

WHAT IS CINEMA, WHY THEORIZE CINEMA, THE SUBJECT AND THE METHOD OF THEORIZING CINEMA

Unit Structure

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Understanding Cinema
- Nature and History of Cinema
- Why Theories Cinema

1.1 INTRODUCTION

We Live in a country (India) Which is the home to world's second largest Film Industry in the world, Where Every Year more than 1000+ full length feature films are made, not to forget the rising OTT content like web-series

and Independent Films. The study of this art of Cinema has a gain a lot of prominence, The Comprehension of Cinema has a lot of Academic Importance as well as practical applications, which directly or indirectly is useful for the creation and production of Films.

1.2 WHAT IS CINEMA

Cinema is a century old term and it defines the creation and reception of the media that is films but what is cinema is something that we must look at first

The Word “Cinema”

Cinema comes from Adding two words that is Cinematographe + Mass = Cine ma

Cinematographe was a device and Mass (Signifies a large audience)

1.2.1 The Invention of Cinematographe

The Lumiere brothers invented a device called Cinematographe, that can shoot images in continuity, print it and project it too to multiple number of people at a time. In that device sequence of images were played in front of a light source which gave a projection but there was another invention that was similar, it was Thomas Edison's Kinetograph which was invented in 1891 but it was massive and was not very portable to use also the type of projection and the way of using the device was very different and only a single person could use it at a time hence the “MASS” aspect was missing. On 28 December 1895, which is considered as the birth of Cinema, Five of Lumiere's films were screened publicly, The Arrival of a train at the Station and Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory and as the titles suggest these films were just a recording of a day-to-day things but some films also included staged content. Not only Lumiere made the device and films, but they that a greater prospect in their mind, they sent camera crews to various countries to shoot and display films, which gave rise to the beginning of film industries around the world and Lumiere's became popular worldwide. The Cinematographe used 35-millimeter film reel and had a projection speed of 16 frames per second. Till date the 35mm film reels are the industry standard, although there were attempts to make larger as well as shorts film reels size. It requires 16 images to be played within a second to perceive an illusion of motion but 16 frames were just on the edge and there was very little that could have been done with it technically. Rising it by 8 More frames in a second gave 24 FPS which is the stand in today's time, and of course there are a lot of technical aspects which we will look upon in depth in further units.

1.2.2 The Birth of Hollywood

Early American films were made for the working class, it appealed to a huge but mostly illiterate immigrant population. In 1900s filmmakers explored storytelling aspect of films and films became a middle-class phenomenon.

Although Lumiere brothers gave birth to cinema but Méliès Georges was the one developed the fictional aspect, style and storytelling which actually happened by mistake or in other words technical fault in camera. He was famous for creating fictional stories and pioneered in optical effects, In-camera effects, editing, and elaborative lighting and staging sets. Some of his films were from out of this world, literally like “A trip to the Moon” (1902). He Brought fantasy into the films which exhibited the potential of the medium itself. It explored an super natural aspect of creativity and defined the potential of the films is one’s own imagination.

1.2.3 Rise of Cinema, All around the world

Before the beginning of WW1 Italy, France and the United States had major national studios, But the WW1 destroyed Italian and French Film industries and American Film makers got the undivided advantage on the global film market. Many Major American Production Companies files their film technology patents and imposed block booking on exhibitors, which forced the movie theatre owners to buy low grade products with higher grade products. Exhibitors fought back by buying small production companies and eat the major productions.

Then there were film makers who brought a lot of camera technics and editing style such as Porter’s who mastered in editing technics like time shift and change in location, cutting of scenes, parallel action. He used shots instead of scene as the unit of composition, and establishing meaning between two different shots and made a scene from the shots. These Technics are very commonly seen in contemporary film making. His Films such as life of a fireman and the great train robbery were not only innovating in creative aspect but it generated a lot of fame as well, The Great Train Robbery was the most successful film for a decade. Many production companies shifted from New York City to Loa Angeles which provided good sunny and warm weather throughout the year which was suitable for year-round productions, thus giving birth to the Hollywood film industry.

1.2.4 Early Studios, Directors and Artists

In 1912, Niceville was formed by Ince Thomas it was the first modern Hollywood Studio. Ince directed over 100 films and was a very systematic person, he structuralized the film production procedures, and had the final authority of the final cut of all films. He divided the film production in 5 shooting stages, had detailed scripts and time sheets and did shot divisions. Sounds familiar right because his model of the production still gets followed 100 years later. A systematically designed film production sheets not only saves time but money.

Then came, D. W Griffith, who was a politically controversial director as his movies like “The Birth of a Nation” (1915) was a financially very successful film. Griffith sensationalized the narrative styles, he used emotions, drama, He also used various camera and editing technics such as flashbacks, parallel montage, and psychological styles of cuts for to explore and dive deep into human emotions and thoughts. During his career peak he

directed over 450 one-reel films and is considered the prime architect of classical Hollywood style editing.

Then came the period of slapstick comedy, where the character falls prey to violent but harmless gags, this style of films were founded by Sennett and many more joined, such as Harry Langdon, W.C. Fields, Charlie Chaplin and Fatty Arbuckle. Charlie Chaplin became the first international superstar as he wrote, directed and acted, He became famous for his “the Tramp”. His movies were not only funny but it narrated the complexity of human endeavors, behaviours, contradictions, courageous, vulnerability and romanticism. His films such as City Lights, Modern times, The Great Dictator and Monsieur’s were very impactful as well as successful.

1.2.5 End of Silent Era and World War 2

The End of Silent Era, the transition to sound was not very easy as it required costly renovation in production as well as in theatres. In 1930s five major studios came to existence such as Paramount, Warner Brothers, MGM, RKO and Twentieth Century Fox plus three minor studios Universal, Columbia, and United Artists. With different styles and type of films.

In the WW2 cinema became a powerful means for promoting propaganda, when all the other industries were declining due to the effects of the war, Films and Cinema kept blooming all over the world. People were getting fed up with the harsh conditions they were living in, so cinema was their easy escape from reality at least for some time. As a result, the cinema started flourishing and film stars started to immerge. This also resulted in many film movements. These film movements were inspired by the situations which were there. European countries were the most affected by these Wars and it drained all the resources, many of great film makers left Europe and got shifted to America which eventually resulted in the strengthening of Hollywood. India was struggling for freedom and the movies were also patriotic themed, as India got Freedom, the goal was to build the nation and so does the cinema did, Mother India was a landmark movie which also got global recognition.

By this Time Films were being all over the world and different types of cinematic tools and movements were happening. Cinema was a profitable business and film makers understood this. Apart from film creation, people started to appreciate, critic and review films. Film School started where students got practical trainings and formal education in films. Theories were made, challenged, changed and retained. Some of the theories are still relevant and is useful in practical applications as well.

Check your progress

1. Explain what is cinema.

2. Give a Brief History of the rise of cinema.

3. What were the impacts of World Wars on Cinema.

1.3 WHY THEORIES OF CINEMA

A very simple answer to this question is – when a movie is made there are always some learnings and these learning makes experience. It is always good to have an understanding of something before you actually start doing it. So that there is an understanding of what to do and what not to. It can become a guide book; it prevents us from making mistakes which were already made previously.

Film Theory or Theorizing the cinema is an essential framework and tool to understand how films are made and how it is received by its audience. It not just provides insights about films itself but also its audience as well. Film Theory as a subject cannot be studied in isolation or to say exclusively but it takes a lot from various academic disciplines of Arts, Science, Finance, Literature. To theories a film the first thing you need to do is watch it, but not just as a mere audience. The study a film you need to understand the situation and context in which were there, when the film was made such as the political, historical, artistic, psychological, philosophical, cultural and economic aspects.

Theorizing cinema or film theory is a tool to analyze films. Why people started analyzing films is because in 1920s people understood that films were a profitable business and to grow in any business you need to study about it, same goes for films. Filmmakers strived to understand and analyze films and elements, so that they can apply and make their films more effective. Early film theories from about 1920 – 1940 focused in understanding camera technics and editing styles and ways. By mid-1940 – late 1950's the focus shifted more today's representation of reality and how film can capture reality. In 1960's a lot of social and psychological studies were focused. With the proliferation and growth of films the subjects of studies started to expand and one of the major focuses was audience viewing and reception.

1.3.1 Benefits and scope of Theorizing films and Cinema:

Film theory gives us a greater comprehension about films, by paying attention to what emotions the film is trying to arouse by using which type of elements, tool, styles etc. With the change in time the Study of Cinema has become even more interesting, With the digital convergence films are being screened in theatres as well as on OTT platforms and then TV. This can be seen as 2 sides of a coin where on the one side films are becoming more approachable and affordable to watch from a viewer's point of view, and it can be watched in a laptop, Pads, TV and Mobile phone. Where the viewer has all the control over the remote. But on the other side the Spectator is Dead. What I mean to say is a for a person to become a spectator it requires a spectacle (Something which is larger than life). When you go to watch a movie in theatre you are watching it on a big/large screen but if the same movie if watched on a mobile is opposite to spectacular. If you take away the entire immersive experience of physically being in the theatre, will it be as effective? Well, this was happening very gradually and slowly but the Covid disturbed the system so bad that it will be difficult for some viewers to go back to theatres as frequently as they used to once. Having control over watching a movie is definitely a very user-friendly experience but it might not be good for cinema experience. I mean if someone is watching a movie and it getting bored in a scene or a song, they can skip it but the viewer might end up missing some essential components and links to the story. If someone is watching a movie individually the Mass Aspect of the Cinema is compromised, yes, it can be debatable that many (Mass) can simultaneously watch the movie individually at a time. The Convergence of Digital Platforms have not only affected the viewing behaviour of the audience but it is changing the structural DNA of the Film Industry. The viewer has taken the charge they can hype the movie or kill it before it even gets released, one wrong step the movie might get trolled or Meme's, Film makers must be more aware and cautious.

1.3.2 Element and Aspects of Cinema to Understand

There are various elements which play a major role in the composition of films and is decoded and analyzed. The primary brick of cinema is a camera

shot which conveys visual meanings. A **shot** is the time between a camera starts and camera stops. In this time a film maker induce a lot of visual data which contains meaning in itself.

Then these shot combined - form a **scene**, the shots aligned in a manner tells reveals a lot of information. The scene gives a better picture (frame of reference) of what is happening in the film, at a certain location, timeframe and to the character in it.

Mise-En-Scene is what the frame is composed of, that is, how the items in front of the camera are arranged and shot. (Will understand Mise en scene in depth in further units).

Film scenes uses a different types of **camera angles**, it is often used in manipulating viewers emotion, it can be done using different kinds of camera techniques some common camera angles are Eye level, high angle, low angle and oblique angle.

Lighting is a major player in creating a mood and defining a stylistic identity of film. A very common example of it is Marvel Movies Vs DC Movies.

Colour and Colour theory is an altogether is a very huge subject in itself, it fills up the movie and emotions can be controlled by colours. Saturated and bright vivid colours are used to convey happiness and romance whereas Desaturated and bland colours convey though times, depression and sadness.

Sound plays a huge role in keeping the viewers engaged, many believe sound plays more important role than the visual on it. In the movies even silence speaks. There are various elements in sound such as voice over, dubbing, sound recording, sound editing, background score, foley, music and much more.

Editing makes the flow of a film; films are made on editing desk and that statement contains the entire film in itself.

1.3.3 Film theorists categorized films into 3 broad types:

1. **Realism:** As the name suggests these films are more natural in the way its shot, lit, and edited like No special effects. Use of common people for acting etc. The set is not designed and is usually shot in real locations.
2. **Classical:** Here the emphasis is on using production elements. With proper lighting, sound and actors.
3. **Formalism:** This type of films alters the reality and uses special effects, creative lights and sound design. Professional actors and distinctive set designs are common to these types of films and is quite opposite to realism.

1.4 THEORIES OF FILM – BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO COMMON THEORIES OF CINEMA:

Early Theories of Films tried to legitimize cinema as an art. Hugo Munsterberg and Rudolf Amheim saw films to be more than just recording of reality but rather alteration of ways in which human perceive images, using editing, camera angles. These theories tried to differentiate films from other forms of art.

Realism – Realist Film Theorists recognized cinema as a mechanical recording of reality without any intentional intervention. This happened with the development of cinema itself and the type of film which were being made that time, it simply resembled reality. A good example of this would be Italian Neorealism, where the actors resembled common man and with natural light and no set design the films were a look alike of reality but it was not actual reality, that what Andre Bazin called the myth of Total Cinema. Andre Bazin highly regarded Mise-en-scene where the entire scene is filled with meanings and information, in accordance with space and time, which has to be decoded by the viewers. Siegfried Kracauer believed that a film should focus on the unpredictable, unplanned events of everyday existence.

Apparatus Theory suggests that film as a medium itself reflect reality and everything a film maker does has a meaning. All the technical aspects of the film are important such as shots, camera angles, colour, lights etc. These aspects try to create meanings. Not only the technical aspects of film and film making but also the experience of spectatorship that is a closed dark movie theatre with silence and numb audiences also have psychological and all these Apparatus from Camera, light to the Theatre viewing experience everything adds up.

Auteur theory: This theory was introduced in Fresh film journal *Cashiers du Cinema* by Andrew Sarris. Auteur simply means Author in French. Auteur theory simply considered Director as the author of the movie. It gave importance to the Artist's personal vision. Here the audience see's what the director/auteur wants to show, in other word from the perspective of the auteur.

Semiotics and Structuralist: This Theory takes from Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of semiology and Claude Levi-Struss's structural theory, Film Theorist see film language as set of codes and structures, that are aligned and structured to form meaning by the medium itself. These structures are based of repetitive patterns. This theory identifies that we can get a greater comprehension of movies and bunch of movies by analyzing and comparing their structural elements. Christian Metz identified the presence of eight principal syntagma's where images and sounds are arranged into units of Narrative structure, and give a continuity to make a story.

Ideology Theory: In this theory cinema is analyzed as an ideological apparatus, it indulges the viewers in a psychological space and takes them away from real conditions of their existence.

Marxist Film Theory: The Marxist Film Theorists believed that films portray what the dominant wants to tell, it masks the dominant ideology by giving the audience the illusion of freedom, and acts as a mode of naturalizing and legitimizing the exploitative class structure. It misleads the audience by manipulating subjective portrayal to objective reality. It looked films as propaganda tool of the elites to disseminate bourgeois construct and to misguide audience.

Feminist Film Theory: Early Feminist Film Theorists looked at stereotyping of women in Hollywood, this theory believe actresses and female characters are often forced to stereotypical roles, as well as patriarchal aspect of cinema spectatorship. It looked at the gender differentiation between male and female characters and their portrayal as subordinate to their male lead counterparts, Laura Mulvey argued that Hollywood films as subject to male gaze, where the male character would be masculine and strong as oppose to passive female characters. It gave more importance to what men desire.

Social and Cultural Studies: These Theories try to identify films within the bound of social, cultural, political and organizational existence. The scholars of this studies consider all aspect of popular culture. Stuart Hall states that “spectatorship is an active process of textual decoding.” These studies a region specific and takes demographic and geographic spectatorship into account.

Queer Film Theory: It believes that film Industry is controlled by majority of straight men and women and undermines minority. Just like feminist theory it believes that most of the movies are made by men and straight people. And therefore, it undermines LGBT community as well as portray them in negative light or a subject to laugh about and show them as strange and unusual.

Cognitive Theory: It believes that audience create meaning through their rational and cognition, Audience decode film by using their rational and cognitive process rather than emotional. This theory assumes film spectators as active audience and they are aware of what they are watching. It gives importance to human intellectual and see perception and cognition as universal, inherent human characteristics.

1.4.1 Here are Some important film movements.

German expressionism – The World War 1 drained European resources and film industries. Germany went into strict restrictions on import of foreign films and thus increased the demand for domestic film production, Berlin based mega studio became a home for German Filmmakers, These Filmmakers made few prominent films from 1919-1933, until Hitler came to power. This Expressionism was inspired by expressionism movement in

arts, literature, painting and architecture. Influenced by these things German filmmakers wanted to create a distortion and went against the follow of Hollywood films which were mostly comedy and romantic films. German expressionist films expressed individual subjectivities, desires, complexities. German Expressionism used a lot of camera and lighting technics, Distorted set designs which uneven paintings and shapes. The movies were dark and used shadows, there was a lot of use of mirrors and reflective objects for distorting to image as to portray psychological disturbance. Harsh lightings with deep contrast these films created its own style which later when restrictions were lifted gained the eye of film makers in Hollywood as well as other parts of the world. This expressionist movement were also influenced by the tough times and the feelings of betrayal. Some important films were Fritz Lang's "Metropolis" (1927) and Robert Wiene's "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1919).

Soviet Montage – Soviet Filmmakers used Shot as a primary unit of film and experimented with shot by juxta positioning it to create meaning and arouse emotions from it. They used shots as a grammatical tool of film language. They used dialectical montage to create intellectual meaning which the viewer has to decode. These films portrayed inhumanity of czarist rule and revolutionary potential, labour class and bonds of soviet citizens. Some key films are Sergei Eisenstein's "Battleship Potemkin" (1925) and Dziga Vertov's "A man with a Movie Camera" (1929).

Italian Neo Realism –The World War II caused significant damage to the film studios and Italian film industry to lost its centre. Italian neorealism started when the World War II got over and Benito Mussolini's government declined. The film makers started shooting in real locations, likes streets and real houses. With common looking actors. These films tried to show realistic life of their people. Italian Neo realism was seen as a signifier of cultural change and social development in Italy. Its films presented contemporary stories and ideas that tried to represent reality and poor financial conditions. But this movement lost it relevance as it was against the morality of development. As the nation started developing these films which displayed poverty and difficulties were discouraged. Some Key films are Vittorio De Sica's "The Bicycle Thieves" (1948) and Roberto Rossellini's "Rome, Open City".

Check your progress

4. Explain montage.

5. What is Italian Neo Realism cinema

6. Why do we need theories in cinema?

1.5 LET'S SUM UP

The study and concepts of cinema and film are extremely important, write from is inception cinema has been a point of interest throughout the world. And learning about the concepts, industry gives us insights about how the cinema works. Cinema has gone through a lot of famous movements and periods. With time cinema has also evolved practically, technologically and theoretically. 1.6 QUESTIONS

1. Write the importance of theorizing Cinema
2. Describe the Invention of Cinema Camera
3. Discuss in detail the early history of cinema
4. Who were the major directors during silent era.
5. Write short notes on
 - a. Auteur Theory
 - b. Realism
 - c. Marxist Theory
 - d. German expressionism.

1.6 REFERENCES

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THEORISING THE MEDIUM OF FILM, REALISM, STRUCTURALISM, DECONSTRUCTION, SEMIOTICS

Unit Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Classic Film Theory
- 2.2 The Critique of Realism
- 2.3 Structuralism
 - 2.3.1 Post- Structuralism and Deconstruction
- 2.4 Semiotics in Film
 - 2.4.1 What Does Semiotics Mean?
 - 2.4.2 What is Semiotic Theory?

OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Semiotics
- Realism
- Structuralism

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Film theory had to battle for a long time before it could be called a true film theory. Difficulty originated from the exact quality that secured cinema's universality: since the first crowds pushed themselves out of the way of an oncoming screen locomotive, film has dazzled us with its apparent ability to replicate reality openly, instantly, and directly. Because of this realism, professional film study has been hampered from the start by antagonism from Kantian aesthetics' suffocating legacy.

Kant compares experience with cognition, particular and universal, interested and disinterested in *The Critique of Judgement* (1790). Because it integrates sensation—rough hearing and vision—with contemplation, aesthetic experience differs from just sensual gratification (eating, for example). The aesthetic object is emphasised as a singularity, rather than as an example of a broader concept, for its own sake and without regard for

utility or societal purpose. All of this seems to go against what cinema is supposed to be good at: depicting the real.

Clearly tainted by raw sensation, too vulnerable to documentary exploitation, and too easily used for social good

2.1 CLASSIC FILM THEORY

As Aaron Scharf (1969) persuasively demonstrates, the early impact of photography on painting and artistic concepts was immense. While photography enabled some artists to experiment and innovate, it also reinforced and legitimised the distinction between art and craft, the aesthetic and the functional.

Cinematic images have a double degree of resemblance to reality, as they are both caused by it (light from photosensitive film) and produced by it, as light is projected through segments of celluloid onto a screen. It was extremely enticing to disregard cinema as an art form.

In the face of an ostensibly unchallengeable realism, the objective of classic film theory was to determine the unique value of cinema—what has enabled it to provide such a compelling portrait of modernity—in order to justify its existence.

As a result, two primary strategies emerged. The creationists (or formalists), such as Rudolf Arnheim, Sergei Eisenstein, and Béla Balázs, view cinema as an art form that transcends realism, whereas the realists, such as Siegmund Kracauer and André Bazin, venerate cinema because it depicts reality so accurately.

Rudolf Arnheim's 'Cinema' (1933) is an excellent illustration of creationism because it attempts to "dispute the claim that film is merely a poor mechanical reproduction of real life." Arnheim begins by contrasting the cinematic experience with our empirical understanding of the everyday world. In everyday life, the world is three-dimensional, whereas in the cinema, all we get is a flat screen; we live in colour with sound, whereas cinema is black-and-white and silent (or was until 1929); we can look wherever we want within our field of vision in our everyday world, whereas cinema restricts what we see to what fits within the screen's frame.

The formalist theory of Arnheim and the realist theory hypothesis of André Bazin appear incompatible. Nevertheless, both perspectives presume that film, which has its origins in the, must be utilised in the photographic process as part of a mechanical evaluation. Whether the reproduction is slow or robust, it is convincing.

Numerous effects, including camera angles and movement, focus, lighting effects, framing, altered motion, superimposition, and specialised optics, are utilised by film to shape and construct reality. In addition to these aspects pertaining predominantly to the single shot, cinema works through sequences of shots edited together to create dazzling and profound effects of contrast and repetition, metonymy and metaphor. Editing enables a

cinemagoer to see something that an empirical observer of the original film would never see.

Arnheim is one of the first to codify cinema's unique resources and the various ways it generates meanings that are absent from the reality from which the photographic image is derived. Despite Arnheim's claim that cinema transcends reality, he does not dispute the notion that cinema is profoundly influenced by its photographic resemblance to life. Realists, led by André Bazin, emphasise this relationship as the fundamental characteristic of the medium, as in this passage.

Photography's objective nature bestows upon it a credibility not found in any other form of image-making. Regardless of the objections of our critical spirit, we are compelled to acknowledge the presence of the object reproduced, genuinely re-presented, and placed before us, i.e., as real in time and space. Photography has a distinct advantage as a result of this transfer of actuality from the object to its copy.

This passage demonstrates Bazin's awareness of the fact that filmed objects are not shown in cinema, but rather "represented." And elsewhere, he expresses his admiration for cinematic realism because it has a Brechtian effect in that it allows the viewer to criticise, whereas more obviously created film (such as Eisenstein) attempts to distort the viewer's perception.

Arnheim's (formalist) and Bazin's (realist) theories appear to be at variance. However, their shared postulate is fundamental and distinguishes traditional cinema theory. Formalist philosophy regards film as more than "the poor mechanical imitation of real life," as Arnheim describes it: Realist theory, according to Bazin, favours cinema insofar as it adheres to "a mechanical reproduction in which man plays no part" (1967: 12). Both perspectives hold that film, which is based on the photographic process, must be evaluated in part as a mechanical reproduction, regardless of how weak or convincing it may be. This viewpoint, known as the naturalist or reflectionist fallacy, was not overturned in cinema theory until the 1990s.

Due to what Stephen Heath calls "the confrontation of Marxism and psychoanalysis in the field of semiotics," film theory was able to develop into a comprehensive account of cinema (1916: 11). First among these three theoretical approaches was semiotics (or semiology). In his posthumous work *Course in General Linguistics*, published in 1916, Saussure introduced a number of theoretical distinctions to the study of language, of which two were particularly useful when applied to cinema theory.

Saussure reintroduced the classical rhetorical distinction between signifier and signified to analyse the naive notion of 'words.' The signifier level of an utterance consists of the sounds (phonemes) selected for use by a particular language and ordered in time, whereas the signified level consists of the meanings assigned to any collection of signifiers. The set of signifiers that gives rise to a particular meaning is solely a matter of convention.

In contemporary English, the sounds represented by 'mare' can mean 'female horse' or even 'municipal leader' (mayor), whereas in French, a similar combination of signifiers ('mer'/'mdre') can mean both 'sea' and 'mother.'

The distinction made by Saussure implies a principle: the material organisation of a language is ontologically prior to any meaning it produces. Throughout the 1960s, semiotics had a significant impact on film theory by concentrating attention on the unique qualities of film, its specific differentia, that distinguished it from other forms of signification (such as novels and theatre).

However, there are a number of specifics that must be addressed. Because, while Saussure's distinction between signifier and signified functions flawlessly in a language, it is considerably more difficult to implement it in a visual medium such as film. What exactly takes the place of the signifier and the signified in any well-known sequence, such as the one at the conclusion of Ford's *The Searchers* (1956) when John Wayne is left standing outside the door? As we shall see, Christian Metz's works deal with this topic.

A second distinction proposed by Saussure was expanded upon in film semiotics. In English, as in Chinese, syntax can simply use word order to distinguish between 'Dog bites man' and 'Man bites dog' because language functions by moving forward in time. Saussure termed this horizontal axis of discourse 'syntagmatic,' noting that phrases were selected and rejected from a potential corpus lying in a vertical dimension (the 'associative' or 'paradigmatic'). Thus, in any of the aforementioned instances, 'Snake' is a potential paradigmatic replacement for 'Dog' or 'Man,' whereas 'Yesterday' is not, because 'Yesterday strikes man' is not a valid sentence.

Alternately, the syntagmatic axis can be viewed as a consistent structure that would remain unchanged if paradigmatic concepts were substituted along it. Vladimir Propp extended this theory to narrative analysis in 1928, identifying a common structure of thirty-one 'functions' across 115 Russian folk tales.

Thus, the function 'The hero departs home' (Propp 1968:11) can be fulfilled by phrases such as 'Lvan is sent to slay the dragon' or 'Dmitri goes in pursuit of the princess.'

Raymond Bellour (1972), in his study of *The Birds* (USA, 1963), and Peter Wollen (1982), in his analysis of *North by Northwest* (USA, 1959), both discussing Hitchcock, were the pioneers of a semiotic analysis of film narrative. Bellour dissects the Bodega Bay sequence shot-by-shot, while Wollen undertakes a comprehensive Proppian analysis of the entire film. Both analyses, as plausible as they are in detail, suffer from what are now recognised as the inevitable assumptions of formal narrative analysis: that there is only one narrative and not multiple concurrent narrative meanings, and that the narrative is 'out there' in the text and not constructed in the text-reader relationship.

Following Propp's example, narrative cinema analysis had the distinct advantage of deflecting discussion away from any discussion of the relationship or correspondence between a film and the actual world it was meant to depict. It focused on cinema as text, but at the expense of a corresponding restriction. Narrative is an effect that occurs in many different forms of text; therefore, focusing on narrative in films does not help us understand what is distinctive to film.

However, semiotic attention to cinema has the overall impact of diminishing concern with the issue of realism and increasing attention to cinema as a distinct type of textuality. After 1968, these tendencies were reinforced in an unexpected manner.

According to classic Marxism, the political and ideological "superstructure" is determined by the economic situation and method of production. In the 1960s, however, the French Marxist scholar Louis Althusser argued that conceptions of base and superstructure should be rethought in terms of economic, political, and ideological practices, each of which was "relatively autonomous" and had its own "particular effectivity."

Althusserian Marxism was equally stringent in excluding ostensibly non-political approaches to cinema as it was in rejecting film theory that began with literary or theatrical models after the revolutionary events of 1968 (such as the journal *Cahiers du cinéma*). In 1969, Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean Narboni asserted wrote in '*Cahiers du Cinéma*' that "every film is political" and "cinema is one of the languages through which the world expresses itself to itself" (1993:45,46). To comprehend cinema, one must first comprehend film in and of itself, apart from any other concept.

2.2 THE CRITIQUE OF REALISM

This theoretical breakthrough had the immediate effect of reopening the entire subject of realism in film in a significantly more compelling and radical manner. Complete realism analysis was impeded while film theory was devoted to a reflectionist concept of the text being judged against some prior conception of the real. Once 'reflectionism' is abandoned, cinematic reality can be viewed primarily as the consequence of particular text types.

Roland Barthes had previously suggested this. In the 1930s, Bertolt Brecht had done the same thing.

Brecht promoted his own version of modernist, anti-illusionist 'epic' drama, claiming that it was politically radical because it forced the audience to confront the text and think for themselves, while dismissing conventional naturalist or realist theatre as Aristotelian, as a finished, easily consumed product.

In a 1974 article titled "Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses," Colin MacCabe uses both Roland Barthes and Bertolt Brecht to argue that exterior reality is less significant than the text created through a particular signifying system. MacCabe's initial strategy is to concentrate on traditional realism, excluding works by Dreyer and the Hollywood musical

from his analysis. "A classic realist book is one in which there is a hierarchy among the discourses that make up the text, and this hierarchy is defined in terms of an empirical conception of truth," he writes (1993: 54).

On the basis of the relationship between metalanguage and object language, MacCabe asserts that all texts are composed of a diversity of distinct types of discourse, which can be divided into two groups. This conceptual distinction, coined by Alfred Tarski, refers to what occurs when one language addresses another, such as in the current English-written book *Teach Yourself Japanese*. Japanese is positioned as the object language, while contemporary English is positioned as the metalanguage, as it were, outside of Japanese and capable of being studied alongside it.

The words enclosed in inverted commas (what the characters say to one another) become an object language in the classic realist text, which the narrative prose (what isn't marked off as quoted) pledges to explain because the text cannot explain itself.

While the object language is perceived to be rhetorically constructed — the bias of the portrayed characters' points of view is all too apparent — the metalanguage can pass itself off as simply transparent, the voice of Truth: "The unquestioned nature of the narrative discourse necessitates that the only problem posed by reality is to go see what Things are there" (1993). According to MacCabe, in realism film, conversation becomes the object language, and what we see via the camera replaces the metalanguage by revealing what 'really' occurred. This effect encouraged viewers to disregard the fact that films are created (via scripts, photography, editing, and so on) and instead concentrate on the visual narrative as if it revealed what was already there.

According to MacCabe (and Brecht), realism is conservative because it cannot accommodate contradiction, which encompasses the possibility of change.

In continuation of MacCabe's thesis, Stephen Heath (1976) defines realism as 'narrative space.' Heath begins with the visual representation system upon which cinema, like photography, is based, namely the Quattrocento tradition, which evolved to depict three dimensional objects on a flat surface in such a way that the image has the same effect on the viewer as natural objects (see Bryson 1983 for a brilliant development of this thesis). The viewer is situated in the centre of what appears to be an all-encompassing vista in Quattrocentos space, which employs multiple techniques in addition to linear perspective.

Contrarily, cinema is a process that continuously threatens the fixity and cantering sought by the Western tradition of the static image.

The constant movement of figures and objects into and out of frame is likely to remind the viewer of the empty space that surrounds the screen.

Mainstream film attempts to mitigate for this precarious instability through narrative, a narrativization that "contains the mobility that threatens the

clarity of vision" (1993: 76) by continually re-centering the audience's perspective. Heath enumerates the procedures recommended by film manuals, including the use of a master shot, the 180-degree rule, matching on action, eyeline matching, and avoiding impossible angles, and asserts that they are all designed to ensure that "the spectator's illusion of seeing a continuous piece of action is not interrupted."

The opening of *Jaws* (USA, 1975) is a fantastic example: 'a beach party with the camera tracking slowly right along the line of faces of the participants until it stops on a young man looking away; eyeline cut to a young woman who is thus revealed as the object of his gaze; cut to a high-angle shot of the party that shows its general space, its situation before the start of the action with the run down to the ocean and the first shark attack' (1993: 80). According to Heath, conventional cinema seeks to transmute fixity into motion and absence into presence by elevating (in Laplacian terms) the Imaginary over the Symbolic via narratization.

An alternative or radical cinema would reject this type of coherence; instead, it would open its textuality, allowing the viewer to experience the process that they are always missing out on, a process that entails change and is necessary for any sense of coherence or stability.

In this way, MacCabe and Heath hope to deliver on their promise of combining semiology and ideology, a comprehensive examination of cinema's fundamental operation as a signifying effect with an appreciation of film's inherent political nature. Nonetheless, there is a substantial difference between the two accounts.

According to Heath, realism and the influence of narrative space endeavour to restrict the signification process, whereas for MacCabe, realism obliterates the signifier to achieve transparency. It is conceivable that MacCabe continues to write from a fundamentally structuralist stance, in which reality is a semiotic organisation that inevitably produces certain effects on the observer.

Heath, on the other hand, asserts that transparency is "impossible" (1993: 82) and begins by defining process as a subject process. Subjectivity is present in MacCabe's narrative, but not to the same extent as in Heath's. Heath then moves beyond structuralism to a post-structuralism that employs psychoanalysis to analyse cinema and subjectivity, particularly gendered subjectivity in the work of Laura Mulvey. Following Metz's redefinition of realism as a literary influence, this is where film theory moves.

2.3 STRUCTURALISM

2.3.1 Post- Structuralism and Deconstruction

Post-structuralism is a broad term that incorporates a number of theoretical innovations that have emerged after structuralism and semiotics.

On occasion, the term has been applied to the work of Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes, but most notably to the challenging and innovative revision

of Freud proposed by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, as well as to the work of Jacques Derrida, a kind of "anti-philosophy" known as deconstruction. This chapter will concentrate on the application of Derridean theory to film because the Guide devotes a separate page to the discussion of Lacanian psychoanalysis's fundamental influence on film studies.

If the objective and focus of film studies is the formal and thematic interpretation of particular films, deconstruction has little to offer. Deconstruction is neither a discipline nor a method; rather, it is a critical approach to the most fundamental aspects of knowledge production. Similar to Lacanian psychoanalysis, it concentrates on the meaning lapses, gaps, and contradictions that inevitably characterise all understanding. As a consequence, deconstruction has been considered a component of the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' that emerged from Freud and Nietzsche's anti-foundationalist research.

Although the application of deconstruction to film has been considerably less obvious than that of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Derrida's influence on philosophers such as gender theorist Judith Butler and post-colonial studies expert Homi Bhabha has been significant. It is accurate to say that Derridean thought has had a significant but predominantly indirect influence on film, as these thinkers have had a substantial impact on contemporary film writing.

Some on the left have also criticised deconstruction because it tends to call even progressive and liberatory thought into question. In reality, Derrida's ideas are profoundly political when properly understood as a critique of outmoded 'logocentric' thinking that has led to numerous political impasses in the past and present.

Despite this, a number of French and international theorists have explicitly applied key deconstructive theories to film. For instance, a deconstructive perspective can challenge the historiographical assumptions that permit us to divide film history into discrete, self-identifiable movements such as German Expressionism and Italian Neorealism, etc. Deconstructive analysis is also subject to the concept of cinematic genre, along with auteurs and authorial intent, which are already hotly contested. Deconstruction, perhaps most significantly, calls into question the very foundations of interpretation by revealing the institutional and contextual limitations that invariably precede any attempt at reading.

Deconstruction can be approached in a variety of ways, but it is most easily understood as a revision of the fundamental discoveries made by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure at the turn of the century. Father of structuralism and semiotics, Saussure asserted that there are "no positive concepts" in language, meaning that meanings are derived from distinctions between words and sounds rather than something inherent to words and sounds themselves.

Thus, the sound 'p,' like the word 'truth,' could never be functional on its own; they only differed from 't,' 'r,' or 's,' on the one hand, and 'error,' on the

other. If this is the case, it becomes apparent that 'error' is integral to the meaning of its ostensible opposite, truth, in a bizarre manner that contradicts conventional Western logic (which, according to Derrida, is founded on a 'metaphysics of presence'). In other words, paradoxically, truth cannot be conceived and therefore cannot exist in the absence of error.

Thus, error is both present and absent 'inside' truth, casting doubt on the principle of non-contradiction (the fundamental foundation of Western logic), which states that an object cannot be both A and not-A simultaneously.

Clearly, Western philosophy has relied since its inception on a set of self-identical concepts aligned as binary oppositions, such as truth-error, good-evil, spirit-body, nature-culture, man-woman, etc. In each case, one term is favoured or regarded as primary or original, whereas the second term is considered a (later) distortion of the first or inferior in some way. The primary objective of deconstruction has been to reverse and displace these ostensible oppositions, as a simple reversal would not alter the underlying binary logic.

Because deconstruction is founded on the concepts and terminology of semiotics, the distinction between signifier and signified is one of the first binary oppositions to be challenged. From a poststructuralist standpoint, it is simple to view the latter as a transcendent, almost spiritual entity that is privileged over the 'merely' material signifier, which is typically viewed as an impermanent container with no influence on the enclosed. Derridean theory emphasises the 'free play' between signifier and signified that underlies all meaning, demonstrating that the material signifier's markings never completely disappear in the face of the signified.

In addition, deconstruction, like Lacanian psychoanalysis, accentuates that meaning effects result from the sliding of signifiers within chains, as opposed to a signifier always leading to a signified.

In fact, when one looks up a term in a dictionary, the result is not a singular signified but a series of signifiers that must be looked up individually. Derrida has criticised Lacan for what he perceives to be an unacceptable originality based on his foundational trinity of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. Deconstructive theorists tend to agree with the feminist critique of Lacanian cinema theory's emphasis on the phallus as the primary signifier from which all meaning derives.

