

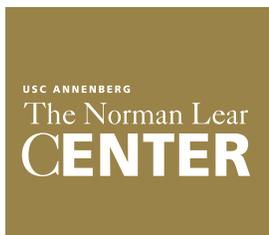
THE THIRD EYE

HH&S Launches First Global Center With Asian Center for Entertainment Education



HOLLYWOOD, HEALTH & SOCIETY
USC ANNENBERG NORMAN LEAR CENTER

Transcript of a panel held March 12, 2013 at FICCI/Frames Conference in Mumbai, India



The Norman Lear Center

The Norman Lear Center is a nonpartisan research and public policy center that studies the social, political, economic and cultural impact of entertainment on the world. The Lear Center translates its findings into action through testimony, journalism, strategic research and innovative public outreach campaigns. On campus, from its base in the USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism, the Lear Center builds bridges between schools and disciplines whose faculty study aspects of entertainment, media and culture. Beyond campus, it bridges the gap between the entertainment industry and academia, and between them and the public. Through scholarship and research; through its conferences, public events and publications; and in its attempts to illuminate and repair the world, the Lear Center works to be at the forefront of discussion and practice in the field.

For more information, visit www.learcenter.org



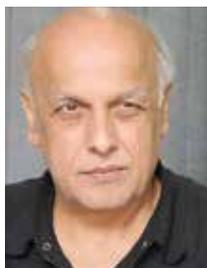
Hollywood, Health & Society

Hollywood, Health & Society (HH&S), a program of the Norman Lear Center, provides entertainment industry professionals with accurate and timely information for storylines on health and climate change. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The California Endowment, the Grantham Foundation, ClimateWorks, Skoll Global Threats Fund, among others, HH&S recognizes the profound impact that entertainment media have on individual knowledge and behavior. HH&S supplies writers and producers with accurate health information through individual consultations, tip sheets, group briefings, a technical assistance hotline, panel discussions at the Writers Guild of America, West, a quarterly newsletter and web links to health information and public service announcements. The program also conducts extensive evaluations on the content and impact of TV health storylines.

For more information, visit www.usc.edu/hhs



Participants



MAHESH BHATT is a prominent Indian film director, producer and screenwriter. Bhatt's early directional career consisted of acclaimed art parallel films, such as "Arth," "Saaransh," "Janam" and "Naam." He was later the writer of numerous commercial films in a range of film genres, including dramas, comedies and thrillers. At 21 Bhatt made his debut as a director, with the film "Sakat" (1970), which was then followed by "Manzilein Aur Bhi Hain" in 1974. His 1979 film, "Lahu Ke Do Rang," received two Filmfare Awards in 1980. His first major hit came with "Arth" (1982), when he turned to his personal life for inspiration. Later, he made many more films taking insights from his personal life, where he highlighted personal narratives, ranging from illegitimate birth to extramarital affair and created critically acclaimed films such as "Janam" (1985) and "Naam" (1986). A stand-out film from his earlier period is "Saaransh" (1984), an exploration of an old couple's anxieties in a universe governed by arbitrary violence, and dramatic films like "Kaash" (1987), which dealt with real-life family situations with a tragic end. In 1995 he moved to television, then a newly opening up medium in India. He made two series in 1995, "A Mouthful of Sky" and the popular serial "Swabhimaan." He is married to Soni Razdan, an Indian film actress and director.



GOUTAM GHOSE is one of the most acclaimed film directors of modern India. He started making documentaries in 1973, and took active part in a group theater movement in Calcutta. A dedicated photojournalist, he made his first documentary, "New Earth," in 1973. That was followed by "Hungry Autumn," which won him the main award at the Oberhausen Film Festival. Has since made 10 feature films including "Maa Bhoomi," "Dakhal," "Antarjali Yatra," "Padma Nadir Majhi" and "Abar Aranye." Has made a number of prominent documentaries including "Meeting a Milestone" and "Beyond the Himalayas." He has won 16 National Awards and many International and film festival awards, including Cannes.



Participants



KIRAN JONEJA is a well-known actress and TV personality and talk show host who began her career in the film “Shahleen.” Her TV work includes the serials “Buniyaad” and “Mahabharat.” She was crowned Miss India while still in college and later worked as a model. She formed her own filmmaking company, Kiran Chitra Enterprises, in 1992, and recently wrote, produced and directed the telefilm “Antarwand.” She is married to the film director Ramesh Sippy.



COLIN MACLAY is the managing director of the Berkman Center, where he is privileged to work in diverse capacities with its faculty, staff, fellows and extended community to realize its ambitious goals. His broad aim is to effectively and appropriately integrate information and communication technologies (ICTs) with social and economic development, focusing on the changes Internet technologies foster in society, policy and institutions. Both as co-founder of the Information Technologies Group at Harvard’s Center for International Development and at Berkman, Maclay’s research has paired hands-on multi stakeholder collaborations with the generation of data that reveal trends, challenges and opportunities for the integration of ICTs in developing world communities.



