardner's arrival, as well as the influence that the anthropological accounts of Jonathan Parry, Diana Eck, Mina Koushik, and Saraswati had on the film's conception (1994b:75). Ostor maintains that "many ideas of the fieldwork" are "realized in the film", although be it in an "indirect, metaphorical, and evocative way" (1994b:78). Whereas Ruby observes Gardner's "artistic vision" to be at odds with the body of ethnographically derived information (2000:106), in chapters 1 and 2 of this exegesis, I demonstrated how Gardner's "artistic vision" is in fact informed by such ethnographic accounts, and how allusions to such prior anthropological works within the film are an integral part of its modernist construct.

The implication of such misguided criticisms (Moore 1988, Parry 1988, Ruby 1989, 2000) is that meanings constructed through cinematic convention are either "arbitrary or

irrelevant or unquantifiable” (MacDougall 1998:71). This perception of film is endemic of the discipline as a whole. In a 1988 interview, Maurice Bloch remarked:

What ethnographic films – and especially the ethnographic films which are being made at the moment – are trying to do is give the idea that if you just stare at people, if you just hear their words out of context, you’ve learnt something about them. This idea that ethnographic film can speak for itself is what is wrong. The kind of thing one tries to teach in anthropology, is if you just stare at exotic scenes and listen to the things people are saying without knowing anything about these people, you understand less about them than if you have never seen or heard them (cited in Houtman 1988:20).

It is evident that critics such as Bloch, although aware of the constructed nature of ethnography, are unaware of the constructed nature of film. The prevailing assumption, notes MacDougall, “seems to be that a film is no more than arbitrarily joined together slices of life” (1998:72). Bill Nichol’s in ‘The Domain of the Documentary’ (1991), maintains that critics of film’s claim to anthropological value consider visual images to be “mysterious imitations of the very things that written language can demystify, make into an object of knowledge, and render available for productive purposes” (1991:3). More precisely, it is argued that images depend on words in order to anchor meaning or convey it.

A pragmatic approach to *Forest of Bliss*, however, reveals a film in sharp contrast to such criticism. Far from being incomprehensible, the film is shown to display a complex communicative logic that constructs meaning through its cinematic elements. Such a perspective, as MacDougall notes, might involve the creation of new conceptions of ethnography rather than attempts to adapt the cinematic medium to pre-prescribed written forms (1998:271).

Forest of Bliss as “Abnormal” Discourse

In anthropology a problem arises since the historically rooted act of constructing a film is often incommensurable with the historically situated act of comprehension of an anthropological audience. By incommensurable, citing Richard Rorty, I mean unable to be located within the “normal” discourse of a discipline. Normal discourse, Rorty

explains, is “that which is conducted within an agreed-upon set of conventions about what counts as a relevant contribution, what counts as answering the question, what counts as having a good argument for the answer or a good criticism of it” (1979:320).

Many view the incommensurability of film (eg. its distinctive method of communication) as a threat to anthropological discourse, since much of what film has to offer does not correspond to the usual anthropological terms (Ruby 1975, Heider 1976, Bloch 1988, Rollwagen 1988). The implicit threat is that of undesired, unexplained, and therefore uncontrolled content that will lead to misrepresentation and misinterpretation. Anthropologists, aware of these dangers, search for ways to constrain film, to locate it within the “normal” discourse of the discipline – to make it commensurable.

There have been a number of attempts at commensuration (Ruby 1975, Heider 1976, Rollwagen 1988). Anthropologists such as Jack R. Rollwagen have argued from a theoretical perspective. In ‘The Role of Anthropological Theory in “Ethnographic” Filmmaking’ (1988), he maintains that the term “ethnographic” should not belong to a subject matter, but instead to a disciplinary approach to a subject matter (1988:289). Rollwagen claims that anthropological theory is the only scientific framework that exists for the study of cultural systems in human societies throughout the world and in cross-cultural perspective (1988:293). Only anthropology, he argues, provides “the cross-cultural framework that is sophisticated enough to deal with the range of variation that exists among cultural systems” (1988:294). If anthropological theory is ignored, warns Rollwagen, the implication is that merely observing while in the field is sufficient to reveal the structure of that “reality” to the filmmaker, just as merely observing the film (as structured by the film-maker) is sufficient to reveal to the audience the nature of events portrayed in the film (1988:293). Rollwagen’s idea of film, I argue, is a rather naive realist notion that the image is an unmediated view of the world.

Others, such as Karl Heider and Jay Ruby have focused on the method of ethnographic filmmaking. Karl Heider, in *Ethnographic Film* (1976), attempts to provide a method by which ethnographic film can produce statements of “scientific type accuracy” in contrast to the distortion of reality for “aesthetic effects” popularised in other types of

film (1976:7). Heider promotes what he curiously calls a “broad-minded dogmatism” which consists of a fourteen-point criterion by which anthropologists can judge the ethnographicness of a film (1976:50). Heider’s sociological checklist strongly resembles the requirements of traditional written ethnography.

Jay Ruby’s hope for a “filmic ethnography”, however, is probably the most well known attempt at commensuration. In a seminal paper of 1975, Ruby focused on what he observed as the “scientific obligations of the ethnographic filmmaker and the scientific nature of the ethnographic film” (1975:109). Under the pretence of elevating ethnographic film to the disciplinary status of the written ethnography, Ruby’s “scientific” approach to filmmaking attempts to draw analogies between itself and the mainstream model of written ethnography.

The clearest link with written ethnography is Ruby’s call for the filmic use of “a distinctive lexicon – an anthropological argot” which is further defined as “a specialised visual anthropological lexicon” (1975:107). Ruby maintains that anthropologists are trained in several “anthropological linguistic codes” that enable them to make “sophisticated distinctions” between ethnographies (filmic or written) that produce anthropological knowledge, and those that only appear to be “products of anthropological intent” (1975:107). Ruby’s proposal presupposes a rough semiotic equivalency between written anthropology and potential visual codes (MacDougall 1998:75). Once these visual codes are accessed or invented, it is argued that ethnographic film will become more scientific, describing culture from a perspective similar to the written ethnography. Most recently, Ruby has argued that the term “ethnographic” be confined to those works in which the maker “had formal training in ethnography, intended to produce an ethnography, employed ethnographic field practices, and sought validation among those competent to judge the work as ethnography” (2000:6). For Ruby, this conception transcends the medium of presentation, and can thus be applied to both written and filmic ethnographies. The difficulty inherent in Ruby’s position, as MacDougall points out, is that although anthropology may use terminology or an “argot” to express concepts, film expresses concepts through constructions (1998:76).

Such attempts at commensuration are indicative of the paralysis that has plagued the relationship between film and anthropology. Discussions continue to “get stuck on the level of recording methods and attempts to gain the respect of (written) anthropology” (Oster 1990:716). A bit like forcing the square peg into the round hole, such attempts to locate film in normal anthropological discourse have failed. Critics such as Ruby have been unable to reference an actual film that lives up to their criteria for ethnographic film. Such reductive methods of commensuration, although contrary to their goal, have allowed anthropologists to discard film as a foreign organism that is incompatible with anthropological knowledge. Anthropologists such as Edmund Carpenter, in ‘Assassins and Cannibals’ (SVA 1989), have taken Ruby to task for attempting to further his own anthropological agenda while ignoring important works that are produced outside those parameters. Ruby’s rather dogmatic perspective, argues Carpenter, robs anthropology of the “new opportunities for exploring and discovering” that the medium of film can offer (Carpenter 1989:12).

The assumption that all contributions to a given discourse need to be commensurable has greater implications for the discipline as a whole. As a consequence, anthropology, notes Anna Grimshaw and Keith Hart, loses its “progressive momentum” by cutting itself off from “the sources of its own renewal in human creativity”, becoming “a conservative vehicle for the reproduction of narrow professional expertise, less open to eclectic working methods and insight based on diffuse personal experience” (1995:53). This form of methodological nihilism runs the risk of promoting a false sense of authority based on intellectual abstraction. Richard Rorty argues that such a “desire for constraint – a desire to find ‘foundations’ to which one might cling, frameworks beyond which one must not stray, objects which impose themselves, representations which cannot be gainsaid” is based on a lopsided view of science that seeks to suppress the investigator’s subjectivity (1979:315). This attitude effectively inhibits a substantial body of visual works from entering into the anthropological discourse and being examined more closely for what it has achieved.