Derrida's early work, particularly *Of Grammatology* (1967), centres on dismantling the symptomatic binary opposition that, throughout the history of Western philosophy, has prioritised speech over writing. Derrida demonstrates in this work that since Plato and as recently as Saussure, Claude, and Levi Strauss, speech has been associated with the living breath and the 'real' meaning of the speaker, which is guaranteed by her presence, whereas writing has been viewed as dead, deceptive, and always an indication of an absence.

This is due in large part to the peculiar biological phenomenon that, when we speak (and listen), meaning appears to be a straightforward, 'natural' process with no intermediary. In conversation, the relationship between signifier and signified is seamless, whereas in writing, it is always more convoluted. We appear to believe, naively, that if a writer could speak to us in person, i.e., if she were present, we would comprehend precisely what she meant. In this work, Derrida demonstrates that the asserted immediacy and directness of speech is a fiction, and that all of the negative qualities associated with writing also apply to speech.

In a typical manner, he inverts the hierarchy, placing writing above speech, and then completely inverts the hierarchy by reframing the term 'writing' as 'Writing,' with an extended, intentionally paradoxical meaning that encompasses both writing (in the conventional sense) and speaking. As such, it joins a slew of other key terms developed by Derrida over the past three decades, such as trace, hinge, hymen, supplement, and difference (he purposely misspells this French word to emphasise its difference from itself, a difference that is reflected in writing but not in speech)-terms that attempt to name an impossible 'space,' to express presence and absence simultaneously.

However, without being innovative. Derrida asserts that these notions are neither 'words' nor 'concepts' in a (occasionally quixotic) effort to evade the metaphysics of presence.

This newly expanded concept of Writing is readily applicable to film, as the term cinematography clearly indicates the 'written' nature of cinematography. According to Derrida, the image, like written words whose meanings are always "disseminated" in multiple directions rather than being exclusively linear, cannot be limited to a single set of meanings. In fact, located/constructed meanings are inherently contradictory.

Authorial intent, which is notoriously feeble in film, cannot be considered a source of meaning because it is always fragmented and never unified. In reality, cinema is essentially divided into a visual track and an auditory track, which occupy separate physical positions on the celluloid strip but are artificially combined to create the illusion of wholeness and presence. In each of these respects, the image is fundamentally 'incoherent,' as any endeavour to cohere it will always require a more or less arduous epistemological effort of repression of 'secondary' meanings.

Consideration of cinema as a form of writing also complements the anti-realist tendency of contemporary film theory, as it challenges the notion that a film can ever be a "copy" of its referent. From a deconstructive perspective, however, Andre Bazin and other realism theorists insisted on the inherent connection or similarity between reality and its film depiction. Once it is accepted that reality and its representation must always be distinct (as well as similar), difference has equal claim to being the "essential" relationship between the two as similarity does.

More generally, deconstructive thinking can lead us away from a conventional notion of cinema and its relationship to reality as an analogical

one based on similarity, to a notion of cinema as "an anagram of the real," as Brunette and Wills (1989: 88) put it, a place of writing filled with non-natural conventions that allow us to comprehend it as a representation of reality.

Generally speaking, film as a medium is manifestly shaped by negativity, contradiction, and absence. Its effect depends on the absence of what it represents, which is paradoxically present in the form of a 'trace' (which also means 'impression' in the original French and conveys the same sense of absence and presence).

Likewise, the photographic process is based on an exchange that is inverted in a positive print. And using the (now largely discredited) theory of the persistence of vision, we can demonstrate that we couldn't even see the film image unless it was frequently absent due to the function of the shutter. The screen itself, as a material for picture support, must be both present and absent at the same time, because if we can see it, nothing else can be seen.

Deconstruction also questions the 'natural' relationship between original and copy (for instance, we never speak of a 'original' of a document unless there is also a 'copy' in question; thus, in a sense, the copy can be said to create the original), which has significant implications for a mimetic or imitative theory of artistic representation. It is evident, for instance, that a documentary, while nominally 'copying' the reality it focuses on, also serves to individuate that portion of reality by bringing it directly to our attention, and thus 'creating' it.

This is closely related to another concept that Derrida has analysed at length: the concept of iterability (repetition). He has pointed out that, by definition, each iteration of the "same" must be unique (otherwise, it could not be distinguished). Similarly, each time something is cited, it takes on a different meaning based on the context, as Derrida has demonstrated that nothing can be fully specified.

The concept of 'graft,' which is closely related to Roland Barthes' concept of intertextuality, is also applicable in this context. All texts are viewed as being composed of numerous adaptations of other texts in ways that cannot be fully traced. For instance, when we observe an actor in a film, we are necessarily conditioned by his or her appearances in other films; however, in a traditional, logocentric kind of critique, such meanings would not be considered part of the film, and would therefore be deemed 'improper.'

This brings us to another fundamental binary distinction called into question by deconstruction: the distinction between the interior and exterior. Marxist and Freudian critics were punished during the height of formalist literary analysis for 'importing' 'extrinsic' discourses into a poem or novel.

In the case of film, we may question whether the opening or closing credits are "in" the film, and thus a component of it, or "outside" the film, and thus distinct from it. Similarly, one might question whether Alfred Hitchcock's renowned cameo appearances in his films imply that he is a character in them. This reveals a flaw in the logic of inside-outside binary reasoning.

The question of the frame, which Derrida examines in depth in his 1978 book *The Truth in Painting*, is the larger issue at hand. In that work, Derrida writes, "There is framing, but the frame does not exist" (1978/1987, p. 81; translation modified).

This implies that the precise placement of the frame (whether it be a physical frame, for example, or an interpretive frame or context, or any other type of boundary marker) can never be known, despite the fact that its effects can be perceived. The cut is a function with distinct effects but no physical substance in film. It also calls the metaphysics of presence into question, as it is a type of relational absence rather than an obviously present object. In light of this ambiguity, some deconstructive film theorists have proposed that it makes as much sense to base a film's aesthetics on the cut (absence) as it does on the individual frame (presence).

In any case, the concept of the frame is indisputably significant in film as well, and although it is concentrated in a slightly different manner, it is equally perplexing. It is interesting that this word has two opposing meanings in its cinematic usage (and can be added to Derrida's list of key words): it is both the 'outside' boundary (one speaks of the 'Frameline') and the entire inside of the image (Godard said that cinema is 'truth twenty-four frames per second').

In a broader sense, the film frame can be understood as the set of understandings of genre, or of the so-called "real world," or of cinematic norms, etc., that we bring to a film; that is, the constantly shifting context that both permits and restricts interpretation.

This frame, this framed image, can also be interpreted as heterogeneous (consider how many distinct components within it must be suppressed in order to 'understand' it), graphic (again, in the sense that it is written), and pictorial. Much of Derrida's later work has centred on the pictorial nature of writing (in the conventional sense) and, conversely, the graphic nature of the image; both analyses are immediately relevant to a study of the formation of meaning in film.

The French theorist Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier has created the most significant link between Derrida and film to date, most notably in her 1981 book *Le Texte divise*. She combines, among other things, Derrida's explanation of the hybrid form of the hieroglyph (which is composed of phonetic, that is, graphic symbols that represent speech, as well as pictorial elements) with Eisenstein's formulation of montage theory there. In both instances, meaning is regarded as a complex activity that occurs in part through representation and in part through the juxtaposition of images.

Perhaps the most far-reaching effect of a deconstructive approach to film is the act of interpretation. Deconstruction demonstrates that it is impossible to specify what a 'correct' interpretation would look like. In this way, one could argue that the most significant contribution of deconstruction has been the analysis of the institutions that permit and regulate reading and meaning formation in general. It is necessary to emphasise.

Derrida is not a proponent of a "anything goes" reading theory, contrary to what his opponents and some of his most ardent supporters might have you believe. Instead, he has always emphasised the dual nature of his work: transcending the boundaries of traditional logic while remaining logically rigorous.

Check your progress

1. Explain in detail the Classic Film Theory.

2. Discuss at length 'The Critique of Realism'.

3. What is Structuralism? Explain Post – Structuralism and Deconstruction.

2.4 SEMIOTICS IN FILM

Understanding semiotics in film and cinema is essential. Particularly for aspiring filmmakers and those who are new to the film industry. Film semiotics is the study of semiosis, also known as the sign process. In addition to any sign-related conduct, action, or procedure. When signs are associated with moving images, semiosis also includes the generation of meaning.

2.4.1 What does the term semiotics mean?

Semiotics is the study of the formation and transmission of film meaning through culturally understood cues. The origins of semiotics in film lie in the academic study of signs and symbolism, which are inextricably linked to the formulation of meaning.

The manner in which the world is perceived, as well as the culture or environment in which we all reside, influences us on multiple levels, especially unknowingly.

Film semiotics firmly links the behaviours and thoughts that occur in response to a film's messages to the visual indications or cues provided by the medium.

Storytelling

Semiotic storytelling, or the use of signs to convey a story, recognises that people can interpret signs. owing to their own unique experiences and culture.

And that these signals are either taught inborn or learned. Or it could be acquired through social interactions and environmental interactions.

Video advertisements commonly mention semiotics in film. In which the delivered signals, symbols, and visual cues are planned for their connection to the spectator and meaning.

What is Semiotic Theory 2.4.2?

Semiology and film theory play a crucial role in the evolution of film theory as a whole. Regarding the film's signals and symbols, as well as their interpretations.

According to French film theorist Christian Metz, semiotic film theory is best known for employing semiology to analyse or structure the image in a manner most similar to a language.

Metz was the first to distinguish between a language system and a language referencing less-established systems principles in cinematic language.

Unconscious Comprehension

According to semiotic theory, humans comprehend due to unintentionally acquired cultural information. When we see a red light, for instance, we know to stop; even as children, we comprehend that the red light means to stop.

This is because, over time, cultural norms teach us unintentionally the meaning of the red light and its halt signal.

Deciphering the signal and understanding when to cease enables us to interact safely in groups and societies. Thus, according to semiotics, we are all semioticians because we unconsciously acquire and interpret cultural signs.

Check your progress

4. Discuss in detail 'Semiotics in Cinema'.

5. Write notes on :

a) Structuralism

b) Realism

Let's sum it up**A Widely Studied Topic**

In film, semiotics can be used to convey the intended message that the audience is expected to comprehend within the context of the film. Semiotics was initially studied predominantly within linguistics. However, he would shortly transition via psychology and anthropology into behavioural studies.

Culture and society would eventually become inextricably connected with semiotics. As a result, sociology and psychology investigated it. Today, semiotics is used to study and analyse consumer behaviour and their responses to brand messages.

Questions

Discuss semiotics

Explain the relation of semiotics to culture

Watch any film and analyse the semiotic significance of the film

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THE FORMATIVE TRADITION – HUGO MUNSTERBERG

Unit Structure

- 3.0 Hugo's Childhood
- 3.1 Career
- 3.2 Munsterberg's Perspectives on Psychophysical Parallelism
- 3.3 Contribution to Management Studies
- 3.4 Overview of Formalism Film Theory
- 3.5 Ideological Formalism
- 3.6 Formalism in auteur theory
- 3.7 What is Formalism Film Theory?
- 3.8 Formalism in Film Theory: Characteristics
- 3.9 Formalism in cinema theory has the following features:
- 3.10 The Relationship with Animation
- 3.11 Use of Formalism vs. Realism in Film
- 3.12 Cinematic realism: What is it?
- 3.13 But what does this phrase represent in reality?
- 3.14 What is formalist filmmaking?
- 3.15 Formalism versus realism
- 3.16 Formalism's distinctive quality
- 3.17 Formalism and realism in movies
- 3.18 Renowned realist cinema directors
- 3.19 How to include formalism and aesthetic reality into your projects

OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- **The works of Hugo Münsterberg**
- **The cinematic realism**
- **Formalism**

INTRODUCTION

Hugo Münsterberg was a German-born American psychologist who felt that psychology should be used to help solve real-world human behaviour problems. He pioneered applied psychology in the United States and had a substantial impact on industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology, forensic psychology, and clinical psychology. ("Hugo Munsterberg Biography + Contributions to Psychology")

3.0 HUGO'S CHILDHOOD

Hugo Münsterberg was born in Danzig, Prussia on June 1, 1863. (Now known as Gdansk, Poland). Moritz Münsterberg and Minna Anna Bernhardi were his parents. Moritz and his first wife had two kids, Otto and Emil. Moritz married Anna (a cousin of his former wife) when his first wife died unexpectedly, and she gave birth to Hugo and Oscar.

Hugo grew up in a Jewish middle-class home. He did not, however, identify with his Jewish origins. Moritz's father was a partner in a profitable lumber firm that bought lumber in Russia and sold it to merchants in England and Scotland. Anna, his mother, was a well-known musician and artist who continued to perform while caring for the four children.

The Münsterbergs were passionate about music, literature, and art. Moritz and Anna arranged for Hugo to attend a private grammar school before enrolling him at the Academic Gymnasium Danzig at the age of nine. Hugo was encouraged as a child to write poems, play the cello, write for the school newspaper, and act in local plays. His mother Anna, on the other hand, died when he was only 12 years old.

3.1 CAREER

Münsterberg agreed to work as a private instructor and professor at the University of Freiburg in 1887, and he subsequently released a slim volume titled *Activity of the Will*. Psychoanalyst Edward Titchener and philosopher Richard Wundt also critiqued the work, claiming that "Dr. Münsterberg has the terrible ability of writing easily—fatal especially in science...where correctness is the one thing most needed."

However, Münsterberg's theories profoundly intrigued American psychologist William James, particularly because they matched with James's own theory of emotion.

Münsterberg started working as an assistant professor at the Leipzig University in 1891. He met William James during the first International Congress of Psychology that year, which was held in Paris, France. James asked Münsterberg to run the psychology lab at Harvard in 1892 after the two kept in touch and met frequently together. 1 He typically remained in the lab and published his findings in German because of his limited English proficiency at the time. Münsterberg's laboratory was referred to as "the most important in America" by James McKeen Cattell.

Münsterberg received a permanent job offer following his three years at the lab. He turned down the opportunity and decided to go back to Europe. He returned to Harvard two years later and worked there for the remainder of his life. He was chosen to lead the American Psychological Association in 1898.

Hugo Münsterberg abruptly passed away on December 16, 1916, from a severe cerebral hemorrhage, collapsing before he could conclude his presentation at Radcliffe.

3.2 MUNSTERBERG'S PERSPECTIVES ON PSYCHOPHYSICAL PARALLELISM

Munsterberg supported the idea of psychophysical parallelism. Psychophysical parallelism is a dualist theory that asserts the mind and body function in parallel (or move in harmony), but do not interact or cause changes in each other. ("Hugo Munsterberg Biography + Contributions to Psychology") Munsterberg felt that physical acts were always fully correlated with specific cerebral processes. Psychophysical parallelism was central to much of his early studies on perception, attention, learning, and memory.

3.3 CONTRIBUTION TO MANAGEMENT STUDIES

He is regarded as the "father of industrial psychology" and is just as revered by psychology students as Frederick Taylor is by management students. Munsterberg made an effort to create useful applications of psychology. He suggested that psychologists could assist business in three key areas: a. Identifying individuals who are most suitable for particular professions. b. Determining the psychological circumstances necessary for maximum effectiveness. c. Identifying strategies for influencing people's behaviour so that it is consistent with management's goals

3.4 OVERVIEW OF FORMALISM FILM THEORY

In its broadest sense, formalism examines the synthesis—or lack thereof—of the various components of filmmaking as well as the emotional and intellectual impact of both the synthesis and of the component parts individually. Consider the lone component of editing, for instance. A formalist might research how jump cuts or non-continuity editing in Hollywood tends to provide a more unsettling or volatile effect while creating a more reassuring effect.

Another option is to think about combining different aspects, such editing, shot composition, and music. The shootout that concludes Sergio Leone's Dollars trilogy of spaghetti westerns is a remarkable illustration of how these components combine to create an effect: As the sequence moves closer to its conclusion, the length of the shots shortens while the music intensifies. The shot selection shifts from very wide to very close and

stressful. Tension is produced by all of these factors collectively rather than individually.

The distinctive feature of formalism is that it incorporates both the auteurism and ideological schools of critique. Style serves as the unifying factor for Formalist criticism in each of these instances. Ideologues concentrate on how socioeconomic factors produce a specific style, while auteurists concentrate on how auteurs infuse their own style into the work. Formalism focuses mostly on style and how it conveys concepts, feelings, and themes (rather than, as critics of formalism point out, concentrating on the themes of a work itself).

3.5 IDEOLOGICAL FORMALISM

Here are two examples of formalism-related ideological interpretations:

The traditional Hollywood style of filmmaking, also known as the institutional mode of representation, is very distinctive and includes dissolves, massive coverage, three-point lighting, "mood" music, continuity editing, and other techniques that aim to make the viewing experience as enjoyable as possible. The crude socio-economic ideological reason for this is that Hollywood wants to sell as many tickets and generate as much money as it can.

We are informed that throughout the war and post-war years, filmmakers (as well as moviegoers) were generally more pessimistic, which is why cinema noir, which was given its name by Nino Frank, is characterized by lower production quality, darker imagery, under lighting, location filming, and general nihilism. Additionally, the German Expressionists immigrated to America and carried with them their stylized lighting effects (as well as their disenchantment after the war, despite popular belief [citation needed]).

By taking this stance, it may be claimed that the style or "language" of these films is directly influenced by factors other than the people who made them, such as social, economic, and political pressures, of which the creators may or may not be aware. These categories—classic Hollywood film, the American independent movement, contemporary LGBT cinema, and the French, German, and Czech new waves—are all products of this field of critique.

3.6 FORMALISM IN AUTEUR THEORY

The auteur theory is the antithesis of the ideological approach, celebrating the individual, typically the filmmaker, and how his or her decisions, thoughts, and style manifest themselves in the work. The ideological approach is concerned with broad movements and the effects of the world around the filmmaker.

François Truffaut and the other young cinema critics who wrote for *Cahiers du cinéma* founded this branch of criticism for two reasons.

It was first developed to preserve the film medium itself. Truffaut aimed to elevate films (and their directors) to a level of significance at least equal to that of other widely acknowledged creative forms like literature, music, and painting by suggesting that films had auteurs, or creators. Each of these artistic mediums, as well as their respective criticism, focuses primarily on a single creative force: the author of a novel (not, for example, his editor or typesetter), the composer of a piece of music (though occasionally the performers are given credence, similar to actors in modern cinema), or the painter of a fresco (not his assistants who mix the colours or often do some of the painting themselves). By giving the director—rather than the screenwriter—the same status as authors, composers, or painters, it aimed to dispel the myth that cinema is a muddled art form that falls in between theatre and literature.

Second, it aimed to elevate a lot of filmmakers who were denigrated by mainstream critics. It made the case that genre directors and low-budget B-movies were as essential as prestige films, if not more so, than those that were typically accorded greater attention and respectability in France and the US. According to Truffaut's perspective, auteurs took genres that weren't really suited to them, such as romances, action movies, and thrillers, and added their own distinctive spin to them.

3.7 WHAT IS FORMALISM FILM THEORY?

Formalism film theory, often known as formalist film theory, is the study of the technical aspects of filmmaking, including those pertaining to the set, costumes, props, lighting, and sound of the movie. The use of colour, composition, shots, and film editing are also included.

According to formalist theory, the Director alters reality for the viewer by utilising a variety of filmmaking techniques.

Things like employing and training professional performers, as well as the usage of special effects. Additionally, editing can be used to alter the timing of the events being shown on the screen.

Formalism basically refers to the usage of filmmaking methods and components, in order to construct a completely made-up, fictitious world. Almost all of the contemporary films that we view nowadays can be categorised as formalist to some extent.

If we investigate them, we'll find that they all largely make use of experienced actors, elaborate special effects, time-stretching or -reversing editing, and dramatic lighting, additionally, to sound to amplify the made-up universe.

3.8 FORMALISM IN FILM THEORY: CHARACTERISTICS

Actually, neither formalists nor formalism are defined by any particular set of traits. In fact, a formalist theory of film may be said to include any altered or synthesised usage of diverse filmmaking elements and techniques.

However, what we observe in the majority of contemporary films is the use of adjusted lighting to achieve a particular image and the use of sound to exaggerate a particular occurrence. Or the use of expert acting to exacerbate the situation is all indicative of formalist cinema theory.

3.9 FORMALISM IN CINEMA THEORY HAS THE FOLLOWING FEATURES:

- the usage of actors with experience.
- lighting technique used to produce synthesised perspectives.
- using editing to change the speed of time.
- use of sound to exaggerate circumstances or happenings.
- breaking the illusion of a realistic event or thing by using props or other factors.
- special effects are heavily used to further synthesise the world.

3.10 THE RELATIONSHIP WITH ANIMATION

If after reading this, you think, "Animation!" You are entirely correct! The goal of formalist cinema theory is to present to us a manufactured, synthesised reality that is entirely artificial and unreal.

And animations are generally really good at this. As a result, formalism is significantly present in many animations.

Additionally, certain camera angles relate to formalism cinema theory. For instance, the POV perspective, the over-the-shoulder shot, and the long shot are all frequently used in movies of this genre.

Combinations of these photos are widely used to convey the perception of a break from reality in an image or a vista. The formalism cinema theory is in action here.

Because of the dislocation from reality caused by the employment of tools, methods, and other filmmaking components, different moods and intentions can be created.

Check Your Progress:

1) Give an overview of Formalism Film Theory

2) Discuss Formalism in auteur theory

3.11 USE OF FORMALISM VS. REALISM IN FILM

The distinction between truth and art can easily start to blur once you start exploring the world of film theory. After all, to paraphrase French film critic André Bazin from *What is Cinema?*, a foundational classic of cinema criticism, "Reality is not art; nonetheless, realistic art has the ability to produce a realistic aesthetic."

However, there are still a lot of options to be made for filmmakers who are planning to shoot their first short films regarding how you can choose to portray truth in your film against how much you investigate reality and the avant garde.

Let's look at some of these challenging film choices before attempting to understand the age-old argument between cinematic realism and formalism. And whether you're working on a short film, corporate video, or commercial production, you'll ideally be better prepared to tell stories where you may develop your own unique integral aesthetic of reality.

3.12 CINEMATIC REALISM: WHAT IS IT?

There are several significant genres and styles to examine in terms of film theory as we go back through cinematic history. But there is still one kind of movie that stands out: the idea of realism (also known as "cinematic realism") in movies.

3.13 BUT WHAT DOES THIS PHRASE REPRESENT IN REALITY?

Simply put, the phrase "cinematic realism" refers to a subset of films that fall within the umbrella of the trend known as realism in art. Since the aim of this cinematic realism is to depict all of the little and intimate sights, sounds, and emotions of daily life on the big screen, it is also known as "slice of life film."

We'll go through a couple of them below. Filmmakers can choose (and have chosen) to produce cinematic realism as a cinematic style in a variety of ways. It's easiest to think of it from the standpoint of a simple definition as a categorical phrase that matches the aesthetic within a larger realist art trend.

3.14 WHAT IS FORMALIST FILMMAKING?

We must discuss formalism, which is on the opposing extreme of the cinema theory spectrum. This viewpoint is frequently viewed as being opposed to cinematic realism and the intentions of traditional realist filmmakers. Realism and reality are less important than fictional events and diverse movie genres (and other types of entertainment) that are designed to be enjoyed.

Formalism is generally seen as being the complete antithesis of realism. It focuses on the "formal" or technical aspects of film and how they might be used to tell more commercial and entertaining stories in movies and videos.

As a result, there are a lot more possibilities for filmmakers to apply formalism in their work. Because of the way it is made, every aspect—including the script, the shooting, the lighting, the editing, the soundtrack, etc.—must function in unison and adhere to a specific formula.

3.15 FORMALISM VERSUS REALISM

As was already established, the easiest way to talk about cinematic realism and formalism is only in terms of how they relate to one another. And in many respects, this argument may lie at the centre of film theory and criticism, at least in terms of how we as filmmakers (and cinephiles) are forced to confront the consequences of cinematic narrative.

Here are some of the salient characteristics of each of these distinctive styles, again from the perspective of basic definition:

Realistic filmmaking traits, commonly known as "slice of life cinema"

It focuses on the commonplace, unremarkable, and unimportant aspects of life.

Without additional effects or meaning, shots are more objective.

Cameras are typically framed at eye level to capture human movement and behaviour.

Shots are frequently static or barely moving while mounted on a tripod.

Without any additional flair, the lighting and arrangement feel open and haphazard.

Instead of being customised sets, locales are typically actual places.

The goal of editing is to maintain continuity and is not to in any way be distracting.

Diegetic music and sounds are created to come from the outside world.

3.16 FORMALISM'S DISTINCTIVE QUALITY

It is regarded as a traditional Hollywood look.

Its main goal is to make engaging movies that viewers will appreciate.

Shots are intended to create effects and meaning and are more arbitrary.

To provide variation, the camera can be set up with various angles, levels, and lengths.

Shots typically include movement to make them more engaging and fun.

The goal of the lighting and composition is to engross the audience in the action.

Locations are frequently on managed sets, helping with production.

Editing places more of an emphasis on entertaining and plot than strictly on continuity.

To add excitement to the movie, non-diegetic music and sound effects can be used.

As you can see, these two dissimilar cinema genres stand symmetrically in opposition to one another. However, since filmmakers have discovered methods to blend components of both into their own particular approaches, the dispute between the two rapidly becomes murky.

3.17 FORMALISM AND REALISM IN MOVIES

We'll discuss some well-known directors later, along with their unique preferences and techniques, but for now, let's focus on realism and the various subgenres that make up this film genre.

The term "classical realism" refers to an artistic movement from the early twenty-first century that, via its experiments with paintings and photography, greatly influenced the cinematic realism aesthetic.

Classical Hollywood cinema: The era of formalism in film, which was the original dominating style, occurred from the 1910s to the 1960s, during the height of American cinema.

Neorealism: Also known as Italian neorealism due to its cinematic origins in Italy, this post-World War II movement sought to portray the everyday conditions and psychology of the Italian people.

Surrealism: A reaction to early 21st-century realism that attempted to shock and test audience perceptions, surrealism is characterised by the rejection of dramatic psychology.

The documentary filmmaking technique known as *cinéma vérité*, which gained popularity in the 1960s and beyond, aimed to capture "genuine cinema" from real-life occurrences in films with no overt messages or meanings.

With its roots in sculpture and painting, hyperrealism is a more contemporary form of realism that concentrates on precise, photographic realism in its visuals.

Psychological realism is a hybrid kind of realism that adds realistic details to formalistic storytelling to show the interior thoughts and stories of characters.

3.18 RENOWNED REALIST CINEMA DIRECTORS

Now let's examine a few particular directors to discover how they have chosen to adhere to these various cinema ideas and subgenres. Some of the most well-known directors in cinematic history, from Jean Renoir to Martin Scorsese, have developed fresh and inventive approaches to use these traditions.

The Rules of the Game by Jean Renoir, 1939 As a true filmmaking pioneer, Jean Renoir's most well-known work might be viewed since a superb illustration of the application of classic realism in film, as he made an effort to show actual people in a lifelike and real way.

The Bicycle Thieves by Vittorio De Sica (1948): *The Bicycle Thieves*, one of the most well-known examples of Italian neorealism, is used in film classes as the standard illustration of how Italian filmmakers in the 1940s introduced a furious, and at times painful, honesty to filmmaking.

Raging Bull, directed by Martin Scorsese, was perhaps his most effective attempt to subvert a typical sports and wrestling genre picture by adding realistic elements. Scorsese is known for fusing several genres and techniques.

Before Sunrise by Richard Linklater, from the *Sunrise* trilogy, is a remarkable illustration of what can be accomplished when you forgo many of the formalistic aspects of traditional filmmaking and instead concentrate on characters and everyday interaction.

The Hurt Locker, directed by Kathryn Bigelow, won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 2008. It is arguably one of the best examples of how modern Hollywood skilfully combines parts of reality with formalism.

3.19 HOW TO INCLUDE FORMALISM AND AESTHETIC REALITY INTO YOUR PROJECTS

The challenge is now: How do you incorporate the aesthetics and characteristics of realism and formalism into your own works of art? While we could provide you with a list of the many camera angles to use and compositional styles to take into account, the real solution will depend on your personal cinematic preferences.

In many ways, traditional Hollywood production and theatre screenings are on the verge of extinction as we stand at the dawn of a new era of film and media. Up-and-coming filmmakers have access to new media platforms like TikTok and YouTube, while streaming providers are experimenting with unheard-of formats and lengths.

However, a lot of your filmmaking choices will depend on whether you want to depict real life accurately or alter it. There is no right or wrong answer in this situation regarding the options you select, but knowing how

these choices have historically been made will help you make more informed judgments in the future.

Check Your Progress:

1) Explain the Use of Formalism vs. Realism in Film

2) Write a note on : Formalism versus realism

CONCLUSION

Hugo Munsterberg's "The Formative Tradition" is an essay on the history and development of cinema as an art form. Munsterberg argues that cinema is a unique medium with its own distinct language and aesthetic, and that it has the potential to be a powerful tool for artistic expression.

Munsterberg traces the evolution of cinema from its early days as a novelty to its emergence as a popular form of entertainment, and ultimately as a recognized art form. He identifies several key elements that have contributed to the development of cinema, including the use of camera movement, editing, and lighting to create mood and atmosphere, and the incorporation of music and sound to enhance emotional impact.

Munsterberg also notes the importance of storytelling in cinema, arguing that it is through the narrative structure that filmmakers are able to create meaning and engage with audiences. He suggests that the best films are those that combine technical mastery with a compelling narrative, and that they have the power to move and inspire audiences.

Munsterberg's "The Formative Tradition" is an important contribution to the study of cinema as an art form, emphasizing the unique qualities of the medium and its potential for artistic expression.

QUESTIONS

What is Munsterberg's argument about the evolution of cinema as an art form?

How does Munsterberg describe the language and aesthetics of cinema?

What key elements does Munsterberg identify as contributing to the development of cinema?

What role does storytelling play in cinema, according to Munsterberg?

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SERGEI EISENSTEIN

Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Eisenstein and his works
- 4.3 Montage and Eisenstein
- 4.4 Different types of Montage
- 4.5 Montage an important tool to express emotions
- 4.6 Summing up
- 4.7 Questions
- 4.8 References

4.0. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- What makes Sergei Eisenstein an important filmmaker in the history of cinema
- Understanding montage as an important tool to express emotions and in telling a story
- Different types of montage

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Sergei Eisenstein was one of the greatest directors in the history of cinema. He was born on January 22, 1898, and passed away on February 11, 1948. Besides being a film director, Eisenstein was a film theorist and greatest proponent of soviet montage theory. Eisenstein shot to fame with three major films in the cinema world. According to Britannia Encyclopaedia, Eisenstein's three film classics Battleship Potemkin (1925), Alexander Nevsky (1938), and Ivan the Terrible (released in two parts, 1944 and 1958) catapulted his reputation

Eisenstein had Jewish ancestry. He lived in Riga in Latvia. His father Mikhail Eisenstein was a civil engineer who worked in shipbuilding till 1910. Then, the family moved to St. Petersburg. Eisenstein studied at Institute of Civil Engineering, St Petersburg between 1916 and 1918. He decided to have a career in the plastic arts and enrolled at School of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was a great event which changed the course of almost every field in the Soviet Union, also known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). At this point, Eisenstein enlisted in the Red Army, the army and air force of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. He was assigned the job of constructing defences and entertaining the troops. This was a blessing in disguise for him. Eisenstein found his calling. It was cinema which had irresistible pull for him. In 1920, he entered the Proletkult Theatre, which meant Theatre of the People in Moscow as an assistant decorator. He made huge progress and he was promoted to co-director in the theatre. He also he designed costumes and the scenery for several notable productions.

He also developed a high interest in the Kabuki theatre of Japan. This interest helped in creating his ideas which would form the foundation of his personal philosophy of films. According to Britannia Encyclopedia, Eisenstein made a short film, **Dnevnik Glumova** (Glumov's Diary). He showed the performance in 1923. After making this short film, Eisenstein's interest in cinema blossomed into passion. He made his first film, **Stachka** (*Strike*) in 1925. He published his first article on theories of editing in a magazine **Lef**. Gradually, in a progressive way, Eisenstein developed his ideas about montage. He describes it as **montage of attractions** which means choosing images arbitrarily independent of action and not in chronological order.

The aim of such process is to create maximum psychological impact on a viewer. In this way, a director can establish clearly his or her ideas in consciousness of viewers. This approach became the very foundation of Eisenstein's filmmaking in future. It is observed that these ideas continue to remain important for Eisenstein as regards critiquing a film. Most of his own films were made with this approach in mind. The montage of attractions was used effectively to accentuate an event or idea or thought in a scene.

4.2. EISENSTEIN AND HIS WORKS

According to film scholars, in his film **Strike** (1925), Eisenstein juxtaposed the scene of workers killed by machine guns with the scene of cattle being butchered in a slaughterhouse, indicating the heinous element of killing human beings. Scholars point out that the scene was pronounced enough to create a feeling of horror among viewers and sensitised them about violence. In this process, Eisenstein sacrificed the objective reality of killing of people because the scene of slaughterhouse accentuated the killings of people in an effective way. Keeping these ideas in mind, Eisenstein made critically acclaimed films such as **October** (1928), **Alexander Nevsky** (1938) and **Ivan the Terrible** ((Part One (1944), Part Two (1958)). A film which made Eisenstein a favourite and influential among critics and viewers is **Battleship Potemkin** (1925). The film shows the strong mutiny of the crew of Russian battleship Potemkin against the officers of the ship. This mutiny was a precursor to the Russian Revolution of 1917. In the film, there is an influential sequence on the Odessa steps. In this sequence, civilians

are massacred by Tsar's soldiers. The tension, the grotesqueness, the horror, and the deep sense of inhumanity was shown through the scenes as Tsar's soldiers marched down the Odessa steps to kill civilians who are protesting. This scene is considered a classic in the history of cinema largely because of the highly tensed editing done by Eisenstein. The film earned him the title "revolutionary Russian director."

Film historian David Bordwell in his book **The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film** writes about Sergei Eisenstein. He notes, "Eisenstein's films of the 1920s are, in both content and form, paradigms of Marxist art" He says, "The level of themes and issues these films illustrate "the Bolshevik version of history, which places class struggle at the centre of change", at the micro level they "exemplify a politicized conception of cinematic narrative" by subordinating actions of individual characters (represented through type) to a larger dynamic of social struggle between opposing classes." He explains that Eisenstein's films strike a good balance of the content and form. He says, "While their content is shaped by Marxism's materialist understanding of history, the montage theory that typifies their form is anchored in Eisenstein's understanding of Engels's dialectics." He states, "The idea that Eisenstein's theory and practice of the silent era were little more than an expression of Bolshevik Marxism."

After the huge success and critical acclaim of **Battleship Potemkin** (1925), Eisenstein made **October or Ten Days That Shook the World** (1928), **The General Law** (1929), **Sentimental Romance** (1930) and the medieval epic of **Alexander Nevsky** (1938).

Eisenstein left behind a considerable legacy which has served well for future filmmakers. Just like non-native English language speakers and writers learn grammar from Wren and Martin English Grammar book, in the same fashion, budding filmmakers learn the craft of filmmaking by watching films of Sergei Eisenstein. Naum Kleiman, a leading Russian authority on Eisenstein in a lecture on him said, "Eisenstein's early films conceived of social change and political cinema in broader terms, far exceeding the confines of class struggle. In his article "What Modelled Eisenstein's Art?", Kleiman hypothesizes that Eisenstein's revolutionary trilogy modelled a revolution and a strike *in general*, and are concerned with broader themes of innocence, dignity, violence and justice."

Kleiman says that Eisenstein's understanding of the construction of historical film, its formal and compositional levels, and his use of intertextual references are important. He argues in the lecture that Eisenstein developed and implemented a unique understanding of historical film. He says, "He not only does what was normally presented as historical background for the actions of human protagonists come to the foreground in his films, but also the general historical laws that reveal themselves in these developments are scrutinized, while at the same time the singularity of their occurrence is addressed through the formal composition of the film."

4.3. MONTAGE AND EISENSTEIN

The etymological source of Montage comes from the French word “Monter” which means “to mount” or “to assemble.” This is what essentially Eisenstein achieved through editing and created highly evocative films. Scholars cite that the ideas associated with montage theory provided a distinct edge to Eisenstein’s films. Eisenstein had original ideas about montage. In fact, these ideas made him an influential film theorist. In fact, many film scholars point out that he was one of the few early film theorists in the history of cinema. He developed five major types of montage thanks to his long experience and deep understanding of craft of filmmaking. Many film scholars have captured in their books how Eisenstein arrived at various nuances of montage.

Writer Sandra Kuberski in her book **Sergei Eisenstein’s Montage Techniques and their Meanings in Comparison to Louis Buñuel’s "Un Chien Andalou"** writes, “In 1923, Eisenstein published his first and most famous essays: The Montage of Attractions. In this treatise, Eisenstein describes his attempt to create a ‘film language’ consisting of visual figures of speech and abstract discursive arguments.” She writes, “He understood the term ‘attractions’ as images or events which easily attract the attention of the viewer, like circus acts. Thus, it is his purpose to not only combine concrete visual images, but to cause whole chains of associations.” She notes, “It is not the realistic depiction that interests Eisenstein, but the motoric and associative construct behind it and that all shots are selected with regard to an underlying concept and effect.”

4.4. DIFFERENT TYPES OF MONTAGE

In his essay “The Fourth Dimension in Cinema”, Eisenstein explains five types of montage, of which each has a certain effect on the viewer: **Metric, Rhythmic, Tonal, Over tonal, and Intellectual**. Let us understand each of these:

Metric

This is usually connected with metre of music. This kind of montage relates to space which is followed by music. The metric montage is the simplest kind of montage. One of the easiest ways to understand metric montage is to look at music videos. A video is cut into clips which are in sync with the beat of the music. There is no need for continuity in clips if a story is told in the video. Scholars cite metric montage helps in creating highly emotionally charged scenes of suspense or drama. In a large sense, metric montage creates with visual place within a scene.