JONATHAN TAPLIN is an American writer, film producer and scholar. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio and has lived in Los Angeles, California since 1973. Taplin graduated from Princeton University in 1969 and is currently the director of the Annenberg Innovation Lab at the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. Taplin’s early production work included producing concerts for Bob Dylan and The Band. In 1973 he produced Martin Scorsese’s first major feature film, “Mean Streets.” Between 1974 and 1996, Taplin produced 26 hours of television documentaries and 12 feature films, including “The Last Waltz,” “Under Fire” and “To Die For.” His films have been nominated for Academy Awards and Golden Globe Awards and chosen for the Cannes Film Festival six times. Taplin is the author of “Outlaw Blues: Adventures in the Counter-Culture Wars” (Annenberg Press).



Participants



SANDRA DE CASTRO BUFFINGTON is director of Hollywood, Health & Society, a program of the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center that leverages the power of the entertainment industry to improve the health and well-being of people worldwide. Sandra provides resources to leading scriptwriters and producers with the goal of improving the accuracy of health-related storylines on top television programs and films, resulting in more than 565 aired storylines over the span of three years. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The California Endowment, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Skoll Foundation, among others, the program recognizes the profound impact that entertainment media have on individual knowledge and behavior. For her work, Sandra was named one of the “100 Most Influential Hispanics” in America by Poder Magazine, and has received numerous other honors, including the USAID MAQ Outstanding Achievement Award. Her vasectomy campaign in Brazil won seven international advertising awards, including a Bronze Lion at Cannes and a Gold Medal at the London International Advertising Awards. She led Hollywood writers and producers on trips to South Africa and India in 2011, and helped launch the Storybus Tour series and Climate Change Initiative. In 2013, Sandra designed and launched a global network of centers for entertainment education in India and Nigeria, with the hub in L.A., to mainstream socially provocative cinema and television. She is a former associate faculty member at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, and currently serves on the boards of the Harvard Medical School Personal Genetics Education Project, Foundation for Conscious Evolution, Women@The Frontier, and Primary Purpose Productions.



Sandra De Castro Buffington: What a welcome! Thank you so much. I would like to thank the organizers of FICCI Frames 2013 for the opportunity to moderate this wonderful panel. We're going to be talking about unleashing the power of social and economic change through cinema and television; and I look forward to an exciting discussion with our esteemed panellists. First I'd like to start by presenting one model that Hollywood used to unleash social and economic change in partnership with a program that I direct: Hollywood Health and Society. Is it up on the screen? It is. So Hollywood Health and Society has been working for the last eleven years with leading TV and films in Hollywood. We are a free resource in the industry and work to inspire and inform health storylines of social value. You can never tell a writer what story to tell. All you do is bring them real stories of real people, case studies and information. Why? Writers and producers don't see themselves having the jobs of health educators. They don't see that as their jobs. What they're looking for is to tell the most compelling stories. And so Hollywood, Health & Society helps them make their stories more compelling by making them realistic, which means that the health content is factual. I love this quote by the famous jazz musician Charlie Mingus: "Anyone can make the simple complicated. The creativity is making the complicated simple." So we take the complex world of health, and we make it simple and accessible to the community of Hollywood. Over the last three years, we have assisted with more than five hundred and sixty five health storylines on top shows. Ninety-one TV shows over across thirty five different networks: "Desperate Housewives," "Grey's

Anatomy," "Private Practice," "Homeland"—name your favorite show and chances are they've worked with us. I'd like to show a sample. This is a three-minute clip on a storyline on addiction and it's on the "Private Practice." They called us to say one of our doctors is addicted to pills and we want to portray this accurately, and we want people to do an intervention in hopes of her getting clean and sober. So we connected them with experts, this was the result:

(Clip from "Private practice")

Sandra De Castro Buffington: It chokes me up every single time. So when we have a health storyline air, we always ask the network if they will let us air a public service announcement featuring the lead actor

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referring viewers to health. Here's the taping of one of those public service announcements:

(Clip of PSA)

Sandra De Castro Buffington: So we post the website and the hotline number. So you can see this is commercially successful television. This is not parallel anything, this is mainstream. These shows make a lot of money and they are educating the public because they have accurate health content. And we also add the helpline aspect to refer viewers who need help to help. We also posted over two thousand web links on shows' websites on all of these health topics and many more. We offer writers and producers panel discussions at the



writer's guild to inspire them on different topics. We take them on trips overseas so that they can learn real stories on the ground from real people. We launched a Storybus Tour series; we take writers and producers to inner-city Los Angeles to learn about gang violence, toxic housing, environmental justice, education. They learn from people they would never meet otherwise. I'm not sure how much time we have, I have another storyline from "90210." It's a story for young people about breast cancer and the genetic determinants of breast cancer. Many a few see "90210," nobody thinks about that as an "educational program." Yet we work with them nearly every week to get accurate health content into the show; and we know how much people are learning, because we do research to measure the impact. I'm going to skip the "90210" storyline and show you a 30-second clip from "Numb3rs"—and this about organ transplantation:

(Clip from "Numbers")

Sandra De Castro Buffington: So just that role modeling; if you look at this chart at the red circle, 10 percent of the viewers of this episode signed up to become organ donors as result viewing the show. Simple thing. Not meant to educate, yet because the writers and producers consulted with us, they go the content to be accurate and showed people how they can sign up. And so they did. So I'm going to close by saying that we have a wonderful annual awards ceremony to recognize exemplarity TV health storylines. This an incentive and reward for writers and producer of this kind of work. Because this model works so well, and is so efficient, it was an idea came to work in all the creative capitals of the world. So we came to India to partner with this wonderful team; I'm not sure who to point to first, but with the Asian Centre for Entertainment Education on a project called The Third Eye. And I'm wondering maybe Mahesh, you can say a few words. Mahesh Bhatt is going to be leading this program. Creativity needs courage, and Mahesh is one of the most of the courageous people I know. Could you please say a few words.

Mahesh Bhatt: This morning when I got up, Sandra, a gift from the past just flew into my home through the window. It was a line from the great Albert Einstein: "Those who have the privilege to know have



the duty to act. Those who have the privilege to know have the duty to act." (Inaudible) come from a region where they have given their hearts to this subject. They have a duty to act because they have privilege to know. And it is indeed very generous of you to come here and say "we will partner with you to spread this skill that we have successfully used in our part of the world in this region where we make so many movies; without losing sight that these movies have to be box-office success." Sandra was very clear, she said "look, we don't want to convert you and make you evangelists for some cause. You continue doing what you're doing. Make movies, make big blockbusters. But the insights that we offer to you for free, may make you earn a little more and impact the world you live in a lot more." As I said yesterday, and I say again that in my journey through the world of movies, which I began more than 40 years ago. My daughter made a film called "Tamanna" which dealt with female infanticide. Mad it in 1997 with her own money; without going to the government of India or to any person to fund it; because my daughter felt that it was an issue with real stories of real people.

HH&S Director Sandra de Castro Buffington announces the launch of first global center in India, a joint project with the Asian Center for Entertainment Education.



It was the story of a eunuch who had picked up a girl child from the streets of Mahim, and brought that girl child up. And that was the great story that inspired my daughter and we made that film. The film did not do well, because as we know serious, grim stories do not do well. The only consolation prize Pooja got was a national award: 60,000 rupees and a medal, which kind of got black in three months. But years later, when I was promoting my film of genetically modified food in a remote, small town of Rajasthan, a young lady walked up to me, who was an activist then. And she thanked me, and she said: "I must thank you" and I said: "for what?" She said: "Look, I work to sensitize people about the female child. This is a region where female infanticide is peaking. And in my toolbox there's this film that you made called "Tamanna." Tamanna helps us touch the hearts of people that are otherwise closed." It was then that it hit me that maybe my film didn't make money, but it saved lives. And I think that was a great, great take-away. When I hear an icon like Shabana Aazmi, 30 years after we made "Aarth," say with such candor that "prior to 'Aarth' my life was merely of an actor in a film business. I was an actor. But that film, in which I raised the issue of gender equality by asking the question why in this part of the world which worships women, does it have different standards for women and men; in which she walks away from her philandering husband and a lover boy and chooses to walk alone. Her life changed, a symbol for thousands and millions of women, they could at least dream of a life they could fantasize on being on their own." That move has endured for 30 years and inspired so many people. Our only wish that we have in sight, like the one you just showed of an alcoholic, about AA; when I made a movie called "Daddy" about a 17-year-old girl played by Pooja, who cures her alcoholic father of this dreadful disease. I myself was an alcoholic, and I fought this disease on my own, without going to the AA and for 24 years I have been sober. And it was plucked out of my own heart, and that's why whenever I dug into my own wounds, tuned into the lives of real people, those movies resonated. It had the pulse, the throb and the beat of life. And those movies, those are the movies that will be what I see in my obituary movies. I may have made a lot of money from the other movies, and I'm not ashamed or apologetic for that. In fact I think these "so-called" big blockbusters help keep my social cause afloat. But I think these are the movies that will give



me the sense of having contributed to the world beyond my own small little space that I live in. As somebody said, "What is the difference between success and fame?" Success is Mahatma Gandhi, fame is Amitabh Bacchan. So the question is: Do you want to be successful? Do you want, 20 years from now, 30 years from now, a movie that you may have made to have impacted life and touched some way. I think people like Gautam and me, when we look back, we don't measure our worth by looking at the awards we have in our drawing room; or the certificates hanging on the wall. We measure it by the lives we have touched. I think with this tool that Sandra has to provide, I think that we can do a lot to make this part of the world a lot brighter. As the Chinese say: "It's not enough to curse the darkness, but to light a candle". And as the great sufi mystics said: "My lamp was lit by another" so here she (Sandra) comes with her lamp and I with great humility, bend forward and say: "share the light with me so that we can share it with a billion hearts, which watches and loves movies, but when they watch and see these movies they can also take home some messages that can alter their lives on the ground." We owe it to them.