Similarly, Gregory Bateson warns against a view of science, whether social or natural, which cuts itself off from discourse that tends to challenge its prevailing assumptions:

whenever we pride ourselves upon finding a newer, stricter way of thought or exposition; whenever we start insisting too hard upon 'operationalism' or symbolic logic or any of these very essential systems of tramlines, we lose something of the ability to think new thoughts. And equally, of course, whenever we rebel against the sterile rigidity of formal thought and exposition and let our ideas run wild, we likewise lose (1972:75).

Bateson, thus, maintains that advances in scientific thought come from a combination, of what he terms, 'loose' and 'strict' thinking (1972:75). 'Loose' thinking can be thought of as exploration upon personal experiences in the field. Bateson explains this type of thought as "hunches" or "feelings" that are followed in the hope that some connection to the broader realm of investigation will be found (1972:75). Loose and strict thinking are elements within an alternating process – "first the loose thinking and the building up of a structure on unsound foundations and then the correction to stricter thinking and the substitution of a new underpinning beneath the already constructed mass" (1972:86). This is what Bateson believes "is a fair picture of how science advances" (1972:86). In closing Bateson argues:

We ought to accept and enjoy this dual nature of scientific thought and be willing to value the way in which the two processes work together to give us advances in understanding of the world. We ought not to frown too much on either process, or at least to frown equally on either process when it is unsupplemented by the other (1972:86).

From this perspective, ethnographic film can be observed as a form of loose thinking, or what Rorty refers to as "abnormal" discourse. Abnormal discourse, according to Rorty, is what happens when someone joins in the discourse who is ignorant of the conventions of normal discourse or who chooses to ignore them (1979:320). A pragmatic approach to ethnographic film accepts abnormal discourse as a positive influence upon the discipline of anthropology. A filmmaker such as Gardner then becomes celebrated for choosing "important ideas" over "ideas important to anthropology" in the hope that "unseen aspects of reality will reveal themselves" (Carpenter 1989:12).

A pragmatic approach to ethnographic film, therefore, proceeds nonreductively in the hope of seeing things in a new way. By nonreductively, citing Rorty, I mean "willing

to pick up the jargon of the interlocutor rather than translating it into ones own” (1979:318). As a consequence, ethnographic films are discussed on the level of their own construct, using a terminology consistent with the medium. The anthropologist is then able to meet the filmmaker inside the film form as a member of the audience who is responsible for the historically situated act of comprehension that has helped define the accepted convention of the medium. In other words, the anthropologist knows how to “read” the film. Such an approach is particularly valuable when viewing a film with the explicitly constructed character of Gardner’s *Forest of Bliss*. In a film such as *Forest of Bliss* that relies on the visual as the primary mode of expression, where theories and insights are embedded within its structures (MacDougall 1998:71), anthropologists must certainly acquaint themselves with contemporary film theory. Once ethnographic films are read according to cinematic convention, the medium may be observed as a form of revolutionary science and introduce a new paradigm of explanation or perhaps it will again be discarded as irrelevant. In either case, the outcome occurs over time as the conversation between the two discourses continues.

Conclusion

What Becomes of a Pragmatic Approach?

Instead of campaigning for the creation of a mature visual anthropology, with its anthropological principles all in place, we would be wise to look at the principles that emerge when fieldworkers actually try to rethink anthropology through use of a visual medium (MacDougall 1997:293).

Ethnographic film, I argue, does not lend itself to pre-prescribed notions of ethnography. It is, as MacDougall argues, “being created now, even if we do not always recognise it” (1997:293). Anthropologists, therefore, are better to suspend their “epistemological pretensions” (Jackson 1996:5) concerning ethnography when reviewing ethnographic films. A pragmatic approach to ethnographic film is, thus, proposed as a method by which anthropologists can review films according to cinematic convention without immediate concern over anthropological value. Observing film as an alternative means of exploring social phenomena and expressing cultural knowledge, I argue, may arguably enable anthropologists to benefit in some sense from film without concern over the possibility of film diminishing the authority of written ethnography. As a consequence, the two mediums should be able to co-exist within a broader framework of knowledge and, thus, widen the scope of anthropology.

It may thus be argued that cinematic methods of interpretation and representation are applicable to contemporary anthropological research. George E. Marcus makes this point in his article, ‘The Modernist Sensibility in Recent Ethnographic Writing and the Cinematic Metaphor of Montage’ (1994). Marcus, locating cinematic convention – particularly montage – as a modernist aesthetic, explores the way in which modernist forms of representation are relevant to current anthropological research. The empirical

and classificatory realism that has defined traditional ethnography, argues Marcus, “is being modified through the influence of aspects of a classic modernist sensibility toward redefining the real...it is thus no accident that a renewed affinity between the *cross-cultural* and the *modern* should be so profoundly marked in the turbulence about anthropology’s methods and practices of representing its ‘others’” (1994:39-40) (emphasis added). In general, it is argued that those challenges to representation addressed by the “modernist sensibility” in the arts should be carefully reviewed in light of the current “so-called crisis of representation that has called theoretical and critical attention to the form and rhetoric of textmaking” (Marcus 1994:41) in the human sciences. More precisely, Marcus discusses the ways in which cinematic conventions such as narrative (story), montage, simultaneity, and episodic construct can be applied to all ethnographic practice to better deal with the requirements of contemporary ethnography.

Similarly, Anna Grimshaw, in ‘The eye in the door: anthropology, film and the exploration of interior space’ (1997), considers those features which emerge when anthropology is juxtaposed with modernist developments in the visual arts, particularly those of cinema. Like Marcus, Grimshaw does not view cinematic convention as expressions of “aesthetic preference” (Marcus 1994:39), but instead as a “creative response to the new and distinctive characteristics of the age” (1997:37) in which it has developed. Grimshaw, emphasising the impact of the “modernist moment” (1997:39) on methods of representation, compares and contrasts “the separate but mirrored” historical development of anthropology and cinema (1997:49). In brief, Grimshaw argues that cinematic innovation may be seen to correspond to the more dialectic modes of anthropological research that have sought to combine the empirical nature of the practice of ethnography with methods such as existentialism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics. The tenor of her argument is that contemporary anthropologists would be wise to learn from the methods by which cinema has dealt with various challenges to representation in the modern world.

The adoption of cinematic convention to written forms of ethnography, however, is only one possible outcome of a pragmatic approach to ethnographic film. A more radical outcome of a pragmatic approach searches for areas of anthropological research that may

be more suited to visual representation. These areas, it is argued, are located in the field of *experiential studies* in anthropology (MacDougall 1998:272). Although, not clearly defined as of yet, experiential studies might be said to encompass the dialectic of the particular and the universal (Jackson 1998:4) so well explored through Gardner's film. Filmmakers of such as Gardner, I have argued, explore the cross-cultural and "transcultural" (MacDougall 1998:271) properties of cinema, bringing their methods of research closer to "other, quite different, extra-scientific experiences, and especially those proper to art" (Gadamer1975:xvii). Filmmakers of this tendency, as I have demonstrated, apply literary, dramatic, and cinematic conventions derived from fiction film to the previously exclusive domains of written ethnography. The intent of such films has been to depict cultural particulars in ways that evoke the universals of human experience. Anthropologists should, thus, be willing to acknowledge the medium's history of – and method for – exploring such areas of anthropological interest. It might then be argued that ethnographic cinema is in a better position to explore anthropology's new focus on the shared experiences of social dramas, emotion, and narrative than written ethnography.

A pragmatic approach to ethnographic film, thus, has important consequences for ethnographic representation more generally. The contrary, often conflicting, systems of representation – inherent in the constructed nature of film and the constructed nature of ethnography – need not be opposed or hierarchical (Morin 1962, Rouch 1975, Stoller 1992, Loizos 1993, MacDougall 1998). Whether or not film should be a recognised medium of anthropology, though, is a question that will need to be answered over time. It has been the argument of this thesis, however, that adopting a pragmatic approach to ethnographic film is the first step in exploring such a possibility.

