



Autobiography of a “Broken” Intellectual: Self-Performance, Melancholia, and Political History in Ghatak’s *Jukti Takko Aar Gappo*

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Abstract: Ritwik Ghatak’s *Jukti Takko Aar Gappo* (1974) is often read as autobiography because Ghatak plays Nilkantha Bagchi, a disillusioned intellectual resembling aspects of the filmmaker’s life. This article argues instead that the film constructs a self-critical performance, not a transparent confession. Through encounters with refugees, artists, intellectuals, and revolutionaries, Nilkantha’s authority is repeatedly questioned. Drawing on Geeta Kapur’s analysis of cinematic self-representation and a limited psychoanalytic account of melancholia, the essay examines how loss becomes self-reproach without diagnosing the character or filmmaker. Close readings of theatrical interruption, allegorical naming, competing voices, and circular imagery show how personal collapse becomes a public debate about Partition, historical memory, and intellectual responsibility. Ghatak’s self-portrait remains an unfinished political argument.

Keywords: Ritwik Ghatak; *Jukti Takko Aar Gappo*; autobiographical cinema; Partition of Bengal; melancholia; political modernism; Bengali cinema; Reason, Debate and a Story



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Introduction

Ritwik Ghatak’s final feature, *Jukti Takko Aar Gappo* (Ghatak, 1974; released in 1977; English title *Reason, Debate and a Story*), is often approached as an unusually direct encounter with its maker. Ghatak plays Nilkantha Bagchi, an estranged intellectual whose dependence on alcohol, disintegrating family life, and bitter reflections on politics invite comparison with Ghatak’s own circumstances. The resemblance is important, but it is not the film’s explanation. Nilkantha is also a fictional participant in a journey among refugees, artists, teachers, urban intellectuals, and young revolutionaries. Through him, Ghatak stages arguments about the Bengal Partition of 1947, the violence surrounding Bangladesh’s independence in 1971, the failure of cultural leadership, and the limits of radical commitment. The political setting is inseparable from the performer who brings those arguments to the screen (Ghatak, 1974; Sarkar, 2009).

A description of the work as autobiography can therefore mislead if it suggests a transparent transfer of biographical fact into film. Nilkantha resembles the filmmaker but also debates, contradicts, satirizes, and exposes him. Ghatak is present as author, actor, and a character who cannot control the meanings produced by his encounters. In a foundational reading, Kapur (2000) frames this triangular relation between author, performance, and fictional persona as a means of articulating a self within history. Her argument is the indispensable point of departure for the present essay: the film’s self-representation has already been explored as political testimony, and a new account must explain more than the general proposition that Ghatak plays himself.

A second useful distinction concerns the history at issue. Nilkantha recalls the collapse of a political dream of Bengali unity, but the film’s encounters are not reducible to the immediate aftermath of the 1947 Partition. The new refugee crisis produced by the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, the

economic uncertainties of West Bengal, and conflicts surrounding revolutionary politics establish a layered present. Treating all these injuries as one undifferentiated memory would conceal how the film stages disagreements over the response each historical moment demands. Rajadhyaksha (1982) situates Ghatak's formal ambition within an epic mode of political and cultural address; Kapur (2000) identifies a particularly acute tension between the self made visible and the historical forces against which it argues. The present reading brings those concerns together by tracing how Nilkantha's embodied self-critique is repeatedly challenged by people whose circumstances he cannot fully represent.

This article advances a narrower interpretation. It argues that *Jukti Takko Aar Gappo* constructs an autobiographical self capable of criticizing its own authority. Nilkantha's declarations of failure do not simply disclose a psychology; they allow the film to ask what an intellectual can still claim to know or accomplish when the collective promises to which he once committed himself appear broken. The film's episodic progression, interrupted performances, alternating modes of speech, and circular imagery refuse the coherence normally expected of a retrospective life narrative. They produce a self-portrait that is at once a confession, a performance of self-reproach, and a public debate. The central figure becomes less a key to the filmmaker's personality than the unstable point at which biography and historical conflict meet.

The discussion moves from the limits of cinematic autobiography to the film's historical itinerary, before considering melancholia, cultural allegory, and the politics of theatrical form. This order brings the psychoanalytic vocabulary under the control of the film analysis rather than making scenes illustrate an inventory of psychological categories. Its claims arise from close reading of the complete feature. Where dialogue varies by subtitle edition, the analysis paraphrases rather than presenting unverifiable wording as an exact quotation. No inference about the filmmaker's clinical condition is proposed.