Director Mahesh Bhatt delivers remarks during panel at the FICCI/frames entertainment industry conference in Mumbai.



Because we are privileged to know, so it is our duty to act. And act we will! Thank you.

Sandra De Castro Buffington: Thank you so much Mahesh! I'm going to ask Gautam: You know India has been known as the cradle of consciousness for thousands of years. And, of Mahatma Gandhi's teachers, the great avatar Paramhansa Yoga Nanda went to the west to take the consciousness of India and to spread it there. And it wasn't a coincidence that one of the ashrams he opened in Los Angeles is actually located in Hollywood. And Paramhansa Yoga Nanda from the 20s to the 50s, for over 30 years, worked with some of the leading talent of Hollywood to raise their consciousness, to teach them Priya Yoga and to encourage them to create stories of social value. We know what the results are, I meant there have been a tremendous number of TV series and movies. Maybe starting with Norman Lear in the 60s, who created programs like "The Jeffersons" and "All in the Family," dealing with all that taboo topics in society at that time. My question to you has to do with: Are we underestimating our audiences? Why is it such a challenge? And also another question I'll give you too is: Around the change in evolution of story formats.

Goutam Ghose: Thank you very much, Sandra. Thanks for your initiative. It is very important, the role of cinema and its impact on society. As rightly saying, we exchange knowledge between the east and the west; and this subcontinent in my opinion is a place of composite culture. There are many synergies from different faiths. I remember when I made a film on a great Shehnai maestro, Ustad Bismilla Khan. Shehnai is something like the oboe. It's Indian. He said: "My life is very simple. I go to the Ganges for a holy dip in the morning, then go to the Masjid, Sarharra Masjid for my namaaz. Then after that my whole day is spent at Balaji Mandir playing shehnai. That's our culture. But unfortunately, you know, institution always used for faith, or politicians used faith for the wrong reasons. But I have a question, you know myself I wonder: in the last hundred odd years, what we have done with cinema. I remember a very interesting article written by the great pioneer D.W Griffith, a great American filmmaker; way back in 1924. The title is the "Movies a hundred years from now," [meaning] 2024. He was so much in love with the cinema, with a

new marvel. He said that this is something one has never yet seen before. With this new language, we go ahead and we can serve the society. How? He was a dreamer. That people of Japan will come to know the culture of South America, or the Americans will know about the culture of South East Asia. Indians will know about the people of Greenland. Something like that. And through movies, we exchange ideas and finally create international brotherhood. And I'm sure he writes: that maybe in the beginning of the 20th century or by the end of the 20th century there will be no war. He was such a dreamer. So he thought the cinema would really bring peace and harmony. Alas, it never happened. After 24 years in, we have seen devastating second

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world wars and so many wars, today people are fighting violence all over. So cinema couldn't really change the society. But what cinema did: It has recorded the memory of people, stories of people. That's why we would say a film is basically a collective memory of people. That's wonderful you know, the way you've taken initiative there. In a small place, in a small area you can create an impact; you can record the story; which has some effect on, chain effects. And in India, we have incredible stories in each and every corner because the country is so diverse—it's not homogeneous at all. So I believe that, of course as Mahesh has rightly said that: "I may have produced many blockbusters, big commercials." But there are certain things which apply the same thing to me, which still remains very close to my heart, because those moments when not only the filmmaker, but all the participants: the actors, the crew. We all together cross the river.



It's again the story of our own endurance despite violence, despite wrong politics, despite all mischievous things happening all over the world. So today I want to quote something from Gandhi, because one thing that I really admire about Gandhi was that he always tried to understand the relative truth. Truth is there, but understanding of truth, that is very relative. And unless you understand the truth of others, you can't criticize yourself to understand your own truth. So today, we have to use cinema to stop violence, to stop massacre, to bring peace and harmony. That's the most important thing for the human race, because you know, we have to overcome our negative emotions and we have to supplement with our positive emotions. Let me quote these beautiful seven things from Gandhi: The seven social seeds which he regarded as the roots of all forms of violence. "Wealth without work. Pleasure without conscience. Knowledge without character. Commerce without morality. Science without humanity. Worship without sacrifice. Politics without principles. It seems Utopia, but I don't think so. There lies the truth."