Bibliography

- Aristotle. 1907. *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Arts: With a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics*, translated by Gerald F. Else. London: Macmillan.
- _____. 1957. *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument*, translated by Gerald F. Else. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- _____. 1965. On the Art of Poetry. In *Classic Literary Criticism: Aristotle: On the Art of Poetry, Horace: On the Art of Poetry, Longinus: On the Sublime*, translated by T.S. Dorsch. Harmondsworth, Mx: Penguin Books.
- Bateson, Gregory. 1972. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Bloch, Maurice. 1988. Interview with Maurice Bloch. *Anthropology Today* 4 (1): 18-21.
- Bordwell, David. 1993. *The Cinema of Eisenstein*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Carpenter, Edmund. 1989. Assassins and Cannibals. *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter* 5 (1): 12-13.
- Cézanne, Paul. 1996. *Cézanne*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art.
- Chopra, Radikha. 1989. Robert Gardner's "Forest of Bliss" – A Review. *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter* 5 (1): 2-3.
- De Brigard, E. 1975. The History of Ethnographic Film. In *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, edited by Paul Hockings. The Hague: Mouton.
- de Heusch, Luc. 1962. *The Cinema and the Social Sciences: A Survey of Ethnographic and Sociological Films, Reports and Papers in the Social Sciences*. Paris: UNESCO Reports and Papers in the Social Sciences 16.
- Dilthey, Wilhelm. 1976. *Selected Writings*, edited and translated by H.P. Rickman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eisenstein, Sergei. 1957. The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram. In *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, translated and edited by Jay Leda. New York: Meridian Books.
- _____. 1975. *The Film Sense*, translated and edited by Jay Leda. New York: Harcourt.
- _____. 1988. *S.M. Eisenstein: Selected Works, Vol I*, edited and translated by Richard Taylor. London: BFI Publishing.

- _____. 1991. *S.M Eisenstein: Selected Works, Vol II, Towards a Theory of Montage*, edited by Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor, translated by Michael Glenny. London: BFI Publishing.
- Eliot, T. S. 1960. *Selected Essays*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.
- _____. 1975. *Ulysses, Order, and Myth*. In *The Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, edited by F. Kermode. London: Faber & Faber.
- Fenollosa, Ernest. 1920. The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry. In *Instigations of Ezra Pound*. New York: Books for Libraries Press, Inc.
- Frye, Northrop. 1973. The Encyclopaedic Form of the Epic. In *Parnassus Revisited: Modern Critical Essays on the Epic Tradition*, edited by Anthony C. Yu. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Gadamer, Hans-George. 1975. *Truth and Method*, translated by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. New York: Seabury Press.
- Gardner, Robert and Okos Akos. 1994. "Non-fiction film Authorship and Forest of Bliss: Issues of Intention, Circumstance, and Change" (typescript).
- Gardner, Robert. 1957. Anthropology and Film. *Daedalus* 86: 344-52.
- _____. 1972. On the Making of *Dead Birds*. In *The Dani of West Irian*, edited by K. G. Heider: Warner Modular Publications.
- _____. 1988. Letter to the Editor. *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter* 4 (2): 3.
- _____. 1996. The Impulse to Preserve. In *Beyond Document: Essays on Nonfiction Film*, edited by C. Warren. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press.
- Grimshaw, Anna and Keith Hart. 1995. The Rise and Fall of Scientific Ethnography. In *The Future of Anthropology*, edited by A. Ahmed and C. Shore. London: The Athlone Press.
- Grimshaw, Anna. 1997. The eye in the door: anthropology, film, and the exploration of interior space. In *Rethinking Visual Anthropology*, edited by M. Banks and H. Morphy. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Houtman, Gustaaf. 1988. Interview with Maurice Bloch. *Anthropology Today* 4 (1): 18-21.
- Jackson, Michael. 1996. Introduction: Phenomenology, Radical Empiricism, and Anthropological Critique. In *Things as They Are*, edited by Michael Jackson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- _____. 1998. *Minima Ethnographica: Intersubjectivity and the Anthropological Project*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Loizos, Peter. 1993. *Innovation in Ethnographic Film: From Innocence to Self Consciousness, 1995-1985*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Longenbach, James. 1987. *Modernist Poetics of History: Pound, Eliot, and the Sense of the Past*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- MacDougall, David. 1997. The Visual in Anthropology. In *Rethinking Visual Anthropology*, edited by M. Banks and H. Morphy. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- _____. 1998. *Transcultural Cinema*, edited by Lucien Taylor. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Marcus, George E. 1994. The Modernist Sensibility in Recent Ethnographic Writing and the Cinematic Metaphor of Montage. In *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays From V.A.R. 1990-1994*, edited by Lucien Taylor. New York: Routledge.
- Mead, Margaret. 1975. Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words. In *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, edited by Paul Hockings. The Hague: Mouton.
- Megill, Allen. 1985. *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Moore, Alexander. 1988. The Limitations of Imagist Documentary: A Review of Robert Gardner's "Forest of Bliss". *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter* 4 (2): 1-3.
- Morin, Edgar. 1962. Preface. In *The Cinema and Social Sciences: A Survey of Ethnographic and Sociological Films*, edited by L. de Heusch. Paris: UNESCO Reports and Papers in the Social Sciences 16.
- Morner, K. and Ralph Rausch. 1991. *NTC's Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Chicago: NTC Publishing Group.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1983. *Untimely Meditations*, translated by R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Newman, John Kevin. 1986. *The Classical Epic Tradition*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Nichols, Bill. 1988. The Voice of Documentary. In *New Challenges for Documentary*, edited by Alan Rosenthal. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- _____. 1991. *Representing Reality. Issues and Concepts in Documentary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Ostor, Akos and Robert Gardner. 1994a. "Non-fiction film Authorship and Forest of Bliss: Issues of Intention, Circumstance, and Change" (typescript).
- Ostor, Akos. 1989. Is That What Forest Of Bliss Is All About? A Response. *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter* 5 (1): 4-8.

- _____. 1990. Whither Ethnographic Film? *American Anthropologist* 92: 715-723.
- _____. 1994b. *Forest of Bliss*. Film and Anthropology. *East-West Film Journal* 8 (2): 70-104.
- Parry, Jonathan. 1981. Death and Cosmogony in Kashi. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 15 (1-2): 337-365.
- _____. 1988. Comment on Robert Gardner's "Forest of Bliss". *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter* 4 (2): 4-7.
- _____. 1994. *Death in Banaras*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Perez, Gilberto. 1998. *The Material Ghost: Films and Their Medium*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Price, Hereward T. Mirror Scenes in Shakespeare. In *Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies*, edited by James G. McManaway, Giles E. Dawson, and Edwin E. Willoughby. Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library.
- Rollwagen, Jack A. 1988. The Role of Anthropological Theory in "Ethnographic" Filmmaking. In *Anthropological Filmmaking*, edited by J. A. Rollwagen. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- Rorty, Richard. 1979. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Rouche, Jean. 1975. The Camera and Man. In *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, edited by P. Hockings. The Hague: Mouton.
- Ruby, Jay. 1975. Is Ethnographic Film a Filmic Ethnography? *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* 2 (2): 104-111.
- _____. 1989. The Emperor and His Clothes. *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter* 5 (1): 9-11.
- _____. 2000. *Picturing Culture: Explorations of Film & Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Saraswati, Baidyanath. 1984. *The Spectrum of the Sacred: Essays on the Religious Traditions of India*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
- Schwarz, Daniel R. 1997. *Reconfiguring Modernism*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Sitney, P. Adams. 1990. *Modernist Montage: The Obscurity of Vision In Cinema and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Stall, Frits. 1989. Anthropologists Against Death. *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter* 5 (1): 14,19.




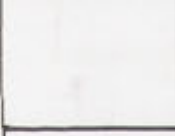
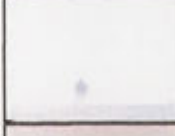
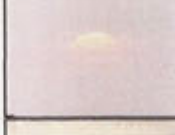



- Staub, August W. 1978. Holding Up the Mirror: The Twentieth Century Director as Self-Conscious Artist. In *Theatre Byways*, edited by C.J. Stevens and Joseph Aurbach. New Orleans: Polyanthos.
- Stoller, Paul. 1992. *The Cinematic Griot: The Ethnography of Jean Rouch*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Swami, Shree Purohit, and W.B. Yeats. 1937. *The Ten Principal Upanishads*, translation into English. London: Faber and Faber Limited.
- Turner, Victor. 1981. Social Dramas and Stories about Them. In *On Narrative*, edited by W.J.T. Mitchell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Warren, Charles, ed. 1996. *Beyond Document: Essays in Nonfiction Film*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press.
- Weinberger, Eliot. 1996. The Camera People. In *Beyond Document: Essays in Nonfiction Film*, edited by C. Warren. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press.
- Yongsoo, Kim. 1992. *Montage theory as a tool for analysis of theatre history and practice*. A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Georgia. Michigan: UMI Dissertation Services.