Autobiography as a Performance of Self-Criticism

The productive question is not whether Nilkantha “is” Ghatak but how the film makes identification possible and then unsettles it. Ghatak’s performance supplies the most conspicuous evidence of personal involvement. The character’s physical exhaustion, disheveled appearance, drinking, and confrontational speech bring the director’s recognizable body into a fictional structure. The spectator can scarcely forget that the maker of the film is also its central figure. Yet acting is not a simple confession. The presence of the camera, the intervention of other performers, the selection of conversations, and the film’s eventual treatment of Nilkantha’s death separate the person who made the film from the self placed before us. His authority as filmmaker survives the fictional character’s repeated demonstration of failure.

The contrast between auteurial control and character vulnerability is not a semantic nicety. In a conventional memoir, the narrating subject may organize the past from an apparent vantage point of retrospective understanding. Here the protagonist can neither possess the whole story nor compel the other characters to affirm his judgments. Arguments interrupt the journey, and Nilkantha’s visible exhaustion compromises the position of mastery normally granted to an intellectual protagonist. The camera does not grant him an exemption from the conflict around him simply because the director plays the role. Self-representation becomes an experiment in exposure. What is at stake is therefore the authority of the left intellectual as much as the damage experienced by one man. The film can be called autobiographical precisely because it questions the terms on which its author might claim political legitimacy.

Renov (2004) describes moving-image autobiography as a practice that can construct and interrogate subjectivity rather than merely record an already coherent life. Although his study addresses documentary and video practices, the distinction between an expressive self and a self produced by cinematic form is useful here. Ghatak’s fictionalized self-portrait is even more openly mediated than a

first-person documentary because the role of Nilkantha emerges through staging, performance, dramatic encounter, and an ending written by its actor-director. Ghatak controls the film yet subjects his surrogate to interruption and contradiction. This tension, rather than an exact one-to-one correspondence between life and character, constitutes the work's autobiographical force.

The opening domestic crisis establishes this difficulty. Durga leaves Nilkantha, accompanied by their child, because the conditions of family life have become untenable. His drinking and financial insecurity are foregrounded; so is his failure to act decisively when the relationship is ruptured. The film does not ask audiences simply to condemn Durga or excuse Nilkantha. Her departure gives material form to the damage done by his withdrawal, while his inability to prevent it makes the home a site from which the intellectual has become displaced. What follows is therefore not a heroic journey toward renewed mastery. It is an improvised movement through other people's losses, needs, and arguments, undertaken by someone who cannot repair his own household.

Durga's departure also prevents the autobiographical argument from becoming a story only about the wounded male artist. Her response to domestic precarity marks a claim to practical agency that Nilkantha's philosophical language cannot substitute for. It would be too easy to transform her into a symbolic goddess or maternal resource whose function is to reveal his suffering. The cinematic situation asks a more uncomfortable question: what happens to those who must live with the consequences of an intellectual's political and emotional retreat? The film permits sympathy for his disillusionment while showing why sympathy is not absolution. That dual position makes the family breakdown a formal counterweight to the later public debates, where Nilkantha can appear more persuasive than he is in domestic life.

A recurring contrast structures the film: Nilkantha has language, learning, and memories of political struggle, but little capacity to convert them into durable action. He can dispute the comfortable assumptions of others, offer refuge or solidarity, and still fail to provide economic or emotional

stability. This contradiction is central to the figure of the broken intellectual. The break is not presented as an absolute absence of ethical judgment; it is a fracture between critical speech and effective praxis. Ghatak's own work on cinema stresses the possibility of politically committed art (Ghatak, 1987). The final film tests that commitment by exposing its authorial surrogate to the accusation that articulate protest has not changed the world it condemns.

Partition, Refugeehood, and an Unfinished Political Journey

Nilkantha's travels cannot be separated from the overlapping historical crises of Bengal. The film moves across the long afterlife of the 1947 Partition and the more immediate violence surrounding the Bangladesh Liberation War. Its displaced travelers do not represent a single, homogeneous refugee experience. Bongobala's account of flight from East Pakistan and Nachiketa's search for employment and shelter place different kinds of insecurity in relation. Each is encountered through conversation and companionship rather than through a comprehensive historical reconstruction. The effect is to make displacement a lived condition that continues to organize the present, not a completed event left behind in 1947 (Sarkar, 2009).