Sandra De Castro Buffington: Thank you so much. So beautiful. Kiran, I'd like to go to you next; and I know you anchored a very successful TV show that dealt with women and women issues. Any you've also been in making lots of movies, both yourself and your husband. If you could tell us what you have learnt from your conversations with women and the movies that you have made and can you can tell us what sort of impact they had on society?

Kiran Joneja: You know when I was talking to Mr. Basu, the head of Star TV, we were discussing what kind of show did we want to bring forward. I had a choice of doing a talk show where i would bring celebrities and film personalities and have an interview with them or do a program that would be dedicated to social issues. There was no question, that my decision was social issues and not interviewing celebrities and I was so glad for that because when we started the talk show called the Kiran Joneja Show on Star Plus, we did about 52 programs I think one year and within the first three programs anywhere I would go out or I would be at a function anywhere I was in touch with people around me, there was always some kind of reaction and people would actually come and talk about the show to me. They



would say you know that person spoke very well on your show or said this, this, this, and I realized that they were watching the show and it was having an impact on them because they were listening to the speakers, to the panelists, to the people who had actually been victimized, who were the victims, who came up with their stories and they were amazing, some of them were so bold; some women who were sexually abused and had gone through domestic violence, we also had female infanticide as one of the topics. They came up with stories and opened up and exposed themselves completely, talked about details and told the public what they had gone through. It really takes courage and guts to be sitting there and talking to the whole world and telling them your problems and what you went through. Of course, many of them were winners—women who had fought to come out of their problems and were today helping other women and many of them were helping other women or other children, whichever area they were in to come out of the same problem. And it was really heart warming to see that we like she said that we have the power and we should talk to people

Director Goutam Ghose called the role of films and their impact on society "very important," saying they have "recorded the memory of people, stories of people."



and spread the word, give them knowledge and give the information cause we have this tool which is very, very powerful, whether it's television—whether it is cinema, they are equally powerful in their own way. And television goes into the houses, into the bedrooms of each person who is watching and so very personal intimate issues can be discussed. As far as bringing in health issues or social issues or women's problems within commercial cinema, mainstream cinema is concerned there have been very sparingly far apart some directors who have incorporated these issues into the story and have done it beautifully so that when people go and watch the film they do not feel like it is a docu-drama or they are being lectured at which is something nobody wants to and yet they brought across the point very, very subtly but it is very far apart and very few. I think what needs to be done a more effort needs to be made in that area and as they said about health issues and can bring in other social issues and if we have the right research and the proper help wherein we bring it without disturbing the mainstream line of the story yet imparting some kind of knowledge, some kind of information to the people around us would be great. I think some of the examples I could think of are Mr. B.R. Chopra was a great filmmaker and from time to time he did come up with films that talked about women's issues or talked about other issues, Nikaah was one such film dealing with the Muslim area but it did deal with the problems of women, the commodization of a woman and how she should be allowed to make the decision who she wants to spend her life with, it should not be in a man's hand. He had Insaaf ka Tarazu which dealt and very beautifully dealt with a brought out a lot of areas of that part. My own husband Mr. Sippi in two films, I think very few people know this but in his first film that he made Andaaz was about remarriage about a widow. And when he went to people to discuss the subject of the film, even the actors they asked him if he was sure if this was what he wanted to deal with in your first film and he had the conviction and he did it and it did very well. Sholay similarly also had the track of Amitji and Jayaji, though it did not happen because the hero dies but nevertheless the seed was sown, so the point is if we can cleverly do that I think it would be great and we could use our resources and use our privileged position to then impart some kind of knowledge and some kind of information to people around us.

Sandra de Castro Buffington: Thank you. So The Third Eye is going to be a free service to Bollywood, the film and television industry and not be limited to Mumbai it will be nationwide and this will be a resource, any time any of you making films or television have serious research issue that you need facts for, that you want to make sure that you're portraying accurately. You can contact the third eye and we will have those resources for you. Access issues. Something that you want facts for, something you want portrayed accurately, you can contact the third eye and we will have those resources for you. Access to experts. We'll take you into villages if that's where you need to go. To hospitals if you need to go there. So with that, I'd like to go to Jonathan and ask you about some of the new storytelling formats that are emerging;

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and after that I'm going to go to Colin and ask you about how you're engaging audiences, once they've been exposed to a storyline and using digital platforms and social media.