Filmography

- The Battleship Potemkin.* 1925. Sergei Eisenstein. Goskino, Moscow (Russia). 66 min.
- Dead Birds.* 1963. Robert Gardner. Film Study Center, Harvard University (U.S.A).
84 min.
- Deep Hearts.* 1978. Robert Gardner. Film Study Center, Harvard University (U.S.A).
58 min.
- Forest of Bliss.* 1985. Robert Gardner. Film Study Center, Harvard University
(U.S.A). 91 min.
- Grass. A Nation's Battle for Life.* 1925. Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack.
Paramount Pictures (U.S.A). 63 min.
- Land Without Bread (Las Hurdes).* 1932. Luis Brunuel. 45 min.
- Naked Spaces: Living is Round.* 1985. Trinh T. Minh-ha. 135 Min.
- Nanook of the North: A Story of Life and Love in the Actual Arctic.* 1922. Robert J.
Flaherty. Revillon Freres (France). 75 min.
- Night Mail.* 1936. Basil Wright and Harry Watt. G.P.O. Film Unit (G.B.). 24 min.
- Rivers of Sand.* 1975. Robert Gardner. Film Study Center, Harvard University
(U.S.A). 84 min.
- Song of Ceylon.* 1934. Basil Wright. Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board/GPO Film Unit
(G.B.). 40 min.
- Tempus de Baristas.* 1993. David MacDougall. Istituto Superiore Regionale
Etnografico/ Fieldwork Films/ BBC Television (Italy/Australia/G.B.). 100
min.

Appendix A

Figure A1: *Forest of Bliss* shot list.










Shot	Duration (sec)	Description	Key Objects	Image	Location	Audio
1	25.79	Fade in to running dog.	Dog		On far shore	Trotting dog / birds / bells
2	20.38	Mist and boat on Ganges.	Boat		View from far shore	Creaking oars / birds / bells
3	2.58	Bird of prey on far shore.	Bird of prey		On far shore	Creaking oars / birds / bells
4	23.50	Mist and boat on Ganges.	Boat		View from far shore	Creaking oars / birds / bells
5	14.21	Sand-workers on far shore in mist.	Sand		On far shore	Creaking oars / bells
6	4.83	Boy with kite on far shore.	Kite		On far shore	Bells
7	5.71	Rising sun from far shore.			View from far shore	Bells
8	8.04	Corpse at Manikarnika ghat on steps.	Steps / corpse / bird / dog		View from far shore	Bells / birds
9	12.58	Boat on Ganges sails left to right.	Boat		View from far shore	Bells / birds
10	6.46	Sacred fire from far shore.	Fire		View from far shore	Bells / birds

11	15.54	Dogs fight on far shore.	Dog		On far shore	Dogs fighting
12	44.00	Fade in titles and Yeats' quote.	Yeats quotation			Wood chopped / trees felled
13	13.38	Fade in Mithai Lal.			Inner city	Talking / birds / music
14	10.17	Mithai Lal starts for morning bath.			Inner city	Talking / birds / music
15	5.46	Mithai Lal continues.			Inner city	Talking / birds / music
16	5.63	Mithai Lal down steps	Steps		Inner city	Man grunting
17	5.37	Mithai Lal past wood weighing scales.	Scale		Inner city	Man grunting
18	15.17	Mithai Lal continues.	Steps		Inner city	Talking
19	12.71	Mithai Lal down steps.	Steps		Inner city	Man grunting
20	8.58	Mithai Lal past stack of wood.	Wood / steps		Inner city	Man grunting
21	11.50	Mithai Lal towards river.	Steps		Banaras shore	Man grunting
22	10.79	Mithai Lal at river's edge.	Steps		Banaras shore	Talking













23	11.50	Boat sails right to left.	Boat		Ganges	Boat through water
24	34.88	Mithai Lal at river's edge.	Steps		Banaras shore	Talking / laughing
25	2.79	Close shot offerings on Ganges.			Banaras shore	Birds
26	11.67	Pilgrims make offerings of marigold.	Marigold		Banaras shore	Birds
27	43.96	Mithai Lal swimming.			Ganges	Talking / laughing
28	3.33	Rising sun.			Ganges	Talking
29	31.21	Mithai Lal begins worship.			Ganges	Talking
30	9.33	Dog gnaws at corpse.	Dog / corpse		Ganges	Oars
31	2.79	Bow of boat glides on river.	Boat		Ganges	Oars
32	30.67	Mithai Lal offering water to sun.			Ganges	Talking / singing / pouring of water
33	12.92	Mithai Lal climbs out of water.			Ganges	Talking
34	9.25	Mithai Lal lustrates deities.			Banaras shore	Talking / pouring water

35	4.00	Ringing bell at Dom Raja's.	Bells		Banaras shore	Bells
36	18.29	Priest in Dom Raja's shrine.			Banaras shore	Bells
37	4.50	Ringing bell.	Bells		Banaras shore	Bells
38	8.50	Tiger and vultures at Dom Raja's.	Bird of prey / tiger		Banaras shore	Bells / dogs / birds
39	13.96	Dom Raja being massaged.			Banaras shore	Birds / dogs
40	10.50	Tiger's mouth and vultures.	Bird of prey / tiger		Banaras shore	Birds / dogs
41	11.96	Dom Raja closer shot.			Banaras shore	Birds / dogs
42	10.13	Man sets out birdcage.	Birds in cage		Banaras shore	Birds
43	39.79	Dom Raja sleeps – cigarette burns.			Banaras shore	Birds / dogs / talking
44	4.75	Birds in cage.	Birds in cage		Banaras shore	Birds / dogs
45	18.58	Ragul Pundit at river – prays.			Banaras shore	Bells/ chants
46	81.79	Same – different angle.	Bells		Banaras shore	Bells/ chants

47	14.79	Mithai Lal starts home.			Banaras shore	Talking
48	6.33	Mithai Lal goes up stairs.	Steps		Banaras shore	Talking
49	21.38	Mithai Lal dances.			Banaras shore	Laughing / talking
50	22.21	Mithai Lal uses mirror.			Banaras shore	Grunting
51	12.21	Mithai Lal prays to river.			Banaras shore	Grunting / talking
52	11.83	Mithai Lal ascends steps w/ wife.	Steps		Banaras shore	Grunting
53	9.54	Mithai Lal goes up stairs and through gate.	Steps		Inner city	Grunting
54	9.96	Mithai Lal and beggars.	Steps		Inner city	Wood being split / talking
55	3.00	Same – different angle	Steps		Inner city	Wood being split / talking
56	13.29	Mithai Lal up narrow stairway.	Steps		Inner city	Wood being split / birds
57	5.83	Sleeping figure stirs.	Steps		Inner city	Wood being split / birds
58	59.50	Mithai Lal adorns linga.			Inner city	Talking / birds / pouring water

59	3.88	Mithai Lal continues home past kite.	Kite		Inner city	Grunting
60	10.50	Mithai Lal continues up stairway.	Steps		Inner city	Grunting
61	26.96	Mithai Lal sprinkles shrine.			Inner city	Grunting / pouring water
62	6.54	Mithai Lal up more stairs.	Steps		Inner city	Grunting
63	5.00	Mithai Lal knocks head on stairs.	Steps		Inner city	Grunting
64	6.17	Mithai Lal approaches his house.			Inner city	Wood being split
65	8.83	Middle shot man and marigolds.	Marigolds		Outside city	Plucking of marigolds
66	2.50	Close up face man picking marigolds.	Marigolds		Outside city	Plucking of marigolds
67	10.79	Close up hands picking marigolds.	Marigolds		Outside city	Plucking of marigolds
68	11.58	Closer hands picking marigolds.	Marigolds		Outside city	Plucking of marigolds
69	15.79	Traveling shot woman carries marigolds.	Marigolds		Outside city	Birds
70	20.13	Following shot – same – into village.	Marigolds		Outside city	Birds

71	4.71	Woman puts down basket of marigolds.	Marigolds		Outside city	Birds
72	28.79	Man picks up enormous log above Ganges.	Wood		Outside city	Talking
73	11.96	Same action / different angle at Raj Ghat.	Wood		Outside city	Talking
74	11.79	Same action / different angle at Raj Ghat.	Wood		Outside city	Talking
75	5.58	Following shot/man carries wood to barge.	Wood		Outside city	Talking
76	17.00	Different angle – same – man onto boat.	Wood		Outside city	Wood dropped
77	5.25	Huge log dumped into boat.	Wood		Outside city	Wood dropped
78	1.54	Same – different angle.	Wood		Outside city	Wood dropped
79	11.21	Same – more distant.	Wood		Outside city	Wood dropped
80	5.79	Barge pushing off from shore.	Boat		Ganges	Talking
81	4.50	Poling barge upstream.	Boat		Ganges	Talking
82	4.33	Distant shot barge being rowed up river.	Boat		Ganges	Oars