Rhythmic

Rhythmic montage involves the pace of cutting between two shots. It can change the pace of scene and hence, a film. So, due to a rhythmic montage either a film has a fast or slow pace. A distinction one needs to keep in mind

about rhythmic montage is it creates both visual and auditory sense in a scene.

Tonal

Tonal montage gives rise to highly emotional connected scenes. Scenes are cut to connect emotional tone of a scene with the next scene's emotional tone. In this way, directors pay attention to emotional high or low points in a scene and cut scenes accordingly. As a result of this, directors achieve desired emotional effect on a viewer.

Over tonal

Scholars cite that over tonal montage is a modern invention. It is a technique which uses all tonal, rhythmic, and metric montages in a scene. This technique maximises the impact of montage in a scene. In terms of presentation, it makes a film engaging. This is because a particular conflict or theme is emphasised in a film when scenes are cut in over tonal montage format. In such cuttings, participation of viewers increases as they begin to think about scenes and the film.

Intellectual

Intellectual montage is also referred to as Kuleshov Effect and ideological montages. It is metaphorical in nature. Sequence of images represents a metaphor and triggers different reactions in a viewer. In an intellectual montage, two unrelated images or shots create a secondary meaning. This secondary meaning may not be there in these images or shots. In a large sense, the meaning-making exercise is done by audience.

4.5. MONTAGE AN IMPORTANT TOOL TO EXPRESS EMOTIONS

In the early 1910s and 1920s, Russian director Lev Kuleshov had demonstrated a film editing technique called the Kuleshov effect. In this technique, viewers would derive their own meaning two shots. Kuleshov made a short film. It had three distinct shots. The first shot shows a bowl of soup. The second shot shows a girl in a coffin. And the third shot shows a woman lying on a couch. When the short film was shown audiences immediately created their meanings. The first shot reflected hunger (soup), the second shot showed grief or sadness (coffin) and the third shot showed desire (woman).

This kind of editing became one of the most widely used techniques in cinema. Even today, many film-makers use intellectual montage to convey deep emotions. By using contrasting images, this montage increases the participation of a viewer in a film, thereby increasing a viewer's emotional investment in a film.

Eisenstein used montage with a distinct ideology. With the effective combination of ideology and montage, his films would trigger discussions among viewers, scholars, and film-lovers. Writer Sandra Kuberski in her

book **Sergei Eisenstein's Montage Techniques and their Meanings in Comparison to Louis Buñuel's "Un Chien Andalou"** writes "The prospect of a discursive cinema that could lay out arguments and present entire systems of thought" fascinated Eisenstein," She adds, "Eisenstein envisioned using montage to generate not only emotions but also abstract concepts: 'From image to emotion, from emotion to thesis.'"

She points out that these five types of montage overlap in the Odessa staircase scene in the film **Battleship Potemkin** (1925). Writer Sandra Kuberski writes in her book, "The fragmentary images of Eisenstein confront the viewer – he has to think about them and draw his own conclusion, "in further consequence, the seen images merge with the associative thoughts of the viewer and a third 'higher' – in Eisenstein's case a political and ideological – meaning emerges." To achieve this effect and arouse strong feelings in the viewer, Eisenstein's montage strings together several shocking 'attractions'. The massacre on the Odessa stairs is especially outstanding."

She writes, "In contrast to conventional editing that juxtaposes continuing shots, Eisenstein held the belief that shots create the most powerful meaning when they clash. In this logic he refers to German philosopher Hegel (1770-1831) and his dialectical process, in which one shot (thesis A) and the succeeding shot (antithesis B) clash and simultaneously unify to synthesis C and yield a higher, 'third meaning'. She explains, "In this sense, the combination of two images of concrete objects has "to be regarded not as their sum, but as their product" a depiction of an abstract concept or idea that is graphically unrepresentable, invisible and not a fixed symbol.

In this manner, a film acquires high emotional depth and considerable amount of pace which keeps a viewer engaged. Sandra Kuberski writes in her book points out that Eisenstein builds emotion and meaning up progressively, elaborately leading to the climactic moment.

4.6. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is montage theory?

2. Explain different types of montage?

3. What is the contribution of Sergei Eisenstein in developing montage theory?

Sergei Eisenstein - 4

4.7. SUMMING UP

Sergei Eisenstein was a pioneer in developing the grammar of filmmaking. He along with his able filmmakers in the Soviet Union focused on one aspect: How editing is a key tool in structuring a story and even tell a story in different ways. After Russian director Lev Kuleshov, Eisenstein was one of the early filmmakers who realised the potential of montage (to assemble) in expressing emotions and interpreting them. Through various cutting of a scene, Eisenstein developed five types of montage editing. These are: **Metric, Rhythmic, Tonal, Over tonal, and Intellectual.** A proof of these various types of editing is Eisenstein's own films. **Battleship Potemkin** includes Odessa Steps sequence which shows the plight of Russian people under the oppressive Tsar's rule.

QUESTIONS

Name a few important films of Eisenstein which put him in the league of pioneers?

Could you share your views on Odessa Staircase sequence in the film Battleship Potemkin?

Discuss any one movie with montage and explain its significance to the movie

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RUDOLF ARNHEIM

Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2. What are some key ideas proposed by Rudolf Arnheim in his book Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye (1954)?
- 4.3. What are the salient features of his seminal work in film studies “Film As Art”?
- 4.4. What is the contribution of Arnheim in developing Formalist Film Theory?
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4.0. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand the contribution of Rudolf Arnheim in the field of:

- Film studies
- Visual Arts
- Psychology

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Rudolf Arnheim was an influential art and film theorist and visual experience psychologist. He was born in Berlin, Germany on July 15, 1904. Psychology was one of the subjects that attracted Arnheim since his childhood. He took a keen interest in Sigmund Freud's works. At Berlin University he studied experimental psychology and philosophy. He studied music and art history at the same university.

Arnheim was one of the earliest film theorists who investigated the applicability of Gestalt theory to the perception of art. Arnheim has authored extremely influential works in the arts and film. Two of Arnheim's works are highly regarded and are referred to even by art and film scholars. Film as Art (1932) and Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye (1954) are examples of such works. Additionally, Arnheim has written numerous publications on the arts. Towards a Psychology of Art (1966), Visual Thinking (1969), and The Power of the Centre (1983) are the titles. Throughout his career, Rudolf Arnheim received prestigious fellowships. Among these are the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1942 and the Rockefeller Foundation in 1943, which stand out.

4.2. WHAT ARE RUDOLF ARNHEIM'S CENTRAL ARGUMENTS IN HIS 1954 BOOK ART AND VISUAL PERCEPTION: A PSYCHOLOGY OF THE CREATIVE EYE?

In a tribute to Arnheim, one of the most influential film historians, David Bordwell, writes, "He was one of the most influential theorists of the visual arts of the 20th century, and he had a tremendous impact on how people, including film theorist Kristin Thompson and me, think about film." In an obituary for Arnheim, architectural historian James Ackerman writes, "From the perspective of the 1990s, Rudi Arnheim emerges as the quintessential advocate of modernism in the field of psychology – a discipline virtually contemporaneous with the modern movement. He elucidated for tens of thousands of readers and students the significance of perceptual processes to their responses to the arts, particularly the abstract aspects of art. It was impossible to designate a successor of his stature and scope upon his retirement."

Let us comprehend the significant concepts expressed in Arnheim's significant works:

(1954) book titled *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye*.

This book has become a classic not only among serious art and film scholars, but also among those interested in human psychology. All elements of Gestalt philosophy are present. Arnheim was taught at the University of Berlin by Max Wertheimer and Wolfgang Kohler. Max Wertheimer and Wolfgang Kohler were the two primary originators of Gestalt psychology. Gestalt psychology is summarised by the adage "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Simply stated, it indicates that observers perceive the entire pattern and not its individual components. Here are several salient characteristics of the book:

Vision is the perception of significant structural patterns rather than the mechanical recording of elements.

Visual encounters are dynamic.

Every aspect of visual experience has a corresponding physiological counterpart within the nervous system.

Any stimulus pattern is typically perceived so that the resulting structure is as plain as the conditions allow.

The overall structural characteristics are the primary perceptual data, not the particulars.

What is meant by the term simplicity? First, it can be defined as the subjective experience and evaluation of an observer who has no trouble understanding what is conveyed to him. What Spinoza said regarding order

is applicable to simplicity. According to a passage in the *Ethics*, we have a firm belief that there is order in the objects themselves, despite our lack of knowledge regarding their nature.

A shape is never perceived as the form of a single object, but rather as the form of a category of things. In two respects, shape is a concept: first, because we perceive every shape as a type of shape. Second, because each type of shape is perceived as the form of an entire category of objects

4. 3 WHAT ARE THE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS SEMINAL FILM STUDIES WORK "FILM AS ART"?

Now, let's continue on to another influential work by Arnheim: *Film as art* (1932). The book is a compilation of essays written by Arnheim in 1957 about cinema in Germany and Italy during the 1930s. It was published as *Film as Art* in the United States by the University of California Press. The essays primarily examine the silent films of Charlie Chaplin, F.W. Morneau, E. A. Dupont, Carl Dreyer, Rene Clair, Serge Eisenstein, King Vidor, and other pioneering directors who demonstrated that film is an art form. Here are a few salient characteristics of the book's ideas as expressed by Arnheim:

In his review of *Film as Art*, film historian and critic Frank Beaver writes, "Arnheim's interest in and comprehension of the interrelationship between art and visual perception—a field of study in which he would become a leading scholar—is very evident in *Film as Art*."

Arnheim states, "A distinguishing characteristic between "reality" and film art is the "relativity of movement in film," such as the use of a rapidly moving camera that allows the viewer (in a stationary position) to participate in a unique, vertigo-inducing visual experience that the human eye alone is incapable of producing."

Beaver notes that Arnheim asserts that film visualisations can stimulate a variety of sensory sensations, and he contends that a film's content must be "visual" above all else.

Arnheim examines how the medium (film) allows for artistic expression. He discusses unforgettable landscapes in classic silent films. He claims that the various screen visualisations affect the viewer. He discusses several iconic film sequences. The use of unusual angles in filming the characters in Dupont's *Vaudeville* (originally titled *Variety*), Carl Theodor Dreyer's close camera placement to effect dynamic perspective changes in *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, light and dark visual contrasting in Josef von Sternberg's *The Docks of New York*, and the use of montage in the editing of Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin to "build" their films.

Beaver observes that Arnheim pays special attention to film acting and to the ways in which film can express abstract and complicated ideas not only through captivating camera visualisation, but also through dramatic

invention within the narrative. The dazzling pantomime parallels of Chaplin in *The Gold Rush* are mentioned. Arnheim describes a scenario in which Chaplin's character consumes a shoe. It is an insightful analysis of the disparity between the wealthy and the poor.

Beaver concludes: "Film as Art concludes with two short essays, both written in the 1930s, that speculate on the artistic possibilities of talking pictures and television, a further indication of the book's prescient brilliance."

4.4 WHAT ROLE DID ARNHEIM PLAY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORMALIST FILM THEORY?

Formalist Film theory is a significant contribution to film studies. Rudolf Arnheim was a proponent of this filmmaking technique. Formalist Film Theory examines the emotive or intellectual impact of each filmmaking element, including editing, set design, lighting, special effects, and shot composition, on the viewer. When formalist film theory is employed, these elements can be analysed as a whole or individually. This is a crucial element of narration. In a film, the use of light to depict two contrasting characters is one example. For a morally upright character, the illumination is bright. On the other hand, the illumination is dim for a character who is morally reprehensible. This theory holds true even today, as technology has become an integral component of cinematic storytelling. This is another significant contribution by Rudolf Arnheim to film studies.

The death of Rudolf Arnheim occurred on June 9, 2007.

Check your progress

What is formalist film theory?

What is film as art

Who is Rudolf Arnheim

Rudolf Arnheim was an eminent film theorist who focused extensively on the application of Gestalt theory to the arts. He authored influential works in the arts and cinema. Two of Arnheim's works are highly regarded and are referred to even by art and film scholars. *Film as Art* (1932) and *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye* (1954) are examples of such works. Additionally, Arnheim has written numerous publications on the arts. *Towards a Psychology of Art* (1966), *Visual Thinking* (1969), and *The Power of the Centre* (1983) are the titles.

In his 1954 book *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye*, makes a number of crucial observations regarding the visual arts. He emphasises that vision is not simply observing elements and converting them into memories. It involves recognising structural patterns. Additionally, he discusses simplicity, a crucial element that elevates any work of art to greatness. According to him, 'order in things' is one of the essential elements that contribute significantly to the simplicity of an artistic work. Due to this arrangement, an observer has no trouble comprehending what is presented to him. In addition, Arnheim observes that a shape is never perceived as the form of a single object, but rather as the form of a category of things. He describes shape as a concept in two distinct ways. Because we perceive every shape as a type of shape. Second, each type of shape is perceived as the form of an entire category of objects.

In his 1932 book *Film as Art*, Arnheim makes several insightful observations about cinema. A distinguishing characteristic between "reality" and film art, according to him, is the use of a swiftly moving camera, which enables a spectator (in a stationary position) to participate in a unique visual experience that the human eye alone cannot produce. He asserts that a film's expression of its subject matter must be "visual" above all else. Arnheim focuses particularly on film acting. He discusses how a film can express abstract and complex concepts not only through the camera but also through dramatic invention within the narrative. The film *The Gold Rush* contains pantomimic parallels to those of Charles Chaplin. Arnheim describes a scenario in which Chaplin's character consumes a shoe. It is an analysis of how the gap between wealthy and poor has affected the poor. Arnheim's contribution to formalist theory is widely recognised. He was among the earliest adherents to Formalist Film Theory. He emphasised the study of the affective or intellectual impact of each aspect of filmmaking, including editing, set design, lighting, special effects, and shot composition, on the audience. When formalist film theory is employed, these elements can be analysed as a whole or individually. This is a crucial element of narration. In a film, the use of light to depict two contrasting characters is one example. For a morally upright character, the illumination is bright. On the other hand, the illumination is dim for a character who is morally reprehensible. This theory holds true even today, as technology has become an integral component of cinematic storytelling. This is another significant contribution by Rudolf Arnheim to film studies.

4.6 QUESTIONS

1. What makes Rudolf Arnheim's book *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye* (1954) a landmark in visual arts and film studies?

2. What are some pioneering thoughts Arnheim's explained in his seminal book on film studies "Film As Art"?

3. Discuss the contribution of Rudolf Arnheim's in Formalist Film Theory?

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BELA BALÁZS AND THE TRADITION OF FORM

Unit Structure

- 5.0 Bela Balázs and the tradition of form
- 5.1 FORMALISM IN RUSSIAN
- 5.2 The Raw Materials of Film Arts
- 5.3 The creative potential of film technique
- 5.4 Cinematic Shape or Form
- 5.5 Cinematic Functions

OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- **Tradition of form**
- **The need for formalism**
- **Different types of functions**

5.0 BELA BALÁZS AND THE TRADITION OF FORM

Béla Balázs was one of the first and undoubtedly one of the best introductions to the art form. It has been followed by a slew of imitators, each attempting to provide a broad audience with a rudimentary understanding of the medium's potential. The entire enterprise of formative cinema theory will be scrutinized in this chapter so that we may grasp the foundations of such introductory film books and, more significantly, see why Balázs' work is among the best.

The figures we've looked at so far are without a doubt the most interesting and valuable members of the formative heritage. Münsterberg and Arnheim impress us because they have a rich philosophical tradition that actively supports their views. Eisenstein towers beyond even these men, not only because of the breadth and creativity of his writings, but also because he fought his entire life to reject the naive reductionism that formalist theory tempts one to adopt. We saw that he had the fortitude to look beyond his early theoretical discoveries in search of solutions that could account for more nuanced components of the film experience.

In general, the innumerable lesser personalities who have followed the basic direction of formative thought have lacked Eisenstein's persistence and

vision, as well as Arnheim and Munsterberg's philosophic discipline. As a result, most formative theory is predictable, and frequently tediously so.

There have been two significant periods of prolific formative theory.

The first occurred between 1920 and 1935, when a whole intellectual class realized that cinema (particularly silent film) was not just a sociological phenomenon of exceptional importance, but also a powerful art form with the same rights and obligations as any other art form.

These theorists aspired to reveal the features of this new medium to explain the enigmatic success of the great silent films and to guide future cinema toward greater strength and maturity. The second major period of formative cinema theory began in the early 1960s and continues to this day. The rising scholarly interest in film lends strength to this epoch. Our classrooms are filled with students eager to learn the secrets of the screen, and introductory textbooks by the score, all of which must be in the formative tradition, have arrived to meet this student demand.

Typically, such publications are arranged into chapters based on film technical aspects.

There are always chapters on composition, camera, lighting, editing, sound, and colour, as well as an acting chapter. Each chapter enumerates the many artistic control options in its domain, emphasizing the "unnatural" (or, more properly, "cinematic") elements of the medium. In some ways, all such books are (wanted or not) progeny of Arnheim's *Film as Art*. Most make several references to aesthetically successful films to demonstrate the legitimacy of the cinematic aspects they are discussing. Michelangelo Antonioni's *Red Desert* describes meaningful hue. The artistic use of lighting is examined in relation to Fritz Lang's *M* and Carl Dreyer's *Day of Wrath*. In each case, we are given the answer to a significant difficulty that a director discovered by changing one or more technical aspects.

There's always something hollow about this technique. Formative film theory is problematic for the same reason it is appealing it is fully focused on film technique. When this concentration is not accompanied by sufficient illumination of the issues essential to cinematic form and purpose, the outcome is merely a rubric for possible uses of the medium rather than a complete and consistent philosophy.

Almost all introductory texts of this type provide weight by establishing an implied parallel between film and language. They reject being simple rubrics and instead claim to be visual dictionaries and grammars, giving the learner with the vocabulary and syntax required "to understand" the numerous types of meaning at work in each film's tactics. Many of these publications' titles reveal this intention: *The Grammar of Film*, *The Language of Film*, *The Rhetoric of Film*, and so on.

Cinema has a relationship to language and can be called a language in certain ways; nevertheless, as Christian Metz, Jean Mistry, and others have demonstrated, its relationship to vocal language is not straightforward and

is, at best, incomplete and convoluted. Failure to theories occurs when a comparison is drawn between these mediums without acknowledging the limitations of the analogy.

Aside from the inherent difficulty in discussing a liquid and physically multi-layered medium as if it were a digital, homogeneous system like language, there is the extremely dangerous implication in film language primers that film is a closed finite system, like a keyboard, on which the director plays whatever melody he has in mind. This reduces the filmmaking process to a formula of "right choices," decisions that are appropriate for the message at hand. Eisenstein fought a lengthy war against this mechanical and digital inclination in his own ideas. He understood a strict formalism binds the artist and tends to determine the appearance of films from the outside.

Formative theory, at its most basic, must necessarily place a premium on the mere visibility of cinematic language. Filmmakers with striking skills are valued higher than more subtle filmmakers,' because a technically oriented theory can never distinguish the aesthetic merit of a Robert Bresson film from any given TV commercial. In fact, one Pepsi-Cola commercial contains more technical "art" (visible techniques) than all Bresson's films combined. Formative theory, without a thoroughgoing sense of shape and purpose, presents us with nothing more than a collection of film effects, which is scarcely sufficient for a theory of cinema.

To fully comprehend formative cinema theory, we must look outside film theory itself, much as we did with neo-Kantianism to locate Munsterberg's theory and Gestalt psychology to situate Arnheim's. To get the most comprehensive picture of formative cinema theory, to see its implicit world vision, we must look to Russian Formalist poetics.

5.1 FORMALISM IN RUSSIAN

Is it a coincidence that the years of the Russian Formalist movement (1918-30) correspond so nicely with the beginnings of formative cinema theory? Without a question. However, Sergei Eisenstein was profoundly inspired by their work, and Arnheim and Balázs were aware of it. Even more astonishing, Russian Formalist concepts have been revitalized, widely translated, and openly embraced since the early 1960s, precisely during the dawn of film semiotics and the supremacy of formative theory in our classrooms.

Aside from these intriguing historical connections, Russian Formalism provides formative cinema theory with the vast philosophic environment that it requires. While not all formative theorists agree with them, the Russian Formalist viewpoints are completely consistent with formative film theory. Russian Formalism, while primarily a philosophy of poetic language, establishes a whole theory of human activity. What is it, the Formalists wonder, that distinguishes and distinguishes the creative or

aesthetic components of a man's life? To address this, they first devised a framework of four function categories that, they claim, account for every potential human activity. Every action we take serves one or more of the following purposes: practical, theoretical, symbolic, and artistic.

The practical category includes goods or behaviors that have an immediate utility. (Highways and their construction allow us to go from one city to the next.) The theoretical category includes all items and acts that serve generic and undetermined purposes. (Microbiology serves, and will continue to serve, a variety of human-health-related purposes.) In the symbolic category, one object or activity works in place of another object or activity. (The marriage rite represents and objectifies the binding object, which is referred to as defamiliarization.) The Formalists were keen to laud artworks that highlighted this process.

Shklovsky held to Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* as the exemplar of the literary object in one of the most notorious formalist papers.¹ *Tristram Shandy* is a novel in which the reader is constantly reminded that he is participating in a literary experience. Sterne makes it practically impossible for us to connect his novel to the real world. We are left with an artistic object whose enjoyment is a result of our experience of the literary process, of literary technique itself.

Boris Tomashevsky broadened this process by collecting many literary approaches and pointing out how each technique drives art away from the representation of reality, taking his inspiration from Shklovsky. He separated the plot (technique) from the story (reality), the motivation (technique) from the general causality (reality), and so on. He concluded that all literary approaches we consider artistic (irony, comedy, pathos, figures of speech) act as conscious distortions of reality. One can instantly observe how similar this position is to Arnheim's.

A second wave of literary Formalism flourished in Prague in the late 1920s and early 1930s, refining the concept of defamiliarization by adding the concept of "foregrounding." These Formalists defined artistic speech as speech that rises above the easily intelligible (the plainly codified) and stands firm in front of the reader's eyes. He can't avoid it because it's both different and tough. They considered each piece of art as a construction of many types of artistic discourse, and they rated it based on its skill in foregrounding itself.

Currently, the connection between these literary themes and film theory is clear.

The cinematic close shot has obvious equivalents to Tomashevsky's concentration on exaggerated detail and Jan Mukarovsky's delineation of foregrounding. Several film critics, most notably the East European Béla

Balázs, establish cinema's claims to art in its ability to close-up, "for the pictorial formation of details."

The spatial metaphor of foregrounding has a temporal counterpart in the concept of rhythm, which, predictably, is another core concept of the Formalists. Just as we link the filmic close-up with foregrounding, we might associate montage with rhythm. When discussing Russian films from the 1920s, Allardyce Nicoll stated, "If cutting is prose, then montage is poetry."

In its most extreme form, this view of cinema believes that the aesthetic works in direct opposition to the mundane. This fully corresponds to Shklovsky's thesis that "poetry is attenuated, convoluted speech," as well as his view of rhythm as a "disorder which cannot be foreseen," but which constantly encourages incorrect prediction. Compare Shklovsky to film theorists like Dallas Bower, who believes that editing rhythms "break up the omnipresence to produce a new artificial time superimposed as if on real time," or Potemkin, who believes that rhythms are "repetitions, repetitions in variation, the progressive deformation of a theme." ° Finally, Jean Cocteau's epigram: "My fundamental objective is to prevent the pictures from flowing, to fight them, to anchor and unite them without losing their realism." *

There is the possibility of a grotesque and harmful exaggeration within these concepts of defamiliarization, foregrounding, deformation, and deviation. Shklovsky implied, to a large extent, that only foregrounded material is creative. This approach, however, can lead to some weird mistakes. For example, it may be deduced from this that a specific poem or film comprises exactly thirty (or n) aesthetic moments based on its literary foundation. Should the density of foregrounding in a work of art be used to appraise it?

Few Formalists have gone this far since such a concept involves a quantitative idea of aesthetic merit. Few people would argue that T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is a more poetic work than Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* because it breaks up the prose meaning more frequently and in more varied ways. However, Formalists have always been attracted to elevate flashy technique-laden artworks over more subtle types of artworks. Formalism has been tempted to become a champion of a specific type of art rather than a philosophy applicable to all styles of artwork.

There have been Formalists in both cinema theory and literary theory who have resisted this tendency. Jan Mukarovsky's, a famous Prague school critic, saw that the densest conceivable artwork would succeed in foregrounding everything and completely removing the background. 'In this case, all relief would be lost, and nothing would stand out.

For him, foregrounding is that which separates the aesthetic item from the rest of the world, rather than specific parts inside an artwork that contrast with the rest of the artwork.

The work's style is determined by the types of foregrounding used in connection to a given background, yet sheer quantity of foregrounding will never make an object "more attractive." An object is either aesthetically seen or not, and it is sufficient for an artwork to have one instance of deformation inside it to make us view it aesthetically as a whole.

It is thus conceivable to assume that art removes itself from the world through defamiliarization procedures without concluding that "greater departure equals more art." To deal with the special problems of individual works of art, Mukarovsky's and his Prague colleagues established the ideas of aesthetic "norm" and aesthetic "value." This more fluid Formalism enabled them to maintain a descriptive rather than evaluative stance and cope with a wide range of artworks. When we examine the various types and degrees of foregrounding in various artworks, we are analyzing and comparing styles.

Style is nothing more than a specialized approach of technique, and technique, according to Shklovsky, is art itself. Formalism, then, tempts one to priorities "clearly apparent" styles above more naturalistic ones, but it does not, in my opinion, need this hierarchy. While most formative cinema theorists have succumbed to this temptation, there have always been those writers who have worked hard to escape the reductionism that is its main downfall. Béla Balázs was one of the very first and unquestionably most influential of such theorists.

Balzac's first cinema scripts were published in 1922. In the 1930s and 1940s, he was to incorporate ideas he had while lecturing in the Soviet Union as Bela Balázs and the Tradition of Formalism 85. *Theory of the Film*, a popular collection of his articles, combines both his early and later essays into a logical whole. Without a doubt, Balázs' book today appears largely unoriginal because it covers the same technical ground as so many other film introductions. Nonetheless, even though his was nearly the first such text, Balázs' work stands out for its clarity and caution. He surrounded his views on film technique with a slew of thoughts about the origin and purpose of film, and he added to this broad viewpoint the enthusiasm of one who feels that a comprehensive theory of film is required to steer cinema down more fruitful routes.

Balázs began his book by discussing the origins of film. His goal was to limit his subject to film art, or what he referred to as the "language-form" of cinema. In this, he mirrored both Munsterberg and Arnheim, but unlike them, he approached his inquiry by studying the economic architecture of film, which he maintained, as a Marxist, constituted the foundation of this new art.

He felt that film art could only thrive if business conditions allowed it to. Cinema competed with vaudeville, music hall, and popular theatre because

it was at the mercy of theatre managers trying to meet a desire for unique entertainment, and to compete with live entertainment, film promoters were compelled to hunt for subjects that cinema alone could provide. As a result, nature was immediately introduced as an active player in film dramas.

Even the stars of film were not the full-throated theatrical players, but rather animals, children, and other "more natural topics." To provide another example, in slapstick comedy, several takes were employed to create motion and magic spectacles that would be hard to achieve on the live stage. All these subjects were appropriate and natural for film, according to Balázs, but they did not yet add up to a new creative form.

Cinema was remained largely a photographed theatre, competing only in terms of subject matter with theatre. Balázs plainly asked the following questions:

When and how did cinematography become a distinct autonomous art form, adopting procedures that differed markedly from those of the theatre and employing a completely different form language? What exactly is the distinction between photographic theatre and cinematic art? Why, given that both are motion images projected on a screen, should I claim that one is only a technical replication, and the other is an independently creative art form?

Balázs responded by doing a brief comparison of the two mediums. He described a theatrical scenario as one in which the action is constantly maintained in a spatial continuity separated from the audience by a fixed distance. Furthermore, the spectator observes the activity and the space from a consistent point of view. While photographic theatre frequently changed distance and angle between scenes of a drama, every event (or entire scene) unfolded without modification. As a result, the cinema situation was virtually the same as that revolutionary possibility for cultural regeneration that piqued his interest.

Balázs' understanding of the origins of cinema's aesthetic usage enabled him to develop his theory of its form-language quickly and to make predictions and suggestions for the future.

For him, as for other formative theorists, the cinematic process entails the development of film art from everyday objects. The raw material of film is not reality itself, but rather the "filmic topic" that exposes itself to one's experience in the world and offers itself to be converted into cinema.

This concept of "filmy subject" is extremely intriguing and unusual. Balázs, as a Marxist, believed in the reality and independence of the exterior world of sensation. Reality is never grasped by art in and of itself of the theatre, until these conditions were called into doubt. It was because art constantly lends its own human patterns to our universe.

According to Balázs, the new form- and human meanings were devised by D. W. Griffith. Reality, on the other hand, is multifaceted and open. By breaking scenes up into pieces, adjusting the distance and angle of the camera from fragment to fragment, and crucially by building his film as a montage of fragments rather than a linkage of scenes, he redefined the language of cinema to a variety of applications. Each art deals with reality in its own unique way, taking just those aspects of reality that can be easily modified by its unique means as its topic. An author, painter, and filmmaker may all be there at the same historical event, yet each will interpret it differently.

For Balázs, the form-language of cinema was a natural result through which he could transform this event in his own unique way, determined mostly by his means. A result of the oscillation between subject matter and technical form. Economic concerns compelled the cinema to seek out new subjects, yet these subjects (chases, children, nature, and its wonders) needed the use of new techniques such as close-up and montage.

These processes swiftly produced a form-language, and that language began to determine the types of subjects and tales fit for cinema. Balázs, like many subsequent theorists, believed that cinema reached full maturity in the twenties: proper subjects were presented in proper cinematic form, all of which aided the development of a revitalized popular culture, a culture no longer dependent on words, but sensitized to the emanations of a visibly expressive world.

5.2 THE RAW MATERIALS OF FILM ARTS

Balázs, like Arnheim, recognized that cinema has several functions, but it was only the art of film that held this diadem. Even though they all utilize it, none of these media can claim to understand the reality of the event.

Balzac's perspective on artistic raw material is elegantly shown through his comments on adaptation. The filmmaker who uses another work of art as his subject matter does nothing wrong if he attempts to modify it through the form-language of cinema. (On this issue, Balázs is diametrically opposed to André Bazin, who advised filmmakers to set aside their treasured form-language and put themselves at the service of the masterpieces they desire to bring to the screen.)

Balázs confesses that his strategy of adapting masterpieces has not been fruitful. Consider the various incarnations of *Moby Dick*. They are disappointing not because adaptation is difficult in and of itself, but because a masterpiece is a work whose subject is perfectly suited to its medium. Any alteration to this work will invariably result in a less desirable outcome. Balázs will never accept Bazin's answer to this dilemma since it amounts to the suppression of the "truly cinematic" and reduces cinema to a simple entertainment medium, a servant of the other arts. Instead, Balázs advises adapting poor works, which are more likely to have the potential for

cinematic transformation. He can name a slew of cheap novels and plays that have been turned into fantastic films because the adapter found a truly cinematic subject within them, including *Birth of a Nation*, *Touch of Evil*, *Psycho*, *The Searchers*, and *Treasure of Sierra Madre*.

Balázs has such a high regard for the right selection of cinematic subjects that he elevates the film script to the status of an independent work of art. Just as we see Shakespeare's plays as fully realized even when they are not staged, Balázs believed that the completed film script may be interpreted as a complete transformation of reality on occasion. In this, he undoubtedly contradicts most other thinkers. While this is by no means the most essential component of his entire theory, it does demonstrate Balzac's distinct notion that the basic material of cinema is not something that can be used by anybody. Only those with the talent and energy to seek out cinematic raw material in their experience will find it.

5.6. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Discuss the two significant periods of prolific formative theory.

2. Explain Formalism in Russia.

3. Why is Balázs important?

5.3 THE CREATIVE POTENTIAL OF FILM TECHNIQUE

Balázs' concept of cinema's raw material is essentially undeveloped in comparison to the other theories we've looked at. Saying that filmmakers should constantly look for content that is appropriately cinematic only raises

the matter to a new degree of generality: what exactly is properly cinematic material?

Balázs' awareness of the filmmaking process's continuity allowed him to approach this topic in such a foggy manner. Cinematic subject matter came readily to him and was in turn generated by cinematic approaches. Proper subjects are those that can be transformed most thoroughly and revealingly by cinema's varied techniques. The Russian Formalists would have backed him up completely in this situation. Balázs, like them, felt most at ease in the realm of the creative process.

Most Balázs' thoughts about cinema technique are very similar to Arnheim's because both believe that all vision is formative. Both regard the screen as a pictorial frame within which the filmmaker arranges his subjects into meaningful patterns. And, unlike Arnheim, Balázs was a staunch supporter of new cinematic inventions, but he insisted on them being employed for its formative rather than practical potential. Many of his critiques of gross representationalism, to which sound was quickly applied, were read as if they were written by Arnheim. Balázs, on the other hand, was just as open to technology as Eisenstein. He recognized that brilliant filmmakers could do incredible things with the technology that Hollywood had slapped alongside its visuals. His sound predictions even before Eisenstein's:

Only when the sound film has resolved noise into its elements, segregated individual, intimate voices, and made them speak to us separately in vocal, acoustic close-up; when these isolated detail-sounds are collated again in purposeful order by sound montage; when these isolated detail-sounds are collated again in purposeful order by sound montage, will the sound film have become a new art Theory of the Film.

Balázs' view of cinema technique was based entirely on the belief that films are not representations of truth, but rather the humanization of nature, because the landscapes we choose as backdrops for our dramas are the result of our cultural patterns. This idea, which has recently gained traction in France's radical left-wing film magazines, has its origins in Russian Formalism. Because all vision is cultural rather than natural, the artist does no significant harm to reality when he distorts and deforms it.

He may be able to physically stretch the visual patterns within his audience's thoughts until they see a different world because of his distortion. Old, familiar, and so never seen items can only be hit with new impressions by using unfamiliar and surprising approaches provided by stunning set-ups.

Balázs, on the other hand, immediately turned conservative when it came to applying the notion of visual distortion. He maintained over and over that distortion must always be employed in the context of a naturalistic setting. Something must constantly be distorted in distortion. Theory of the own "If that something is no longer present in the picture, then the meaning is also gone."

Balázs only requested odd angles to the extent that the viewer can still orient himself in the picture and distinguish the usage of a specific type of subject matter, as Balázs gladly accepted such figures of speech in film that naturally emerge from the medium.

The weird from the familiar. He was willing to let sub- the images themselves, for example. Eisenstein's work in the film was something he admired objective shots, including full dream sequences, if Potemkin's last segment, where an unmistakable connection is drawn

An organized plot between the men on the ship and the engines that power that ship was set against narrative and visual distortion which it discussed or advanced. In both aspects of the figure (the troops and the engine), his situation can be described as "easy."

Some similarities to Mukarovsky's work, as indicated above, derive directly from the theme and tale. The mind comprehends the situation. Whose aesthetic sensibility is harmed rather than enhanced by excessive foregrounding.

Balzac's perspective on editing procedures can be deduced; yet it is difficult to predict the level of the support he compares in passing, seizing the relationship present in the environment being filmed. But this is different from the purposeful joining of dramatically unjustified phrases in a famous scene from October, such as the fall of the Tsar and the downfall of a statue. While devoted every effort to cutting

Balázs denounced this misuse of what he saw to be an essentially visual and dramatic (rather than conceptual) medium, because the mind may quickly identify the monument with the Tsar's power.

The shots are combined by the editor in a planned order so that the sequence of frames produces a specific desired effect, like how the fitter assembles the components of Balzac's caution, but only goes so far. He was not a supporter of some enigmatic realistic film. He agreed wholeheartedly with both Eisenstein and the Russian Formalists.

The artist must be brave enough to exhibit his techniques to turn these disconnected bits into a mechanism that can turn them into power (Theory of the p. 118) generating, work-performing machine

The viewer should not be enticed to gaze through the art to a fictitious "reality" hidden behind it. Other storytelling techniques include fades, dissolves, and other transitions.

Eisenstein has never come out so freely in support of a mechanistic theory of punctuation that graphically indicates that the images are of human being's montage. Balázs went on to list the several types of editing structures that are used to criticize or mock reality in cinema and did not ignore Eisenstein's "inner-speech" goal.

in response to it. Even so, Balázs refrained from adopting a strict formalist approach. He insisted that cinematic clichés, such as the fades that open and conclude sequences, keep the film's genuine feel.

Excellent editing.... The word "direction" is used to launch trains of thought and give them a specific destination. We can discern an intrinsic tie to mental processes in such films. In other words, dissolves and fades are "like" the mental processes that allow us to shift from a cinema of associations running within the human consciousness (Theory of the Film, p. 124). Other customs, such as the wipe, are "those curtains of shadows... draped across the screen, an admission of helplessness... opposed to the spirit of cinema art" (p. 153).

So, while acknowledging the traditional and formative nature of film techniques, Balázs continuously urged filmmakers to apply them meticulously and consistently in relation to our everyday perception, creating filmic meaning out of the ordinary world of sight and sound. He regularly utilized traditional Marxist vocabulary to criticize unduly warped films that obscure the supremacy of normal perception and create bizarre visual and temporal realms.