Jonathan Taplin: Thanks, I was struck—I've been here for three days now . . . especially the panel that Mahesh was on yesterday—of the struggles that Indian filmmakers have to be able to deal with the issues that are troubling them. I come from a tradition in America where the artist—I go back to Henry David Thoreau who was really Gandhi's great inspiration. The artist is thought of as a person who puts sand into the gears of the machine. That's his role. He is not there just to make everybody happy, he's there to be part of the great refusal, to point out the other side. And so, you know, part of



what has to happen now is, Indian filmmaker and Indian musicians need to understand their role as artists, and being able to get ahead of the politics. Not follow the politics but get ahead of them. I was lucky to have worked for Bob Dylan in the 1960s. Bob Dylan was a very courageous man. He got ahead of the politics of the Civil Rights Movement. I made movies with Martin Scorsese, it was the same thing—a young filmmaker who would chances. They thought it was their role, it wasn't just trying to entertain. Now, I'm not saying that America is any better now because basically, most of the filmmaking is about fantasy, Spider-Man . . . I mean it's mostly nonsense. What disturbs me in three days of watching television at night because I couldn't get to sleep, is that America seems to be exporting its worst reality show culture into India. And you're going to get on the same silly thing. I would just say one thing, you know there were two great dystopian people who thought about the future in the 30s. One was George Orwell, and one was Aldous Huxley. Orwell thought the big problem would be big brother. That there would be an all seeing eye that would put his foot on your neck and scare you from doing anything; to be passive. But Huxley was more concerned that basically we would entertain ourselves to death. That everybody would take pills, and you would go to the feelies: these movies that would make you dull and not think about anything and it would not be necessary for the government to scare you. You would just be so passive and your job was to go shopping and everything [so] that you wouldn't have to worry. So, my take on this is: look, there's all sorts of new storytelling tools and everything, but it all comes back to where you need to define the role of the artist in the society. And to me, that's obvious. The artist is there to put sand in the gears of the machine and that's what it's all about.

Sandra De Castro Buffington: Thank you. Colin?

Colin Maclay: It's a tough job to follow these philosopher, storyteller types. I feel rather small compared to my wonderful co-panelists. But maybe I can just pick up on some of the themes and note that one of the most exciting things in my view about this new storytelling environment is that the stories are not just told in one venue; it's not just in the cinema, or just on television. We have multiple



screens, we have multiple platforms, whether it's through SMS or its through Facebook or you choose your venue. But there's this constant potential for ongoing engagement with an audience and that means that means that the sand need not be limited to the gears that the artist put them in, but can indeed be picked up by the audience more broadly and then changed into new forms. So I think that whether you're talking about peace or gender equality, or social change, or health. Or any of these topics that are so near and dear to our hearts. Once they're put into that storytelling form and they're made available to the public; there are now new ways to engage the public and allow them to then engage with that material. To work on it. To learn more about the health concern that they might have. Or to learn more about the peace issue. Or indeed to organize around the issues that they care most about. They have the platforms right there in front of them. Now naturally the access isn't evenly distributed, but it is increasingly well distributed. And there is more and more access everywhere, we're seeing. I think that one of the exciting things is: from the artists perspective, it

Members of the panel (from left): Kiran Joneja, Colin Maclay, Jonathan Taplin, Sandra de Castro Buffington, Goutam Ghose and Mahesh Bhatt.



allows a deeper and richer engagement with the audience. It doesn't mean that you need to change, but it does mean that you can engage your audience in new ways, and that the storytelling can go further than it did before. That messaging can take on new tones. So coming back to the themes, it allows you to advance the themes that you care about, whatever they are. It's the same sorts of questions we have around economics. If you want to make money, you also want to engage your audience. And so you want the same sorts of platforms regardless of what the idea is. So it's about understanding how we use these new tools to continue the message further; to have greater impact, greater reach in society. We know that the storytelling we do is fundamental; is our greatest resource. It doesn't matter whether you're a scientist, or a politician, or a business person, or an advocate. That your story is your friend. That's the power. So I think the exciting thing about these new tools is that the cost of those paths to sharing your message and making it actionable by the public; allowing the public to read, remix and recast and reuse that message. And build upon it indeed, to take it and make it its own. We're seeing greater opportunities to do that than ever before. So I think the challenge comes back to the creative industry, to any artist to not just put out the story and be done with it but rather think about how you want that story to be told, retold and untold in ways that it will really facilitate the robust digestion and engagement of it.

Sandra De Castro Buffington: Thank you Colin. How is our time? Is there time for questions? Can somebody tell me? Yes, please.

Guest 1: This question is an amalgam of two halves one addressed to Kiranji and the other to Gautam. I had the honour to interview stars and starlets like Kiranji for television as well as print medium and the social program she did is an exception and that is the sad part of it. She was bold enough to choose a format that would contribute and make a change in society. But in nine cases out of ten, that option is not available. That I think should change and she made a very valid point. But coming to Gautam's quotes from Gandhiji and D.W Griffith: I think the greatest film he ever made was "intolerance" and that is exactly what has been increasing over the last hundred years. It is said that the only six things that sell in this country, at least India are:

religion, politics, sex, cricket. These are the things that sell; nothing has changed on those fronts. If anything has changed is the reaction of the people. They become very angry. They do see and odd film now and then, where these are the subjects, but it is terribly anger driven. So, is there a via-media where we can accept social change without getting very angry about it?