These distinctions also guard against making Bongobala merely the allegorical name for a violated motherland. Her reported loss and forced movement demand attention to gendered exposure during conflict, while the film's use of her as a figure for Bengal risks subsuming her particular experience under an intellectual's more encompassing historical lament. This tension is a strength of the film rather than a problem to be hidden. Nilkantha's sympathy does not automatically give him authority to speak for her, and the viewer must hold the claim of regional belonging together with the unequal situations from which the travelers speak. In this respect the episodic road structure offers a significant alternative to a single male consciousness narrating all of Partition history.

The journey gathers people who have been separated from institutions that might have recognized their labor or value. The educated but unemployed Nachiketa embodies one failure of developmental

promise; the Sanskrit teacher Jagannath and the Chhau practitioner Panchanan Ustad articulate the insecurity of inherited and vernacular cultural forms. Nilkantha's precarious status as host and traveler parallels theirs without erasing the differences between refugeehood, caste, unemployment, and artistic marginalization. It is precisely the friction among their positions that prevents the traveling group from becoming an uncomplicated allegory of national unity.

The film's arguments with urban cultural elites sharpen this critique. In the encounter with Satyajit Basu and his associates, leisure, liquor, and confident commentary are set against a city marked by protest and dislocation. Nilkantha's contempt for accommodation may seem justified, but his own consumption of alcohol and his dependence on verbal denunciation complicate any easy contrast between principled outsider and compromised bourgeois. A scene that might have endorsed Nilkantha as the film's moral spokesperson instead exposes the limits of that posture. Political disillusionment is not a credential granting a speaker immunity from criticism.

The late conversations with young Naxalite militants are equally resistant to a single verdict. Nilkantha acknowledges the urgency of social transformation while questioning political certainty and the violence of revolutionary tactics. His arguments express both a generational bond and a generational conflict. The youths' militancy unsettles the older intellectual's despair; his insistence on thought and historical knowledge unsettles their confidence that action alone is sufficient. Rather than treating the discussion as evidence that Ghatak simply rejected an entire movement, the scene can be understood as a dramatization of a difficult relationship between political judgment and commitment. The film does not resolve the dispute into a usable program.

Kapur (2000) has already placed the film's constructed self in a history of political praxis. This reading extends that insight by identifying a pattern of unstable address: Nilkantha moves between giving testimony, examining others, being called to account, and failing to answer. His intellectual authority changes from encounter to encounter. The episodic structure is thus meaningful, not an

accumulation of ideas that could be rearranged at will. Every new interlocutor tests the adequacy of a different explanation of the political present, while Nilkantha's self-criticism is itself subjected to repeated examination.

The encounters with affluent literary figures and radical students make this history politically contentious. The former may be able to speak eloquently about the crisis while remaining insulated from its material effects. The latter are committed to action yet bring their own assumptions about means, ends, and the interpretation of social struggle. Nilkantha's criticisms do not resolve the dispute in either direction. He rejects withdrawal into comfort while questioning political certainty that leaves little room for reflection. The film thereby makes conversation a political action without pretending that conversation alone amounts to liberation. Its title's emphasis on reasoning, argument, and story is pertinent: a story places living situations beside principles and forces each position to encounter what it cannot comfortably explain.

Melancholia, Ambivalence, and the Limits of Psychoanalytic Explanation

Psychoanalytic language can clarify aspects of Nilkantha's repetition and self-reproach, provided it remains a mode of interpretation rather than a diagnosis. Psychoanalytic criticism often proposes explanations through denial, the id, ego, superego, developmental stages, archetypes, and a series of other categories. Applied individually, such labels risk converting the character into a psychological specimen and reducing scenes to examples of textbook concepts. The more productive question concerns the contradiction the film repeatedly stages: why does a man who identifies what is broken in society return so compulsively to his own inability to intervene?

Freud's account of mourning and melancholia supplies a limited but suggestive vocabulary for this pattern. Melancholia, in that account, involves a painfully diminished sense of self in which the loss of an object becomes entangled with reproach directed at the ego (Freud, 1917/1957). The concept should not be imposed as a clinical diagnosis of either Ghatak or Nilkantha. It can, however, help

articulate the film's peculiar coupling of collective loss and recurrent self-accusation. Nilkantha laments a damaged Bengal and a failed political project while also returning to his inadequacy as husband, parent, intellectual, and political actor. His grief is public in its references but self-directed in its idiom.