He described such films as a "degenerative phenomenon of bourgeois art," claiming that they "peeled facial emotion off the face and physiognomy off the object, creating abstract, floating 'expressions' that no longer represent anything" (p. 108). Balázs was less committed to pure shape than the Russian Formalists, preferring to keep the object's status and elevate it to meaning through film technique. His focus was always drawn back to the original items, which for Shklovsky and the other Formalists vanished the moment the artist touched them.

5.4 CINEMATIC SHAPE OR FORM

The creator of Theory of the Film divided the film into two pieces. The first half, which was largely a plea to recognize cinema as a new linguistic form, was heavily focused on film technique. Part Two began with a discussion of the various cinema genres. Balázs investigated the formal elements that transform the language of film into actual examples of cinema in this part. The importance that Balázs places on cinematic form cannot be overstated.

A hillside stone and one of Michelangelo's sculptures are both made of stone. Their substance is like that of stones. The distinction between them is not in the substance, but in the form. The spirit and law of a material reveal themselves most fully in the created forms of a work of art, rather than in the raw substance (Theory of the Film, p. 161).

Balázs recommended studying cinema's forms by looking at what he perceived to be fringe genres.

He intended to see the principles and norms of cinematic shape by looking at its extremes. For Balázs, the avant-garde or abstract film had colonized one side of cinema, while the pure documentary had colonized the other. The more traditional genres of fiction cinema, news and instructional film,

and personal documentary are sandwiched between them. However, it is the fringe genres that always put our ideals to the test, and it is to them that he turned his focus.

Balázs discovered forms that purposely avoid plot at both extremities of the film spectrum. "On the one side, the goal was to display form without things, and on the other, to show objects without form." This tendency resulted in the cult of the documentary film on the one hand, and the toying with objectless forms on the other" (p. 174).

Balzac's tone reflects his conservatism and formalism. To avoid a specific story, the pure documentary loses its voice and becomes completely deafening. It's like an uncarved rock on a hillside, obnoxious and almost pointless. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the totally abstract film had gone beyond plot in its desire for "absolute sharing," losing contact with the reality it was supposed to interpret.

Balázs began his argument by elaborating on the rationale of the "pure documentary" with the utmost sympathy. It aspires to "penetrate so deeply into the core of life, reproduce so vividly the raw material of reality, that there are sufficient expressive dramatic components in it without the necessity for a constructive 'plot,'" much alone preliminary screenplays and scenarios, according to him (p. 156)

But everything in Balázs' mindset works against such a clever strategy. Reality was not something he, like Eisenstein, could grasp naively. Filmmakers must seek truth in reality's incomprehensibility and loudness, and then set that truth free to speak for itself.

This procedure necessitates both talent and energy; it nearly always necessitates the development of a plot as well as a thorough grasp of cinematic technique.

For the truth—that is, the law and meaning of reality—to emerge from the empirical fog of reality through the interpretation of a seeing and experiencing maker, such a maker must employ all modes of expression available to the art of the film (Theory of the Film, p. 162).

Even if photography could capture reality (and we know Balázs had strong qualms about this claim), he found bare reality unsatisfactory. He, like Eisenstein and all other formative thinkers, had a proclivity to prioritize editing over photography. "Single photographs are merely representations of reality. Only the montage transforms them into facts or lies" (p. 162). Balázs took a position against realists such as Kracauer and Bazin at this point. For both, reality is never "mere," and photography is its handmaid, they would have remarked.

Balzac's assaults, however, were directed more at extreme tendencies in filmmaking than against realism cinema theorists. Dziga Vertov's Kino-Eye newsreels, for example, annoyed him because of their claim to superior objectivity. Balázs viewed such films to be highly subjective, as the audience is susceptible to the cameraman's whims. For his part, this

cameraman aims to capture not truths about reality, nor even an objective picture of it, but rather the continuity of vision that he provides. Only this personal continuity binds the disparate pictures in a film like this. Balázs wondered how subjective a film could be. And how despotic.

Balázs' tone was tempered with his trademark equanimity and understanding, even though his reasoning appeared to be severe. This was a personal insight, as he had filmed at least one "hero-less" documentary (The Adventures of obj a Ten Mark Note). He saw the importance of wanting to be free of the mundane film that "links the characteristic occurrences of life on the fragile thread of a single human destiny" (p. 159). The documentary filmmaker tries to avoid the appearance of the artificial so that his topic does not appear to be a "simple scriptwriter's creation."

Balázs, with some sorrow, undercut this naive aspiration, pushing for films based on specific human stories as well as written films. Human experience cannot be ordered without specific dramas because they do not exist in the ma5s. Even films that aim to raise social consciousness and action do it best by encasing their philosophy in modest personal dramas, demonstrating societal concern in a single person rather than a faceless mass.

Most likely, Balázs came to this conclusion because of the importance he always gave to the facial close-up. But it's important to remember that he was writing during the period of Soviet socialist realism, a movement that was gaining traction at the time supporting basic personal social dramas and explicitly condemning early Eisenstein's "formalist" big epics

Balázs was worried by pure documentary's inclination to stray from cinema's correct narrative course, but he was enraged by Avant ambitions. Because what should be recorded, what may be seen, is entirely determined by the technical capabilities of cinema. As a result, films of purely aesthetic value emerge, whose continuation is based on some abstract logic. Such films attempt to "create the world in the soul, not the soul in the world" (p. 179). Avant-gardists like Stan Brakhage have recently adopted Balázs' terminology and turned it around to promote their style. Brakhage's admiration and his disapproval are "like visions seen with closed eyelids" (p. 179).

Balázs' theory was undoubtedly compromised by his personal prejudices. Even though both abstract and fiction films succeed in translating subject matter into meaningful shape, Balázs nevertheless prefers narrative shape over plastic shape. Perhaps he was limited by a lack of a fully thought-out concept of subject matter (raw material), because isn't it simple willfulness to allow avant-garde techniques only when they serve, and are bound by, logically formed and humanly fascinating plots? Wasn't Balázs' argument like that of early twentieth-century art critics hoping to halt the wave of non-representational painting?

Balázs would not have been subjected to such attacks if he had mapped out the importance of the representational and, more especially, the "human" to the subject matter of film in any detail.

Balázs resisted the repercussions of his theory, acknowledging that the subject matter of art does not matter after it has been swallowed up by technique, but the Russian Formalists did. He was a formalist in the sense that he believed art could only be created through the conscious and consistent transformation of reality into art; he was a humanist in the sense that he demanded that the subject matter be humanly interesting; and he began to lean toward the realist view when he denounced avant-garde techniques and modernist film forms for neglecting or undermining the human world that only drama can reveal, according to him. However, with these considerations and objections, we get at the aim of film art.

5.5 CINEMATIC FUNCTIONS

Even though it's referred to Balázs' book as an introductory text, we should not misunderstand his intent.

Balázs was no doubt content to teach the uninitiated about film's vocabulary and structures, but his primary and lifelong purpose was the promotion of the art form itself. Balázs, like Arnheim, had a deep admiration for late-silent-era cinema. The language-form seemed to tackle proper issues as a matter of course at the time, resulting in startling dramas of individuals in struggle with nature or culture. While Balázs was never so narrow-minded as to claim that just this type of dramatic cinema should be made, he did believe that such films are at the heart of the art. They do so because they immediately fulfil the role of all great art, which is to awaken us to human meaning and experience and to enlarge those meanings and perceptions.

Every creative form exists for Balázs as a search light pointing in a specific direction. Cinema has shone a light in a whole new direction, illuminating what was previously obscured by ignorance or, more commonly, unconsciousness and disinterest. Balázs' belief in the "directedness" of art forms led him to seek out cinema's correct form, as well as its proper direction. The power source that generates an art form's light is comparable to its technique or unique creative potential, and the mechanism that directs the light might be considered its form.

The first task of cinema is to evolve and grow until it reaches its full potential and can function as well as other art forms have in the past. It must also establish its own path so that it might illuminate the spiritual darkness of our culture in the same way that the other arts have done so. Balázs had no faith in the advancement of the arts, believing that film would never be able to achieve more than what other artists had already accomplished. At its best, it will be reminiscent of Middle Ages frescoes or Elizabethan theatre.

This is not to say that cinema must imitate other forms of art. Only their accomplishment in illuminating life and perception must be emulated. But, to do so, film must adopt methods that are fundamentally distinct from those used by any other art form. Balázs chastised the stodgy Old-World culture for attempting to make cinema behave in the way of classic art (with discretion, distance, and cold objective form) in one of his most striking

portions. For the first time in history, Europe had to learn from America that the proper form of cinema is one of spectator identification, in which the gap between vision and the visible shrinks. The spectator in film, as in no other art form, encounters not a self-contained artistic entity, but the world as it is being produced by man.

Hollywood invented an art form that ignores the principle of self-contained composition and not only eliminates the distance between the spectator and the work, but also creates the illusion in the spectator that he is in the middle of the action depicted in the film's fictional space (Theory of the Film, p. 50).

Balázs has established a favorable position for film, albeit at the sacrifice of consistency. Observer identification and delusion are viewed positively here, yet they go against the ideals of defamiliarization and art as formal technique, which Balázs fought to establish. '6 How can one experience a work's "artfulness" if he is engrossed in its illusionary system? To put it another way, who hasn't been caught up in the enigma of Tristram Shandy, the novel Shklovsky dubbed "the most typical of all novels"?

At the broader levels of his theory, this is far from the lone discrepancy.

His open flirtations with the same reality his theory condemns are the most troubling. On every level, he alluded to cinema's unique potential to bring us into harmony with nature. For example, he claims that the close-up offers film the potential to show the hidden movements and rules of nature.

A close-up can reveal a quality in a hand gesture that we hadn't seen previously. The close-up shows your shadow on the wall with which you had spent your entire life and with which you were only vaguely familiar (Theory of the Film, p. 55).

The A Boy in the Country, 1937 is the close-up's of "natural expression" competes with Balázs' philosophy of "expression by form." Blackhawk Films is a production company based in the United States

Balázs is unquestionably the poet of the close-up. Its force was infinitely moving and enlightening to him. But his lyricism before the close-up pushed him away from the Formalists and toward Siegfried Kracauer and André Bazin's realistic perspectives.

Balázs underlined cinema's affinity for "nature" and its powers of "disclosure" even when he moved away from the subject of camera position and addressed dramatically. These are terms that Kracauer uses frequently. For Balázs, cinema makes nature equal to man, because it both surrounds and participates in his tragedies as well! While the filmmaker may create these surroundings, there are films in which "the countryside was suddenly lifting its veil and presenting its face" (p. 97). Nothing in Arnheim or Eisenstein comes close to this tone.

Balázs' unyielding affection for what he called micro-dramatics was validated by his penchant for, but theoretical denial of, the real and natural.

If the close-up is the cinema's most powerful tool, then the minute psychological drama, which progresses based on minutiae and affects us through the intimate gestures of people and things' faces, must certainly be its proper shape.

Balázs, like Bazin before him, compared the film to a microscope capable of uncovering both nature and the psyche's hidden world. These close-ups are more of a "radiating" source of meaning than a language of gestures (though a thoroughly formative theorist might call them that). Balázs was particularly critical of attempts to approach gestural meaning in linguistic or digital terms. Balázs would be dismissed as mystical and unscientific by modern formative thinkers.

There are times when Balázs deviates from his first principle, which states that meaning and truth are found in man, not in nature. "The camera may stress hidden connotations present in the object," he explained (p. 114). From this, it appears that the filmmaker's mission is to explore and disclose the meaning inherent in objects rather than to create meaning using film's technical arsenal on incoherent material.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Write a note on the raw materials of film arts.

Discuss the creative potential of film critique.

Explain the cinema shape and form.

Lets sum it up

Balázs could undoubtedly reason his way out of this apparent conflict, but the unusual and fundamental tension in his thinking between the formative and photographic approaches should be obvious. His book was constructed to argue for a formative aesthetic, and his ideas were among the first, if not the finest, formative literature on film. Still, his tastes and predilections (for close-ups, micro physiognomy, little psychological films, and audience identification) seem to stem from a genuine tendency that he fought hard to conceal.

When pressed, he revealed that his preference for the modest and natural stemmed from a desire to avoid the "full truth," that reality sometimes piqued his curiosity more than truth. Despite his conservatism and the pull of the "natural," which is more evident in him than in any other formative theorist, finally landed him next to Eisenstein in the formative camp, despite his conservatism and the pull of the "natural" which is more evident in him than in any other formative theorist. While such conflicts create some obvious theoretical problems, they also preserve Balázs from the impoverished reductionism that robs so many formative theories of their interest and significance.

Questions

What do you mean by cinema shape and for,?

Why is russian formalism important

What do you mean by raw materials

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REALIST FILM THEORY – SIEGFRIED KRACAUER

Unit Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Realist Film Theory – Siegfried Kracauer
- 6.2 The Realist Film Theory decoding
- 6.3 Conclusion

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- **The works of Siegfried Kracauer**
- **The realist film theory**
- **Different types of applications**

6.1 REALIST FILM THEORY – SIEGFRIED KRACAUER

Kracauer's Theory of Film (1960) is considered "his most continuous and systematic attempt to explore" (Gilloch, 2015, p. 173) the "fundamental features and potential" of the cinematic medium (Armstrong, 2007, p. 62). (p. 173). Let us consider the intellectual background of Kracauerian cinematic realism (KCR) through the examination of his earlier writings by various Kracauerian scholars, focusing on (1) abstraction and distraction and (2) the affinity between phenomenology – particularly its concept of the Lebenswelt – and Kracauerian thought in the current section.

Kracauer observed that, within the modern condition, the dominance of "systems of technical and conceptual rationality" (Aitken, 2006, p. 154) produces a prevailing state in which the "immediate experience of the physical environment as a possible object of contemplation for the modern subject has become sharply abbreviated, and thus more "abstract" (Kracauer, 1960, pp. 291-292)".

In the modern era, Kracauer defined the resultant abstraction as a 'attitude toward reality' conditioned by the way in which the sciences deal with ordinary experience by abstracting certain elements from them and processing them in various ways, thereby 'stripping the objects of the qualities that give them "all their poignancy and preciousness"' (Dewey, 1934, p. 338). (Kracauer, p. 292, 1960). In the modern world, objects are "conceived in terms of particular abstractions as goods or instruments, with their essence equal to their purpose."

As their corporeal essence is perpetually consumed by concepts (Kracauer, 1960). The prevalent rationality uses these main types of abstraction, which are ideologies, to generate a sense of wholeness in modern life. By reassembling the fragments and depicting them as "organic creations," Kracauer addresses "the true state of disintegration" (Kracauer, 1987)

Distraction (Aitken, 2001) is a sort of culture that "attempts to rebuild reality in the image of the mass ornament" (Elsaesser, 1987) and manifests itself in films, advertisements, the circus, and other locations (Frisby, 1986). For Kracauer, 'the modern subject's state of distraction' (Hansen, 1992), which leads to a 'sterile encounter between the self and the world' (Aitken, 2001), is caused by 'reification in the modern condition' (Hansen, 1992) as manifested in mass ornaments such as films; eventually, however, distraction – 'originally a negative term' (Aitken, 2001) – comes to be viewed as a positive phenomenon Kracauer was also interested in other aspects of popular culture, such as "theatrical revues, travel, dance, photography, best-selling literature, and even urban arcades and hotel lobbies" (Eksteins, 1997); collectively, these mass entertainments reveal "the superficiality and triviality of modern endeavour."

According to Kracauer, these mass decorations "deserve attention and should be defended against naysayers" since they "show a greater "degree of truth" than traditional art forms (Sieg, 2010).

Kracauer's notion that cinema form and spectatorship "correspond to the "damaged condition of modernity"" within the contemporary situation is one of the most important components of his realist film theory. (Aitken, 2006) ; "Kracauer considers cinema to be "realistic" in this sense, but not in the sense of "naive realism." (See p. 166). According to Kracauer (Hansen, 1993), "film remarks on the shattered aspects of the material world" and has the ability to generate a redemptive state in spectators as they examine how "fragments reorganise themselves, possibly into something new" in the modern environment. As "film looks under the table" [Marseille notebooks, Kracauer Papers, 1:5] – for which Kracauer uses the abbreviation *demonolater*' – Kracauer asserted that cinema has the capacity to penetrate physical reality that operates at the foundation of life, which is beyond the humanistic abstractions advocated by the dominant ideology. (Hansen, 1993).

To promote what appears to be a realistic style of filmmaking, Kracauer utilised his theory of distraction (Elsaesser, 1987, p. 67), which says that 'redemption could be attained through a re-engagement with physical reality' (Aitken, 2001, p. 171).

According to Kracauer, the emphasis on the flow of life and dependent detail mirrors the manner in which motion pictures heighten our experience of the ordinary, rendering it extraordinary and exciting. As "the cinema's photographic potential reintroduces us to things in themselves," (Armstrong, 2007) Kracauer stated that "historical and sociological investigations should not seek hidden truths but recognise what is always already in the open" (Sieg, 2010).

As his film reviews and articles from the 1920s and 1930s demonstrate, Kracauer considered the "transient, unrecognised, and culturally overlooked events of everyday life as configurations of writing," using scriptural figures such as "hieroglyph," "ornament," "rebus," and "arabesque." (Hansen, 1992) ; this suggests that Kracauer is a part of a larger philosophical tradition associated with "the readability of the world"

The strength of Kracauer's writings in the 1920s was the phenomenological technique of letting ordinary life to express itself first, then reflecting on it (Schlupmann, 1987). Kracauer drew on Husserl's concept of the *Lebenswelt* to create his theory of cinematic realism (Aitken, 2001), as is obvious here, notably along the lines of phenomenology ("surface") and vitality philosophy (*Lebensphilosophie*, "flow of life") (Witte, Correll, & Zipes, 1975).

Film is a unique medium, according to Kracauer. It is "uniquely fitted to redeem this basis of life for the modern subject" (Aitken, 2001) since it is "generated by the situation of the *Lebenswelt* inside modernity." In practise, this means that films must be "constructed so as to replicate the damaged condition of the *Lebenswelt* within modernity." As a result, Kracauer endorsed a type of cinema with "affinities" with aspects of the *Lebenswelt* such as "unstaged reality," "chance," "the fortuitous," "the indeterminate," "the flow of life," and "endlessness." (Aitken, 2006); this "model of cinematic reality" inspired Kracauer to advocate avant-garde filmmaking in the impressionistic manner (Aitken, 2006). (Aitken, 2006). According to Kracauer, the fundamental principles and affinities of film are fundamentally equivalent to those underlying the *Lebenswelt* (Aitken, 2001).

6.2 THE REALIST FILM THEORY DECODED

The works of Kracauer can be divided into two halves, known as the 'two Kracauer's' (Petro, 1991). From the 1920s to the 1930s, Kracauer served as a practical film critic for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, where he was a "phenomenological observer of the local, the transitory, and the daily" During this time, Kracauer composed "Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces" (1987) and "The Mass Ornament" (1995). These essays were "ethnologically inflected observations of ordinary behaviours" (Sieg, 2010), and they contributed to a "theory of the ordinary" (p. 100) that anticipated "methodologically essential characteristics of what we now term cultural studies" (p. 100). From *Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological Study of the German Film* (1947) and *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (1960) demonstrate that the late Kracauer was a "massive system-builder and conceptual thinker" (Petro, 1991). (Petro, 1991).

According to current research on Kracauer's realist film theory, there is a substantial amount of continuity between the two time periods. For instance, the 'play of surface in and through its representations' (Petro, 1991) is a clear motif in both 'The Mass Ornament' (popular culture and media) and *Theory of Film* (cinema); furthermore, the implications of the cherished Weimar

themes, such as growing calculation, rationalisation, mechanisation, estrangement, etc. (Koss, 1996), that are abundant in the early work are apparent. (Hansen, 2012). However, his work has not been fully acknowledged because German cultural philosophy "in the form of critical sociology from the Frankfurt School has tended to denigrate cinema" (Elsaesser, 1987).

Contributing to this was Kracauer's departure from Marxism and appraisal of "the ornaments of the people not as products of the cultural industry but as phenomena capable of revealing otherwise concealed social experiences" (Sieg, 2010).

To understand the significance of Kracauer's cinematic realism in film studies, we must first trace the development of realist film theory throughout the discipline's development. Until the late 1950s, the realist-intuitionist paradigm dominated European film theory (Aitken, 2001). During the 1950s and 1960s, when there were no institutional places for Film Studies, neither *Caligari* nor *Theory of Film* found a large or enthusiastic following (Petro, 1991).

When academic film study was finally institutionalised in the 1960s and 1970s, the preponderance of post-structuralism and political modernism in the body of film theory pushed realist film theory to the "margins of critical consideration," so Kracauer's books became "further marginalised and unreadable, being antithetical to the reigning critical orthodoxies of auteurism, structuralism, and antirealist film theory" (Aitken, 2001). (Petro, 1991). From the 1980s to the 1990s, realism virtually disappeared from academic discourse, replaced with "border disputes between modernism and postmodernism" (Rothberg, 2000).

Kracauer's work has been "ignored since the 1960s, when structuralism cast a sceptical eye on film's photographic purpose," yet there is a growing interest in it (Armstrong, 2007). In 1991, the influential scholarly journal *New German Critique* published a 'Special Issue on Siegfried Kracauer,' who may be less well-known than André Bazin, 'film theory's arch champion of realism' (Armstrong, 2007), but whose emphasis on film's ability to capture real experience identifies important connections between films, their record of contemporary life, and the role of the spectator (Armstrong, 2007).

Kracauer's realist cinema theory is situated against the backdrop of the modern condition, which is ruled by "systems of technical and conceptual reason" The continual confrontation between direct experience and conceptual logic is a central theme (Aitken, 2006, p. 154). As instrumental discourses permeate contemporary society, the nature of things becomes "equal to their function" (Kracauer 1960).

The predominance of abstraction in the modern condition generates a state in which "physical nature has been perpetually covered by concepts" (p. 299). Kracauer asserted in 'Mass Ornament' that 'hidden truths' such as these are always out in the open, but we frequently fail to recognise them not

because their appearances are deceptive (p. 104), but because the public has internalised the dominant ideologies that are circulated by ideological state apparatuses such as the school, church, media, etc., as they go about their daily lives.

In fact, Kracauer's realist film theory is a cinematic and modern condition theory in the end. He feels that the essential subject matter of film is the modern itself. According to (Gilloch, 2015), "the filmmaker has inherited the position of "painter of modern life"" (Gilloch, 2015). Kracauer argues in *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (1960) that the medium has the potential to liberate modern subjects from the insidious pull of conceptual and instrumental logic, allowing them to reclaim their initial awareness of the world.

By gravitating toward physical reality – "the things themselves" (Russell, 2006; Kracauer, 1960) in Husserlian terms – realist cinema can reassure the audience that their actual lived experiences are valid, regardless of how abstracting discourses dismiss them as mere statistical data or any other form of instrumental conceptualization. ("Siegfried Kracauer, Realist Film Theorist – Joni Gutierrez") According to Kracauer, physical reality as an object of contemplation is the key to film's ability to liberate the modern subject from the slavery of abstractions. The following line explains Kracauer's view on the meditative process:

The viewer cannot hope to fathom the being of any item that draws him into its circle, however imperfectly, unless he walks through the labyrinth of its multiple meanings and psychological correspondences in a dreamlike fashion. As it manifests in film, material existence propels the viewer on a never-ending series of journeys. (Kracauer, 1960)

Early on in *Theory of Film* (1960), Kracauer emphasised the "basic aesthetic principle" in relation to photography, which "remains the most important factor in generating film content."

The nature of photography continues in the nature of film, as film is by default a photographic medium. The current KCR discussion also continues with the fundamental aesthetic premise of the "realistic tendency," which applies to photography and is "true of cinematic media."

According to Kracauer (1960), each medium has its own nature, and "films may claim aesthetic validity if they build from its fundamental properties; like photographs, they must record and depict physical reality" (p. 37). If a film "acknowledges the trend toward realism by emphasising actual physical existence," it employs the "cinematic technique" (Kracauer, 1960). According to Kracauer, a 'cinematic' (1960) film is "committed to camera-reality" whereas a "uncinematic" film "passes over the fundamental properties of the medium" and has a "primal concern for actuality."

To establish the realistic tendency, Kracauer contrasted it with its apparent polar opposite, "the formalist tendency as represented in high-cultured theatre films" (Rheindorf, 2005), and the Soviet montage principle, which

he viewed as ideologically tainted manipulations of physical reality. Because the cinematic medium is claimed to achieve its full potential by capturing "nature in the raw" (Kracauer, 1960), he viewed the preceding examples as "formalist" perversions of the unrestricted use of "film language." (Rheindorf, 2005). According to Kracauer, mainstream theatrical films are uncinematic because they "interfere with or displace the predominance of the realistic tendency" (Gilloch, 2015). On the one hand, this is due to their inept attempts to shoot unsuitable subject matter, such as theatrical plays, operas, and novels.

In contrast, the protagonist's perspective, decisions, and actions drive the plot of a play, which "limits the appropriate use of a medium that does not differentiate between humans and inanimate objects" (Kracauer, 1960). It is hardly surprising that Kracauer dislikes ideologically-motivated montage, given that ideology contributes to the "prevailing abstractness" (1960), which he describes as "the abstract manner in which individuals from all walks of life comprehend the world and themselves." In the conclusion of *Theory of Film*, Kracauer urges us to rid ourselves as best we can of this "abstractness" in order to achieve the "redemption of physical reality."

In order to emphasise the distinction, the preceding thesis regarding the binary opposition - realistic and formative tendencies – is expressed in starkly opposing terms. Kracauer, on the other hand, contended that these attitudes are neither fundamentally contradictory nor mutually incompatible. According to Kracauer, everything depends on finding the "right" equilibrium between realistic and formative inclinations (1960).

However, he continued by stating that the relationship is well-balanced if the formalist inclination "does not attempt to control" the realist inclination, but instead "ultimately follows its lead." In the practise of his art, the filmmaker can express his formative energies "in all the dimensions that the medium has come to encompass," according to Kracauer (1960). This includes impressionistic depictions of physical existence in documentaries, cinematic visualisations of mental images, altered states of consciousness, rhythmical patterns, etc. According to Kracauer, all of these artistic endeavours are consistent with the cinematic approach so long as they "benefit in some manner the medium's substantive concern with the visible world" (1960). He described the interaction between the realist and formalist perspectives.

The filmmaker externalises his or her "inner visions" (Kracauer, 1960) by using the camera to capture "outside shapes" from physical reality that correspond to his or her formative impulses as an artist, relying on "occasional coincidences between those shapes and images." For instance, Maya Deren's *A Study in Choreography for Camera* (1946) is built on these "occasional coincidences" between her inner images as a filmmaker and the external shapes collected by the camera from the physical context in which she selected to capture the scene depicted in Figure 9a. In Kracauer's terminology, Deren's film is cinematic since it aims to "penetrate the external world."

6.3. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Explain in brief what was Siegfried Kracauer known for?

2. Write a detailed note on the theories of Siegfried Kracauer?

3. What is a film?

This 'postulation of a structural homological link between film and the Lebenswelt' demonstrates that Kracauer's idea of cinematic realism was not based on naive realist assumptions. (Aitken, 2001). Kracauer's "theory of cinematic realism" is best described as "a sort of phenomenological realism that, like Kantian aesthetics and Husserlian phenomenology from which it derives, seeks a basis for knowledge and representation through attentive observation of the material world." (Aitken, 2001; Aitken, 2001, Aitken, 2001, - Kracauer elaborated:

Both the farmer and the engineer recognise the relevance of seemingly inconsequential factors. They recognise that a number of tiny factors must interact in order for crops to ripen or a complicated machine to function. Their experience has taught them to reject the pretensions of pure conceptions while at the same time recognising that minor things are more than merely trivial. In the humanities, where a survey that focuses solely on the exposition of ideas risks disregarding the significance of the concepts themselves, this perspective is also beneficial. (Gemünden & Moltke, 2012,) cited in (Kracauer, 1996) Husserl asserted that abstraction risks erasing 'subjective meanings produced inside experience' (Aitken, 2001) of 'the phenomenal world' or the Lebenswelt, which is 'the universe in which we exist intuitively' (Husserl, 1970, p. 139). On the way to self-actualization, Husserl remarked that the modern subject "must regain contact with this lost and suppressed component of life." Indeed, the modern subject's need to reconnect with the Lebenswelt, which is the "essential to understanding Kracauer's claim that "physical reality" might be redeemed

through film," shows the connection between phenomenology and KCR. (Wils, 2016).

The works of Kracauer can be divided into two halves, known as the 'two Kracauer's' (Petro, 1991). From the 1920s until the 1930s, Kracauer served as a practical film critic for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, where he was a "phenomenological observer of the local, transitory, and daily." During this time, Kracauer composed "Cult of Distraction: On Berlin's Picture Palaces" (1987) and "The Mass Ornament" (1995). These pieces were "ethnologically inflected observations of ordinary behaviours" (Sieg, 2010) that led to a "theory of the ordinary" that anticipated "methodologically essential characteristics of what we now term cultural studies".

From *Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological Study of the German Film* (1947) and *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (1960) demonstrate that the late Kracauer was a "massive system-builder and conceptual thinker" (Petro, 1991). (Petro, 1991). According to current research on Kracauer's realist film theory, there is a substantial amount of continuity between the two time periods. For instance, the 'play of surface in and through its representations' (Petro, 1991) is a clear motif in both 'The Mass Ornament' (popular culture and media) and *Theory of Film* (cinema); additionally, the implications of the cherished Weimar themes, such as growing calculation, rationalisation, mechanisation, estrangement, etc. (Koss, 1996), that are abundant in the early work are evident.

Among the first generation of Critical Theorists, including Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, Eric Fromm, Leo Lowenthal, and Friedrich Pollock, Kracauer has been described as "the only one with significant cinematic experience" (Hansen, 2012). However, his work has not been fully acknowledged because German cultural philosophy "in the form of critical sociology from the Frankfurt School has tended to denigrate cinema" (Elsaesser, 1987). Contributing to this was Kracauer's departure from Marxism and appraisal of "the ornaments of the people not as products of the cultural industry but as phenomena capable of revealing otherwise concealed social experiences" (Sieg, 2010).

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This appreciation for the "cinematic approach" of the film medium is not a dogmatic fixation on "realism" in film. The primacy of the realist tendency in Kracauer's cinematic realism has broader philosophical implications, particularly in terms of the Husserlian concept of the *Lebenswelt*, which Aitken (2006) emphasised as "key to understanding Kracauer's assertion that "physical reality" can be redeemed through film" (Wils, 2016). Due to its phenomenological emphasis, Kracauer's cinematic realism belongs to the phenomenalist-realist (Aitken, 2016) tradition of film theory.

6.4. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is Cinema according to Siegfried Kracauer?

2. What role did realism play in film theory for theorists such as Siegfried Kracauer?

3. Discuss at length 'The Realist Film Theory'.

Let's sum it up

This appreciation for the "cinematic approach" of the film medium is not a dogmatic fixation on "realism" in film. The primacy of the realist tendency in Kracauer's cinematic realism has broader philosophical implications, particularly in terms of the Husserlian concept of the Lebenswelt, which Aitken (2006) emphasised as "key to understanding Kracauer's assertion that "physical reality" can be redeemed through film" (Wils,2016). ("Siegfried Kracauer, Realist Film Theorist – Joni Gutierrez") Due to its phenomenological emphasis, Kracauer's cinematic realism belongs to the phenomenalist-realist (Aitken, 2016) tradition of film theory.

Questions

What do you mean by realist film theorists

What is the cinematic approach

What do you mean by filmmakers' inner vision

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ANDRE BAZIN

Unit Structure

- 7.1. Objectives
- 7.2. Introduction
- 7.3. Understanding key observations of Andre Bazin from his two volumes of work What is Cinema
- 7.4. Montage and its importance in a film's narrative
- 7.5. Evolution of Editing since the coming of Sound
- 7.6. Depth of field
- 7.7. Limitations of montage
- 7.8. Mixed Cinema
- 7.9. Theatre and cinema
- 7.10. The Concept of presence
- 7.11. Opposition and Identification
- 7.12. Behind the decor
- 7.13. Summing up
- 7.14. Questions
- 7.15. References

7.1. OBJECTIVES

- After studying this, you will be able to
- Study Bazin
- Study Montage
- Understand the principles of Editing

7.2 INTRODUCTION

There are films. And then, there is appreciation of films. The bridge which unites these two necessary things is a thinker who understands the joy of making films with utmost passion and sincerity. In the field of film studies, Andre Bazin is not just the name of one of the few original thinkers. Andre Bazin is not only a school of thought but also filmmaking.

Andre Bazin was born on April 18, 1918, and grew up in Angers in France. Bazin served as seeds of highly critical and epoch-making French New Wave which started in the late 1950s in France. He along with a few fellow passionate film writers such as Jacques Doniol-Valcroze and Joseph-Marie Lo Duca co-founded the film magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1951 in Paris, France. *Cahiers du Cinema* continues to remain one of the benchmarks in film criticism not only in Europe but globally. It was almost a training ground for future filmmakers in French cinema. These included Francois Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard Eric Rohmer, and Claude Chabrol.

In a life span of merely forty years, Andre Bazin donned several hats. He was an original film theorist who produced seminal works. He was a thought-provoking film critic who saw films in most unique ways. He was a mentor who guided future filmmakers. He was everything that was connected to discovering the joy of watching films through the prism of deeply personal philosophy about cinema. There are very few cinema-literate and cinema-scholars who can match his brilliance especially at a time he wrote. He famously was a father-figure to Francois Truffaut. Truffaut dedicated his debut film *The 400 Blows* to Bazin. Bazin died one day after the shooting of *The 400 Blows* started. He died at the age of 40.

Bazin wrote several books in his lifetime. Some of his writings on cinema have been translated in English. Prominent among these are his books on Jean Renoir and Charles Chaplin (*Essays on Chaplin*). Besides this, from the point of view of film studies, Bazin's articles have compiled into two volumes. They are: *What is Cinema?* (volume 1 and 2). These two volumes represent broadly the deep thinker in Bazin who critically analyses cinema with scientific rigour, and puts things in relevant context to help readers understand and appreciate the beauty of cinema. The work is a compilation of his articles which were published in reputed newspaper of France.

For film studies, it is important to grasp salient features of Bazin's work *What is cinema?* — (both volumes) --to appreciate films in holistic manner. Let us understand the crucial issues and thoughts Bazin discusses in these two volumes.

7.3 MONTAGE AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN A FILM'S NARRATIVE

Bazin is clear about the importance of montage in a film's narrative. He points out that arrangement of images gives rise to a certain thread of reality which makes a film's narrative visually engaging. He starts off by giving the history of the use of montage in films. He writes, "I will differentiate, in the cinema between 1920 and 1940, between two broad and opposing trends: those directors who placed their faith in the image and those who placed their faith in the narrative. By "image" I am referring to, in a broad sense, everything that the screen representation adds to the object it depicts. This is a complex inheritance, but it can be reduced to two categories: those relating to the polymers of the image and those relating to the resources of montage, which is essentially the ordering of images in time. Let's examine

a few of Bazin's key observations on montage from the first volume of *What Is Cinema?*

Andre Bazin

By "plastics" of an image, Bazin refers to the style of the sets, the makeup, and, to a certain extent, even the performance, to which we add lighting and, ultimately, the framing of the shot, which gives us its composition.

He references the films of D.W. Griffith and the French art theorist and author André Malraux. He writes, "It was montage that gave birth to film as an art form, distinguishing it from merely animated photography and, in essence, creating a language."

Montage can be "invisible," and this was frequently the case with prewar American cinematic classics. Scenes were dissected for the sole purpose of analysing an episode based on the material or dramatic logic of the scene. This logic conceals the fact of the analysis, the mind of the viewer adopting the director's viewpoints, which are justified by the geography of the action or the shifting emphasis of dramatic interest, quite naturally.

The neutral character of this "invisible" editing, however, does not maximise the potential of montage.

Bazin describes three montage procedures. There is parallel montage, accelerated montage, and allure montage. Using alternating views from each, a director creates parallel montage to convey the sense of simultaneity between two actions occurring at a geographical distance, he writes. Accelerated montage is the process of accelerating the pace of a scene through the use of multiple images of decreasing duration. Bazin gives as an example the illusion of a locomotive's constantly increasing speed without using any images of speed. Montage by attraction entails reinforcing the meaning of an image by associating it with another image that is not necessarily from the same episode.

Bazin notes, "In this extreme form, montage by attraction was rarely used, even by its creator, but one may consider as very close to it in principle the more commonly used ellipsis, comparison, or metaphor, examples of which include the throwing of stockings onto a chair at the foot of a bed or the milk overflowing in H. G. Clouzot's film *Quai des Orfèvres*."

Bazin notes that the creation of a sense or meaning that is not objectively inherent in the images themselves but is derived solely from their juxtaposition is a defining characteristic of montage. He cites the well-known experiment of Kuleshov with the photo of Mozhukhin, in which it was observed that the significance of a smile changed based on the preceding image, as a perfect example of the properties of montage.

Montage as employed by Kuleshov, Eisenstein, and Gance did not depict the event; rather, it made allusions to it. Unquestionably, they derived at least the majority of the constituent elements from the reality they were describing, but he observes that the significance of the film ultimately resides more in the arrangement of these elements than in their objective content.

Bazin adds that the only similarity between montages is that they imply an idea through a metaphor or an association of ideas. Thus, there exists a relay station, a sort of aesthetic "transformer," between the scenario properly so-called, the culmination of the recital, and the image pure and simple. Bazin adds that the meaning is not in the image, but in the shadow of the image projected by montage onto the spectator's field of consciousness.