83	3.75	Sky and vultures.	Bird of prey		Ganges	Oars
84	4.88	Corpse floats in river.	Corpse		Ganges	Oars
85	44.29	Mithai Lal worshipping in his house.	Fire / marigolds		Inner city	Chanting / singing / drums
86	54.42	Mithai Lal blows conch shell.	Fire / marigolds		Inner city	Chanting / belch
87	3.50	Close up deity with marigolds.	Marigolds		Inner city	Chanting
88	31.88	Mithai Lal bangs head on floor.			Inner city	Chanting / head hitting floor
89	7.54	Puppy dog at marigold stringing.	Dog / marigolds		Inner city	Birds / marigolds being strung
90	3.08	Distant shot – same.	Dog / marigolds		Inner city	Birds / marigolds being strung
91	2.83	Woman's face in profile.			Inner city	Birds / marigolds being strung
92	13.50	Puppy gnaws marigold blossom.	Dog / marigold		Inner city	Birds / marigolds being strung
93	3.21	Infant foreground / marigold stringing background.	Marigold		Inner city	Birds / marigolds being strung
94	4.42	Close shot — puppy sleeps, woman w/ marigolds.	Dog / marigold		Inner city	Birds / marigolds being strung






95	2.88	Handprints and marigolds.	Marigold		Inner city	Birds / marigolds being strung
96	5.25	Traveling shot up river / calisthenics on ghats.	Boat		Ganges	Oars
97	2.04	Traveling shot man squats on ghat.	Boat		Ganges	Oars
98	23.88	Traveling shot past Harishchandra Ghat.	Boat		Ganges	Oars
99	10.54	Sand-workers carry sand ashore.	Sand from far shore		Ganges	Talking
100	3.00	Drowned dog foreground / Sand-boats in distance.	Dog		Ganges	Talking
101	4.13	Marigold bundle on bicycle.	Marigolds		Inner city	Street
102	3.83	Marigolds on rickshaw.	Marigolds		Inner city	Street
103	4.21	Marigolds carried on head through traffic.	Marigolds		Inner city	Street
104	4.42	Marigolds on rickshaw through traffic.	Marigolds		Inner city	Street
105	3.92	Cow eats marigolds.	Marigolds		Inner city	Street
106	8.21	Procession in distance / cow runs past camera.	Corpse		Inner city	Bells / drums

107	10.96	Closer procession.	Corpse		Inner city	Bells / drums / music
108	30.29	Woman prays at Ragul Pandit's shrine.	Birds		Temple	Chanting / singing
109	10.67	Ragul worshipping with water.			Temple	Chanting / singing / pouring water
110	7.71	Different angle – same.	Marigolds		Temple	Chanting / singing / pouring water
111	4.50	Different angle – same.			Temple	Chanting / singing / pouring water
112	8.63	Different angle – same.			Temple	Chanting / birds
113	21.63	Woman gyrates on balcony.			Temple	Chanting / birds
114	8.25	Bamboo worker.	Bamboo		Inner city	Hammering bamboo / street
115	13.00	Closer – same.	Bamboo		Inner city	Hammering bamboo / street
116	6.46	Different angle – same.	Bamboo		Inner city	Hammering bamboo / street
117	5.58	Different angle – constructing ladder.	Bamboo		Inner city	Hammering bamboo / street
118	8.00	Different angle – same.	Bamboo		Inner city	Hammering bamboo / street








119	5.88	Different angle – same.	Bamboo		Inner city	Hammering bamboo / street
120	21.58	Man ties ladder.	Bamboo		Inner city	String being tied / street
121	3.12	Different angle – works on ladder.	Bamboo		Inner city	String being tied / street
122	35.71	Different angle – ties other end.	Bamboo		Inner city	String being tied / street
123	15.17	Props ladder against wall.	Bamboo		Inner city	Street
124	10.08	Ladder – maker smokes.	Bamboo		Inner city	Outward breath of smoke / street
125	3.25	Man sleeping on bamboo poles.	Bamboo		Inner city	Street
126	14.13	Outside Mukhti Bhavan dog prowls.	Dog		Mukhti Bhavan	Dog / street
127	33.04	Washing courtyard Mukhti Bhavan.			Mukhti Bhavan	Bells / singing / sweeping / pouring water
128	20.29	Start of visit to dying women.			Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / bells
129	14.79	Attendants go up the stairs.	Steps		Mukhti Bhavan	Bells
130	13.63	In dying woman's room.	Fire		Mukhti Bhavan	Bells

131	6.33	Waving flame.	Fire		Mukhti Bhavan	Bells
132	9.58	Flame and woman's face.	Fire		Mukhti Bhavan	Bells
133	4.71	Different angle – same.	Fire		Mukhti Bhavan	Bells
134	57.33	Giving Ganges water.			Mukhti Bhavan	Bells / chanting
135	39.54	With another dying woman.			Mukhti Bhavan	Bells / chanting
136	15.50	Attendants descend stairs.	Steps		Mukhti Bhavan	Bells
137	17.20	Attendants cross courtyard – seen from balcony.			Mukhti Bhavan	Bells
138	11.50	Dog gnaws carcass far shore.	Dog		On far shore	Birds / flesh and bone eaten
139	5.25	Same – city in background.	Dog		On far shore	Birds / flesh and bone eaten
140	11.13	Sand-workers load sand far shore.	Sand from far shore		On far shore	Drums / bells/ talking
141	7.46	Sand barge on Ganges left to right.	Sand / boat		Ganges	Drums / bells/ talking
142	9.58	Corpse on a boat going to ghat.	Corpse / boat		Ganges	Drums / bells/ singing












143	27.92	Blind man descends stairway.	Steps		Banaras shore	Stick hitting steps / talking
144	8.71	Reverse – same – continues down to river.	Steps		Banaras shore	Stick hitting steps / talking
145	7.58	Dead donkey dragged down steps to river.	Steps		Banaras shore	Head hitting steps / dogs / talking
146	5.25	Same – reverse angle.	Steps		Banaras shore	Dragging sound / bells
147	9.13	Same – different angle.	Steps		Banaras shore	Head hitting steps / birds / talking
148	9.21	Dead dog dragged down steps to river.	Steps		Banaras shore	Dragging sound / talking
149	13.67	Sweepers clean steps.	Steps		Banaras shore	Sweeping sound / talking
150	16.96	Cow devours marigolds.	Marigolds		Banaras shore	Birds / street
151	4.08	Shopkeeper sells kites.	Kites		Banaras shore	Bells / street
152	4.58	Gully people walking.			Banaras shore	Bells / street
153	3.08	Hungry dogs lap spilled milk.	Dog		Banaras shore	Street
154	7.75	Vultures circle Dom Raja's house.	Bird of prey		Banaras shore	Birds

155	6.96	Procession down Manikarnika gully / distant.	Corpse		Banaras shore	Chanting / street
156	14.04	Woman buys marigolds - bull passes.	Marigolds		Banaras shore	Street
157	37.38	Singing beggar / Manikarnika ghat.			Banaras shore	Singing / street
158	6.79	Dog defecates on steps.	Dog/steps		Banaras shore	Singing / street
159	3.92	Dom sweeps wood – weighing courtyard.	Scale		Ghat	Sweeping sound / wood being split
160	5.33	Doms split log.	Wood		Ghat	Wood being split
161	3.00	Child plays with wood scale.	Scale		Ghat	Wood being split
162	7.33	Doms splitting wood closer.	Wood		Ghat	Wood being split
163	3.58	Corpse on way to ghat – dog foreground.	Corpse / dog		Ghat	Chanting / wood being split
164	8.00	Corpse carried down stairway.	Corpse / steps		Ghat	Chanting / wood being split
165	7.46	Doms weigh wood.	Wood / scale		Ghat	Wood being split
166	15.75	Same – different angle.	Wood / scale		Ghat	Wood being split / talking

