

Panel 25
Intermediality, Aesthetics and Transformation

**Composing the Visible:
Visual Form and Intermedial Aesthetics in Mohan Rakesh's 'Uski Roti'**

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This paper explores the intermedial potential in Mohan Rakesh's short story 'Uski Roti' (1957), arguing that its narrative and stylistic components resonate with and anticipate cinematic and visual cultures. 'Uski Roti' is firmly situated within the Nayi Kahani movement in Hindi literature due to its psychological realism and social minimalism. The paper in highlighting the story's emphasis on visual rhythm—stillness, repetition, spatial framing—re-reads the text via an intermedial approach. Defined by Lars Elleström as the interaction and mutual transformation between different media modalities, this approach seeks to reveal a distinctly visualised mode of storytelling that blurs the boundary between prose and image. Employing intermedial theory (Elleström, Rajewsky), image-text studies (W. J. T. Mitchell), and Visual Narratology (Bal, Ryan), the paper highlights that Rakesh's language enacts something of a proto-cinematic inscription under the domain of literature. The narrative of the story, through gaze, movement and sound, encodes the psychological interiority of characters onto material surfaces. 'Uski Roti' avoids traditional storytelling tools like explanation and internal voices and instead builds its narrative through visual and temporal arrangements — making the reader see and feel more than understand via narration. This shifts the story toward a visual aesthetic where the reader's attention is drawn to what can be seen and sensed, creating a slow, stretched experience of time that resembles how time unfolds in visual art or film. This perceptually minimalist poetics puts the story in line with what Laura U. Marks describes as "intercultural cinema," wherein affect, temporality, and embodiment are frequently registered in silence.

Biography

Parul is pursuing her Doctorate in Literature at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa campus, as an Institute Fellow. Her research focuses on the urban literary culture of 1950-60's India vis-a-vis the Nayi Kahani Movement of Hindi Short Story Fiction. An alumna of Miranda House, University of Delhi, she has formerly worked as an Assistant Professor (Ad-hoc) at University of Delhi.