The cinema has a vast arsenal of tools at its disposal to impose its interpretation of an event on the viewer, including the contents of the image and the resources of montage. By the conclusion of the silent film, this arsenal can be considered complete. On the one hand, Soviet cinema carried the theory and practise of montage to its logical conclusion, whereas the German school used sets and lighting to destroy the plasticity of the image. Bazin observes that, whether in France, Sweden, or the United States, it does not appear that the language of cinema lacked the means to express what it desired.

Bazin argues that montage and image expressionism is the substance of cinema. He adds, "The moment you cease to maintain that montage and the plastic composition of the image are the essence of cinematic language, sound ceases to be the aesthetic chasm separating two radically distinct aspects of the seventh art. The cinema perceived to have been killed by the soundtrack is in no way "the cinema."

Bazin observes that between 1930 and 1940, a global cinematic vernacular originating primarily in the United States appears to have emerged. It was the success of five or six main film genres in Hollywood at the time that gave it its overwhelming superiority. (1) The American comedy (Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, 1936) ; (2) The burlesque film (The Marx Brothers) ; (3) The dance and vaudeville film (Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers and the Ziegfield Follies) ; (4) The crime and gangster film (Scarface, I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang, The Informer) ; (5) Psychological and social dramas (Back Street, Jezebel) ;

He adds that, during that period, the French cinema was unquestionably second. Jacques Feyder, Jean Renoir, Marcel Carne, and Julien Duvivier exemplified a trend towards what could be roughly termed stark sombre realism or poetic realism, which progressively revealed its superiority. He adds that American and French production sufficiently demonstrates that the sound film had attained a balanced stage of maturity prior to World War II.

Bazin discusses perfect harmony between image, voice, and content. He discusses film genres with clearly defined principles that can appeal to both the global public and the cultural elite. Second, he discusses films with well-defined photography and editing techniques that are perfectly suited to their subject matter. The works of William Wyler, John Ford, and Marcel Carne are discussed. He writes, "One has the feeling that an art has found its perfect balance, its ideal form of expression, and reciprocally, one admires them for dramatic and moral themes that the cinema, while it may not have created, has given a grandeur, an artistic effectiveness, that they would not

have had otherwise. In conclusion, these are the characteristics of a mature classical art."

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He writes that the most significant phenomenon of the 1940s and 1950s was the introduction of new blood and previously unexplored topics. He observes, "The true revolution occurred more on the level of content than of form." Is neorealism not first and foremost a form of humanism and only secondarily a filmmaking style? Then, with regard to the style itself, is it not fundamentally a form of self-effacement before reality? He adds that a new subject matter necessitates a new form, and the best way to comprehend what a film is attempting to say is to understand how it is saying it.

He notes that by 1938 or 1939, the talking film, especially in France and the United States, had reached a level of classical perfection as a result, on the one hand, of the maturation of different types of drama developed in part over the previous decade and in part inherited from the silent and, on the other hand, of the stabilisation of technical progress.

Check your progress

1. **What is the contribution of Andre Bazin in the French New Wave?**

2. **What are Bazin's thoughts about montage and editing in general since the advent of sound in films?**

3. **What does Bazin refer to when he talks about Depth of field?**

7.4 EVOLUTION OF EDITING SINCE THE COMING OF SOUND

His views on editing disclose a great deal about his qualities as an observer and thinker. At a time when access to films was limited, Bazin's razor-sharp

memory and insightful observations demonstrate how devoted he was to cinema. Let us comprehend some of his critical observations in the book:

In 1938, there was a nearly universal standard editing pattern. If, somewhat conventionally, we label the type of silent films based on the plastics of the image and the artifices of montage "expressionist" or "symbolic," we may be overlooking a significant aspect of these films.

The new form of storytelling can be described as "analytic" and "dramatic." As a review of one of the elements of Kuleshov's experiment, let us assume that we have a table laden with food and a famished vagrant. One could assume that it would have been edited in 1936.

He describes the probable pattern that Kuleshov's experiment may have modified:

Close-up of the actor and table.

The camera moves into a close-up of a face displaying a mixture of awe and desire.

Close-up images of cuisine.

Full shot of a person who is cautiously approaching the camera.

Slowly, the camera draws back to reveal a three-quarter shot of the actor grasping a chicken wing.

Regardless of the variations that could be conceived for this scene, they would all share the following characteristics: a) The verisimilitude of space in which the position of the actor is always determined, even when a close-up eliminates the setting; and b) The purpose and effects of the cutting are exclusively dramatic or psychological.

Bazin then discusses a few films by notable directors, including Orson Welles and William Wyler. He discusses the pattern of editing in films produced between 1930 and 1939. He explains, "Let's consider the montage of the stone lions in the film *The End of St. Petersburg*. Thus, around 1938, almost all films were edited according to the same principle. In general, approximately 600 setups were used to develop the plot. In a dialogue sequence, the characteristic technique was shot-reverse-shot; the camera followed the order of the text, alternating the character shown with each speech."

7.5 DEPTH OF FIELD

He also discusses the depth of field. A shot's depth of field is the spectrum of what is in focus. The shot-in-depth technique introduced by Orson Welles and William Wyler posed a challenge to this editing style, which Bazin notes was so admirably suited to the best films produced between 1930 and 1939. *Citizen Kane's* influence cannot be overstated. Thanks to depth of field, entire scenes can be captured in a single shot with the camera remaining still. In the past, montage was used to create dramatic effects.

Now, actors' movements within a predetermined framework are used to create these effects. He observes further that the pursuit of compositional depth is, in effect, a partial substitution of montage with frequent panning shots and entrances. It is predicated on a respect for the continuity and duration of dramatic space.

Regarding how depth of field impacts a film's presentation, he makes a number of insightful observations. Consider the following observations:

Obviously, it would be preposterous to deny that montage has contributed significantly to the development of film language, but this has occurred at the expense of other, no less cinematic values. Therefore, depth of field is not merely a cameraman's stock in trade, like the use of a series of filters or a particular lighting style; it is a capital gain in the field of direction, a dialectical advance in the history of film language.

The depth of focus brings the viewer's relationship with the image closer to his relationship with reality. Therefore, it is accurate to state that the image's structure is more realistic, regardless of its content. This necessitates both a more engaged mental attitude and a more positive contribution on the part of the spectator to the action in progress. While analytical montage only requires him to follow his guide and let his attention flow seamlessly with the director's choice of what he should see, here he is required to make at least some personal decisions. The meaning of the image is derived in part from his attention and will.

Montage, in analysing reality, presupposes by its very nature the coherence of the dramatic event's meaning. Undoubtedly, another form of analysis is conceivable, but it would involve a different film. Montage, by its very nature, precludes ambiguity in expression. Kuleshov's experiment demonstrates this per absurdum by attributing on each occasion a specific meaning to a facial expression, the ambiguity of which alone makes the three successively contradictory expressions feasible. If we have spent a great deal of time discussing Orson Welles, it is because his entry into the filmic firmament in 1941 marked the beginning of a new era, and because his case is the most spectacular and, by virtue of his excesses, the most significant. *Citizen Kane*, however, is part of a larger movement, an enormous upheaval of the geological bed of cinema, confirming that the language of the screen had revolutionised everywhere up until a certain point.

The decade from 1940 to 1950, according to Bazin, represents a decisive stride forward in the evolution of film language. He observes that the zenith of American comedy occurred within the framework of an editing style in which the realism of the time played no role. "American comedy had everything to gain, in strict line-by-line progression, from the rhythmic resources of classical editing," he observes. He explains in an engaging manner how different directors use close-ups and how diverse close-ups give rise to various film genres. "The stylistic repertoire of a director like Hitchcock, for instance, extended from the inherent power of the basic document as such to superimpositions and large close-ups. However,

Hitchcock's close-ups differ from those of C. B. de Mille's *The Cheat* (1915). They are one variety of his style's figures among many others. In other words, in the silent era, montage evoked what the director wished to convey; in 1938, it described it.

7.6 LIMITATIONS OF MONTAGE

Bazin discusses the limitations of montage after discussing its benefits. Here are several key insights from this section of the book:

Montage is not an absolute by nature, at least from a psychological standpoint.

The habit of going to the movies has progressively educated audiences, and today, if you asked them to concentrate a little, a sizeable portion of the population would be able to distinguish between real scenes and those created by montage.

He explains the distinction between films by discussing films. He discusses the distinction between a literary story and film language. He discusses the 1956 French film *Le Ballon Rouge*. "The Red Balloon (*Le ballon rouge*) is a literary story," he writes. The film is not fundamentally dependent on montage. It is dependent on it by accident. A documentary about the imagination, or more specifically, the dream.... Montage, which we are continuously told is the essence of cinema, is, in this instance, the preeminent literary and anti-cinematic technique." When the essence of a scene requires the simultaneous presence of two or more factors, montage is ruled out, he adds.

"The fact that reconstructions of actual events were acceptable in the early days of cinema is a clear indication that the public's attitude has evolved," he explains. In the case of narrative films that parallel the novel or the play, it is likely that certain types of action cannot be fully developed through montage. The expression of concrete duration conflicts with the abstract time of montage, as illustrated by *Citizen Kane* and *Ambersons*."

7.7 MIXED CINEMA

After discussing montage and its use in film, Bazin discusses the increasing reliance of film narratives on literature. He writes, "A quick look back over the films of the past ten or fifteen years reveals that one of the defining characteristics of their evolution has been their increasing reliance on the literary and theatrical traditions for their source material." He observes that critics have been harsh on films whose plots are derived from literature. According to him, "the term 'filmed theatre' has become a cliché of critical disapproval."

However, he defends filmmakers' use of literature for story inspiration. "The cinema is young, but literature, theatre, and music are as old as history," he writes. Let us first acknowledge that adaptations, which contemporary critics view as a disgraceful cop-out, are a well-established

aspect of art history. "Malraux has demonstrated how much Renaissance painting owed its origins to Gothic sculpture."

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He adds, "One would expect a young art to attempt to imitate its elders and then, gradually, to develop its own laws and choose its proper themes." According to him, "in the realm of language and style, cinematic creation is proportional to fidelity." A decent adaptation should restore the essence of both the letter and the spirit for the same reasons that render a word-for-word translation useless and a too-free translation a cause for condemnation.

7.8 THEATRE AND CINEMA

In subsequent chapters, Bazin shares his observations about the differences between theatre and cinema. He talks at great length about how cinema is different from the theatres on a few important parameters. They are: The concept of presence, opposition, and identification, and behind the décor. Let us understand a few critical observations of Bazin about these parameters.

7.9 THE CONCEPT OF PRESENCE

Bazin observes that "the stage welcomes every illusion except that of presence; the actor is there in disguise, with the soul and voice of another, but he is there nonetheless, and space calls out for him and the solidity of his presence." On the other hand, cinema accommodates all forms of reality except one: the corporeal presence of the actor." He writes, "If the writing, style, and dramatic structure are rigorously conceived as the receptacle for the soul and being of the flesh-and-blood actor, then any attempt to substitute the shadow and reflection of a man on the screen for the man himself is a futile endeavour." This argument has no counterargument."

He observes that the definition of presence is based on time and space. "To be in the presence of someone" is to recognise him as existing contemporaneously with us and to recognise that he is within the actual range of our senses — in the case of cinema, our sight, and in radio, our hearing." He adds, "It is no longer as certain that there is no stage between presence and absence as it once was. Likewise, the source of the cinema's efficacy lies at the ontological level. It is untrue that the screen cannot place us "in the presence of" the actor.

"It is true that Molière can die on stage in the theatre, and we have the privilege of living in the actor's biographical time." In the film about Manolete, however, we are present at the actual death of the famous matador, and while our emotions may not be as intense as if we were in the arena at that moment in history, their essence is identical. What we lose as a result of the absence of direct witness is not recaptured by the artificial proximity provided by photographic enlargement. Everything occurs as though within the time-space boundary that defines presence. The cinema offers us only a reduced, but not negative, measure of duration, while the increase in the space factor restores the equilibrium of the psychological equation."

7.10 OPPOSITION AND IDENTIFICATION

Bazin discusses the differences between the experiences of viewing a film and a play. He writes, "An honest appraisal of the respective pleasures derived from theatre and cinema, at least in terms of what is less intellectual and more immediate about them, compels us to acknowledge that the pleasure we experience at the conclusion of a play has a more uplifting, nobler, and one might even say more moral effect than the pleasure which follows a good film. We appear to have a cleaner conscience." "The source of the disenchantment that follows the film is unquestionably a process of depersonalization of the viewer," he says. He cites several intriguing observations by the French author M. Rosenkrantz. M. Rosenkrantz writes in the French magazine *Esprit*, "The characters on the screen are quite naturally objects of identification, whereas those on the stage are rather objects of mental opposition, because their real presence gives them an objective reality, and to transpose them into beings in an imaginary world, the spectator's will must intervene actively to transform their physical reality into an abstraction." This abstraction is the result of an intelligent process that can only be asked of a completely conscious individual."

Bazin makes an intriguing distinction between the theatre and the film industry. He writes, "A member of the film audience tends to identify with the film's protagonist through a psychological process that turns the audience into a "mass" and homogenises emotion. In the same way that in algebra, if two numbers equal a third, they are equal, we can say that if two individuals identify with a third, they identify with one another. Let us compare chorus ladies on stage to those on film. On the screen, they gratify an unconscious sexual desire, and when the hero joins them, he satisfies the viewer's desire to the extent that the viewer has identified with the hero." He continues, "On stage, the ladies excite the audience as they would in real life. There is no identification with the hero as a result. Instead, he becomes an object of jealousy and envy. In other terms, Tarzan can only exist on-screen. "The cinema soothes the viewer, while the theatre excites him or her."

He elaborates on the distinctions between reading a novel, viewing a film, and attending a play. He writes, "Examined closely, the enjoyment derived from the theatre differs not only from that derived from the cinema, but also from that derived from the novel. The reader of a novel identifies with the protagonist because, like the individual in the dark theatre, he is physically isolated. Therefore, after a lengthy period of reading, he experiences the same illusion of intimacy with the protagonist. Incontestably, there is a self-satisfaction, a concession to seclusion, and a sort of betrayal of action by refusing social responsibility in the enjoyment of cinema and literature.

7.11 BEHIND THE DÉCOR

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Bazin explains the significance of set design and acting in theatre and film. He writes, "In the theatre, the human being is of paramount importance. The on-screen drama can exist without actors. A slamming door, a leaf in the wind, or crashing waves on the shore can heighten the drama. Some cinematic masterpieces use man only as a supporting character or as a foil to nature, which is the true protagonist. Even when the subject is man's struggle with nature, as in *Nanook and Man of Aran*, it cannot be compared to a theatrical performance. The driving force behind the action is not man, but nature." He cites the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's thoughts on cinema and theatre. "In the theatre, the drama begins with the actor; in the cinema, it begins with the setting and ends with the actor," says Sartre. In response, Bazin writes, "This dramatic reversal is of decisive significance. It is intrinsic to the essence of the *mise-en-scene*."

The remainder of the essays discuss the individuality of directors including Jean Renoir, Charles Chaplin, Vittorio De Sica, Luchino Visconti, and Roberto Rossellini. Bazin discusses the distinctive qualities of these filmmakers in relation to films like *Bicycle Thieves*, *Limelight*, *La Terra Trema*, and *Paisa*.

Andre Bazin died at the age of forty on November 11, 1958.

Check your progress

4. What does Bazin refer to when he talks about Depth of field?

5. What does Bazin mean by Mixed Cinema?

6. How does Bazin distinguish between theatre and Cinema?

7.12 SUMMING UP

Andre Bazin is considered a founding parent of the French New Wave. In 1951, he founded the highly regarded film magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma* in Paris, France. This publication served as a nurturing ground for critics who, in the coming years, will become film directors and alter the language of filmmaking. Francois Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, and Eric Rohmer are examples of eminent critics who worked at *Cahiers du Cinéma* before turning to film direction. In addition to this, Bazin was a profound thinker about cinema. He authored numerous articles on cinema. These articles have been compiled into two volumes entitled *What Is Cinema?*

What is a film? (In two volumes) is one of the essential texts for students of cinema studies. He delves deeply into the use of montage in film storytelling. He asserts that editing is a crucial factor that demonstrates the distinction between a literary story and film language. He writes that an almost ubiquitous standard editing pattern existed. In this type of photo retouching, images were "expressionist" or "symbolic." Subsequently, editing altered, and a new, "analytic" and "dramatic" form of storytelling developed. Bazin discusses the concept of "presence" (of an actor's presence), depth of field (what is in the focus of a scene), the limitations of montage, and mixed cinema (judicious use of literature in film).

7.13 QUESTIONS

7. **What is the contribution of Andre Bazin in the French New Wave?**

8. **What are Bazin's thoughts about montage and editing in general since the advent of sound in films?**

9. What does Bazin refer to when he talks about Depth of field?

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10. What does Bazin mean by Mixed Cinema?

11. How does Bazin distinguish between theatre and Cinema?

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THEORIES IN FILM

Unit Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Theories in Film
 - 8.1.1 Auteur theory
 - 8.1.2 Apparatus theory
 - 8.1.3 Cognitive film theory
 - 8.1.4 Montage theory
- 8.2 Film theory
 - 8.2.1 Types of film theory
- 8.3 Semiotics and Semiology in films
 - 8.3.1 Some terms and concepts
- 8.4 Semiology in films, Christian Metz, and Jean Mitry
 - 8.4.1 Christian Metz
 - 8.4.2 Jean Mitry
- 8.5 Questions
- 8.6 References

8.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To familiarize the student with the theories that shaped cinema
2. To help the student understand the role and application of semiotics in cinema
3. To familiarize the student with theorists and critics of semiology in films

8.1 THEORIES IN FILM

In 1948, Alexandre Astruc, a French documentary filmmaker, developed a theory which, in essence, asserts that the director of a film should be regarded as its primary creative force. This theory, known as the Auteur Theory, became the standard for filmmaking in the 1950s under the leadership of the French director Francois Truffaut. This theory is discussed in Unit 13 and can be accessed through there. This chapter's takeaway is that the Auteur Theory presents the director's vision through the storytelling

elements he employs, but leaves the interpretation wholly up to the viewer, allowing them to create meanings that may differ from what the director intended.

8.1.2 Device theory

In the 1970s, apparatus theory, which was partially derived from Marxist film theory, semiotics, and psychoanalysis, dominated cinema studies. It was stated that cinema is ideological by its very nature because films are produced to represent reality. The mechanics of representation consist of the camera and editing, the framing is ideological, and the cinematic equipment (or apparatus) is used to present realistic images and noises to the viewer's eyes and ears. However, the used technology conceals the frame-by-frame construction of reality.

This theory also has a Marxist component, asserting that passive spectators cannot distinguish between the world of cinema and film and the real world, and identify so strongly with the characters on screen that they are susceptible to ideological poisoning. Jean-Louis Baudry, a film theorist, stated that because the film is viewed in a darkened theatre with no external distractions, the audience can experience the film as if it were actuality and as if they were experiencing the events themselves. Cinema, according to apparatus theory, also maintains the dominant ideology of the culture within the spectator. Ideology is not imposed on cinema; rather, it is inherent to the medium and influences audience thought. And this is accomplished using a variety of devices and equipment.

8.1.3 Theory of cognitive film

Cognitive Film Theory, also known as Aesthetic Cognitivism, is a theory about the value of the arts that views them not merely (or not even) as sources of delight, diversion, pleasure, or emotional catharsis, but as sources of comprehension. It seeks to explain audience comprehension, emotional arousal, and aesthetic preference. Cognitive film theory focuses on the experience and reaction of the film spectator, as well as the relationship between film content, the appropriate context in which the viewing experience occurs, and viewer psychology. Scholars of this theory include Noell Carroll, David Bordwell, Carl Plantiga, and Greg M. Smith. While Carroll believes that a film's narrative is the primary source of emotional signals for the viewer, Smith believes that stylistic devices rather than narrative are responsible for establishing the film's mood. Understanding the impact of sound, lighting, setting, script, and casting on the audience's comprehension of a film is given greater depth, substance, and structure by this theory. The audience's ability to identify and relate to events, human passions, and fond recollections, as well as invest their emotions in the film, makes it cognitively acceptable.

8.1.4 Montage concept

Montage is French for "assembly" or "editing," and the Soviet montage theory is an editing-heavy approach to understanding and creating cinema (montage is French for "assembly" or "editing"). It is the main contribution

of Soviet film theorists to the global film industry. Post-Soviet film theories heavily relied on montage's reorientation of film analysis towards language, a literal film grammar. The core of this theory is Sergei Eisenstein's assertion that "montage is an idea that arises from the collision of independent shots" and that "each sequential element is perceived not next to the other, but on top of the other." This theory suggests that through the use of montages, i.e., scenes or shots set in succession, one can manipulate and influence the viewer's thoughts. This theory employs concepts from linguistics and semiotics to develop a film language spoken by the director.

8.2 FILM THEORY

Film theory is a collection of scholarly approaches within the academic field of film or cinema studies that began in the 1920s by questioning the formal essential attributes of motion pictures and now provides conceptual frameworks for understanding film's relationship to reality, the other arts, individual viewers, and society. Film theory is the study of film and how its many elements work together to create a representation of reality. Film theory utilises an academic approach to describe the essence of cinema and how it reflects the audience and the world.

When motion pictures arose as a new form of mass entertainment in the early 20th century, they were compared to the prevalent art form at the time, theatre. Germaine Dulac, Jean Epstein, Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, and Rudolf Arnheim emphasised how film differed from reality and how it could be considered a legitimate art form. In the years following World War II, André Bazin, a French film critic and theorist, argued that the essence of cinema resided in its ability to mechanically reproduce reality, not in its difference from reality. He believed that a film is the director's vision, and that it is up to the audience to interpret the film's meaning. The French New Wave was influenced by these ideas, which emphasised realism, the Auteur Theory, and avant-garde filmmaking. As film technology and filmmaking evolved, film theory adopted concepts from fields such as Gender studies, psychoanalysis, anthropology, semiotics, linguistics, and literary theory and established itself in academia.

Check you progress

1. Explain Semiology in films.

2. Take any scene of your choice and elaborate on the shot-by-shot semiotics

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3. What is connotation and denotation with respect to films? Give examples.
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8.2.1 Film theory types:

Feminist: This theory examines portrayals of women in film. Feminist theorists investigate how filmmakers disregard the subjectivity of female characters by objectifying and sexualizing them. Important to this theory is Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in which she coined the phrase "male gaze."

Psychoanalytic: This theory, derived from the field of psychology, endeavours to study the human psyche by analysing the effect of unconscious thoughts, sexual desires, and narcissism on a character's narrative progression.

This theory posits that the director is the primary artistic visionary of a film and that the best films are created by filmmakers who direct their own films with a personal artistic vision.

This theory examines queer subject matter and subtexts in a film, i.e., sexual orientation and gender identities in film.

Marxist: This theory investigates the depiction of power structures and class conflict in film. The focus of the theorists is on the protagonists fighting for the requirements of a group against the capitalist powers. Example: Gully Boy's efforts to overcome class distinction in order to prosper in Bollywood.

8.3 SEMIOTICS AND SEMIOLOGY IN FILMS:

Semiotics (also known as semiotic studies) is the study of sign processes (semiosis), which include any activity, conduct, or process involving signs, where a sign is defined as anything that conveys a meaning to the sign's interpreter. The meaning may be intentional, such as a word spoken with a specific meaning, or incidental, such as a symptom indicating a specific medical condition. Signs can also convey emotions and can communicate internally (through the thought) or through any of the five senses: sight, hearing, scent, and touch. The receiver uses cognitive processes to interpret and make sense of the received sign in order to respond effectively. Simply put, semiotic theory asserts that there are signs that we comprehend due to

unconsciously acquired cultural knowledge; deciphering the sign and understanding when to stop enables us to interact safely within our community and society.

8.3.1 A few terms and ideas:

Syntax is the study of how words combine to produce larger units, such as phrases and sentences, in linguistics. Word order, grammatical relations, hierarchical sentence structure, agreement, the nature of crosslinguistic variation, and the relationship between form and meaning are central concerns of syntax.

Semantics is the study of reference, meaning, and reality.

Cognitive semantics: Cognitive semantics takes a cognitive linguistics-inspired approach to meaning. As opposed to a domain-specific language module, this framework explains language through general cognitive abilities. This emphasises that a sign can be interpreted based on the individual's prior knowledge and abilities, and not necessarily what the sign was intended to communicate.

Syntactics is the subfield of semiotics concerned with formal relations between signs or expressions that are independent of their signification and their interpreters, or, more generally, with formal properties of symbol systems.

Denotation is the conventional definition of a term.

The connotation of a term is the emotion it evokes.

A narrative is a story or account of events, experiences, or the like, whether they are real or imagined.

A trope is the metaphorical or figurative use of a term or expression. As an example, the Eiffel Tower motif is used to represent Paris.

There are concealed symbols in every art form, and it is up to the audience to interpret them. Film semiotics is the study of sign processes or any other activity, behaviour, or process involving signs, including the production of meaning, in relation to moving images.

In the 1920s, French writer Louis Delluc wrote about the ability of film to transcend national language, while Hungarian film theorist Bela Balázs and Italian writer Ricciotto Canudo wrote about the linguistic nature of films.

In the 1910s and '20s, Russian writers and literary critics Yury Tynyanov and Boris Eichenbaum defined the principles of syntagmatic construction, stating that cinema is a 'language' in which the linking of shots resembles syntax. In the same way that linguistics employs phrases and sentences to convey meaning, shots in cinema are linked sequentially to convey meaning. Tynyanov emphasised the significance of lighting and montage, whereas Eichenbaum viewed film as "inner speech" and "image translations of linguistic tropes."

Since the 1950s, when Post-structuralists began to criticise structuralism and academic interest in semiotics grew, film theorists such as Christian Metz have developed explanations and theories to examine semiotics in film.

8.4 SEMIOLOGY IN FILMS, CHRISTIAN METZ, AND JEAN MITRY:

Film conveys meaning in both denotative and connotative ways. What the audience sees and hears is denotative, so they do not have to make an effort to identify it. Simultaneously, these sounds and images are connotative, and the scene is shot to elicit specific emotions in the viewer. Social values, emotive overtones, and ideological assumptions comprise connotation. "The study of connotation brings us closer to the notion of cinema as an art (the "seventh art")," as stated by Christian Metz. When photographed from various perspectives, the subject of a photograph may acquire a new connotative significance. A low angle picture of a rose, for instance, conveys a sense that the flower is dominant or overpowering because we subconsciously compare it to an overhead shot of the same flower, which would diminish its significance. In Kubrick's *The Shining*, the murderer is depicted from a lower angle (establishing dominance) while the victim is depicted from a higher angle (establishing vulnerability). The rose shot would not be compared to other prospective shots, but rather to shots that precede or follow it. It has meaning because it is compared to other images we actually observe.

The narrative of a film is created through a combination of dialogue, audio, visual images, gestures, and actions. Narrators, typically in the form of a voice-over, are widely used in documentary films and are of great assistance in conveying the narrative while accompanying powerful shots. Films frequently employ tropes because they rely on external characteristics to disclose internal ones. Metaphors, which are defined as a comparison between two unrelated objects that share certain characteristics, are also an effective semiotic tool for filmmaking. In cinema, two consecutive images are metaphorical when there is an implied comparison between them. For instance, following a shot of the protagonist's eyes with an image of a tiger's eyes implies that the protagonist is similar to a tiger.

8.4.1 Christian Metz:

Metz's pioneering contributions to film semiotics had a significant impact on film theory in France, Britain, Latin America, and the United States during the 1970s. In 1964, he published the article *Cinema, langue ou parole?* ("cinema, language or speech") in the journal *Communications*. During the next 25 years, he published the following books: *Essays on the Signification of Cinema* (1968 and 1973), *Language and Cinema* (1971), *Semiotic Essays* (1977), and *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema* (1977). Metz focused on narrative structure and proposed a method for classifying film sequences (or syntagms). Metz, influenced by Freud's psychology and Mirror Theory, proposed that film's popularity

stems from its capacity to be both an imperfect reflection of reality and a means of entering the unconscious dream state. Film is a language because, unlike the written word, its fundamental unit, which Metz argues is the shot, is neither symbolic nor arbitrary but iconic; therefore, it is loaded with specific meaning. Midway through the 1980s, Metz shifted his focus from semiology to psychoanalysis in films, anticipating the future of film studies. Now, film analysis takes into account not only the signs and symbols presented to the viewer, but also the human psyche as proposed by Freud et al.

Jean Mitry critiqued the work of Christian Metz in 1987's *Semiotics and the Analysis of Film*.

Jean Mitry was a French film theorist, critic, and filmmaker, as well as a co-founder of France's first film society and, in 1938, of the Cinémathèque Française, a non-profit organisation containing one of the largest archives of film documents and film-related artefacts. Jean René Goetgheluck Le Rouge Tillard Des Acres de Presfontaines was his actual name. Born in Soisson, France, in 1904, he became prominent in the French film scene in the 1920s, writing reviews and serving as one of Abel Gance's many assistants during the production of *Napoléon* (1924). Other than publishing the two volumes of *Esthétique et psychologie du cinéma*, he published a large five volume *Histoire du cinéma*, a history of experimental cinema (*Le cinéma expérimental*), a critique of film semiology (*La sémiologie en question*), monographs and studies of John Ford, Chaplin, Eisenstein, René Clair, Thomas Ince, a *Dictionnaire du cinéma*, and a massive thirty-five volume universal filmography.

Mitry was one of the few significant film theorists who also engaged in film production. *Les structures*, his first book, examines the conditions under which the mundane objects presented by film are framed, composed, organised, and transformed into intentional image-objects, thereby identifying the principles that cause a film to acquire form. Regarding communication, he asserts that psychological indicators pertain to the perceptual mental representations of external objects. On the other hand, linguistic signs are typically understood to be forms that have come to arbitrarily or conventionally represent abstract mental constructs such as ideas or concepts.

Mitry differs from early structuralist film semioticians such as Barthes and Metz in that his conception of representation is not based on linguistics and verbal language. Regardless of the manifestation (verbal, visual, filmic, etc.), language is that which expresses and communicates thought (ideas, emotions) and its operations, enabling the audience to comprehend what the frame/shot/scene is attempting to convey. This demonstrates that Mitry believed that "connotation" alone constitutes a language in film, and not "denotation."

Check your progress

4. What are the different theories in film?

5. What is Christian Metz's contribution to cinema?

6. What is Jean Mitry's contribution to cinema?

Lets sum it up

Numerous and diverse film theories exist, ranging from psychological and sociological to postmodernist and feminist perspectives. Psychoanalytic theory, which examines the subconscious motivations of characters and the audience, Marxist theory, which examines the role of class and power in film production and reception, semiotics, which examines the signs and symbols used to create meaning in film, and feminist theory, which examines the representation of gender and sexuality in film, are among the major theoretical approaches. Other significant theoretical perspectives include auteur theory, which emphasises the director's role in generating meaning in film, and postmodernism, which challenges the notion of a single, unified meaning in film. Each of these theories provides a unique perspective on cinema and contributes to our comprehension of the medium and its influence on society.

8.5 QUESTIONS:

7. Explain Semiology in films.

8. Take any scene of your choice and elaborate on the shot-by-shot semiotics

9. What is connotation and denotation with respect to films? Give examples.

10. Elaborate on _____ theory. (choose from section 8.1)

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REALITY AND REPRESENTATION

Unit Structure

9.0 Objectives

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1. Comprehension of the concept of reality and representation

9.1.2. History and circumstantial reality

9.2 Understanding “WHO” is Representing?

9.2.1. Who is representing? whom?

9.3 Representation Theory – Stuart Hall

9.3.1. Understanding representation through the mirror of media.

9.3.2. Methods to show representation

9.4 Let's sum up

9.5 Questions

9.6 References

9.0. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Understanding what reality and representation is
- Nature and characteristics of representation
- Learning the theories of representation

9.1. INTRODUCTION

Reality and Representation

Reality - the way life really is, not the way it may appear to be or how you would like it to be, reality is a thing that is experienced, not just imagined.

Representation – A sign or symbol that conveys meaning with a combination of content and forms, for example A dog is real, where as a painting of a dog is a representation. All film and images are representation inherently, not matter how real or realistic it may seem.

Every film falls into question about the reality and representation, as many realists' theorists' debates that, films are nothing but a representation of reality. When it comes to representation it can be a diverse and applied to all kinds of art and literature. but the real question is what representation means, and how does films represent real people or objects in a film. To represent is "to stand for", or to symbolize. In terms of film representation is more of portray as it is a visual medium. Signs and symbols are used to communicate meaning. Let look at painting and literature, sometimes the characters and the objects in the painting or literacy pieces of art might not necessarily have a physical reality. You can draw or paint anything without having a real model or a person in your mind. In fact, you might not paint anything that exists in the real world at all. Your art can be completely nonrepresentational, it can be just few dots, or splash of paint. This is a reversal of the definition of reality, here the artist can make anything they Imagine. But wait now where things get complicated is all form or at be it representational or non-representational are real things. The art itself exists in the real world. For example, the character's played Tom Holland, Tobey Maguire, and Andrew Garfield in the movie "Spider Man: No way home" are CGI and do not exist in the real world, but Spider Man as a Character is certainly real, and so do the actors. In narrative films, the film maker has something to shoot that is real. (Keeping completely Computer-Generated Images Films aside). The film maker captures real people and real thing. It might be characters wearing costumes and makeup, but they are they are real human beings. These characters might be placed in a constructed set, but the set itself has a physical space. There is a song by an American Band RHCP called Californication where in the lyrics its written "Space may be the final frontier, but it's made in a Hollywood basement". That states that the intergalactic space which is shown in the movies are created in real basements of Hollywood studios. The set's background might be mountains and rocks which might be painted on a backdrop, but it is still a material background. Similarly, if we breakdown the process of the creation of art the art itself has a reality. Even animated films, where each frame is painted, processed, and connected in a film strip, the strip is a physical material. Along with detailing and voice over it becomes even more closer to reality. These Animated Characters might be influenced or given characteristic of humans, even the objects or creatures are allocated with emotions and personalities which might have some relevance in the real world. In simple word, what the film shows is a representation and what a film is a physical form of art.

9.1.1.Comprehension of the concept of reality and representation

Another point of view is that every artist be it from any field, painting, literature or films, has a unique and different perspective. For example, If Rohit Shetty, Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Raju Hirani make a movie on a single topic or person. Will it be the same?! Even if it's the same subject or person but there can be multiple representations of it, the style, structure, elements, and form of all the three films will be entirely different. But why is this so, for example, You and your team or friends go to cover an event in your university, you all have Digital cameras and you all shoot video of your professors reciting a poetry, you all capture the same moment in time,

and edit it separately and make a short film of that event. Will all the films be same? The answer is no! Because all of you and your friends have different perspectives, even technical aspects are involved such as your cameras, lens, memory cards and even camera positions should be same, even if that's the case you might use upbeat fast track to the background music and your friends might use slow and calm music to the similar clips. On the tip of the iceberg, it may seem that motion pictures capture real people and event (reality) as it is, but the representation of an event, person, art will always differ in every piece of art.

This is a very peculiar aesthetic issue in film studies, to form a comprehension of something that might appear random, spontaneous unmediated event or action, is a mediated and staged piece of art. Film covers the actions in a frame and that frame is most composed intentionally by the media producers like the director of a movie. On its surface, we might ignore the mediation in the films, we don't primarily see the art but what we see is a representation of things captured in an image which have physical reality. In contrary most of the classical Hollywood Filmmaking style attempts to design the films completely artificial. The elaborate sets are designed, idealized lightening, planned hair and makeup of the actors. Most aspects are planned and implemented to create and mise-en-scene, which we see study in detail in further units. To portray "a Hollywood version of life" and in terms of India "a Bollywood version of life". Where the things and people in the films are too good to be real and unreal at the same time. For example, let's take the movie "student of the Year". The settings and the characters are larger than life. The school in which the characters are in, does not look anything less than a five-star hotel. Although that school and type of students are too lavish with respect to most of the schools in Indian context, but what the characters are dealing with is very relatable to the college going youth, like friendship, love, and disappointed parental issues. It is a time relatable but also unrelatable. To sum it up we can say it's a very "Karan Johar Version" of life. It's true with all kinds of filmmakers, Let's take Anurag Kashyap for example, his films appear very raw and ethnic, with very common looking actors and settings, but even in his movies these characters are made to look common, and the dialogues are vulgar - of the common. On the top layer it might appear as reality but if you observe closely, it is representation. Vicky Kaushal in *Massan* looks extremely ordinary whereas he looks better than ordinary. If we dig deeper into the aesthetic, you will find the types of shots (handheld shots) are designed in a way to give a raw and realistic look. Even the editing is done that way. It is all staged.

9.1.2. History and circumstantial reality

During the World Wars Europe went through a lot of financial crises, where their film studios were also destroyed. The filmmakers in Italy started shooting in real locations with very common looking nonprofessional actors. Which gave the birth to the film movement called Italian Neo-Realism. It proliferated a more realistic approach to making films. There was low to no set designs and even the actors did not wear make-up. This movement brought films closer to reality and the representation was

realistic. The movies of this movement portrayed the socio-economic and political condition of Italy. Mostly about everyday life of the common man. Even though the representation was realistic but was it the reality. Not really, the films were still planned, and staged. Thus, of reality it cannot be true.

9.2. UNDERSTANDING “WHO” IS REPRESENTING?

Every Movie be it an Autobiography, Fictional or Based on real story have some levels of representation involve, does not matter if its intentional or not. Sometime the representation can be realistic on the other hand it can be the quite opposite. Even fictional world has some aspects which resemble to the real world. In most situations it's the human figure in a fictional world let it be Avatar or Avengers there is always that figure that we can identify with, and it represents something in the real world.

