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## ***Beckett in Bengal: Boredom, Waiting and Repetition in the Cinema of Ashish Avikunthak***

In what can loosely be referred to as Boredom Studies, there is an almost organic organisation of boredom thought, theory, philosophy and research around the ‘Western’. Though there is acknowledgement of boredom as a universalised and democratised phenomenon, mood, affect and experience, there are hardly any postcolonial or decolonial appraisals on it. This paper will be an attempt to reconnoitre boredom’s relationship with cinema, particularly postcolonial cinema, through an appraisal of two films of filmmaker and cultural anthropologist Ashish Avikunthak. Here, Beckett’s oeuvre shares elemental connections to Avikunthak’s reflections on time, memory, and repetition which are most stark in his adaptations of two of the former’s plays *Waiting for Godot* (1953) and *Come and Go* (1966) to *Kalkimanthankatha/The Churning of Kalki* (2015) and *Antaral/End Note* (2005). The creative vitality of post-Romantic boredom is underlined in these films by both duration and ambiguity which is not shy of offsetting an effect of anti-immersion yet it augments interactivity in the process through a conscious effort to fuse the onslaught of histories on the “now” as we know it. The films deliberately have a processual nature, forming narratives while being shot, on the edit table and at screenings across universities, museums, and gallery spaces. As well, Beckett’s works have a long stated history of adaptation in India, especially *Waiting for Godot*, having been adapted to stage in different languages, since as early as the 70s. The attempt would also be to look at the question of aesthetic reception through an investigation on the methods and connotations of the very act of adaptation itself from theatre to cinema; English and French to Bengali and Hindi; and the conjunctures of Western thought and Hindu mythology; Modernist aesthetic strategies and Maoist subtext; academic and cinematic discourse; and politics and aesthetics. To this, the paper would like to suggest that boredom is an overarching aesthetic force that forges a relationship between the texts at hand and their histories. Another important facet of the paper would be to look at Avikunthak’s treatment of cinema as an aesthetic

object with respect to the digital age where occurs a subversion of market capitalism's deep-rooted ties to cinema in the age of entertainment providing it a political and dissident quality which effectively stages a return to theatrical source-points of ritualistic action where narrative content of cinema is stripped to its minutest slices, the intrinsic and elemental arbitrariness and boredom of everyday life which urges "engagement" and contemplative viewing. What has been referred to as Avikunthak's Cinema of Prayōga, I opine, will be fertile ground for a long-overdue conversation on boredom philosophy and the postcolonial question.