Goutam Ghose: Well you know anger is sometimes justified because it is a human quality, you know we all get angry but at the same time we try to suppress anger, to control it. What is happening now in this society because India is so diverse, multi layered you can find many centuries running together. You go to Kumbh Mela, 10 million people

"We have this tool which is very, very powerful, whether it's television—whether it is cinema, they are equally powerful in their own way. And television goes into the houses, into the bedrooms of each person who is watching, and so very personal intimate issues can be discussed."

– ACTRESS/TV PERSONALITY KIRAN JONEJA

are there because of some faith. You go to Bombay or big cities and you find top class 21st century everything, it's so diverse. But you know that is why social responsibility is very important for the media people or the communicators. He has mentioned about the bad reality shows. The worst reality shows imported from abroad are really corrupting our people. There are some good shows too, which also quite inspiring for the singers and artists. One has to understand since we have many layers we need we don't know, we have no information about certain layers, they do not come into the mainstream and we don't know them. But thanks to digital technology hundreds and thousands of young people, they are working with a small little digital camera and they are recording all those layers and trying to educate people. They do not appear in the mainstream media. I think you



know the impact of their work will help us in the future and that is as we have mentioned the role of an artist, of an engaged person.

Guest 2: Sandra as the director of Hollywood, Health & Society and to Maheshji for India, I would appreciate some effort, some thought into making entertainment and media not only entertainment not only with a social message but somewhere helping the poverty issue, where money is given to people in some way so that you know you become a medium, network marketing is one example but it is illegal but I was talking to the technology section over there and even if you can take 100 rupees per person the returns you can give, some sort of mathematical juggling will be needed but its high time we apply our mind to help people really. Just showing and encashing on people's problems and you know just repeat the same stories is not the need of the hour the way I see it, we are against tremendous issues coming up now. So for that we need to prepare ourselves and the way I see it we need to design a model where we have a central thing which disperses liquid cash to people because we are going to be in big trouble otherwise. So if you could please apply your mind to this particularly to Sandra and Mahesh. Thank you.

Sandra de Castro Buffington: You want to answer that?

Mahesh Bhatt: Well, I think you need to answer that because she has some ideas of what you are doing which is different from what you are actually doing.

Sandra de Castro Buffington: So one of the things we know is that people with disproportionate health risk are watching television during the day time and I would imagine in India it would be public TV. So we have examples literally all over the world of storylines that have helped the economic development of viewers. There was a long-running storyline in Mexico that portrays a woman who very painstakingly buys a sewing machine and it shows her go from abject poverty to being a business owner. Then across the continent of South America the sales of sewing machines sky rocketed. There is another serial that dealt with somebody who went back to school to be educated and change his life that way. Again we saw a huge peak



in enrollment for school, the viewers going back to complete their education. There are different ways to give educational messages to motivate people to take a different turn in life. I don't see television and film as a way to actually give out money, I don't think that would actually solve our problems. I do think we need to empower people, unify people and inspire people and connect them to social programs that can help and that is something television can do.

Mahesh Bhatt: You know I recently ran into a young man when I went for one of these inspirational talk for young people, and this young man was compelled to act one day because he was travelling in a bus and he was sitting down next to a guy who went the conductor came to him in order to purchase a ticket, he had to write it down the destination he was suppose to go and give it to him because he could neither speak nor hear. And this kind of ignited something in this guy that I met and he started this courier service in the city of Mumbai, which is also now in Delhi for people who cannot hear or talk, deaf and dumb people. And he says that it is doing rather well

Actress Kiran Joneja, a former host of a talk show dedicated to social issues, called television and cinema "powerful tools."



but whenever my guys go to deliver, there are people very moved and they want to offer money. They want to give them shoes, clothes, so I tell them “Hey, don’t do that. Don’t give them money because with the money you cripple them in a way. Give them work, give us work.” You know this whole idea of giving money away give you temporary relief. And perhaps what we need to examine is the idea of empowering people. The idea is not to become a crutch but to make the person realize however shaky they are your feet will see you through this journey of life. And that’s the danger we come from a culture where for our own self aggrandizement we choose to become conscious for people, that is exploited from the guru-shishya parampara construct. So I think that there is an intervention of money sometimes required in the situation but the long term goal should be to make a person walk on his own two shaky feet. And filmmakers like us have no illusions that apart from igniting ideas as Jonathan said, we can play with the borders that are being created the frontiers being created. That itself is a big enough job, you need to go and ask those guys you have chosen as elective representative of yours to address that part of your problem. We can ignite passion, give you direction but to give you money, I don’t have an illusion that as a filmmaker, I barely make my ends meet. One-fifth is the strike rate for a filmmaker for success over failure. So to pretend that now I am going to work to elevate poverty would be a lie and I don’t want to indulge in this hypocrisy.