167	2.79	Corpse carried down gully across screen.	Corpse		Ghat	Chanting / wood being split
168	3.33	Piling wood after weighing.	Wood		Ghat	Dropped wood
169	5.67	Loading wood onto a man.	Wood		Ghat	Wood being split
170	7.29	Same – different angle.	Wood		Ghat	Wood being split
171	6.50	Wood – carrier descends stairs.	Wood / steps		Ghat	Wood being split / street
172	5.54	Empty scale swings.	Scale		Ghat	Talking
173	16.58	Wood barge rowed up river.	Wood / boat		Ganges	Oars
174	19.00	Traveling shot past washer people.	Wood / boat		Ganges	Oars / pounding wash / donkey
175	12.92	From barge – rower foreground/river background.	Wood / boat		Ganges	Oars
176	6.25	Rower – city background.	Wood / boat		Ganges	Oars
177	6.29	Dom Raja's house – vultures circle.	Bird of prey		Banaras shore	Oars
178	2.46	Tiger and vultures from balcony.	Bird of prey / tiger		Banaras shore	Birds

179	7.21	Woman sweeps courtyard.			Banaras shore	Sweeping / birds / dogs
180	50.04	Dom Raja and attendants.			Banaras shore	Talking / birds / dogs
181	22.46	Dom Raja rises and leaves house.			Banaras shore	Talking / birds / dogs
182	7.79	Dom Raja starts into city.			Banaras shore	Birds / dogs
183	5.17	Water buffalo descends stairway.	Steps / water buffalo		Banaras shore	Sound of animal on steps
184	11.75	Washing Mukhti Bhavan courtyard.			Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / drums / bells / pouring water
185	13.29	Attendants sing in ante room.			Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / drums / bells
186	11.21	Man arrives with ladder.	Bamboo		Mukhti Bhavan	Street
187	1.67	Ladder against building.	Bamboo		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / bells
188	15.29	Traveling shot down stairway.	Steps		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / bells
189	19.46	Reverse shot of corpse carried downstairs.	Steps		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / bells
190	14.50	Corpse laid on courtyard.	Corpse		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / bells












191	9.08	Ladder put down by corpse.	Bamboo / corpse		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / bells
192	13.25	Corpse lifted to ladder.	Bamboo / corpse		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / bells
193	17.17	Men tie corpse to ladder.	Bamboo / corpse		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / bells
194	14.00	Same – closer.	Bamboo / corpse		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / louder bells
195	3.67	Silk draped on corpse.	Bamboo / corpse		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / louder bells
196	23.42	Readying marigolds for corpse.	Marigolds / corpse		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / louder bells
197	7.33	Tying marigolds onto corpse.	Marigolds / corpse		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / louder bells
198	4.04	Men singing.			Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / louder bells
199	31.29	Relatives circle corpse.	Corpse		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / faster bells
200	2.88	Woman in shadows under arch.			Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / faster bells
201	16.13	Relatives lift corpse.	Corpse / bamboo		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / bells slow
202	11.87	Corpse carried out of Mukhti Bhavan.	Corpse/bamboo		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / bells slow













203	3.21	Empty courtyard with sparrows.	Birds		Mukhti Bhavan	Singing / bells slow
204	8.63	Corpse being carried out into street.	Corpse/bamboo		Mukhti Bhavan	Bells
205	22.50	Washing courtyard Mukhti Bhavan.			Mukhti Bhavan	Drums / bells / singing / pouring water
206	9.88	Oar in water, wood boat.	Boat		Ganges	Oars
207	6.38	Back of wood boat and oarsman / city background.	Boat		Ganges	Oars
208	11.17	Different angle – oarsman.	Boat		Ganges	Oars
209	10.67	Procession Manikarnika gully.	Corpse		Banaras shore	Singing / chanting / dogs
210	2.42	Child and calf watch.			Banaras shore	Singing / chanting / dogs
211	7.13	Dog scratches fleas, at Manikarnika.	Dog		Banaras shore	Street
212	10.58	Sand barge from the bow.	Boat / sand		Ganges	Talking / pole in water
213	9.83	Man poles sand barge.	Boat / sand		Ganges	Pole in water
214	13.54	Different angle – same.	Boat / sand		Ganges	Pole in water

215	6.17	Feet of man poling barge.	Boat / sand		Ganges	Pole clanking on boat
216	2.46	Marigolds on bow of barge.	Marigolds / boat		Ganges	Wind
217	10.17	Cargo of sand / man poles in background.	Boat / sand		Ganges	Pole clanking on boat
218	2.75	Sand spills into river over gunwale.	Boat / sand		Ganges	Pole clanking on boat
219	23.33	Boat carrying child's corpse / body dumped.	Boat / corpse		Ganges	Oars / talking / splash of body
220	8.75	Oar in water – wood barge.	Boat		Ganges	Oars
221	13.08	Oarsman in wood boat, head and shoulders.	Boat / wood		Ganges	Oars
222	2.08	Steaming cremation platform.	Fire		Ghat	Talking
223	6.54	Empty scale; cremation platform behind.	Scale		Ghat	Wood being split
224	14.29	Wood barge landing, Manikarnika.	Wood / boat		Ghat	Wood being split / boat moving in water
225	12.83	Oarsman stows oar.	Boat / wood		Ghat	Wood being split / banging oar
226	28.75	Oarsman stows other oar.	Boat / wood		Ghat	Birds / boat moving in water / banging oar

227	0.04	Tying up wood barge.	Boat / wood		Ghat	Birds
228	20.75	Water buffalo at river's edge / Manikamika.	Water buffalo		Ghat	Wood being split / dogs / crackling fire
229	4.58	Wood scale foreground; child w/ kite background.	Scale / kite		Ghat	Kite flapping / talking
230	3.71	Lingum in shrine with birds.	Birds		Ghat	Birds
231	6.29	Closer – same.	Birds		Ghat	Birds
232	7.21	Women pick over embers.	Fire		Ghat	Poking stick / talking
233	8.96	Man drops load of wood.	Wood		Ghat	Crackling fire / dropped wood
234	3.62	Water buffalo looks out over parapet.	Water buffalo		Ghat	Street
235	11.42	Weighing out wood.	Wood		Ghat	Birds / talking
236	10.29	Woman picks over embers.	Fire		Ghat	Poking stick / talking
237	17.54	Man drops load of wood.	Wood / kite		Ghat	Dropped wood
238	10.54	Dog sniffs embers.	Fire		Ghat	Wood being split / bells













239	12.00	Man preparing to launch repaired boat.	Boat		Banaras shore	Dragging bamboo poles
240	6.83	Carpenter displays tools.	Boat		Banaras shore	Tools placed on ground
241	2.04	Marigolds on boat.	Marigolds		Banaras shore	Tools placed on ground
242	14.63	Carpenter's assistant makes yellow handprints.	Boat / yellow handprint		Banaras shore	Hand touching boat / talking
243	10.33	Same – different angle.	Boat / yellow handprint		Banaras shore	Hand touching boat / talking
244	4.54	Same – port side.	Boat / yellow handprint		Banaras shore	Hand touching boat / talking
245	10.67	Same – different angle.	Boat / yellow handprint		Banaras shore	Hand touching boat / talking
246	7.96	Procession, Manikarnika.	Corpse		Banaras shore	Bells / chanting
247	8.67	Manikarnika – near repaired boat – swing pan to boat.	Boat		Banaras shore	Talking
248	19.25	Yellow ochre on tools.			Banaras shore	Talking
249	16.83	Yellow hands on ground.	Yellow handprint		Banaras shore	Talking
250	6.58	Marigolds on bow.	Marigolds		Banaras shore	Talking


251	1.83	Corpse lowered onto pyre.	Fire / corpse		Ghat	Dogs
252	2.92	Carpenter's profile.	Boat		Banaras shore	Talking
253	6.33	Carpenter ties strings.	Boat		Banaras shore	Talking
254	2.12	Carpenter makes offering.	Boat		Banaras shore	Talking
255	24.83	Carpenter circles boat clockwise offering water.	Boat		Banaras shore	Pouring water
256	3.75	Carpenter hammers hull walking clockwise.	Boat		Banaras shore	Hammering noise
257	10.42	Continuation – same shot.	Boat		Banaras shore	Hammering noise
258	10.00	Men swing boat around.	Boat		Banaras shore	Talking
259	6.67	Bless boat with river water.	Boat / pouring of water		Banaras shore	Talking / pouring water
260	4.63	Pouring water on face of corpse.	Corpse / marigolds		Banaras shore	Talking / pouring water
261	23.00	Launching boat.	Boat		Banaras shore	Talking / boat moving on ground
262	14.33	Procession, Manikarnika.	Corpse		Banaras shore	Bells / drums