Freud's formulation is especially helpful when employed at the level of narrative relations rather than mental diagnosis. An object of loss need not be reduced to a loved individual; for this interpretive purpose, it can denote an imagined political future to which the subject has attached his sense of self. Nilkantha's repeated acknowledgment of failure then becomes more than a biographical confession. It is the speech of someone who measures the present against a promise he can no longer realize. Yet the analogy must remain qualified. The film supplies neither clinical evidence nor unmediated access to unconscious processes, and the external histories it narrates—migration, violence, unemployment, and class inequality—cannot be reduced to the character's affective economy. Melancholia names one articulation of loss among others, not a master explanation of the story.

Alcohol appears within this structure as both conduct and image. The bottle is a recurring prop, a marker of damaged intimacy, and a means by which the character publicly stages his compromised authority. It would be speculative to assert that a single unconscious defense mechanism explains every instance of drinking, or that the film gives evidence about Ghatak's intentions or mental health. More defensibly, the repeated visibility of alcohol makes the body of the speaking intellectual inseparable from an acknowledged failure of self-government. His denunciations cannot be heard as pure reason from a position outside social damage. They are delivered by a figure who bears that damage in his posture, movement, and relations with others.

The relation between self-condemnation and ethical judgment is therefore ambivalent. Nilkantha can admit to dishonest conduct undertaken for alcohol while distinguishing it from acts of opportunism performed for prestige or political power. The distinction does not absolve him. Instead, it dramatizes

the effort to preserve an ethical boundary after the loss of other forms of agency. His capacity for critique persists alongside conduct the film does not require us to admire. Psychoanalytic interpretation becomes useful only when it keeps such contradictions open, rather than using them to certify that a particular faculty of the psyche has prevailed over another.

One can also speak of repetition without treating every recurrence as a symptom to be classified. The film revisits the failed promise of independence, the language of collective belonging, and the intellectual's inability to reconcile thought with action. These returns help establish a historical temporality in which the past is not sealed off from current political life. Partition reappears through people who still search for places to live and through debates that have lost none of their urgency. Such an interpretation joins psychoanalytic questions about loss to the film's formal and historical construction, rather than locating the explanation in Nilkantha's interiority alone.

Myth, Naming, and the Politics of Cultural Authority

The allegorical names and mythological associations within *Jukti Takko Aar Gappo* are more than decorative clues awaiting interpretation. Nilkantha invokes the name of Shiva as bearer of poison, an especially suggestive association for a character who seems to carry accumulated social bitterness. Yet to describe him as a heroic embodiment of the deity would flatten the film's irony. The very intellectual who articulates historical injury is unable to protect his family or lead an effective political movement. The mythic association gives his condition tragic magnitude while the fiction simultaneously tests the grandeur of such a pose. Poison is not purified into moral superiority merely because the suffering subject names it.

Durga's name evokes a figure of feminine strength, but her decisive action in the narrative is ordinary and material: she leaves an unsustainable marriage and seeks to safeguard her child's future. It is important not to allow the name of a goddess to obscure the practical agency of a woman responding to poverty and marital exhaustion. Similarly, Bongobala's association with a wounded

Bengal can be a compelling allegorical interpretation without diminishing her position as a displaced woman with a particular history of violence. The person and the national figure coexist uneasily, and the film's politics depend partly on that unease.

Nachiketa's name invites comparison with the questioning figure of the Katha Upanishad, while Jagannath evokes divine universality at a moment when the bearer of that name has little worldly security. Panchanan Ustad, who works with Chhau masks, complicates any division between high textual culture and supposedly lesser folk traditions. These references become most illuminating when read through the encounters they structure. The argument between the Sanskrit scholar and the mask maker is not a contest in which one tradition can be declared definitively authentic. It exposes unequal cultural prestige and the fragile livelihoods of people whose knowledge has become difficult to sustain.

A formally alert reading asks how such figures occupy the same dramatic itinerary rather than extracting the supposed secret of each name in isolation. Jagannath's Sanskrit learning and Panchanan's work with masks can be juxtaposed as differently valued forms of cultural expertise. Their exchange also has a theatrical quality: intellectual positions become visible through bodily presentation, argument, and changes of tone. The question is not whether either man correctly symbolizes the nation, but why the film makes a supposedly disintegrating cultural world speak in voices that are simultaneously unequal and indispensable. This tension situates traditional knowledge within the political present rather than outside history. It also resists a simplistic opposition between an educated intellectual and an authentic folk culture.