To understand this, we need to answer three basic questions firstly, who is Representing? The Film maker and his vision is a power centric term, the portray of reality is basically done by the reproduction of the reality, but scientifically let can never be the exact reality as reality is time bound. Reality and representation are a complex subject where there are endless possibilities and truths. At a point it comes down to perspective of the person who is representing and is a subjective matter. The second question is how adequate and accurate the portrayal or representation is, what are the parameters for determining the accuracy and adequacy of a representation. Sometime the representation might be adequate but not accurate, for example the autobiography of Sanjay Dutt movie “Sanju”, The question arises how adequate has been the portrayal of Sanjay Dutt has been in the movie, how much the film maker knows about him, from where did he got to know about and understanding about Sanjay Dutt's life, did Sanjay Dutt himself narrated his story to him, if yes, is there a bias perspective, and how accurately the depiction of the person has been done (is the second question), this also involves the aesthetic quality of character as well as the world created in that film, how much it resembles with the real world. The third question is who judges the accuracy of the film, is it the film maker, or the person on whom the film is made or the audience who are watching it. Every person has different perspective, which is personal centric and thus what suits me does not necessarily suit anyone else. It's quite confusing right, hence we need to look at some theories of representations to give us a better understanding of it.

9.2.1 Who is representing?

There are various theories of Representations, the Early Representation theory look at the literary aspect, where it all started with the understanding the narrative of religious books particularly “bible”, who said, what, about whom and whom was it being narrated to and who was listening and writing about it, the one who wrote it did he write the exact same thing which was being told. This Representation theory literally covers anything and everything in the world, so every literary piece of art or story consists of

some representation, sometime these representations are purposeful and is used to identify.

Portrayal, Fiction, Symbolic Simulation whatever it may be, there is always questions about aesthetics and theories of fiction and representation in art (be it literature, art, or film) and what is accuracy and validation of representation. Is motion picture just an illusion or does it contain reality in it. Are there any relations between metaphors and literal meaning? Are films just imaginary visual signifiers. The theories of representation not only deal with literary, aesthetic aspects but also psychological aspects too, as films are made with the actual worldly conventions molding our visual experience. The study involves how these visual representation and signifier stimulates the emotional response.

Check your progress

1. Explain Representation

2. Explain the concept of WHO is representing

3. Give some examples of representation and reality

9.3. REPRESENTATION THEORY – STUART HALL

The Representation theory in media and films traditionally looks at how the film medium represents the reality, and this representation is always validated in respect to reality. Stuart hall disagreed as this is a very simplified version of a complex subject which is very straight forward and inefficient. Where “True Meaning” = “Media Representation” which is an inaccurate measurement of reality and representation. He also explained the concept of personal representation in media, that is Representation as a reflection/Distortion of reality. Even the representation as a word has two meanings, the first and the obvious one is to present, to project, to depict of something else which already exists and through the medium of films or

any form of media is Re-presented. Here the Representation conveys the meaning of something which is already there. But there is another comprehension of the word representation. For example, as we say about political leaders are representing someone, where they Stand in for someone or taking the place of” as a representative, where everyone can’t be, the leaders can be. So now if we club both the notions of representation, to depict and to stand for. This is what the Media practices. It represents people, topic, events, actions. In this concept of representation itself contains the idea of giving meaning. So now it can be stated as “Representation is the way in which Meaning is given to the things depicted” – Stuart Hall. Through any kind of media be it news screens, films, or printed papers. And we think that the representation differs from the true meaning or reality and is distortion of reality. Then to find the true representation is needed to measure the gap between, what we think is the actual reality with what has been depicted. Stuart Hall also suggested a new perspective of it – Representation as constructive. Coming back to the literal and over simplified notion of representation = reality. Hall, reject this approach which implied that a subject or person or a group of people or events has a single meaning based on which accuracy and adequacy can be measured. Stuart halls argued that there is no specific fixed meaning or Reality based on which distortion can be measured and often the subject’s actual means does not exist, until it is portrayed by the media, the media is this case media literally provides a perspective and give meaning to these events. It simple terms the actions or characters does not carry real meaning and even if there is no single interpretation of what is going on until it has been represented by the media. Media representation are reflection of things that already have meaning, but the representation itself is a meaning constructing phenomenon of the things that happens. To sum this up we can say that representation does not happen after the event, but it is constitutive of the event it enters the constitution of the subject or event. Presentation becomes the part of the subject, or object itself. That is Reality does not exist outside the process of representation.

9.3.1. Understanding representation through the mirror of media:

As discussed early it is important to recognize who is representing, who has the power to construct and give meaning and influence the society. It suggests that everything the audience knows and thinks about a subject is controlled by the media. For example, we develop conceptions about things or people by watching a movie which is basically the intent of the producer or the film maker. This is a power centric position, and it attempts determines and allocate a particular meaning and associates it with a certain thing or a character in the real world. Ever wondered why the rich character’s name in Bollywood movies Kapoor are usually, Singhania, Bajaj this is because the film producers associate wealth to the surnames. Few years back I went to watch a live interview of Nawazuddin Siddique where someone in the audience asked him, how do you master these unconventional roles. Where he smiled and answered that “Am I the Unconventional actor?! About 90 percent of the Indian look like and resemble to me rather than 6 feet tall, muscular, and fair men. So, know tell me who is unconventional?”. This is what media and films do, the convention

of strong muscular, tall, and fair hero is a convention that Bollywood films has created but it does not always reflect the reality, similarly the portrayal of dark and ugly looking men as villain. But this is being challenged and changing with contemporary times. But you can still find protagonist fair and handsome in most of the Bollywood films. These representations are peculiarly biased and limited, it generates hegemonic representation which gives rise to stereotypes. Stereotypes is over simplified portrayal of a person, or a group of people, things, place by we generalized characteristic which is usually exaggerated. It most based on a concept of audience's rapid recognition. This often leads to misrepresentation. It does not necessarily mean that stereotypes are false, stereotypes are often correct at some level of truth, be it observational or experiential but it might become outdated and might not be true everywhere, thus would not represent the subject very well. Let take stereotypes in gender, for example female characters are often portrayed as beautiful, weak, submissive, and prone to danger if left alone, well to some it might be offensive whereas some might even agree to this representation. If we take LGTB community in film, they have been the target of narrow perspectives and used as gags or for comic effects. For example, the character of "Bobby Darling" has been often used to joke around and add comic reliefs to the movies. For a long time, this representation was not that offensive but now as the times have changed, the representations like these have become more prominent and offend a larger amount of audience. Now let's discuss, Ethnicity Stereotypes, there are a wide variety of races around the globe, there are a lot of generalization that is done when it comes to the races, such as Germans as Rude, Africans or African American are often stereotyped as thugs, or gangster, even there set design is stereotypical made, such as metal fencing, baseball bats, colourful graffiti on the walls. Asian as a race is highly stereotyped be it, Indian, Arabic or Eastern Asian origins. Arabic characters are seen extremely rich but doing stupid things, or even terrorists. Eastern Asians as Nerds or Kungfu masters and it is still being done very subliminally in Hollywood films Example, The Character of Ned (better known as peter parkers friend) in the movie Spider Man No way home. Some Modern film makers are trying to break these stereotypes or flip the stereotypes, even in Bollywood movies like My Name Is Khan- where the protagonist tries to show that all Asian Muslims are not Terrorist, Tube light – Where the movie deals with north-eastern Indian and Chinese race. and P.K – Pakistani's are not traitors. These films tried to show how stereotype leads to misconceptions. These reversals of stereotypes give a new depth to the characters and make them more realistic. Sara corner in the movie Terminator. Stereotypes are the dangerous, if done wrong it can destroy the entire movie. Age Ethnicity is simple where there are many differences between the young and the old people. Stereotypes are not reality but representation which are often not true or accurate. But again, as we discussed stereotypes are not always negative sometimes it's a necessity for the movie.

9.3.2. Methods to show representation

There are two ways to show a representation, first is the constructive blocks, how does the camera movements, angles, shots, editing clubs to represent

the characters and actions. Which we will learn in the further units. The second method is through scripting and character development. If you say the character is a Macho Man accordingly, he must appear. Reality and Representation is very delicate terms, and some time there is a very fine line between them, the audience might not notice it but as a film maker or film literate, it is extremely important to understand the similarities and differences of both terms. If no used properly it can ruin the entire movie.

Check your progress

1. What is the Importance of “WHO” in representation?

2. What is the difference between representation and depiction?

3. Explain Stuart Halls theory of representation

9.4. LET'S SUM UP

The comprehension of reality and representation is involved in every stage of the movie be it preproduction, production and postproduction. In preproduction the producer, writer and the director must give special attention to the representational aspect of the characters and the world around them. The representation should justify and action and the characters. For example, if a movie is based on a historical event which happened in 1950's but the film is shot at a modern looking society it won't be a correct representation. If one does not pay attention to it, representation can also become misrepresentation, and which can deviate the audience from the story. Again, if we see the movies based on political figures, Political figures are always controversial, even if one attempts to give a decent representation of the person in the movie, there will be a side which will feel it is a misrepresentation. Again, if we take the example of the Movie “Sanju” there are a lot of people including Sanjay Dutt's himself who appreciated the attempt of representing him, from his own perspective and his side of story but there are many who called it an attempt of brain

washing to improve his reputation. Now who is the supreme judge and who can give a final validation of the accuracy of the representation. The audience can decide if the representation is positive or negative. To simplify a good representation of someone or something is a close recreation or reproductions of reality. By adding depth into the characters. Bear in mind while attempting to represent something or someone, the representation itself should bring the audience into the story and done in a way that it should get unnoticed by the audience.

9.5. QUESTIONS

4. What is the difference between reality and representation?

5. Explain representation with some examples.

6. What is the Importance of “WHO” in representation?

7. What is the difference between representation and depiction?

8. Explain Stuart Halls theory of representation

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MISE-EN-SCENE – WITHIN THE IMAGE, CAMERA MOVEMENT, CINEMATOGRAPHY

Unit Structure

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Understanding the term Mise-en-scene

10.2.1 Everything is for a reason

10.3 Various Elements and Departments employed in a Mise-en-scene

10.3.1 The Art Department and Art Director

10.3.2 Light and Grip Department

10.3.3 The DOP or Cinematographer

10.4 Understanding Anatomy of Camera, Lens and shot composition

10.4.1 Anatomy of Camera

10.4.2 Anatomy and types of camera lenses

10.4.3 Camera Angles, Framing and composition

10.5 Let's sum up

10.6 Questions

10.7 References

10.0. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Understanding what a mise-en-scene is
- Learning about Structural units and elements of Mise-en-scene
- The Importance and use of Mise-en-scene

10.1. INTRODUCTION

Mise-en-scene is a popular term in the context of film direction and cinematography. Although this term is a conceptual, but it has a lot to do with technical aspects of camera and picturization. Films and the language of film uses a lot of audio-visual elements as units of compositions. A

composition in film deals with what is in the frame, it covers a wide variety of aspect. Just like a painting is created similarly a frame is created, designed, and composed. There is a lot that goes behind the camera and before pressing the record button of the camera, but what the viewer's see is only what happens after the camera starts rolling, the frame, the characters, the lights, the colours, the motion caused by the movement of camera. All these combined, make a composition and this composition deals with the representation. Films often deals with the portrayal of reality and representation. What films represent is a prime focus of study. The term mise-en-scene (also mise-en-scène) explains the primary feature of cinematic representation. It's a French term which means that "what has been put into the scene or put onstage." In simple terms "setting the stage". Everything in the filmed image is described by the term mise-en-scene: it's the collective term for all what you see in a single film image. Mise-en-scene consists of all the elements placed in front of the camera to be shot, which includes settings and sets, props, lighting, costumes, makeup, actors and their acting, gesture, and facial expressions.

10.2. UNDERSTANDING THE TERM MISE-EN-SCENE

Mise-en-scene as a term might be confusing at times and might sound very complex but if we try to simplify it is just how we create the most "meaningful" image. Just as an electrician selects his tool for electrical work similarly a film maker chooses what is to be there in the frame and what is to be happening in that scene. While a scene is created there is a constant process of encoding that happens, this visual encoding is done carefully while composing a scene, what the film maker is trying to represent is a major focus here. The better the mise-en-scene is the clearer the representation is gives. All the visual elements combined and knit to create a visual meaning.

If mise-en-scene is used properly it has a potential to enhance the film and add meaning to image and engage the audience intellectually as well as emotionally. It can keep the viewer indulged in the frame hence enhance the visual reception of the audience.

Although mise-en-scene deals with all what's in front of the camera, but it does not just about the camera frame and positioning. The creation of mise-en-scene starts at pre-production itself, that is why storyboarding is given so much importance. The storyboarding artist carefully places the elements that needs to be in the scene.

10.2.1 Everything is for a reason.

Mise-en-scene consist of all that camera is capturing like the set and how its lit, how the subjects are placed and framed, how the actors look and what they are wearing, what props are being used. Everything in the frame should work together to enhance the scene or mise-en-scene. Everything we see in a film is placed and designed for a reason.

10.3. VARIOUS ELEMENTS AND DEPARTMENTS EMPLOYED IN A MISE-EN-SCENE

To create a mise-en-scene it requires a teamwork of highly specialized team, This Team that designs mise-en-scene arranges and structures the set and the actors in particular way in accordance with the director's vision.

10.3.1. The Art Department and Art Director

The Art department builds the set and decorates it, gives a spatial world in the film, it is led by The Production designer creates the physical aspect of the film, the production designer oversees the film's look. For this the production designer works with the director to understand the vision and then starts the research and recce of the shoot location, then comes a set decorator who is responsible for adding details in the set, what need to be there. The set designer also works with the Art director on the budget and arranges the props and the costumes required, usually they hire buyers who buy or rents dressing and props. Once the set is designed the Art department builds all the things which do not actually exist in the set. Now when the set is designed and decorated to give a time-spatial feel and the look of a physical world of the film. It is also important that the characters should also fit in to the world that has been created, here is where the Costume and makeup teams comes into action. The **costume designer** understands the characters. And designs a specific look for a character. The costume enhances the visual narrative of the film. If the personality and location of the characters changes in the movie the costumes also change to signify the transition. For Example, in the Movie Pushpa the lead actor starts as a labour and thus wears cheap and shabby cloths but in the end of the parts of the movie we can see he wears plain white shirt like a boss (although in the movie the characters says that the cloths and brand of cloths doesn't matter but in film production and costume design of the film it does). The Costume designs gets the audience pull into the film. It is very important that the actors should become their characters in front of the camera. Thus, they need to behave and look like the characters as well. Hair and Make-Up unit understand the personality of the character but also understand the hair and skin type of the actors as well. A good make-up is when it goes unnoticed, the use of makeup is to keep the audience engaged with the character and not to deviate them from the story or distract them through make up. (An example of this is in the Movie "Chichore" 2019, where Sushant Singh played the role of father by putting a "Partially bald wig" but it noticeable, it distracted the me so much that it became very difficult to connect with the character. It was not only obvious but also appeared unreal. Movies are shot scene by scene and usually not in chronological order, so Costume and Make-Up departments needs to be very systematic, aware, and planned to maintain continuity of the film.

10.3.2. Light and Grip Department

Films is made with the use of images and photos, but what is photo? Photo means Light and thus it is extremely important in the films, without light

film is nothing more than a radio. The Department responsible for managing the lights is called G&E that is Grip and Electric. The Electric team creates and controls the light, while the grips control the shadow, diffusion, and reflections. This is a highly technical job and the Grip and Electric Department work closely with the Director and DOP/ Cinematographer. The Electric Department must create systematic plan for lighting the sets at all locations. This plan includes the director's vision and cinematographer's stylistic need. The G&E Department needs to have a good knowledge of the colour theory and colour temperature. Understanding of the colour temperature is very crucial as to light the scene warm or cold. These warm and cool colours are used to set the mood of the film. For Example, in the movie "Tamasha" the first part of the movie (Particularly the song Matargasti) is very brightly lit with vivid colours to signify the happy and cheerfulness of the character and as the movie progresses you can see the shift between the colour from warm to cooler and the lights starts getting replaced by the darkness. The G&E is not only responsible for bringing and supplying lights but also the movement and arrangement of lights. The Electricians controls the light and its intensity whereas the grip department use tool the block or shape the light according to the requirement of the mise-en-scene. Sometimes the film uses natural light of the sun, but as the day passes the sun changes its positions and intensity of light also changes, hence there comes the use of artificial lights, in outdoors it is used to create a consistency in lights and create a balanced light on the set. In Studios and Indoors, It's the game of artificial light only, the lights are arranged, modified, and moved. The most common Technique of Light is Three-point lighting setup, as the name suggest there is use of lights from three points, These 3 lights lite up the subject. The first and the main light is called the key light which emits the highest intensity of light the second light is called a Fill light which is used to fill up the other side of the faces and to reduce shadows, The third light is called the hair light or the back light, which is used to separate the subject from the background by give it a slight highlight.

But not all light sources are lights, many a time a fill light is just a reflection of key light bouncing on a wall, mirror, or a bounce board. There are various ways to use lights, the lights themselves comes with mounts, barn doors or matte box where you can also add colour gels. The Barn door can shape the light. The lights which are used directly without any diffusers or gels can be very harsh, which is useful in some situations and stylistic cinematic approaches like in The German expressionism the lights are very harsh and shadows are prominent but to give a softer texture to the subject various diffusions (Soft box) and Silks can be added in front of the light to make it softer. Not only the lights but it is equally important to control the shadows for this the grip departments uses various tools like cutters/flags mounted on C-stands, C-stands are heavy with bendable arms which allows to use it in multiple angles. The flags mounted on these stands are also known as floppies as it can be flipped to block lighter.

The Grip department not only handles the lighting and diffusion tools, but they are also responsible for the movement of camera. The Tripods, dolly tracks or jimmy jibs cranes on which the camera is mounted in setup, built,

and maintained by the Grips. Often hand-held shots use the grips, as the cameraman/cinematographer needs to be on the wheelchair or ladder which is handled by the grips.

Now we know that camera movements are held by the grip now let's look at the movement of the camera itself. The movement of camera plays an important role in building a scene, it can bring the audience closer to the subject or take them away as per the requirement of scene.

10.3.3. The DOP or Cinematographer

We all know a film is created by moving images and the person who takes this picture or creates a mise-en-scene within the frame and on the sensor of the camera is Cinematographer/ Director Photography or Director of photography, but don't be confused these are names given to one specific role of controlling the camera. The Cinematographer is the one who brings the directors vision into the camera and life. The Cinematographer needs to be technically sound but also creative. The job of a cinematographer starts way before the production starts. In pre-production stage the DOP works with the director, understands his visions and advice the director on how the scenes will look which camera is to be used, what settings, picture profile frame rates and even lights and how the set should look. In the production stage the DOP works with the Art department and explains them how the set design, costumes and make up need to be. As we discussed earlier the photos and films are nothing but a play of light in a time – space dimension, Hence the DOP is constantly associated with the G&E Department/ Lighting head the gaffer. They plan and decide what kind of lights to be used, of course keeping the production budget in mind.

According to me the process of cinematography can be comprehended as – “It Requires a lot of brain to become the eye of the audience”.

Cinematography the process of exposing light to the sensor of the camera and capturing an image. Cinematography is a highly technical but also a very creative job. It requires knowledge, skills, and a load of experience. It is not just merely pressing the record button. There are various aspects that a cinematographer needs to element while shooting such as the distance between the camera and the subject, camera angles and the direction, camera movements, selecting types of cameras as well as types of lenses, constantly adjusting the settings and formats, Lighting and balancing the exposure triangle for optimal output and a lot more. Even creating mise-en-scene within the camera as well as the image, the composition and the arrangement of objects, subjects, and motion in the frame.

Check your progress

1. Explain Mise-en-scen

2. What are the units of composition in a mise-en-scene?

3. What is the role of an Art Director?

10.4. UNDERSTANDING ANATOMY OF CAMERA, LENS AND SHOT COMPOSITION

Before diving into the process of cinematography, one must learn about the types of cameras and lenses. A camera is a tool which lets the light to enter through lens, this light falls on the sensor creating an imprint (image). This imprint is processed and send to the storage device. This process is like our eyes and brain system.

10.4.1 Anatomy of Camera

Modern cameras have upgraded and provide an ease of use. Today we are in the realm of mirrorless camera. To make it simpler there are 4 main types of cameras that are capable of shooting videos and being use in contemporary video and film shooting. First is, small sensor camera, these cameras mostly come with inbuild lens or non-interchangeable lens, like mobiles and small cameras, modern days smart phone's (especially high-end) cameras are coming very close to actual cameras, and it is also becoming a viable option for small film makers and content creator. The next is a DSLR (Digital Single Lens Reflex), This is a commonly used camera both for stills as well as videos, this camera has a mirror that reflects light to the sensor and is compact and affordable. Then we have got Mirrorless Camera, which does not consist of a mirror, the light directly falls on the sensor, its faster and better from DSLR in a lot of aspects. High-end Mirrorless cameras are coming close to the Cinema Cameras and in some respects even better than cinema cameras too. Mirrorless cameras are the present and future and has potential to replace cinema cameras in the future. Last but the most important, is Cinema Camera or Cine-line Cameras, which are huge and extremely expensive, its mega-pixel count is lower to absorb more light in every unit pixel, which is more favorable for taking videos rather than photos.

10.4.2 Anatomy and types of camera lenses

Lens is an eye of camera, it consists of curved glass, plastic/metal body, aperture blades and rubber grips. The glass refracts the light and sends it to the sensor which records visual data, forming an image. Lenses are the most important tool in a cinematographer's kit and lens are extremely expensive, often lenses are even more expensive than the camera body itself. This fragile piece of glass must be kept delicately and with utmost precaution, as even a scratch on the glass can distorted the image. There are different types of lenses, there can be various types of differentiation in lenses according to focal length, angle of view, type of view and focusing systems. There are few basic categories of lens like Prime lens and Zoom lens, Cine-lens, anamorphic lens.

The most common categories of lenses are prime lens, prime lenses are the one with fixed focal lens, almost called portrait lens as we cannot zoom in or out. To make the subjects bigger or smaller one has to physical move closers or away from the subject. These lenses generally have higher light intake capacity, that is lower f-stop, gives a nice bokeh effect and separation of the subject from the background, and comes in both auto focus and manual focus system.

Then we have zoom lenses, as the name suggests this lens can zoom, which means we can range the focal lengths just by zooming in or out. That is the focal length (optical distance between the camera and subject) can be varied just by standing on a fixed distance from the subject.

Cine lens are the lenses designed for video purpose rather than photo, these lenses provide aspect ratio suitable for video purposes and as generally fixed focal length. Anamorphic lens has a cylindrical front element (glass) with gives a horizontally squeezed and compressed image which is uncompressed in post productions.

Then Lens can also be distinguishing based on angle of view. The first type of lenses are ultra or super wide lenses, these lens gives a very wide angle of view and wide field of view. If the lens is too wide, it creates a barrel distortion and curves the image on the corners. (Full frame focal length 08mm – 24mm).

Then we have normal lens or kit lenses which creates minimum distortion and is like the way objects are perceived by the human eye. (Full frame focal length 24mm-70mm).

Telephoto lenses are used when the camera man wants or is far away from the subject or object. A telephoto lens reduces the distance between foreground and background. It keeps background elements out of focus and emphasizes on single subject or object and in isolation.

1.4.3 Camera Angles, Framing and composition

Now that we know the basics of camera and lens, we will look at the type of shots that can be created. That is the amount of visual data incorporated

in the image relies on the distance of the camera from the action and on the focal lengths of the camera lens.

Extreme long shot captures everything in the scene. This shot is usually used for establishing scenes. As it gives a very wide field of view and with shot focal length. This shot can be used to shoot action in wide landscapes and with interiors. This type of shots mostly requires a wide-angle lens.

Long shot basically captures the full body of the subject, background and gestures and expressions, it also captures movements. It is good for establishing the subjects with respect to its environment.

Medium shot is a closer, it captures the head to waist or knees up. It is good for depicting conversation and scenes with dialogue. It Captures the hand gestures and expressions.

Close-up shot narrowly focuses on subjects/object and closes to specific portions of the subject like face, hands and if it is extreme closeup it captures parts like fingers, eyes etc. These types of shots are very tight and brings the viewers very close to the subject and gives utmost importance to the subject with minimum background.

Deep Focus shot is more like long shot that keep the subject, objects, background in focus all at once. It gives a visual like human eye and thus is preferred by realistic and documentary film makers as it preserves the spatial unity. It demands higher f-stop for edge-to-edge sharpness.

180-degree angle and over the shoulder, these types of shots are used to that the characters are in conversation and when one is talking it focuses on the expressions and gestures of the other character. Over the Shoulder is a commonly used and a favoured shot of many film makers. Here the camera is just behind the shoulder of a subject and thus captures a small portion of shoulder with the other person in focus.

Point of view shot gives a view from the eyes to the character, it suggests the viewers to perceive through the eye of the character, Here the audience identifies with the subject and view the scene as the subject itself.

A cinematographer must be aware of various type of camera angles and what how it affects the scene and emotions. In simple words, the angle in which the camera is pointed towards the action or subject is a camera angle.

Bird's Eye view – as the name suggests bird eye view captures the action from Top of it, or high above. The camera points vertical downwards on the characters or figures, which often signifies the characters or the figures vulnerable and powerless. As the camera is high above the subjects it is mostly wide shot. The best example of it is Christopher Nolan's Dunkirk. The view from the fighter jets where the soldier on land seems like insects.

High angle shot is where the camera is positioned above the eye level, it again looks down upon the character which reduces the size of it and

suggests weakness and inactiveness. Example of it is the movie "Shashank redemption's bail refusal scenes".

Eye level view, here the camera is straight at the eye level. It gives a natural view.

Low angle shot is where the camera is positioned below the eye level, it increases the size of the character and signifies them as powerful, energetic, and heroic.

Canted angle is where the camera is purposely tilted one side, showing a diagonal view to signify tension or actions (fight scenes).

The motion of camera or camera movement involves the physical movement of the camera, the direction of where the camera is pointing keeps changing, must not all camera movement be actual movement of camera, zooming changes the focal length to take the audience closer or away from the subjects or action.

Pan is a horizontal rotation of the camera, often use to follow the characters and to keep them in frame. The camera move side to sides.

Tilt is an up-down movement of the camera, is often used to capture the subject below or above the frame.

Tracking is the movement of camera which follows the subjects or action, moving in the same direction maintaining their position in the frame.

Crane shot is where the camera is above the ground, often involves rise and drop to establish elements or bringing the subject or object closer.

Focus racking is where the camera changes focus within a shot to emphasize on specify area of the image and un-focusing (blurring) the other parts of it, it is used to guide the viewer's focus from one position of the screen to other. Opposite to deep focus here it requires lower f-stop number to focus on a specific area within the frame.

Check your progress

1. What is the Importance of Light in Films?

2. What is the Role of Cinematographer?

3. Explain the anatomy of Camera and lens

10.5. LET'S SUM UP

There are a lot more aspects when we understand, cinematography, Camera Movement and Mise-en-scene which can be studied as subjects separately. Creating a mise-en-scene covers a wide range of jobs in Productions stage, in the next unit will look at basic post-production, editing and sound.

10.6. QUESTIONS

4. What is a Mise-en-scene?

5. Explain the elements of Mise-en-scene

6. What is the Importance of Light in Films?

7. What is the Role of Cinematographer?

8. Explain the anatomy of Camera and lens

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EDITING AND SOUND

Unit Structure

11.0. Objectives

11.1. Introduction

11.2. Understanding the role of editor in films

11.2.1. Early Editing and Traditional Editing Techniques

11.2.2. Digital Non-Linear editing techniques

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11.4.1. Sound Design

11.4.2. Various types of mics and filters

11.4.3. Sound editing

11.5. Let's sum up

11.6. Questions

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11.0. OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Understanding what Editing is
- Learning about the basics of editing and sound
- The Importance and use of putting up all the pieces together

11.1. INTRODUCTION

Every Film, wherever it might have been shot is made on the editor's desk.

This is the importance of editing and editors, A portion of a scene, shot on a film is called a take. Segments of different takes are joined together in a systematic order to give a film a final structure, this process is called editing.

The connections between takes are called cuts. A typical feature length movie often contain 1000+ Cuts but the job of these cuts draws the attention to the viewer into the narrative, for that these cuts must be seamless that is the audience should not recognize these cuts and for flow unnoticed by the viewers, it should not distract the audience from the story. Hence it takes a lot of effort to make the work look effortless. A film is an extremely delicate piece of art and even a single misplaced cut can change its meaning.

11.2. UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF EDITOR IN FILMS

As we all know a film is composed of sequence of shots, the shots might itself carry meaning, but the real potential of narrative is exploited when these shots are put together in sequence, it provides context to the viewers. The shots react to one another and base on its arrangement it can give meaning and arouse emotions out of it. Editing can make or break the movie. Hence it is an extremely important task. The person responsible for bringing together all the cuts in a final form called movie is an editor.

Just like a cinematographer an editor needs to be technically sound as well as creatively superb, many of the best directors were editors first, such as Raju Hirani. if a director knows what the final sequence will be and what the movie will look like, he/she can start implementing it right from pre-production stage. An editor's job is a highly specialized work where they need to comprehend the technological of post-production, like data sorting, files management and editing software and how to integrate visual effects, sound design, Colours and music into a package. They also need to understand visual and narrative grammar and a great sense of timing.

An editor's work starts by sorting through enormous amount of raw data which can take several hours or often days, and then arrange it systematically. This might sound a simple task but trust me it's not! A film is usually shot scene by scene and are not shot in a chronological order. It can be anywhere from the films it the job of editor to arrange it in a structure. The editor arranges the movie the why the director wanted it to be, from the movie which is shot. the editor needs to master their visual memories to remember tiny differences between takes and shots and have an idea how it will look when cut and placed together. Editor's must understand the movie and have a zest if the story is not working and have the expertise and experience to offer solution on how to rectify it.

11.2.1 Early Editing and Traditional Editing Techniques

Earlier editors use to physically cut and slice the film reel with razors blades and the paste the two shots together. It was a real time consuming and tedious process, even single cut would take a lot of time, experimenting with various types of cuts was a very complicated, there was no Control-Z command to reverse or undo the edit. If they wanted to change some timing they had to manually cut, tape, and join the films again and again. In 1920's "Moviola" an editing machine started to be used predominantly, it not only reduced time by aligning the film but also allowed editors to watch the film

while making the cuts. After half a decade in the 1970's flatbed editing systems arrived, these systems allowed the editors to move the film forward and backward to check their edits as well as recorded sounds. These editing systems used linear editing systems or destructive editing where the editor had to physically cut (destruct) to rearrange the shots and construct the film, this process was also a linear process where these shots were arranged in a linear order as the film moves forward.

11.2.2 Digital Non-Linear editing techniques

Finally in the 1990's Digital editing system like the AVID, came to existence and it eased the entire editing process. With the development of modern-day computers, we have got three major editing software being used as industry standard, that is Avid Media Composer, Apple's Final Cut Pro and Adobe Premiere Pro. Each of these software's are high-end but with different user interfaces. An editor must choose which software works the best of them in terms of budget, computer systems available and ease of use. These systems use non-linear process of editing where a film can be cut and placed digitally anywhere of the editing timeline in a nonlinear format. In simple words nonlinear editing allows the editor to work through entire timeline at one and the cut can be done and joined with any other shot. It makes the entire process very fast as the editor can scroll through the entire movie and check if everything is in order and if not, then make changes to it. This software can handle large files and gives the editor full control of the project. It not only allows basic editing, but also to add music, sound effects, transitions, special effects and even colour. With all these it also internally/externally integrates with special effects software's such as aftereffects.

11.2.3 Data Sorting and Footage Selection, Working with the Director

When raw footages come into the editor, the first task to the editor is to arrange the in folders, name it with the date, The Editor is not a single person, there is a Head editor, under which there are various editors and subeditors. Hence it is very important to arrange the footages into well labelled folders, which everyone in the editing team can understand and locate specific shots without wasting anytime. When it's done the editor has to align the sound to the visuals. (Note – Films audio and visuals are recorded separately which must be aligned and merged in the editing). After doing that the editor starts making the cuts to give the film a skeleton or a basic structure which is called the assembly cut, this is just a basic cut of the movie, these cuts are usually very lengthy and often contains multiple takes of a particular shot. This is basically used by the editor and director to check if they have captured the narrative/story, and if there is something missing or extra, are there any technical issues. Then the editor makes a rough cut or few of them, and experiments with the sequence, here the film is checked and if required restructured. The main purpose of these rough cuts is to focus on the main parts of the film that are not up to the mark and get a zest of the overall length of the movie. When this is done the editors starts preparing the fine cut, where there are fine adjustments to be made but which has a significant impact. This cut refines movie by maximizing

emotional impact, make the shots crisp by trimming or extending the scenes. When the editor gets satisfied with all the changes in the fine cut, they move on to the final cut, and as the name suggests this is the final structure of the film with no more changes, now the polishing works starts, the bland film footage goes through the process of colour correction, where the colours are added to the desired taste, visual effects and transitions are added. Sound is added, like dubbing, background score, music, and sound effects. Even after adding colour, sound and effects, if the editor or the director wants to change something in the movie and adding all the species to the chef's special dish, if still there might be something missing, hence the editor along with the director can make changes but usually after this polishing work is complete and the movie is ready. Hence the work of the editor completes over here leaving a significant mark on the movie. The Editor can shift a movie's perspective, the editors are always curious of why the scene is a particular why and how will it look if something is changed in it. Sometimes the editor's ideas are so good that even director change certain parts in the story. It is said that, when making the movie Gangs of Wasseyapur Anurag Kashyap made a long and continuous movie, but the editor trimmed it and made it into 2 parts. Cinematographer usually take shots keeping in mind how it will look like in the editing. So does the editor keep in how a cinematographer would have shot while editing, shoot and edit are highly integrated, shots are meant to be edited. But it's the job of an editor to give a film perspective as discussed earlier, movies are light in a space in a time dimensions and the editor has to final call and final control over all three of them. The editor decides how much the pace of the movie will be, to extend the scene or to slow it down, to zoom in to the shot, or to increase the exposure or dim it down. Eventually all these aspects influence the emotion of the audience and the film. The best editor work closely with the director to squeeze out the real potential of the film. As the timeline of the movies keep growing the relationship between the editors and the directors also get stronger. Some of the best directors' usually work with their favorite editors. For example, Martin Scorsese – Thelma, Stephen Spielberg – Michael Kahn, Quentin Tarantino – Sally Menke. Walter Murch is a legendary editor, He Edited "The Godfather" and he was one of the first from the old school editors working with the old linear editing system to switch to non-linear editing system as time demanded. He also wrote a book on movie editing known as "In the Blink of an Eye". Where he splits cutting away from one shot to another in six factors. Emotion, Story, rhythm, eye trace, 2D place of screen and 3D Space.

11.2.4 Living in the reel world – Living in a timeline

Practice makes a man perfect this is so true in terms of editing; you not only get faster and better but also your mind gets open to many creative possibilities. The only drawback of this is once you start comprehending the process of direction, cinematography, and editing. your movie viewing experience will be ruined as your mind will be continuously in investigating state like where was the camera located when a particular shot was taken, why is the colours so bright, where is the shot cutting, what kinds of visual effects are used. This happens to everyone who experience the editing, when you edit a film you by heart it, As the editors are the first audience of the

film and watch the film hundred times before its ready, an editor knows which scene is placed in which sequence on the timeline. Sometimes the editors become so engrossed into the movie that they forget to keep track of the real time. At that time, they live in film's timeline rather than actual time.

11.3. EDITING PROCESS AND TECHNICALITIES.

Before we dive deeper in editing process there some basic terminologies that one needs to understand. The first step as we discussed is data sorting then we open a new project in the editing software, first thing after opening the project is to make folders (Bins) in the software where the raw footages will be stacked and from there it will be put in the timeline. The first video which gets on the timeline determines the aspect ratio, Resolution as well as frames per second for the entire project, hence one needs to be very cautious. Note – The raw footage may be in different aspect ratios or FPS – But the timeline should always be in a standard FPS like 24,25 or 30. After the videos are dragged into the timeline, the blade tool is used to cut the shots and ripple delete is used to join to separate shots. You can also trim the videos but there are times where you get multiple cuts from a single video clip, hence blade tool is used. There is no specific way of editing, but as you start editing more you get faster at editing and start forming your own style, which becomes ideal and most efficient way. It also often varies on the type of projects and scenes. But the most common way is to start with A-Roll, which is the main video, for example if there a person narrating something in the story, that person's shot will be the A-Roll and if we want to add visuals of what he is narrating that becomes the B-Roll.

11.3.1. Optical Effects and Transitions

Then optical effects can be added to connect different shots, these are commonly known as video transitions. The most common transitions are

Fade In: is applied in the beginning of a shot, it lightens the shot.

Fade Out: is the opposite of fade in, here where the shot gets darken to black in the end.

Wipe and Slide: The first shot gets replaced by the next shot through a horizontal motion.

Dissolve: is the most used transition where a subsequent shot is superimposed on the first shot. Both the shots smoothly blend for a brief period, Dissolve is often used to denote passage of time. There are many more types of transitions. After visual effects and transitions are made, then the editor starts to add music, sound effects and audio transitions. Then the entire video project gets colour corrected, the then the final sequence is exported in the required file format and aspect ratio, before hitting the export button, target bit rate is set according to the media in which the movie or project will be played.