263	6.21	Rowing re-born boat.	Boat		Ganges	Talking
264	9.58	Immersing corpse, Manikarnika.	Corpse / marigolds		Ganges	Talking
265	5.46	Reborn boat rowed into river.	Boat		Ganges	Talking
266	10.38	Carpenter with marigolds.	Marigolds		Banaras shore	Match being struck
267	5.04	Marigold wreath on bow of boat in river.	Marigolds / boat		Ganges	Oars
268	8.04	Oar in water.	Boat		Ganges	Oars
269	9.37	Corpse on roof of motorcycle taxi.	Corpse		Inner city	Street
270	4.88	Corpse carried through streets.	Corpse		Inner city	Street
271	4.54	Man on bicycle with marigolds.	Marigolds		Inner city	Street
272	3.38	Laborer pushing load.			Inner city	Street
273	6.54	Same – different angle.			Inner city	Street
274	6.96	Men carry corpse.	Corpse / marigolds		Inner city	Street

275	7.79	Same – different angle.	Corpse		Inner city	Street
276	2.96	Marigolds carried on head.	Marigolds		Inner city	Street
277	3.75	Marigold bundle through traffic.	Marigolds		Inner city	Street
278	8.96	Laborer pushes load.			Inner city	Street
279	2.29	Corpse carried.	Corpse / marigolds		Inner city	Street
280	17.71	Same/different angle into gully.	Corpse / marigolds		Inner city	Chanting / street
281	29.25	Blind man traveling shot from behind.			Inner city	Street
282	4.17	Dog cowers.	Dog		Inner city	Street
283	12.63	Marigold sellers – procession passes.	Marigolds		Inner city	Chanting / street
284	1.67	Woman watches from doorway.			Inner city	Street
285	28.21	Procession in gully: right to left – 2 corpses.	Corpse		Inner city	Chanting / street
286	3.58	Traveling shot up stairway.	Steps		Inner city	Wood being split

287	2.58	Man urinates.			Inner city	Wood being split
288	5.54	Child splits wood.	Wood		Inner city	Wood being split
289	6.29	Closer – same.	Wood		Inner city	Wood being split
290	1.92	Dead puppy.	Dog		Inner city	Street
291	14.71	Dom Raja buttons shirt.			Ghat	Bells / birds
292	3.38	Corpse goes down stairs.	Corpse		Ghat	Singing
293	13.46	Dom Raja puts on cap.			Ghat	Birds / singing
294	2.96	Spinning thread.	'Thread of life'		Inner city	Wood being split
295	5.96	Pan up man on roof spinning.	'Thread of life'		Inner city	Wood being split
296	6.29	Arranging woodpile.	Wood		Ghat	Wood being split
297	9.25	Man drops load of wood.	Wood		Ghat	Wood dropped
298	4.13	Dom Raja watches.			Ghat	Birds / talking









299	6.96	Sparrow at Dom Raja's knee.	Birds		Ghat	Birds
300	11.79	Dom Raja speaks.			Ghat	Birds / talking
301	13.63	Dom sweeps handrail.			Ghat	Sweeping sound / talking
302	11.13	Water buffalo watching.	Water buffalo		Ghat	Sobbing
303	17.96	Man weeps.			Ghat	Sobbing
304	7.38	Carrying wood from barge.	Wood		Ghat	Talking
305	15.87	Wood carrier edge of river.	Wood		Ghat	Talking / bells / pouring water
306	4.79	Man drops load of wood.	Wood		Ghat	Wood dropped
307	26.92	Wood carrier up stairs.	Wood / steps / dog		Ghat	Talking
308	26.67	Corpse past Dom Raja down stairs.	Corpse / steps		Ghat	Chanting
309	12.75	Puppy staggers upstairs.	Dog / steps		Ghat	Talking
310	54.00	Dom Raja argues with mourners.			Ghat	Arguing













311	6.37	Man paints wall / fire in distance.	Fire		Ghat	Bells
312	9.71	Puppy staggers upstairs.	Dog / steps		Ghat	Talking
313	8.46	Corpse carried past charcoal gleaners.	Corpse		Ghat	Poking stick / talking
314	19.88	Dom Raja talks and drinks.	Food		Ghat	Talking
315	5.50	Servant brings food to Dom Raja.	Food		Ghat	Talking
316	17.38	Dom Raja eats.	Food		Ghat	Talking
317	41.75	Closer – same.	Food		Ghat	Talking
318	26.00	Mithai Lal at home healing patient.	Fire		Temple	Laughing / talking
319	28.13	Mithai Lal holds flame.	Fire		Temple	Chanting
320	43.46	Man worships Mithai Lal's shrine.			Temple	Laughing / talking
321	59.83	Mithai Lal begins to cure patient.	Fire		Temple	Chanting
322	7.50	Different angle – same.	Fire		Temple	Chanting

323	1.75	Face of girl.			Temple	Chanting
324	7.00	Man drops load of wood – Manikamika.	Wood		Ghat	Wood dropped / crackling fire
325	22.42	Corpses at Manikamika waiting.	Corpse / marigolds		Ghat	Chanting
326	31.54	Immersing corpse in Ganges.	Corpse		Ganges	Talking
327	8.17	Dogs near corpses.	Dog/ corpse		Ghat	Wood being split / talking
328	10.79	Dom providing sacred fire.	Fire		Ghat	Talking / birds
329	11.21	Corpse down steps past Dom Raja.	Corpse		Ghat	Talking / birds
330	11.50	Mourner carrying fire past Dom Raja.	Fire		Ghat	Talking / birds
331	8.13	Building a pyre.	Fire		Ghat	Crackling fire
332	2.92	Closer – same.	Fire		Ghat	Crackling fire
333	5.50	A dog and young man scavenge in fire.	Fire / dog		Ghat	Crackling fire / talking
334	30.13	Chief mourner lights funeral pyre.	Fire / boat		Ghat	Crackling fire / dogs / talk








335	3.87	Dog at water's edge.	Dog		Ghat	Poured water / talk
336	7.83	Child drinks from pipe.	Fire		Ghat	Poured water / talk
337	13.46	Body burning.	Fire / corpse		Ghat	Crackling fire / poured water
338	26.29	Doms scavenge clothing.	Fire		Ghat	Birds / talking
339	26.67	Dom Raja being paid.			Ghat	Talking
340	14.96	Dom kicks refuse off porch.	Fire		Ghat	Talking / bells
341	2.83	Two bracelets near Dom Raja.			Ghat	Talking
342	9.29	Women mourn above burning ground.	Fire		Ghat	Sobbing
343	22.13	Dom Raja injected.			Ghat	Talking / birds
344	4.96	Sparrows peck at seeds / river background.	Birds		Ghat	Birds
345	5.17	Moumer heaves skull into river.			Ghat	Sobbing / talking
346	1.75	Dhoti drying over funeral embers.	Fire		Ghat	Sobbing / talking

347	3.29	Chief mourner breaks pot on pyre.			Ghat	Sobbing / talking / sound of pot
348	4.12	Doms split skull of corpse with bamboo pole.	Bamboo		Ghat	Sound of pole talk
349	2.83	Relatives dismember litter.			Ghat	Talk
350	4.17	Water buffalo and sobbing man.	Water buffalo		Ghat	Sobbing
351	1.67	Dom carrying pile of wood.	Wood / fire		Ghat	Sobbing
352	2.25	Dom drops tongs by sacred fire.	Fire		Ghat	Sobbing / sound of tongs / talking
353	2.54	Two men climb steps past corpses.	Corpse		Ghat	Talking
354	1.79	Cow chews abandoned litter.	Bamboo		Ghat	Talking
355	2.42	Mourner heaves marigolds into the Ganges.	Marigolds		Ghat	Dogs
356	1.79	A torrent of dead embers.			Ghat	Sound of embers poured
357	2.46	Wood scale rising.	Scale / wood		Ghat	Talking
358	1.38	Men place corpse on pyre.	Fire / corpse		Ghat	Talking