Goutam Ghose: I would like to add something on this issue. Actually you know, you can really not just throw away money to the poor people. They may waste that money; empowerment is the most important thing. One thing is really missing in our country that the common people don’t know their constitutional rights, they don’t know at all. What they know is just the voting right. I have asked many people in the villages, “Do you know that we have a constitution?” they say “I don’t know, yes constitution means I have the right to vote.” So that is missing, people don’t know their fundamental rights. Excuse me, let me finish. Suppose if you go to the indigenous people, they had their own constitution for centuries but now they are part of this country, under this constitution. But there is clash because they don’t know our constitution. They believe in their own constitution, their own rights. I remember going to a village in Bastar, 30 years

back and we asked people, “What’s your problem?” And the collector was with me, who was very kind with the songs and dance and their performances. The collector was very happy and asked them to tell their problems and the people said they had none. There is a beautiful light in the sky, water in the river, there are lot of beasts in the forest and there are beautiful honey in the tree. We have no problem. What do you think, we have no problem. So it is very important that we understand what problem they have and that is very relative that we try and understand from our point of view their problem. We never try to understand their problem from their point of view. That is the real problem of development. Development that is not sustainable

“It all comes back to where you need to define the role of the artist in the society. And to me, that’s obvious. The artist is there to put sand in the gears of the machine and that’s what it’s all about.”

– JONATHAN TAPLIN, DIRECTOR, USC ANNENBERG INNOVATION LAB

is not development. And the indigenous people, they know what is sustainable development.

Sandra de Castro Buffington: Thank you.

Guest 3: So Sandra, first of all I would like to complement you and your organization for bringing social issues into the mainstream media in a very effortless manner. You know by putting together accurate data it is very easy to bring these issues to the forefront. My question is to the panel. Where do the boundaries lie in the media between greed and sacrificing the morals of a country? You know from Mr. Gautam we heard the right things, but when you see in reality what is happening in Bollywood is completely opposite. And the example I would use is currently in Bollywood, they are promoting an adult film star as a most celebrated celebrity, without really understanding the implications you are having on society on a long term.



Sandra de Castro Buffington: What's the question please?

Guest 3: The question is on one hand you are saying the right things but on the other hand you're not doing those, so where does the responsibility lie with the entertainment industry to promote the values and traditions of the country? Who is going to step up and say this is wrong, we are not going to go after greed? We are actually going to hold the morals of this country because when kids grow up and they say "Hey I want to be like Sunny Leone." Do you really want your children to grow up with those kind of morals and values.

Sandra de Castro Buffington: We have just been told that our time is over. Thank you for that question and the closing ceremony has just started.

Mahesh Bhatt: See first of all, it would be presumptuous of you to become a model and say that my world view is the only world view and I am the moral compass and then they way I understand and interpret life should be the standard emulated by everybody. I think if you really believe in freedom, you need to understand that the society consists of innumerable people. As long as people, who live in your country, do not violate the law of the land, they should be allowed to operate. Your personal biases need not be the measure by which you should judge people. Greed is what drives the entertainment industry. Even the so called pontiff who sits down and occupies the top chair in Vatican was driven by greed, if you don't have eyes to see it, too bad. That is a different kind of greed, a greed to be next to god. And the industry we are in was created by people who were consumed with the desire to make a place for themselves. But, having satiated themselves as we were discussing yesterday with Sandra. The inner void doesn't get fulfilled with money, with titillation, with unimaginable fame. You want to leave your footprints in the sands of time doing something more meaningful. That is when you take a detour and try to do things that perhaps amount to helping somebody in some other area of life. This happens all over the world. So whether people from a fraternity do that privately, it is for them to figure out; but we as entertainers when we make movies, we make movies with one simple objective; at least the mainstream believes in that, that



we have investments. We have to ensure that the investments are safe. Now within the parameters of that, if we can make a film which has some message that makes my content richer and helps me to sell more tickets; and also serves the need of the environment I live in. I think that's a win – win situation. I understand what Sandra has to say, I have a service for health and other issues, I have real stories of real people, come and have a look at them; and if you can take some of them and use them as fodder for your film factory that you have; that we would be very happy to give you this free service. And I think it will bring depth to our work and it makes the quality of the product slightly richer.

Sandra de Castro Buffington: Thank you very much. I would like to close by saying that we uphold the creative freedom of writer producers and directors above all. Thank you so much.

Veteran directors Goutam Ghose and Mahesh Bhatt discuss role of the filmmaker in society at the FICCI/Frames 2013 entertainment industry conference in Mumbai.