This distinction also matters within debates about Ghatak's cultural politics. Banerjee (2023) offers an important critique of the ways Ghatak's use of Bengali and Brahmanical cultural repertoires can construct an apparently unified community while obscuring differences of caste, class, gender, and religion. That caution is valuable here. Nilkantha's rhetoric of a wounded collective cannot stand in for the diverse positions of the companions he encounters. The film's cultural allegories are strongest

when they are read as contested political forms rather than as unproblematic symbols of a single national or regional essence.

Ghatak's use of performance creates a related ambiguity. The Chhau mask is a crafted surface through which social meanings can be enacted and contested; the filmmaker's own performance as Nilkantha is also a mask, though one grounded in recognizable biography. The comparison should not equate a specific dance tradition with psychoanalytic disguise. Rather, it draws attention to a formal recurrence: the film makes identity visible through performance and asks its audience to judge what remains unresolved between a role, a body, and the history invoked by that role.

Film Form: Theatricality, Interruption, and the Circular Image

The film's formal construction is essential to its account of intellectual failure. Its opening juxtaposes a vulnerable human figure with a stylized performance involving masked or spectral dancers. The sequence offers no reassuringly continuous entrance into a realist social world. Instead, performance and uncertainty coexist from the outset: what we are shown is already mediated by an expressive, theatrical arrangement. The return of related imagery near the end gives the work a circular structure that resists treating Nilkantha's journey as a straightforward movement toward resolution. The political discussion has changed the terms of the encounter, but the larger uncertainty has not disappeared.

Ghatak's background in theater, especially his association with progressive performance movements, informs this instability of dramatic address. The film repeatedly alternates between scenes of personal conflict and encounters that seem organized around arguments about culture, politics, and the future. Theatricality is not simply a matter of actors speaking emphatically or the camera remaining still. It arises when characters are positioned as participants in an argument that temporarily suspends conventional psychological explanation. Their statements are simultaneously expressions of personal

interest and interventions in a debate whose stakes extend beyond a single episode. The audience must examine what is being argued rather than merely await the next event in a continuous plot.

The dialogues between Nilkantha and the Sanskrit teacher, the Chhau performer, or the Naxalite youths offer distinct ways of staging this problem. Speech becomes charged with competing kinds of knowledge, from classical learning and traditional performance to revolutionary conviction and the intellectual's self-conscious skepticism. Neither a sustained close-up nor a cut between speakers has one automatic political meaning. What matters is the change in the spectator's relation to the exchange: conversation shifts from apparently casual meeting to ideological confrontation, from comedy or eccentricity to anxiety or danger. Those changes in tone challenge the viewer's expectation of a stable narrative register.

Sound and speech are essential to that friction even though the argument here does not depend on claims about the exact duration of shots or the precise location of a cut. Distinct voices and registers carry different kinds of authority. Sanskrit recitation, artistic testimony, political rhetoric, and Nilkantha's abrasive self-description do not belong to a smooth conversational continuum. Their collision prompts the viewer to compare how knowledge is performed and heard. The Chhau practitioner introduces a further mode of expression that cannot be translated fully into the language of academic debate. The effect is not the triumph of one voice, but an insistence that any defensible political account must encounter forms of experience outside its own vocabulary.

The film also shows a preference for conspicuous interruptions, static compositions, and abrupt transitions at several points. These are productive observations but should not become claims about particular editing techniques unless a shot-by-shot comparison establishes them. The formal argument can rest more securely on the film's evident alternation of theatrical performance, roadside encounter, domestic rupture, and political debate. Such an episodic organization places heterogeneous social

worlds beside one another without pretending that a single psychological portrait can contain them all. If Nilkantha is a self-portrait, it is a self-portrait constantly displaced by other people's voices.

The journey's episodic form also complicates ordinary expectations of narrative causality. Each encounter can initially appear detachable, as though the travelers have stumbled into a separate social sketch. Yet their accumulation becomes an argument about the forms of community available after historical fracture. The film's shifts in register—satirical conversation, mythic allusion, a performed cultural tradition, family estrangement, and political confrontation—make a single stable tone impossible. These shifts matter more than the simple observation that Ghatak was trained in theater. Filmic theatricality here involves a change of address to the viewer: characters are both individuals in a journey and bearers of public positions that must be assessed. The friction between these roles is a formal account of an intellectual field unable to reach consensus.