11.3.2. Various editing techniques

There are various editing styles, the most common is continuity it is a dominant style of editing in the western narrative films, it attempts to balance the aesthetic qualities of the images before and after a cut, it is used to achieve narrative causality and is designed to reduce distraction and disorientation caused by cuts. The viewer gets so indulge in the narrative that they cannot identify the cuts. **Continuity editing** also follows the 180 degrees rule, this is majorly used in dialogue scene, where the camera is placed on one side of the action to maintain spatial relationship between characters, subjects, and figures from shot to shot. Editors usually use establishing shots to normalize the viewers with physical space in the scene and by giving an audience a sense of spatial causality after which they can use multiple angles. This unlocks a lot of creative freedom in terms of capturing the angle as the audience can locate the subject or action in every subsequent shot to establishing shot.

Spatiotemporal effects like flashback or forward tries to deviate from the continuity editing, here chronological order is braked, the scenes are jumbled up and is out sequence. Like a dream sequence added, or a remembering scene. A good example of it is in the movie bird man and Inception.

Crosscutting is used to show events taking place simultaneously at two or more locations at the same time, by switching back and forth between those locations. This technique relays on temporal continuity rather than spatial. Here the events are taking place parallelly at various locations. A movie that has used crosscutting evidently are “Avenger’s End Game”, “The lord of the rings” and shows like “Game of thrones”. There are many more editing techniques that an editor can use like juxtaposition of shots to create meaning, using montage sequences.

Check your progress

1. Explain what is editing?

2. What are the roles and responsibilities of an Editor?

3. What are the various editing techniques?

11.4. SOUND AND MUSIC

Sound is another major subject in itself; the process of sound creation starts at the production. The importance of sound in films were identified more than 100 years ago in the silent era. Even in the silent era the movies were never watched in silence, the silent films were accompanied by orators and orchestra. The sound and audio in the films are as important as the visuals, some filmmakers even believe that sound of greater importance than visuals. One can deal with jarring visuals by looking away, but it is difficult to ignore bad audio, if the sound is not good, or not properly synced it can be very distracting and on the contrary if the sound design is good, it will go unnoticed by the audience as it will pull them into the narrative and story.

11.4.1 Sound Design

To begin with the sound design of a film requires the recording of live sound such as actors voice, The audience want to hear the characters, which is handled by an onset sound department, which consists of small crew. Their head is a sound mixer, also called the location sound recordist, sound engineer or in laymen term the sound guy. The sound mixer brings all the sound equipment and gear for the shoot, as is in charge for all the recording all the sounds on the set location. Live sound is recorded with the visual shot itself, mostly in an arranged audio recording system and in smaller projects with attached mic to the camera. A good sound recordist will plan the recordings according to the conditions and acoustics of the location and record as much as possible to replicate the sound in reel to feel like real world. The live sound includes all the sound that the characters make such as dialogue, giving audio expressions, the sound of steps or if the character touches something etc., in addition to that it also includes ambient sound, which is usually replicated the added intentionally in the postproduction. This live sound is usually synchronized with the shots to give a realistic feel to the scene. The live recorded audio often acts as a reference if the movie is being dubbed or there is certain sound that needs to be recreated in post-production. Then it is very important to record the room tone, the ambient and atmospheric sound. The person who holds to mike on set is known as the Boom operator, Boom is a type of mic which is attached to a long poll, called the boom poll which is a long unidirectional dynamic microphone pointed over the actors. It captures all the sound created on that scene. But the job of a boom operator is not just holding a mic but to understand what type of shot is being taken, how wide is the shot, where are the lights coming from as to plan their movement accordingly as well as keeping the mic and its shadow out of the camera's vision. In addition to that lavalier mics are placed hidden on the body of actors, these are tiny mics, usually taped and hidden on the actor's chest or cloths. There is another person in a small sound crew who is known as utility sound technician and is responsible for the equipment management and maintenance, like cable management and keeping people quiet during the shots, if required operating the second

boom. It's not just the art of handling the mics and its placement, but it is also important to understand how the sound works when one speaks, they are releasing air through their vocal cords out, which passes through other air molecules and vibrates them, which produces sound waves.

11.4.2 various types of mics and filters

The sound waves act differently in different environment and to capture it there are various kinds of microphone, just like a cinematographer uses different lens to capture images similarly the sound department uses different type of microphones such as Omni-directional – which captures sound from all directions. Bidirectional – these mics pickup sound from front and back and is best for dialogues and interviews, cardioid, Lobar, shot gun. And just like the camera department puts lens filters, the sound department uses windscreen to block the unwanted wind sound that creates distortion in audio. Usually, multiple microphones are used to capture sound and every mic sends the sound to the sound mixer, who can adjust the frequency, recording and sensitivity levels. Now let talk about the sound in post-production, The Clap Board is used to mark every take, and is called out before the scene is shot, this slate is attached to a clapper, which creates a spike in the audio which is used to sync the video to the audio, as well as from multiple audio devices.

11.4.3 Sound Editing

From here the job of sound editor begins, the Sound editor must make decisions on which audio layer will work best for the film, sometimes there are specialized dialogue editors who edit the dialogues, if the dialogues audio from the production sound is not up to the mark, the sound editors call out the actors in the recording studio for re-recording which is also called automated dialogue replacement or ADR. Then there are sound designers who works with foley artists and sound mixers to create the sound effects. Sound effects are often used to direct the audience attention on screen, off screen as well are trigger camera movements. These people are responsible to make the world of film sound real. Today most of the sound can be computer generated but still there are sounds that needs to be recreated using props such as the sound of someone walking, eating etc., this is the job of a foley artist, they catch every major and minute sound effects that need to be added and recreate it. After all this music composers comes into play to give the entire movie a feel and polish the film. After all it is not just about watching a film but feeling what the characters feel and living in the world of film.

Check your progress

1. What is the difference between linear and nonlinear editing?

2. Explain the role of sound department in films?

3. Explain the process of Postproduction and sound.

11.5. LET'S SUM UP

There are lot more aspects when we understand editing and sound, Sound and editing are such a vast topic that there are specialized 3–5-year courses. In this chapter we have just gone through the basic, the tip of an iceberg. The more one edits and records the better understanding they get about the process. But another why to learn it is through carefully watching and listening.

11.6. QUESTIONS

4. What are transitions in editing?

5. Explain the task of an editor

6. What is the difference between linear and nonlinear editing?

7. Explain the role of sound department in films?

8. Explain the process of Postproduction and sound.

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NARRATIVE IN CINEMA

Unit Structure

12.0 Objectives

12.1 Introduction: Narrative from scene to scene

12.1.1 What is narrative

12.1.2 Linear and non-linear narrative

12.1.3 Narrative in films

12.1.4 Breaking the Fourth Wall

12.2 Narrative from screenplay to film

12.2.1 What is screenplay and its structure

12.2.2 Writing an adaptation

12.2.3 Writing a screenplay to film

12.3 Questions

12.4 References

12.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the concept of a narrative
2. To be able to see application of narrative in film and screenwriting
3. For the students to be able to write a screenplay on their own

12.1 INTRODUCTION: NARRATIVE FROM SCENE TO SCENE

12.1.1 What is a narrative

A movie, or motion picture, is made up of multiple stills with minute changes in every frame and played consecutively at such speed that the elements seem to be moving in one fluid manner. The relative movements of the elements within the frames create the illusion of a recognizable action taking place. The smallest set of such actions that make coherent sense is a shot. Many shots arranged in logical progressive order is known as a sequence. Multiple sequences arranged to tell a cohesive story take a motion picture. The process of bringing an idea to screen with sequential events, relevant characters, and relatable plotlines requires, as the most basic building block, a narrative. The primary example of a narrative are all the

moral education stories that we have listened to as children. Fairy tales, novels, autobiographies, novels (fictional and non-fictional), documentaries, feature films, Daadu ki bachpan ki kahaaniyaan, Naani Ma's bedtime stories from the Ramayan, are all narratives.

In ancient times, any story that was 'told' was considered a narrative while a story that was 'enacted' was considered a drama. Since the advent of other mediums of communication like comic books, TV, radio, video games, and the internet, the basic idea of a narrative is now being rethought to include different styles and audiences. This leads to us trying to establish structure to understand the narrative process. A narrative structure is the ways in which discourse of a film's story is constructed, from the smallest units at line level to the full expanse of complete works. 'Narrative' should not be confused with 'narration' which is the process of narrating the story.

As opposed to ancient times where oral storytelling was the only medium, with the audience follows the narrative with verbal cueing, the introduction of new communication channels has strengthened the need to understand the other elements of time, space, causality, and narration. Different media, like dance or comics, dominate distinct domains of storytelling, like movement and 2D imagery. Each of these help diverse audiences delve deeply into the narrative, gain attention, arouse emotions, modify perceptions, and provide education and entertainment. The big screen further expanded on the freedom by amalgamating various such channels and adding its own advantages of synchronised projection. As new media interacts with film study, newer understandings of uses of narrative along with the recognition of narrative traditions in non-Western and minority cultures has begun to receive importance. Since the beginning of Cinema, where filmmakers and critics have always offered their own descriptions of film narrative, often directly or indirectly influenced by literary models and theories, it is now obvious that cinema exists as a "multivocal" medium that narrates through sound and images, that it is both an artistic and a commercial medium, and that it can be a form of both cultural and individual expression all suggest that film narrative and its study will continue to evolve in new directions.

12.1.2 Linear and non-linear writing:

There are 2 distinct types of narrative styles with respect to time – linear and non-linear. "Linear narratives follow their events chronologically, while nonlinear narratives progress jump between different periods of time." ("Linear vs. Nonlinear Narratives: Definition & Structure") Meaning, a film showing Rajnikant go from a rowdy little boy to a flashy adult in the span of throwing sunglasses in the air and catching them, is a linear narrative. On the other hand, films like Pulp Fiction, Back To The Future and Baahubali where the events presented go back and forth in time are non-linear narratives.

Linear narrative structure is to show the process of events according to the time sequence, create a closed narrative chain for the audience, pursue seamless connection between events, weaken the narrative way, and finally

make the audience blindly identify with the film. Since time is unidirectional in this style, it is easier for the audience to engage and immerse themselves in the storyline.

Linear narratives are generally the way most writers choose to tell their tales. But they may be hard to sustain as monotony can set in really early. To combat this, some of the events in the narrative may need to be told concurrently to make sense, that is, more than one subplot unfolds around the same time as another - this is known as parallel narration. 'Super Deluxe' (Indian Tamil film, 2019) is an example here where 4 concurrent stories are clearly being conveyed.

A nonlinear narrative is a narration technique portraying events in a story out of chronological order, such that the relationship among the events does not follow the original causality sequence. Such narrative style can withhold information to maintain a sense of mystery, to keep tension high, and to keep the audience interested. An example of this type of writing is the movie Memento, or its Bollywood's adaptation Ghajini, where the story jumps across different timelines to explain particular sub-plots in crisp scenes.

Check your progress

What is a linear narrative

What is a non linear narrative

What is a narrative

It is also difficult for the writer to think of all events sequentially in time, and this is where non-linear stories come to the rescue. When we tell stories in daily life, we usually jump from incident to incident to give background, or narrate stories within stories, so writing non-linear stories comes naturally to us. So how do you write a non-linear narrative?:

1. Outline whatever blurred events sequence you can make out in the beginning.
2. Write random scenes or events as they come to mind.
3. Fill any missing gaps to complete the plot/story.
4. Rearrange wherever needed to make maximum sense.
5. Use flashbacks, flash forwards, and concurrent subplots, including historical information on the characters or situations – this helps break the otherwise linearity of the story.
6. Build suspense by leaving out some things unexplained.
7. Give the audience some clues to the different time shifts by using references or scene changes; for example, in the Bollywood film *Action Replay*, the background and costumes changed in the different timelines.
8. Insert one scene in the flashback/flashforward that is thematically or visually same as the current timeline for seamless segue.
9. Show the effect in current timeframe, and the cause in the previous timeframe. For example, in ‘3 Idiots’ Bollywood film, 2009) the movie opens with 2 friends (Raju and Farhan) looking for their 3rd friend (Rancho), and the rest of the movie explains why in a flashback story narrated by Raju culminating in them all reuniting.
10. Keep the time jumps long enough to convey a scene but short enough to bring the audience back into the current timeline.
11. Check if you are maintaining continuity and thematic integrity along with characterisation and voice.
12. Ensure you periodically beta test the narrative, that is, narrate your story to a few chosen people to see if they are understanding whatever you want to convey.

This type of time structure applies to all sorts of narratives, be it literature or films. Once you have your narrative in place in text form, we can move on to narratives in films.

12.1.3 Narrative in films

According to Aristotle, in every play written in linear plot progression there are 3 Acts in the Story/Play – The beginning (the setup), the middle (the conflict), and the end (the resolution or climax). The beginning is where the background and characters are established, the protagonist is introduced, and their situation is presented. The middle is where the conflict happens, taking the story ahead – this is where we have a cliff-hanger followed by the interval, it ensures that the audience comes back to watch the second half of the film. The narrative ends with the resolution of the conflict which is commonly known as the climax.

A narrative does not have to rely on just verbal storytelling, though. According to David Bordwell in his book 'Poetics of Cinema', a narrative is a chain of events in a cause-effect relationship occurring in time and space where 'Event B' happens because of 'event A'. This is in line with Aristotle's 3 Act structure where the approach is logical and not just probable. However, Thompson (Storytelling in the New Hollywood, 1999) has added an additional segment between conflict and resolution which is known as the 'development'. Development refers to how the story moves and leads to turning of the plot. Here, character arcs, flashbacks, and repetitions may be used to bring the conflict to a head and create an urgency in the audience that glues them to their seats. This means that in order to have an effective narrative, we have to consider the following elements – the story, the plot (i.e., the order in which the story is told), cause and effect (leading to conflict and resolution), time, space, and narration.

Consider the example of the movie 'Inception' or 'Interstellar' or 'Ghajini' and try to understand the roles of the different elements that form the narrative.

Within the particular Acts, variations in film style results in variations in narrative styles. The 3 dimensions by Bordwell that remain consistent despite stylisations are:

- **Actions and agents:** This refers to characters and their actions which displays not only events in time but also change. The first Act of the film looks at the characters, their circumstances, their surroundings, which are the setup of the events that are to happen. The actions, reaction, and the narration of specific plot points draws attention to the changes happening and leading to the second and third Acts. In Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na (Bollywood film, 2008), the beginning focuses on introducing the different characters and their relationships in a particular friend circle, establishing a close platonic relationship between the 2 main protagonists which eventually gains a romantic angle by the time the climax approaches. All the other friends, and their opinions and actions, become agents to take the story ahead.
- **Protagonists and their problems:** The protagonist is the agent whom the story is about. Structurally, the character whose actions give the drama its distinctive arc is the protagonist, their actions and reactions dictate the plot. The realisation of Bunny in Yeh Jawaani Hai Diwani (Bollywood film, 2013) that he would rather try to fly and fall in life than be stuck in a 'safe zone' prompts him to take up a travelling photographer job – this sequence of events in the plot show change in the character, giving him an arc, and the subsequent shots of his adventures. And that takes the story forward.
- **Narration:** The narration gives the audience a point of view. It tells us whose eyes we are seeing the story from. In 'Rashomon' (1950) by Akira Kurosawa, the narrative takes us through a murder mystery that progresses with narration by the various characters providing subjective, alternative and contradictory versions of the same

incident. With every change of narration, the perspective of the audience also changes, keeping them hooked onto the story.

12.1.4 Breaking the Fourth Wall:

In a theatre, three sides of the stage are composed of the stage and set, and the 4th side (or wall) is where the audience sits. The actors conduct their play and do not communicate directly with the audience as a rule. The same concept applies to film, where the camera is the 4th wall; it is an invisible, imagined wall that separates the actors from the audience. The actors on-screen do not acknowledge the camera and carry on as though the scene is happening in real life.

Breaking the fourth wall is the act of violating the convention, where the actor (or actors) directly refer to the audience or the camera and instantly make the play 'a play and not real life'. The drama happening on stage or screen suddenly becomes self-aware and it is used to draw attention to itself or a social message, as done by Charlie Chaplin in his 1940 film 'The Great Dictator'. You might recollect Dora the Explorer (American animated kids' series, Nickelodeon, 2000-2019) asking the audience a question and blinking at the camera waiting for the appropriate answer – this is an example of breaking the fourth wall.

One of the earliest recorded breakings of the fourth wall was in a 1918 silent film by Mary MacLane titled 'Men Who Have Made Love To Me', followed by Laurel and Hardy where they would look directly at the camera and seek sympathy from their viewers. This sympathy-gaining expressive look was also an act replicated by Wile E. Coyote on 'The Looney Tunes' show on Cartoon Network. More recently, you would remember the characters on The Office speaking directly into the camera as if a part of an interview, the award-winning show 'Fleabag' (Amazon Prime, 2019), and Leonardo DiCaprio on 'The Wolf of Wall Street', all breaking the fourth wall.

12.2 NARRATIVE FROM SCREENPLAY TO FILM

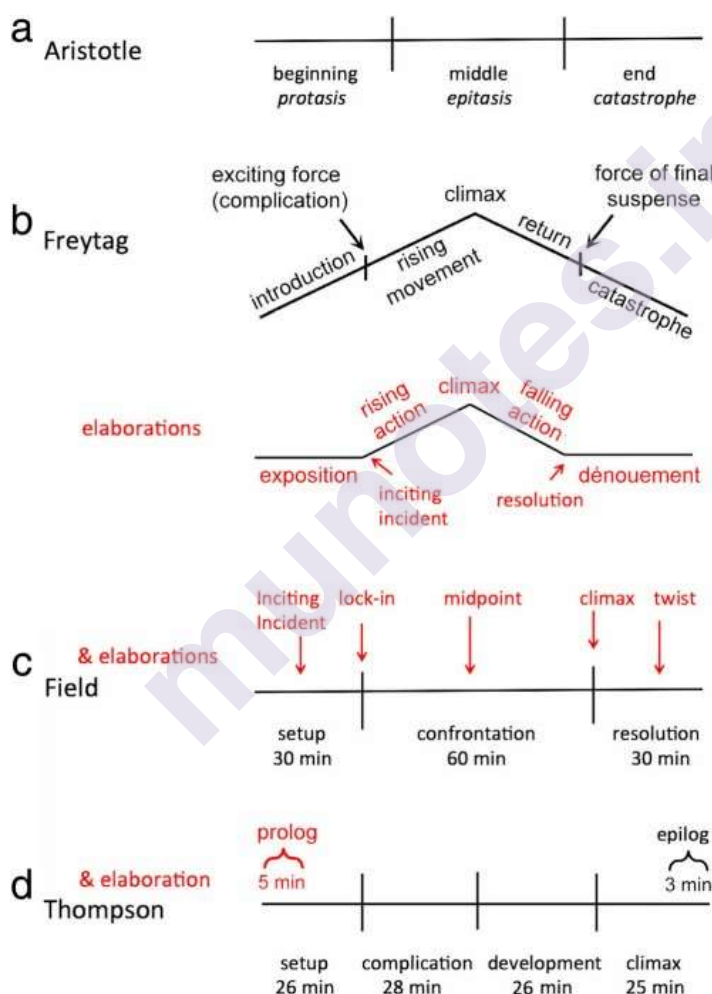
As early as 4th Century, Plato and Aristotle made the key distinction between mimesis (imitation of an event or action without a narrator) and diegesis (telling a story through a narrator's agency). In diegesis, the narrator may speak as (a) a particular character, or (b) the invisible narrator, or even (c) the all-knowing narrator who speaks from "outside" in the form of commenting on the action or the characters. You may understand this best when you associate Narrator type (a) as host of Crime Patrol, type (b) as David Attenborough on Animal Planet, and type (c) as 'Time' from BR Chopra's Mahabharat. Each type of narration lends different effects to the way the audience perceives or gets involved in the story.

The distinction between the diegetic mode and mimetic mode relates to difference of the performance format – the diegetic mode is used for epic poetry where the narrator relates stories by telling it through narration, while mimetic is more used in drama where the story is enacted through direct

embodiment or showing the events visually. Cinema is considered as an epic form, if referred to classical poetics and Aristotle, where dramatic elements are used and technologies like camera and editing come into play.

12.2.1 What is screenplay and its structure

A screenplay, or a script, is written work, that can be either original or adapted from existing pieces of writing, for the screen. It is a form of narration with specified formats where the screenwriter places the dialogues, expressions, actions, and movements of the characters along with visual cues and camera placement. A screenplay establishes scenarios for narrative coherence of the story. A prototypical example of plot-structure thinking would be Jane Smiley's claim that a novel falls naturally into four parts: exposition, rising action, climax, and denouement.



Four representations of narrative theories of literature and movies: Aristotle's is based on his *Poetics* (Upton, 1746); Freytag's comes from *Technique of the Drama* (MacEwan, 1900, p. 115); Field's from *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screen Writing* (Field, 2005); and Thompson's is based on *Storytelling in the New Hollywood* (Thompson, 1999).

American Screenwriter Syd Field, in his book 'Screenplay: The foundations of Screenwriting' (1979), claims that Hollywood films adhere to a three-act structure, having the rough proportions of 1:2:1. In the first act (25–30 minutes into a two-hour film), a problem or conflict is established. The second act, running about an hour, develops that conflict to a peak of intensity. The final half hour or so constitutes a climax and denouement. Field translated this structure into a screenplay's page counts, with each page counting as roughly a minute of screen time.

PERSEPOLIS
Sample Script for Page 33

(Voice of MARIANE comes from off-stage, younger actress playing YOUNG MARIANE at age ~10 is on stage in her bedroom, laying on her bed reading a book.)

MARIANE

I'd never read as much as I did during that period.

(Off stage voice continues, but actress gets up from the bed and the backdrop changes. She is now walking with her MOTHER past a dimly-lit, underground book store)

MARIANE

My favorite author was Ali Ashraf Darvishian, a kind of local Charles Dickens. I went to his clandestine book-signing with my mother.

ALI ASHRAF DARVISHIAN

(Said slowly, keeping pace as he writes the same words) Fer me friend Kourosh

YOUNG MARIANE

(Looking up to her mother) Why does he speak like that?

MOTHER

(Looking down to YOUNG MARIANE with a smile) It's just his Kurdish accent.

MARIANE

(Again, voice of MARIANE comes from off-stage, while different actors are highlighted in a single spotlight. They stand in frozen tableaux, acting out the characters being described. Stage is dark with the audience only able to see the single character as it being described)

He told sad but true stories: Reza became a porter at the age of ten. Leila wove carpets at age five. Hassan, three years old, cleaned car windows.

ANGRY MAN IN CAR

Get down from there, stupid!

(Last tableau is of YOUNG MARIANE and her FATHER sitting in their Cadillac)

I finally understood why I felt ashamed to sit in my father's Cadillac.

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Sample Screenplay/Script is presented above.

12.2.2 Writing an adaptation:

Some of our widely-known and heard stories are not just telling's, but re-tellings. The best examples of this is the Ramayana and the Mahabharata –

epics that are attributed to specific writers but they are adapted to fit the audience and technology of the times.

Rule #1 of adaptation is to never adapt a novel or play into a screenplay unless you control the rights to the property, otherwise it just becomes an intellectual property and royalties related battle. Books/novels/plays can be adapted into films with 3 steps:

1. Read the complete novel/play and understand the story, the characters, the subplots, goals, conflict, and subtexts.
2. Identify the five to ten best scenes – they become the basis of the script.
3. Write an original script.

Parvin Sultana (Indigenising Shakespeare, 2014) observed that cinema as a medium is much younger than theatre. In its initial days, cinema simulated theatre since it lacked its own repertoire. The process of adaptation looks at how meaning is created with words in literary text and how that meaning is translated into the visual image. Although cinematic adaptations have a lot of potential, there are certain limitations.

Adaptation can be of 3 types:

- a. Literal – the script sticks as close as possible to the plot
- b. Traditional – the overall persona of the original text is maintained, but the director makes adjustments in the visual representation
- c. Radical – the director reshapes the book in extreme ways; sometimes relocating it in terms of time, setting, place, and so on

12.2.3 Writing a screenplay to film

David Trottier's book 'The screenwriter's bible' elaborates on 7 steps to writing a good screenplay:

Step 1: Summon your muse: Think about where your passion lies and probe your thoughts and feelings; examine the issues, reflect on the processes, and think of people in the chosen field. Once you have an idea of what you want to write about, start with writing a dramatic premise – a beginning, middle, and end. Once your story has begun to develop, visualize the characters, maybe even the movie promotional poster, and write a 3-page treatment, i.e., the story outline.

Step 2: Dream up your movie idea: Put your mind in a relaxed state and visualize the natural setting of your story, engage your senses physically and mentally which will help you add details to your story, see movies of the same genre, dip into your past to find inspiration, understand dramatic structure, and be open to radical change.

Step 3: Develop your core story: Examine your 3 Acts: what your story is about, what's the catalyst that drives the story, what's the big event, what is

the crisis, when does the showdown happen and who are all involved, when does realization strike the audience of the big change.

Step 4: Create your movie people: This refers to fleshing out your characters in their entirety. Does your character have an inner need or yearning? Then fulfillment of that need will drive the story. In F.R.I.E.N.D.S., will Ross wanting to be with Rachel was the character's yearning, which transferred onto the audience, too. What's the goal of the story? In Pixar's 'Inside Out', Riley's interactions with her parents and friends shaped who she was which was made evident with the concept of 'core memories', which helps the audience really get the character.

Step 5: Step out your story: Critique the premise, the characters, the goals, and the plot first on your own and then seep it out to small audiences to test for loopholes and gaps.

Step 6: Write the first draft

Step 7: Make necessary revisions

Trottier urges us to review our work in intervals to ensure staying on track. The script itself, dialogue, exposition, and character and story are major checkpoints at this juncture.

Check your progress

What's a screenplay? Give an example.

Explain the 3 dimensions of a narrative by Bordwell.

How can you write a screenplay for a film, according to Trottier?

Let's sum it up

In addition to traditional narrative techniques, contemporary cinema has also seen the emergence of experimental and non-narrative forms of

filmmaking. These films often challenge traditional narrative structures and conventions, and may prioritize mood, tone, and visual style over plot and character development. Despite these innovations, narrative remains a key element of cinema and continues to shape the way we engage with film as a storytelling medium.

12.3 QUESTIONS

**Q1. What are the different narrative styles with respect to time?
Give examples.**

Q2. What are the 3 Acts of a Play according to Aristotle?

Q3. What's a screenplay? Give an example.

Q4. Explain the 3 dimensions of a narrative by Bordwell.

**Q5. How can you write a screenplay for a film, according to
Trottier?**

Q6. Explain linear style of narrative writing with example.

Q7. Explain non-linear style of narrative writing with example.

Q8. What are the steps to writing an adaptation?

Q9. What is the Fourth Wall? Why would an artist break it?

Q10. Write a screenplay for an interaction between a mother angry about their teenager's sloppiness and the teenager going through growing up angst.

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THE ROLE OF CREW IN CINEMA AND WAVES IN CINEMA

Unit Structure

13.0 Objectives

13.1 Roles of crew members in cinema

13.2 Author of cinema and Auteur Theory

13.2.1 Waves (Movements) in Cinema

13.2.1.1 Italian Neorealism

13.2.1.2 The French New Wave

13.2.1.3 Indian Parallel Cinema

13.3 Director and origin of Auteur Theory

13.4 Role of the producer

13.5 Questions

13.6 References

13.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To help understand the different departments and roles of individuals and required skills in a film project's crew.
2. To understand the movements that changed the face of cinema over time and their impact on current films.
3. To be able to differentiate between the different roles and responsibilities in a crew and select the right talent.

13.1 ROLES OF CREW MEMBERS IN CINEMA

There are 5 stages in film production: Development, Pre-production, Production, Post-production, and Distribution. Every stage has a set of departments necessary for completion, the people involved are called crew members. Depending on the type of project (live action fiction, live action non-fiction, animation, etc.) and the budget, the roles within a crew can change subtly or drastically. Large budgets can afford a larger crew which distributes work but increases the need for coordination, smaller budgets like college-level documentaries generally have 4-5 people throughout the entire filmmaking process.

The various roles of crew members at various stages of filmmaking can be summarized as follows:

1. Development stage

Film studios are often the initiators of this stage. They hold meetings with producers, screenwriters, market researchers, authors, and ultimately directors and actors to explore new stories, themes, and concepts to make a new film. Trending topics and genres are looked at, rights are purchased to novels or plays or for remaking of old films, real-life characters are researched (for biopics, documentaries), screenplays are written, and possibilities of sequels are discussed at this stage.

a. Film studio

The studio is, at this early stage, the market researcher which observes the market and understands the looks at what appeals to the current audience, which genres are in trend, which actors are in and can bring in the maximum commercial success to the project. Examples of film studios are Raj Kapoor's RK Studios, Shah Rukh Khan's Red Chilies Entertainment, Sanjay Leela Bhansali's SLB Films, and so on.

b. Screenwriter

A screenwriter is a writer who practices the art of screenwriting and screenplay writing, i.e., writing scripts for films, television programmes, and video games on which the shooting is based. The screenplays can be original or adapted from other literature, and are discussed with the film studio, the producer, and director before being put on paper.

2. Pre-production stage

This is the planning stage of the film making process. This includes the storyboarding, budgeting, employing of cast and crew, and scheduling.

a. Storyboard artist

A storyboard artist creates the storyboard, i.e., a series of visual images of key frames of the film that help the director and production designer to communicate with the rest of the production crew.

b. Unit production manager

This crew member manages the production budget and schedule, and reports to the film studio executives and financiers.

c. Production designer

They create the visual draft of the film by working with the Art Director and Costume designers, and hair and makeup stylists.

d. Costume designers, hair stylists, and makeup designers

These artists design the costumes, hairstyles, and makeup that goes on the actors during the shoot. They must research the time that the film is set in, source the materials, get the costumes and wigs and prosthetics ready, and show up well before shoot call-time to dress the actors up. There are specializations for each type of makeup, especially if the film shows fights and aliens and special effects which require experts for real-looking makeup (eg. For Fight Club, Avatar, Stranger Things, The Curious Case of Benjamin Button).

e. Casting Director

Casting directors find the artists required for the roles in the film. Many a times, roles are written with actors in mind and are cast by the directors themselves. Casting directors hire talent to fill in the parts that are left in the script. They do this by holding auditions either live or in front of cameras.

f. Choreographer

They create and teach dance movements to the actors where required. They are also responsible for the camera work of their choreographies in many instances, meaning, they handle/direct the camera operator during the dance shoot. Choreographers are a staple in mainstream commercial Bollywood. Examples of Indian choreographers are Terence Lewis (Lagaan, 2001), the late Saroj Khan (Dhak dhak karne laga, Beta 1992), Kruti Mahesh (Ghoomar, Padmavat, 2018), Remo D'souza, Ganesh Acharya (Beedi Jalaile, Omkara, 2006), and Chinni Prakash (Azeem-o-shaan Shahanshah, Jodha Akbar, 2008). Specialized choreographers can also be hired for fight sequences, for example, Veeru Devgan and Ram Gopal Varma.

g. Production sound mixer

The head of the sound department of the project, Production Sound Mixers record and mix audio on set, take care of the sound aspects of dialogues and effects, and work in tandem with the director, DoP, and 1st AD. They also work with the sound designer and composer to create music for the film.

3. Production stage

Also known as Principal Photography, this stage is when the actual shooting takes place.

a. Producer

The initial contact for a film project, a producer talks with the clients, understands their goals and expectations, and begins to assemble the production team. A producer generally hires the director first, who then goes on to form the rest of the crew team. Producers stay on throughout the production cycles. There are different categories of producers – executive, creative, line, supervising, associate or assistant, television producers, digital or web producers, and so on.

b. Director

The director is the visionary who is involved in all production aspects of the film to ensure that the project happens in time and in budget in the best way possible. A director assembles their crew, adjust the script wherever necessary, and oversee parts of the production. They also must be adept at technicalities and supervise details like lighting, camera, art, and so on.

c. Director of Photography (DoP/DP) / Cinematographer

A DoP or Cinematographer is the person in charge of the lighting and camera – they are called DoP when they handle just the camera, and Cinematographer when they work with both together. They work along with the lighting director and are responsible for bringing the director's vision to fruition. The DoP looks after the camera (angles, movements), lenses, rigs, lights, and filters.

d. Camera Operator

Working Along with the DoP, camera operator operates the camera. They must ensure that exposure, gears, rigs, colour profiles are in place and are guided by the DoP on the framing and camera movements.

e. Lighting Director

The Lighting Director is responsible for handling the lighting requirements of the production set. They work with the Director and DoP to achieve the right look in every frame. They generally have production assistants and other light and electricity experts like Gaffer and Key Grips under them.

f. Set designer / Art Director

Set designers oversee creating the set for the production. They look at all the elements that are going to be in frame, and ensure that the setup, the objects, and the subject matches the theme and look and feel of the film. They are helped by the director to achieve the desired vision.

g. Audio Technician

The audio technician deals directly with the DoP and Director to record audio, adjust levels, and monitor sound recordings on set.

h. Production Assistant

Production Assistants or Pas are assistants to almost everyone on set. They look after everything from gear to lunches on set and at times get a chance to work with a specific department that helps them explore or pursue something specific to their on-set interests.

i. First Assistant Director (1st AD)

The 1st AD is responsible for scheduling and at times keeping continuity of shots. They arrange for talent, ensures that the crew is on time, assists the producer and the director, and helps the Art Department wherever necessary. There can be multiple Ads depending on the budget and requirement of a project.

4. Postproduction stage

post-production is the process of reviewing of footage and assembling the film from the final takes shot during principal photography, synchronizing music, adding subtitles, and finishing with special effects. This stage may overlap with the Production stage.

a. Editor

The editor is the person who selects footage from the final takes, arranges them, adds transitions, adds any necessary text, synchronizes the scenes with the music and dialogues, oversees colour correction and application of VFX and sound effects, and finishes the final master of the film. They work with the director, and VFX and sound artists.

b. VFX artists

They create and add visual effects to the required footage to present an enhanced scene or bring to life non-existing elements (think dinosaurs and Superman flying over fires).

c. Sound and Foley artists

Creating and rendering sound effects from different instruments and objects to achieve a mood or feeling is the job of these artists. There are special sound studios where these sounds are recorded/created/mixed and then added to the film's master.

5. Distribution

The last stage of the filmmaking process, distribution is where the film is released to the audiences. This is done via cinema theatres, DVDs, Blu-ray, television, and OTT. For major film and commercial ventures, key media professionals like film critics and journalists are contacted for promotions. These activities are usually done by the film studios, and they may hold promotional tours and look at broadcast synchronization for maximum reach and profits.

Check your progress

Discuss preproduction stage

Explain production stage

Why is post production significant?

13.2 AUTHOR OF CINEMA AND AUTEUR THEORY

13.2.1 Waves (Movements) in Cinema:

World War II had an impact on global cinema in a way where it gave rise to a new generation of directors who wanted to move away from the hitherto-told stories of God and grandeur and bring to light the state of the society and its problems via the medium of films. The World War had left a deep impact on people's psyche and lifestyle as they had suffered decline in not only economic but moral conditions. The political atmosphere was also in turmoil in most countries, and a lot of studios and theatres were destroyed in the bombings. All these factors contributed to movements in Cinema that started locally but inspired multiple New Waves worldwide.

13.2.1.1 Italian Neorealism:

Post-World War II, Italy saw a national film movement which focused on stories about the poor and working class. Known as 'Italian Neorealism' and 'Golden Age', the directors of this movement made films on poverty, depression, injustice, and desperation, showing the then-current state of society. This movement came to be a sign of change and progress, culturally and socially, in Italy. Addressing contemporary topics, stories, and ideas, these films were shot on location and most often with regular people who were not actors. Notable forebearers of this wave were Gianni Puccini, Luchino Visconti, Giuseppe de Santi's, and others who were film critics criticizing in the magazine called 'Cinema'. Vittorio de Sica's '1948 film 'The Bicycle Thieves is a highly praised representative of this time. A movement that began in 1943, it rapidly declined in the early 1950s, but not before inspiring the French New Wave, the Polish Film School, and the Indian Parallel Cinema movement.

13.2.1.2 The French New Wave:

'La Nouvelle Vague' or 'The French New Wave' is an art film movement that originated in France in the late 1950s. This movement, inspired from Italian Neorealism and experiencing similar social, cultural, and political conditions after WWII, sought to emerge out of the traditional styles of filmmaking. The directors favoured experimentation in narratives, editing, visual styles, themes, and story ideas. The term 'La Nouvelle Vague' was coined by a group of French film critics associated with the magazine 'Cahiers du Cinema' in the late 1950s and '60s. As the stories and narratives took on new and contemporary themes, the directors experimented and used portable equipment that needed very little setup time, fragmented, and long takes in editing for a different visual presentation, and endings that were ambiguous and not traditionally 'happily ever after'. As opposed to adaptation of literature into films as was done so far, these directors pursued situations and ideas relevant to the post-WWII world. Notable directors of this time are Francois Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, and Andre Bazin. Andre Bazin was the co-founder the magazine 'Cahiers du Cinema' and was instrumental in bringing about this movement. Using the magazine as a base for criticism and editorialization, these revolutionaries laid the groundwork for the concept which was being called 'The Auteur Theory'.