359	6.54	Chief mourner breaks pot.	Fire		Ghat	Sound of pot / talking
360	22.50	Traveling shot-birds on bamboo pole in river.	Boat		Ganges	Birds / bells
361	6.04	Two dogs menace each other on the far shore.	Dog		On far shore	Birds / bells
362	9.00	A sail floats past right to left from far shore.	Boat		View from far shore	Birds / bells
363	19.13	Hull of sand barge does the same.	Boat / sand		View from far shore	Birds / bells
364	10.37	Same sail passes more distant / city in background.	Boat		View from far shore	Birds / bells
365	7.75	Young boy flying a kite.	Kite		On far shore	Birds / talking
366	5.54	Young boy pulling in kite.	Kite		On far shore	Birds / talking
367	4.83	A boat sets out from shore with child's body.	Boat / corpse		Ganges	Birds
368	5.83	A young boy intently plays with kite.	Kite		On far shore	Sound of kite
369	15.58	Boat w/ child's body glides left to right on river.	Boat / corpse		Ganges	Talking / birds
370	6.67	Arm of young boy urgently pulling on kite string.	Kite		On far shore	Sound of kite / bells / birds













371	20.54	Men drop child in river / kite falls behind the boat.	Kite / corpse		Ganges	Birds / bells
372	6.58	Traveling shot head and face of sad-eyed buffalo.	Water buffalo		Banaras shore	Buffalo hooves / birds
373	4.50	Child pulling in kite.	Kite		Banaras shore	Buffalo hooves / birds / talk
374	7.08	Traveling shot buffalo's foot up stairway.	Water buffalo/ steps		Banaras shore	Buffalo hooves / birds / talk
375	5.12	Distant shot sand-workers unloading barges.	Sand from far shore		Banaras shore	Birds / talking
376	4.46	Different angle – same.	Sand from far shore		Banaras shore	Birds / talking
377	4.46	Sand-workers pass – low angle.	Sand from far shore		Banaras shore	Birds / talking
378	3.58	Sand-workers' feet up and down stairway.	Sand / steps		Banaras shore	Birds / talking
379	3.92	Distant shot ghats and river with sand boats.	Sand / boat		Banaras shore	Talking
380	4.33	Child runs with kite.	Kite		Banaras shore	Footsteps
381	6.79	Boys play stick and stone game.			Banaras shore	Laughing / talking
382	8.83	Boy running with kite.	Kite		Banaras shore	Talking





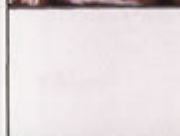
383	4.79	Men irrigating marigold field – distant shot.	Marigolds		Outside city	Poured water
384	3.83	Closer arms and bucket.	Pouring of water		Outside city	Poured water
385	3.08	Man cultivates marigolds.	Marigolds		Outside city	Poured water
386	9.79	Traffic in front of Durga temple.			Temple	Street
387	8.21	Marigold seller outside Durga temple.	Marigolds		Temple	Street / bells
388	4.38	Hands ring temple bell.	Bells		Temple	Bells
389	7.38	Women worshipping, Durga temple.	Fire		Temple	Bells
390	8.38	Same – different angle.	Fire		Temple	Bells
391	2.42	Woman ringing temple bell.	Bells		Temple	Bells
392	4.58	Worshippers, monkeys and marigolds.	Marigolds		Temple	Bells
393	6.96	Different angle – same – monkeys steal marigolds.	Marigolds		Temple	Bells
394	7.33	Worshiper and temple steps.	Steps		Temple	Bells

395	6.38	Worshiper sitting at the Durga temple.			Temple	Bells
396	3.75	Men praying, Durga temple.			Temple	Bells
397	4.29	Monkey watching, Durga temple.			Temple	Bells
398	11.88	Distant shot Durga temple and worshipers.			Temple	Bells
399	8.58	Interior Durga temple – worshipers.			Temple	Bells
400	20.25	Fakir over fire pit – Durga temple.	Fire		Temple	Bells / chanting
401	7.33	Girl drawing hopscotch game.	Hopscotch		Temple	Sound of chalk / talking
402	2.58	Same – different angle.	Hopscotch		Inner city	Sound of chalk / talking
403	5.96	Same – continuation – different angle.	Hopscotch		Inner city	Sound of chalk / talking
404	4.38	Girl tosses stone for hopscotch.	Hopscotch		Inner city	Talking
405	9.25	Slow motion hopscotch.	Hopscotch		Inner city	Talking
406	6.00	Hopscotch – different angle.	Hopscotch		Inner city	Talking

407	8.67	Oar in the water.	Boat		Ganges	Oars
408	6.37	Traveling shot past shore – kite in water.	Boat / kite		Ganges	Oars
409	7.63	Young boy reels in kite.	Kite		On far shore	Sound of kite / talking
410	5.67	Face and hands boy reeling in kite.	Kite		On far shore	Sound of kite / talking / oars
411	6.88	Sun setting behind city / sky filled with kites.	Kite		Banaras shore	Sound of kite / talking / oars
412	32.46	Sun setting behind building / monkey climbs parapet.	Kite		Banaras shore	Bells / oars / birds
413	10.88	From the river the fires at Harischandra.	Fire		Banaras shore	Bells / drums
414	16.54	Drummer and ariti, Durga temple.			Temple	Bells / drums
415	5.50	Monkey and temple bells.	Bells		Temple	Bells
416	9.33	Fire from shrine and devotees.	Fire		Temple	Bells / birds / talking
417	14.08	Same – different angle.	Fire		Temple	Bells / birds / talking
418	54.33	Mithai Lal begins temple séance.	Fire		Temple	Chanting / bells

419	28.67	Different angle / Mithai Lal.	Fire		Temple	Chanting / bells
420	7.42	Different angle / Mithai Lal and devotees.	Fire		Temple	Chanting / bells
421	32.33	Mithai Lal above fire pit.	Fire		Temple	Chanting / bells
422	9.42	Mithai Lal's face chanting over fire.	Fire		Temple	Chanting / bells
423	3.67	Devotee's face and hands.	Fire		Temple	Chanting / bells
424	45.54	Mithai Lal's face. He is chanting.	Fire		Temple	Chanting / bells
425	14.29	Fade-out / fade-in to river / boat left to right.	Boat		Temple	Oars
426	6.13	A dog on the far shore watching.	Dog		Temple	Oars
427	33.75	Ragul Pandit puts on dhoti.			Temple	Chanting / birds
428	11.21	Ragul worshipping.			Temple	Chanting / birds
429	19.87	Same – prepares chalk for marking his body.			Temple	Chanting / birds
430	34.38	Ragul worships with candelabra.	Fire / marigolds		Temple	Bells / drums

431	8.04	Same – further away.	Fire / marigolds		Temple	Bells / drums
432	3.33	Same – different angle.	Fire / marigolds		Temple	Bells / drums
433	5.46	Same – head and shoulders Ragul.	Fire		Temple	Bells / drums / chanting
434	10.87	Ragul puts down candelabra.	Fire		Temple	Bells / drums / chanting
435	6.42	Ragul breaks coconut.	Fire / marigolds		Temple	Bells / drums / sound of coconut
436	61.29	Ragul worships w/coconut, water, conch shell, and wand.	Fire / marigolds		Temple	Bells / drums / chanting / poured water / blowing of conch
437	4.21	Wood-weighting scale.	Wood / scale		Ghat	Chanting
438	9.88	Ragul chanting.	Marigolds		Temple	Chanting
439	3.79	Dogs prowl / burning ground seen from far shore.	Dog		View from far shore	Chanting
440	10.00	Traveling shot in shrine among worshipers.	Fire / marigolds		Temple	Chanting
441	6.75	Dog contemplates corpse in river.	Dog		Banaras shore	Chanting
442	10.04	Ragul worshiping.			Temple	Chanting

443	3.17	Wood barge rowed right to left – from far shore.	Wood / boat		View from far shore	Chanting
444	16.13	Ragul offers holy food.	Food		Temple	Chanting
445	3.21	Men dismantle litter at Manikarnika.	Bamboo		Ghat	Chanting
446	4.29	Ragul offers holy food.	Fire / marigold / food		Temple	Chanting
447	2.00	Dog lopes on far shore.	Dog		On far shore	Chanting
448	11.50	Ragul offers holy food.	Fire / marigolds / food		Temple	Chanting
449	4.29	Laden wood barge at Manikarnika ghat.	Wood / boat		Ghat	Chanting
450	8.71	Ragul prays.	Fire / marigolds		Temple	Birds / talking
451	63.46	Rowboat disappears in mist off screen left.	Boat		Ganges	Oars
452	30.62	Middle of fade-out / fade-in to end titles.	Boat		Ganges	Oars
453	5.96	Start black leader.				
454	0.00	Final frame.				