The ending intensifies this effect. When the political encounter in the forest is overtaken by police violence, Nilkantha's fate cannot be understood solely as his private wish for punishment or as a prediction of Ghatak's death. The scene makes the intellectual's body vulnerable to the very historical antagonisms he has been debating. A fatal ending is not evidence that the filmmaker planned his own demise; such an inference would confuse the fictional organization of events with inaccessible intention. More compelling is the narrative transformation of argument into bodily exposure. The intellectual is no longer able to stand aside and comment. His death ends his speech while leaving the political dispute unresolved.

The political violence of the final movement sharpens the distinction between filmic argument and biography. Because Ghatak made and performed the film before his death, it is tempting to retrospectively treat Nilkantha's fate as a direct announcement of the director's end. The temptation is narratively powerful but methodologically weak. It converts a deliberately constructed tragic fiction into evidence of private foreknowledge. More fruitful is to examine what the film does by giving the

failed intellectual an ending inside a confrontation among institutions, militants, and police power. He does not achieve reconciliation with the world he has criticized. Nor is the last word safely his. The narrative asks whether political witness can carry force when the witness's own failures remain exposed and the structures of violence continue beyond his death.

In this way the final film stands at a distance from conventional cinematic autobiography. Rather than offering a settled retrospective account of the maker's achievements, it builds a deliberately unstable public persona, one whose claims are interrupted by the film's other speakers and ultimately by history. Kapur's (2000) account of the author-actor-character relation helps explain this formal design; the present analysis stresses how the design makes self-criticism a political event. The autobiography is not completed by recognition. It remains open as a demand placed on the audience.

Conclusion: The Intellectual as an Unfinished Argument

Jukti Takko Aar Gappo is not best understood as a transparent record of a filmmaker's final thoughts. Its fictional journey, self-performance, historical encounters, and theatrical disturbances make autobiography a process rather than a completed account of the self. Ghatak's resemblance to Nilkantha matters because the resemblance is exposed to critique. The filmmaker performs a wounded intellectual but does not confer absolute authority on him. Nilkantha's failures of care, economic security, and political action persist beside his capacity to identify cultural hypocrisy and historical violence.

A limited psychoanalytic account of melancholia illuminates the relation between collective loss and self-reproach, but it does not explain away the material history of Bengal or authorize speculation about a real person's pathology. The film's cultural allusions likewise acquire their force through debate. They allow different forms of knowledge and belonging to confront one another rather than substantiating an undifferentiated myth of a unified nation. Historical critique proceeds through the

work's contradictions: speech and action, solidarity and failure, personal damage and political responsibility.

The method proposed here also sets limits on what can be inferred from the filmmaker's life. Correspondences involving alcoholism, estrangement, or political disappointment provide relevant context when independently supported, but they should not dictate the interpretation of particular cinematic gestures. Conversely, mythology should not become an inventory of coded identities, and psychoanalysis should not become the retrospective diagnosis of an artist. The film's accomplishment lies in making those interpretive temptations themselves unstable. It constructs an authorial presence only to divide that presence among competing acts of testimony, performance, moral reckoning, and public argument. This unsettled relation is why its autobiography is political rather than solely personal.

The most distinctive achievement of the film is formal. It brings the director's recognizable body onto the screen, interrupts linear confession with political interlocutors, and closes without reconciling the conflicts it has exposed. This yields a self-portrait in which the intellectual's broken condition is neither romanticized as proof of superior insight nor dismissed as simple incapacity. Instead, Ghatak asks what role critical thought can play when the world has changed faster than the categories through which it was previously understood. The film does not offer a reassuring answer. Its unfinished argument is the source of its continuing force within autobiographical cinema, Indian political modernism, and the cinema of Partition memory.

Editor's note: For related scholarship on Ghatak's cinematic self-performance, Partition, melodrama, and cultural politics, see Kapur (2000), Rajadhyaksha (1982), Sarkar (2009), Renov (2004), Vasudevan (2011), and Banerjee (2023). Dass (2017) examines the theatricality of Ghatak's film form, which bears directly on the discussion of theatrical interruption here, and Ghoshal (2018) offers a trauma-centered reading of the same film. Two further essays in this issue of CINEJ read Ghatak's Partition films through related frameworks: Francis (2026) on landscape, memory, and affect in Subarnarekha, and Erdem (2026) on cognitive estrangement in the Partition Trilogy.

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