13.2.1.3 Indian Parallel Cinema:

Parallel Cinema, or New Indian Cinema, was a film movement in Indian cinema that was inspired from Italian Neorealism. It came about as an alternative to mainstream commercial cinema and originated in West Bengal in the 1950s. Filmmakers who went on to gain international acclaim like Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Bimal Roy, Hrishikesh Mukherjee, and Mrinal Sen shone during this period, eventually spreading to other film industries within the country. Employing symbolism and realism, the movies produced during this time focused on the sociopolitical climate of the times and did not have the typical dance-and-song routines that were a staple in mainstream cinema. This 'Golden Age of Indian Cinema' put

directors like Satyajit Ray and Shyam Benegal on the international map with recognition at Berlin, Venice, and Cannes Film Festivals. In the 1970s and 1980s, a new league of young actors like Shabana Azmi, Naseeruddin Shah, Pankaj Kapoor, Farooq Shaikh, and Deepti Naval joined this movement. The movement also spread by multiple directors into other industries, for eg., into Malayalam cinema by Adoor Gopalakrishnan, into Tamil cinema by K Balachander and Mani Ratnam, in Assamese cinema by Jahnu Barua, and so on. After a sharp decline post this era, Parallel Cinema revived with Ram Gopal Varma's 'Satya' in 1998 under the genre of Mumbai noir. The more recent examples of this movement are Nagesh Kukunoor's 'Dor' (2006), Anurag Kashyap's 'Black Friday' (2007), Kiran Rao's 'Dhobi Ghat' (2010), and includes directors like Aparna Sen (Bengali cinema), Amol Palekar (Marathi cinema), Amartya Bhattacharya (Odia), and Deepa Mehta (Hindi cinema).

13.3 DIRECTOR AND ORIGIN OF AUTEUR THEORY

A film is not made by one man alone. From the story to the marketing, there are multiple people and departments involved in the production and distribution processes, and it all comes to fruition only when the creative, aesthetics, technical and financial teamwork in tandem. But there is one person whose vision is considered supreme among all in the team, and that vision and idea are the ones which end up as the final audio-visual body of work. That person, who is the essence of the film is the director. Hence, for the longest time, the director is known as the author of his film even if he is not the one who wrote the story.

In 1948, Alexandre Astruc, a French documentary maker, came up with a theory which in essence says that the director should be considered as the main creative force of any film. This theory, known as the Auteur Theory', became the standard for filmmaking and was headlined by the French director Francois Truffaut from the 1950s. It was also propagated due to the French New Wave and the magazine 'Cahiers du Cinema'. The theory observes that the director leaves their personal influence on their film in some way or another. This is seen in the works of the Japanese director Akira Kurosawa, Indian Parallel Cinema's Satyajit Ray, America's Alfred Hitchcock, and France's Jean Renoir in their unique visual and thematic styles of storytelling.

- Indian Cinema has strong auteurs in its repertoire like Dadasaheb Phalke, P.C. Barua, Guru Dutt, Mani Ratnam, Govind Nihalani, Girish Kaservalli, and several others. These directors have created multiple cinematic worlds from their creativity, unconventional styles of visualization, and depiction of the current sociopolitical atmospheres via their films. The notable styles of some of the directors observed are:
- Ram Gopal Varma's films display strong biographical elements and narratives consistent with themes of mafia, crime, action, and politics which focuses on aesthetic style and technical elements in the treatment of his films with low-key photography, bleak images,

method acting, new technologies and ideas, and unique characterizations.

- Rakeysh Om Prakash Mehra, known for 'Rang De Basanti', explores contemporary themes, unconventional camera work and narrative strategies, inspiring patriotism in the youth.
- Rajkumar Hirani of 'Munnabhai MBBS' fame is known to make light-themed movies that are entertaining but make the audience question old-gen mindsets.
- Tigmanshu Dhulia, the maker of 'Haasil' and 'Pan Singh Tomar', is a critically acclaimed director known to make movies set in the rough heartlands of India.

Under European Union Law, because of the influence of Auteur Theory, a film's author is the director of the film.

This theory is also occasionally referred to for musicians, including performers and producers. In the 1960s, a record producer, Phil Spector was called as the first auteur among producers of music that was commercially popular. Spector was already popular for helping establish the role of the studio as an instrument, saying that the role of the studio where the recording happens was considered as good as any instrument used in the recording itself; he also integrated pop art aesthetics into music to make the genres of art pop, art rock, and dream pop, inspiring artists spread as wide as Japan. Spector was credited with coming up a new concept where the producer is the overall director of the creative process end-to-end. Whether it was talent scouting, the content to be produced, the arrangements, the actual rendition by the artists, or the rest of the recording processes, everything was done in detail and released under the producer's own label. His dedication and meticulousness earned him the title the first 'Star' producer.

13.4 ROLE OF THE PRODUCER

A film producer, either employed by a production company or freelancing, oversees film production. They plan and coordinate the various aspects of production from story selection to editing. They are also responsible for finding the right material for development, arrange financing, and supervise throughout the 5 stages of filmmaking. Over time, a producer's work began to include a multitude of responsibilities that are still growing, so some U.S.A. cinematographers went on to create a professional classification that were accepted and applied all around the world in due time:

- An executive producer oversees all the other producers and are usually in charge of managing the project's finances, scheduling, recce of the locations, and other business aspects of the film.
- A line producer works with the director if the budget of the project is high. Sometimes the director takes on the role of the line producer as well.

- Creative producers look at all the creative aspects of the film in all the stages of filmmaking, be it script selection right down to the film's release.
- Associate producers are considered more of assistants, but they are exposed to a lot of opportunities to develop skills to become a line producer during the production process.
- Co-producers are a producer's helpers and have similar responsibilities of a line producer.
- A Post-production producer supervises the post-production process.

Check your progress

1. **What is the Auteur Theory? What was its impact on the film industry?**

2. **What is the role of the director in film? How do directors affect the narrative?**

3. **Elaborate on Italian Neorealism as a film movement.**

Lets sum it up

A producer is someone who creates or discovers the idea that will turn into a film, it could be a character or just a story. They wish to impact the world with their films, and seeing they make the most important decisions and can control all aspects of the film, they could very well achieve their wish. They are also the crew member who receives the Academy Award for best film if the film wins one. The producer needs to be organized, adept in the filmmaking process, solve problems creatively, possess good communication skills, and be able to build trust and healthy team culture in their crew.

13.5 QUESTIONS:

4. What is the Auteur Theory? What was its impact on the film industry?

5. What is the role of the director in film? How do directors affect the narrative?

6. Elaborate on Italian Neorealism as a film movement.

7. Elaborate on the French New Wave as a film movement.

8. Elaborate on Parallel Cinema as an Indian film movement.

9. What's a crew in cinema? What are the roles of crew members in the development and pre-production stage?

10. What's a crew in cinema? What are the roles of crew members in the post-production and distribution stage?

11. What's a crew in cinema? What are the roles of crew members in the production stage?

12. Explain the role of xyz (where xyz is any of the given crew member roles) (Short question)

13. What is the role of a producer in film? What are the skills needed to be a producer?

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GENRE IN CINEMA

Unit Structure

14.0 Objectives

14.1 Genre

14.1.1 Types of film and introduction to genre

14.2 Genres in film and the need of categorization

14.2.1 Components of film genres

14.3 Most common / basic film genres categories

14.3.1 Masala films

14.3.2 Some terms and concepts

14.4 Summing up

14.5 Questions

14.6 References

14.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the types of films and its genres
2. To understand the need of categorization of films
3. To be able to identify different genres of film and break down a film to its genre-based elements
4. To be able to determine how to incorporate different elements of a given genre into their own film

14.1 GENRE

When you are scrolling through book stores, TV serials, or Netflix, you come across different categories of stories, these categories are known as genres. *Genre* comes from the French word meaning "kind," "category," or "type". Film genres are categories that define a movie based on its narrative elements. They can be differentiated based mainly on their tone. Each genre is unique based on the types of stories they tell, and they are not static but ever evolving and dynamic. Several subgenres have emerged over time, defining newer filmmaking styles. Genres are important for screenwriters as well as audiences to help set expectations and analyze films.

14.1.1 Types of film and introduction to genre

Most patrons of motion pictures consider films as an artistic and personal expression of the directors. This thought was also the basis of Auteur

Theory that originated during the French New Wave movement. The 3 practical categories or 'modes' of film are the documentary, the experimental, and the fictional. Documentaries relay events, the truth in raw form, to the world. The experimental are where different approaches are tested and technological limits are challenged, including animation. The fictional mode is what we call 'the movies'. The movies employ various forms of storytelling and cinematic languages to convey tales from cultures. Each 'mode' of motion picture can be further divided into genres.

The documentary: The early 20th century saw not only the invention of motion picture but also a growth of interest in journalism and travel by the people. This was identified and production companies depicted exotic locations and contemporary events, including Queen Elizabeth II's coronation. In time, the audience grew bored of the 'actualities' and sought imaginative entertainment, giving way to the following genres in reality films –

Travelogues

Ethnographic films

Newsreels

Documentaries

Documentaries were used for propaganda in the early 20th century as well, with some instances where they were not even documentaries but staged stories sold as documentaries to sway the political fervour of the public. An example of this is the 1936 Riefenstahl's *'Triumph des Willens'*.

The experimental: If you have heard of avant-garde, you have heard of this mode of films. Also known as alternative cinema or art cinema, this mode rapidly grew as artists and filmmakers started exploring the new technology's potential and went beyond the mainstream modes. This mode took form in France in the early 1920s and was significantly contributed to by European and American photographers.

Post-World War I, movements like Surrealism gave rise to animated films. As technology expanded to provide 16mm and 8mm cameras and film stock en masse, American cinema began to reflect cultural transformations taking on explicit themes like LGBT and multicultural ethnicity in the 1960s. 1970s saw a shift in focus on different formal and structural aspects of film, and political concerns led to hybrid styles where narrative fiction and documentary elements came together in film.

The animation: Considered here as a sub-section of the experimental mode, the techniques of animation have played a large role in commercial cinema via animated cartoons. We remember the hand-drawn Mickey Mouse and Bugs Bunny from our Cartoon Network times who are legendary figures in popular culture. In the 1930s, Hollywood animation studios had begun to produce feature-length films with Walt Disney as a pioneer. As children moved to TV cartoons in the 1960s, commercial

motion picture animation took a blow, but the 1980s saw its revival with Disney's *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988). '*Beauty and the Beast*' (1991) was the first animated feature film to be nominated for an Oscar, and *The Lion King* (1994) was a box-office hit. Once Pixar Animation Studios entered this fray with CGI in the 1990s, the animation industry saw a surge in patronage and demand. *Toy Story* (1995), *Frozen* (2013), and the *Shrek* series have been huge successes. Themes now changing from fairy-tale fantasies to real life issues if you have seen *Brave*, *Inside Out*, and *Turning Red*.

Japanese animation films, called *Anime*, garnered international audiences in the 1990s. They were on TV, the internet, on video and DVD releases, and theatrical distribution. Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* (2001) won the Best Animated Feature Oscar in 2003.

The fictional: Motion pictures had taken over from novels, staged melodramas, wax museum displays, paintings, and professional storytelling and become one of the most important narrative art forms of the 20th century. Even though radio and television continued as mediums of expression, they were dominated by the invention of motion picture. As the demand for motion pictures grew, the patrons needed new products to keep them engaged and satisfied. In order to increase the flow of these products and regularise production, film companies began to rely on genres. Genres helped presell motion pictures as the audiences knew what to expect and could be assured of the latest material in entertainment based on their preferences. Studios would save time and money by planning their productions in a specific genre for the year and reuse sets, costumes, and other items. They could also regularise their staff as they could assign the same personnel for that specific genre. This means that they could rely on writers, directors, crew members, and actors to establish a routine since the foundation was already laid in the form of genre. This resulted in quicker, improved work, and better production quality while giving the crew and actors the space to further their art. In this regard of actors improving their art and popularity, think of Nirupa Roy from Bollywood – she was known as the quintessential 'weeping mother' and 'Queen of Misery' and people would flock to theatres to see her acting skills. Once a film of a particular genre became popular, it enhanced the success of the films following in its footsteps. Viewers knew what to expect from a certain genre, recognised stars, were tuned to music and lighting and plot devices due to their familiarity with the type of story being told.

14.2 GENRES IN FILM AND THE NEED OF CATEGORIZATION

Movies have created their own genres since its inception, but have also relied on other arts as the starting point. Literature has heavily influenced the shaping of different genres based on their storytelling styles. The genre 'Western' has important precursors in Wild West shows, pulp fiction, and even popular paintings. Even if the audience is not familiar with the previous literature, paintings, or shows, they quickly learn to identify a

genre based on the hero's costume, the music, and the anticipation of the final shoot-out. Genres ensure that the audience encounters something new and different while they have enjoyed something from the past in a similar format. Most often, highly acclaimed films are those that invoke the rules of a genre, but break them down in the pursuit of ideas that the form has never attained before. Think of *Terminator* – an action-and-sci-fi film, it breaks the rules of unemotional chase scenes by giving a robot the power of emotion. The French New Wave directors like Francois Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard, in the 1950s and 60s, dynamically changed the standards on storytelling and narratives and employed the conventions of genres to create suspense, spectacle, comedy, and tragedies.

This leads us to the aforementioned phenomenon of hybridisation of genres. While the core genres are steady enough, like comedy, fantasy, horror, and mystery; the evolution of storytelling and the support of technology has helped mixing of genres, creating subgenres like romantic-comedy (or Romcom), Crime-Thriller, and Horror-Fantasy.

Genres consist of four elements or parts: character, story, plot, and setting. To remember simply, Story (Action) + Plot + Character + Setting = Genre. The predictability and repetition of genre elements is the basis for film-watching choices, audience expectations, and creative surprises. Since genres refer to recurring, repeating and similar, familiar or instantly-recognizable patterns, styles, themes, syntax, templates, paradigms, motifs, rules or generic conventions, let's look at some...

14.2.1 Components of film genres:-

1. A characteristic time period or setting – along with various stereotypes of that time period, appropriate props, and/or icons, one can depict different eras like modern day, a specific decade or year, historical or fictional times, and so on

Genre	Time period-based settings/places/props
Horror	Dark and isolated foreboding places like spooky castles, graveyards, killing instruments
Sci-fi	Outer space, laser blasters, spaceships
Sports	Sports arenas, teams, sports equipment
War	Battlefields, tanks, bomber planes
Western	Saloons, ten-gallon hats, cattle-drives

2. The use of characters

Genre	Characterisations
Comedy	Nerds, token minorities, buddies

Crime	Detective or private eye, gangsters, criminals
Horror	Ghosts, zombies, serial killers
Sci-fi	Aliens, superheroes, monsters
Western	Cowboys, Sheriff

3. Use of representative content or subject matter – using the storyline, theme, narrative or plot that are similar to other films in that genre/category

Genre	Subject matter
Comedy	Witty dialogue, mistaken identity, slapstick humour, cross-dressing
Crime	Robberies, rival gangs, who-dun-its
Horror	Urban legends, the paranormal, found-footage or mockumentaries
Action	Chase sequence, gun violence, race against time
Melodrama	Terminal illness, broken relationships, martyr maternal figure
Romance	Forbidden love, fairy tales, stages of falling in love then breaking p then reconciling
Sci fi	Apocalyptic scenarios, interstellar travel, doomsday

4. Filming techniques and formats – this component includes camera angles, lighting, editing styles, colour schemes, makeup, and costuming

Genre	Filming techniques and formats
Horror	High and low camera angles, hand-held style shooting, low lighting, jump shots for jump scares, dark colours, use of blood and masks, special effects for gore
Crime	Low camera angles, POV, low lighting, stark contrasts in colour palette, use of hats
Sci fi	High camera angles, bright neon and silver colours, contrast in dark space and shiny costumes

Romance	OTS and closeup shots for subtle love expressions, reds and pinks in settings and costumes, bright colours for happy situations
Action	Fast and short cuts, pastel colours in suits and settings, high angles to cover larger areas in fast-moving scenes

5. Music and audio – these elements are used to enhance or emphasize various characteristics, advance the plot, and create a specific mood or atmosphere

Genre	Music and audio
Horror	Eerie, foreboding
Romance	Upbeat, fresh
Drama	Dramatic, depressing
Sci-fi	Other-worldly, echoing, reverb

Check your progress

1. Elaborate on any 3/5/7 film genres along with their distinguishing elements/characteristics.

2. Compare any 3 film genres on the basis of their distinguishing elements/characteristics.

3. Elaborate on any 1 film genre with at least 3 examples of the characteristics at work.

4. Breakdown a film of XYZ genre examining the elements that classify it into that specific genre.

14.3 MOST COMMON / BASIC FILM GENRES CATEGORIES:

These are broad enough to accommodate practically any film ever made, although film categories can never be precise.

1. Action

Films in this genre usually include high energy, big-budget chases, along with physical stunts and rescues. They also can depict natural disasters and crisis situations like floods, explosions, fires, and have battles, fights, and escapes. These films have non-stop motion, fast-paced rhythm, adventure, good guys fighting bad guys stories. Examples of this genre are the *James Bond* series, the *Jason Bourne* series, Bollywood's '*Dhoom*' and '*Race*' series. Subgenres in action include:

War and military action – eg. Bollywood's *Border*
Western Action – eg. *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*
Spy and espionage action – eg. *James Bond* films
Martial arts action – eg. *Jackie Chan* films

2. Adventure

Adventure films are exciting stories; they depict exotic locales, new experiences, and searches for the unknown. They can include pirate films, epics and biopics, expeditions, jungle/desert epics, treasure hunts, and so on. Examples of this genre are the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series, *Jumanji* series, the animated movie '*Up*', and *Titanic*.

3. Comedy

Light-hearted plots, exaggerated movements, loud and funny expressions, comical one-liners, and goofy music are trademarks of this genre. Films of this genre are designed to amuse the audience and provoke laughter. For examples, think of *Charlie Chaplin* movies, Bollywood's *Welcome* and *Housefull*, and *Andaz Apna Apna*. Subgenres in comedy are varied and many, as audiences seek a moment of relief even in high energy and tense situations: Slapstick comedy – eg. *Dumb and Dumber*
Black comedy / Dark comedy – eg. *Delhi Belly*

Parody comedy – eg. The *Scary Movie* series
Horror comedy – Kollywood's *Kanchana* or Bollywood's *Stree*

Genre in Cinema

4. Horror

Horror films are designed to frighten the audience, and invoke their worst fears be it darkness or monsters or gore. These films captivate and entertain, often ending in a terrifying and shocking finale, the combination being a cathartic experience for many. Right from the era of silent films to today's CGI-created monsters to *Scooby Doo*'s 'human monsters', horror films have a wide range of styles. When combining other genres with horror, like sci-fi or fantasy, the new subgenre has scientific experiments gone wrong resulting in disaster (like *Black Mirror* series) or aliens threatening invasion. Examples of this genre include *The Blair Witch Project*, *The Exorcist*, *IT*, *Psycho*, *The Conjuring*, the *Annabelle* series, Bollywood's *Raaz* series, *Bhoot*, *Tumbbad*, and so on.

Subgenres in horror include:

Psychological

Survival

Found footage

Occult/paranormal

Zombie – eg. *Go goa Gone*

Satanic – eg. *Rosemary's Baby*

Monsters

Dracula

Slasher, and so on

5. Sci-fi / Science Fiction

An experimental and thought-provoking category, this genre focuses on fascination with outer space and the unknown. Quasi-scientific, informative, and visionary films complete with heroes, aliens, impossible quests, fantastic places, futuristic technology, great villains, mad scientists, and nuclear havoc, these films often express the potential of technology to destroy humankind. Examples include *Arrival*, *2012*, *Back to the Future*, *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, and so on.

Subgenres in sci-fi include:

Space travel – eg. *Interstellar*

Time travel- eg. *Tenet*

Robot and monster films

Disaster and alien invasion – eg. *Signs*

6. Drama

The fundamental element of all fictional films is dramatized representation of a story; hence drama is considered as the principal genre by many and not a genre at all by the others. Serious, plot-driven presentations along with portrayal of realistic characters and settings, these films have stories that involve intense character development and interaction. This genre has almost all the other genres as its subgenres.

7. Western

Westerns were the major defining genre of the American film industry. One of the oldest, most enduring genres, they are a eulogy to the early days of the expansive American frontier. They have very recognisable elements and plots as well as characters – dusty old towns, saloons, cowboys, ten-gallon hats, guns, native Indians, and so on. They have evolved over time, but the basic idea of a good guy Sheriff keeping the town hooligans in check has stayed. Examples of this genre are *No Country for Old Men*, *Django Unchained*, *The Revenant*.

Subgenres include:

Classic Western

The Revisionist and Anti-Western

Fantasy and Space Western

Modern Western

Contemporary and Neo-Western

Epic Westerns

Comic Westerns

Spaghetti Westerns

8. Historical / Epics

Drama set in a specific time period of war covering a vast expanse of time and an even bigger panoramic backdrop, epics can be real or imaginary. They are often characterised by an extravagant setting or period, lavish costumes, a sweeping musical score, a mythical or legendary heroic figure set in an historical or imagined event, high production value, accompanied by grandeur and spectacle. Examples of this include *Gandhi*, *Dunkirk*, *Schindler's List*, *Spencer*, the *Bahubali* series, and *Padmavat*. Biopics are a subgenre of the historical genre.

9. Musicals

Musicals or dance films are cinematic forms that emphasize full-scale score or song and dance routines where the performances are a part of the narrative itself. They centre on combinations of music, dance,

song, choreography, and group or solo performances. Examples of this genre are *High School Musical*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Bollywood's Gully Boy*, *Om Shanti Om*, *Rab ne Bana Di Jodi*, and so on.

Subgenres in musicals:

Musical comedy

Concert film

10. Romance

These films generally follow a simple structural convention: a boy and girl alternate loving and hating each other until they are reunited through a grand romantic gesture. They depict stories of love and courtship, taking the audience in to a world of romance. They are more or less staple in every other genre of films, whether it is a superhero Sci-fi like *Superman* who has a romantic love interest Lois Lane, or a comedy like Bollywood's *Wanted* with Salman Khan's love interest of Asin. This genre has chance encounters, heartfelt passion, complex love triangles, breakups and reconciliation, and in many cases comedy and music and dance. Examples include *Casablanca*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, *The Notebook*, *La La Land*.

Subgenres in romance genre:

Romantic drama – eg. *Jab Tak Hai Jaan*

Chick Flick – eg. *The Notebook*

Romantic Comedy – eg. *Tanu Weds Manu*

Historical Romance – eg. *Jodha Akbar*

Paranormal Romance – eg. *The Twilight series*

11. Thriller

This genre rose with the rise of spy and detective pulp novels in the 1960s and 70s. It's one of the best cinematic expressions of exploring sometimes upsetting and underrepresented truths about our governments and society at large. It has a stylised spy, an intense chase, a quest to uncover truth, secretive operations and clubs, strong villain bent on destroying the system or abusing the system, insidious networking, and high tech instruments and gadgets. Examples of this genre are the famous *James Bond* series, Bollywood's *Byomkesh Bakshi*, Tollywood's *Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya*.

Subgenres in thriller:

Crime thriller – eg. *Don*

Political thriller – eg. *Rajneeti*

Spy thriller – eg. *James Bond* films

Supernatural thriller – eg. *Raaz*

Legal thriller – eg. *Article 375*

14.3.1 Masala films

A worthy mention of a genre that arose from the amalgamation of multiple genres is known as Masala Film. A product of Bollywood that came into being with the 1975 hit *Sholay*, this genre has some elements from other genres that make the film appealing to a variety of audiences at the same time. It may combine drama, romance, comedy, dance, song, and adventure all in one. Examples of this include *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), *Mr India* (1987), *Dabangg* (2010), *Chennai Express* (2013).

14.3.2 Some terms and concepts:

- a. Thematic codes: The subtext embedded within genres and subgenres, often based in historical context or relevance
- b. Iconography: Objects that instantly identify a genre or subgenre, e.g., guns in Western films
- c. Structural conventions: Expectations of plot, character, setting, or style. Directors establish their own style helping the audience identify the genres easily
- d. Slasher film: Horror subgenre popularised in 1980s that feature naïve teenagers who become the prey of a serial killer
- e. Final Girl: A slasher film trope coined by Carol J. Clover. Describes a female character who survives the serial killer's attacks and becomes the film's hero, e.g., in the films *Friday the 13th* and *A Train to Busan*
- f. J-Horror: Horror sub-genre from Japan that critiques alienating modern life through figures of ghosts (onryu) and familial relations
- g. Femme fatale: A seductive yet dangerous female villain in the film noir genre
- h. Film Noir: a genre that worked in the 1940s that features low angles, close-ups, harsh shadows, and deep space to represent psychological turmoil and anxiety

Check your progress

5. What is genre? What is the need of genres?

6. What are the 3 modes of film?

7. What are the elements considered when categorising a film into a specific genre?

14.4 SUMMING UP

Earlier, genres used to be set in stone, to make it easier for viewers and audiences to get their money's worth at the box office. For instance, you may choose a Romcom to go on a date, or an adventure film to watch with your buddies. But the Romcom may turn about to be about a human and an alien finding love (*The Shape of Water*, 2017), and the adventure film may be about the relationship between 2 brothers (Pixar's *Onward*, 2020). And you may enjoy both films. This unexpected yet powerful blend of possibilities in cinematic storytelling is the future of genre cinema, where the movie poster need not exactly match the film's story but lead the audience in to a new world with new experiences. When it comes to filmmaking, filmmakers have always tried to push boundaries as we saw during the Waves (movements) in cinema, and hybrids are being created as we breathe. Restrictions that made storytelling standard are being tested and the viewers are welcoming these changes.

How do genres fit in in this changing scenario, then? Genres still set the tone for the movie. Genres still help us narrow down our search for the 'perfect date movie' or 'best family movie' or 'ultimate breakup movie'. Too much deviation from a chosen genre or mixing incompatible elements of multiple genres can result in messy moviemaking, and no one wants to watch that!

14.5 QUESTIONS:

8. What is genre? What is the need of genres?

9. What are the 3 modes of film?

10. What are the elements considered when categorising a film into a specific genre?

11. Elaborate on any 3/5/7 film genres along with their distinguishing elements/characteristics.

12. Compare any 3 film genres on the basis of their distinguishing elements/characteristics.

13. Elaborate on any 1 film genre with at least 3 examples of the characteristics at work.

14. Breakdown a film of XYZ genre examining the elements that classify it into that specific genre.

15. What are Masala Films?

16. Why do you think Masala Films originated in Bollywood?

17. Explain the concepts: (a) (b) (c) [choose from section 14.3.2]

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FILM THEORY

Unit Structure

15.1 Sigmund Freud

15.1.1 Some terms and concepts

15.2 Psychoanalytic film theory

15.2.1 The Gaze

15.2.1.1 The male gaze

15.2.1.2 The female gaze

15.2.1.3 The Objectifying gaze

15.2.1.4 The Gaze and Film

15.3 Christian Metz, Jacques Lacan, and Contributions of Laura Mulvey:

15.3.1 Mulvey and Freud

15.3.2 Mulvey and Lacan

15.4 Mulvey and Feminist Film Theory

15.5 Questions

15.6 References

15.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To help the student understand Freud's theories and their relevance to films.
2. To understand the concept of 'Gaze' and its role in film and film theory
3. To understand the work and contributions of Laura Mulvey in film and feminist film movement.

15.1 SIGMUND FREUD:

Freud is considered the Father of Psychoanalysis. Psychoanalytical theory's central tenet is the Oedipus Complex, which he developed after redefining sexuality. His analysis of dreams helped him devise models to explain repression, and his theory of the unconscious led to the id, ego, and superego model of psychic structure. His conclusions gave rise to in-depth

understanding of libido, hate, aggression, and guilt. He later on developed a wide-ranging interpretation and critique of religion and culture.

15.1.1 Some concepts:

- a. In a play or film, subtext refers to the underlying message imparted by a line of dialogue. Some refer to this as the "lines between the lines" or "the unsaid meaning."
- b. Oedipus Complex: According to Freud, the Oedipus complex is a purportedly universal phase of a young boy's existence in which he despises his father and desires sexual relations with his mother. These desires could be subconscious.
- c. Narcissism is a self-centered personality style characterised by an excessive preoccupation with one's own requirements, frequently at the expense of others.
- d. Voyeurism: Voyeurism is the sexual interest in or practise of observing other people engaging in intimate behaviours, such as undress, sexual activity, or other actions commonly regarded as private. Typically, the term refers to a male who secretly observes someone outside of a public location.
- e. Scopophilia is the aesthetic enjoyment derived from observing an object or a person. Scopophilia, in the context of human sexuality, refers to the sexual enjoyment derived from viewing prurient objects of eroticism, such as pornography, the nude body, and fetishes, as a replacement for actual participation in a sexual relationship.
- f. In social philosophy, objectification is the practise of considering a person or, on occasion, an animal as an object or a thing. It is a component of dehumanisation, the act of denying others' humanity.
- g. Sexual objectification is the practise of considering a person exclusively as an object of sexual desire. In a broader sense, objectification refers to regarding a person as a commodity or an object without regard for their individuality or dignity.
- h. Essentialism is the belief that objects possess a set of attributes that are essential to their identity.

15.2 PSYCHOANALYTIC FILM THEORY

Psychoanalytic film theory is an academic school of thought inspired by the theories of psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. Psychoanalysis was developed near the end of the nineteenth century, and film followed shortly thereafter. Psychoanalytic film theory investigates the unconscious of the film's director, characters, subjects, and occasionally the audience as well. Andre Breton, the inventor of the Surrealist movement, viewed films as a means of engaging the conscious. Using techniques such as superimposition and slow motion, he believed that films resembled

visions in their depiction of a plot. Before films began to be viewed as representations of fantasy, psychoanalytic theory could not be adequately applied to their analysis. When applied to cinema, the theory focused on unveiling the hidden meanings behind screen images.

15.2.1 The Eyeball

In critical theory, sociology, and psychoanalysis, the gaze is defined as the awareness and perception of other individuals, other groups, and oneself.

15.2.1.1 Male voyeurism

The Gaze has been associated with both men and women. In 1972, John Berger, an English art critic, coined the term 'the male gaze' to describe the distinction between how men and women view and are viewed in art and society. According to Berger, men are assigned the character of the Watcher, while women are viewed. Laura Mulvey, a critic and feminist, has critiqued the traditional media's portrayal of women.

15.2.1.2 The female viewpoint

This term was developed as a rebuke to Mulvey's Male Gaze. Judith Butler, an American gender theorist, proposed the concept of the female gaze as a method by which men choose to perform their masculinity by using women as the ones who compel men to self-regulate.

15.2.1.3 The gaze of objectification

In 1997, Barbara Fredrickson and Tomi-Ann Roberts initially proposed the feminist Objectification theory. According to Fredrickson and Roberts, sexual objectification is the experience of being treated "as a body (or collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others." This deprives them not only of their physiological autonomy and sexuality, but also of their humanity. According to the researchers, sexual objectification or the objectifying gaze occurs in three contexts: interpersonal or social encounters, visual media depicting social encounters, and visual media depicting bodies.

15.2.1.4 The View and the Film

Individuals enable media output to influence their lives, opinions, and perceptions as a result of the media-centric nature of western culture. The mass media, particularly user-generated content such as that found on social media, promotes objectification. This may also lead to self-objectification, in which a person dresses or acts a certain manner to appear more desirable. Although the original objectification theory focuses primarily on the implications and theories surrounding women in the spotlight of the objectifying gaze, males are becoming increasingly objectified as a result of the use of mass media. This means that in order to appear as the protagonist in a film, men must look and act a certain way – typically a macho, strong-bodied, and strong-willed individual who is initially dismissive of the female protagonist but ultimately warms up to her.

Consider Lucky from Main Hoon Na, with his charming yet dismissive

personality that causes women to fall in love with him left, right, and centre, while he ignores his female counterpart by labelling her "jhalli." His female protagonist Sanjana is tomboyish, crude, and free-spirited, but Lucky finds her alluring only when she is demure, dismissive, and conventionally seductive. This is a couple that is common across disciplines and film industries.

Check your progress

Explain subtext

Explain objectification

Explain sigmund freud's contribution to cinema

15.3 CHRISTIAN METZ, JACQUES LACAN, AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF LAURA MULVEY:

French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan theorised the Mirror Stage in the development of the human psyche, as well as Freud's concepts of id, ego, and superego; and stated that infants begin to recognise themselves in the mirror between the ages of 6 and 18 months, at which point they begin to form an idea or image of who they are and how they look. Christian Metz's theoretical analysis of cinema incorporated psychoanalytic concepts. These theories and methodologies assisted Laura Mulvey in integrating film theory, psychoanalysis, and feminism within the field of film studies.

Born on 15 August 1941, Laura Mulvey is a British feminist film theorist. She is presently a professor of film and media studies at London's Birkbeck College. Prior to joining the British Film Institute, she taught at Bulmershe College, the London College of Printing, the University of East Anglia, and the British Film Institute. Mulvey's 1973 essay "Visual Pleasure and

Narrative Cinema" is her most well-known work. It was published in 1975. Mulvey is renowned for her critiques of traditional media portrayals of female characters in film. She linked activity and passivity to gender, arguing that masculinity is associated with the active whereas femininity is associated with the passive. She observes that there is no space in the stereotypically masculine role for female activity and desire. These findings have had a significant impact on feminist film theory and media studies, and have eventually been linked to the concept of power.

"Woman as Image, Man as the Bearer of the Look."

In the 1950s and 1960s, viewers were encouraged to identify with and imitate the almost exclusively masculine protagonists of Classic Hollywood films. Women were assigned the role of being looked at, while males were assigned the role of being looking. Mulvey proposes two distinct modes of the male gaze of this era: "voyeuristic" (i.e., viewing women as objects "to be viewed") and "fetishist" (i.e., viewing women as substitutes for "the lack," the underlying Freudian psychoanalytic dread of castration).

"Pleasure of Looking/Fascination with the Human Form,"

She also employs the sexually derived concept of Scopophilia, which has voyeuristic and narcissistic connotations, to explain the appeal of Hollywood cinema. Again, she observes the gender roles of activity and passivity. If you have seen any of the Bond films or even the Race series, you will have observed that the female characters were merely ornamental and did not contribute significantly to the plot. The trope of the 'damsel in distress' is prevalent across genres and narratives, revealing a highly unconscious patriarchal culture.

15.3.1 The works of Mulvey and Freud

According to Mulvey, the paradox of the 'woman' image is that, while they represent attraction and seduction, they also represent the absence of the phallus, resulting in castration anxiety (a Freudian concept). Mulvey has asserted that the dread of castration can be overcome through fetishism and narrative structure. To alleviate this dread on a narrative level, the female protagonist must be found guilty. In the majority of films, this is accomplished by either the woman's death or her marriage to the male protagonist. She is instantaneously transformed into a beautiful, non-threatening object. Consider this phenomenon whenever you watch a Bollywood film from the 1990s in which the heroine rejects the hero but is pursued until she "gives in" or "falls in love" with him – the classic "Ladki ke naa mein haan hota hai"

15.3.2 The authors Mulvey and Lacan

According to Lacan, children derive joy from identifying with a perfect image reflected in a mirror, which shapes their ego ideal. Mulvey examined this concept of ego formation and the mirror stage and linked it to the manner in which a viewer derives narcissistic pleasure from identifying with a human figure on the screen, specifically the masculine characters.

Mulvey contends that cinematic identifications are gendered and structured according to sexual differences, with the representation of powerful male characters being the polar opposite of the representation of powerless female characters. As discussed in previous chapters, a low camera angle gives male characters an immediate impression of superiority, whereas a high camera angle on a female character makes her appear defenceless and impotent. Mulvey argues that camera movement, editing, and illumination all work together to illustrate this sexual distinction.

Another criticism levelled at Mulvey's essay is the presence of essentialism; that is, the belief that the female body possesses a set of characteristics that are essential to its identity and function and that are fundamentally distinct from masculinity. This brings the issue of sexual identity into sharp focus, contradicting the notion that being a woman is a product of the patriarchal system.

Mulvey has been questioned regarding whether the gaze is exclusively masculine. Here, her inability to acknowledge a protagonist and a viewer other than a heterosexual male is evident, as she fails to consider a woman or a homosexual as the gaze. Additionally, only binary genders are regarded, and LGBTQ+ community members are not mentioned. Although we have seen an example in an Indian context, indicating that Mulvey's observations are applicable to all audiences, Mulvey herself only refers to European women when she makes her observations.

15.4 MULVEY AND FEMINIST FILM THEORY:

With the advancements in film over the years, feminist film theory has developed and evolved to analyse both the present and the past methods of filmmaking. Mulvey identifies three "looks" or perspectives that she argues contribute to the sexual objectification of women in film. The first is the masculine character's perspective and how he perceives the female character. The second perspective is that of the viewer as she views the female on-screen character. The third "look" connects the previous two: it is the male audience member's perspective of the male film character. In the third perspective, the male viewer identifies visually with the male protagonist and views the female character as his own sexual object. Mulvey argues that the only way to end the sexual objectification of women in film is to destroy the modern film structure. Eliminating female sexual objectivity through the elimination of voyeurism, equal representation in the workplace and in film, and the application of Apparatus Theory in which the camera is made visible, thereby eliminating 'the invisible visitor,' are fundamental to the Feminist Film movement.

1. Elaborate on any 3 contributions of Laura Mulvey.

2. Explain Mulvey's "*Woman as Image, Man as Bearer of the Look.*"

3. Elaborate on the influence of Freud on Mulvey's work.

4. Elaborate on the influence of Jacques Lacan on Mulvey's work.

Let's sum it up

Film theories can also be used to critique and challenge dominant narratives and representations in film, encouraging us to question the messages and values presented on screen. By engaging with film theories, we can become more critical and discerning viewers, able to appreciate the richness and diversity of cinema while also being aware of its potential limitations and biases.

15.5 QUESTIONS:

5. Elaborate on any 2 of Freud's theories with respect to films.

6. Explain the concepts: (any 3 from section 15.1.1)

7. Explain The Gaze.

8. Explain Psychoanalytic Film Theory.

9. Elaborate on the Objectifying Gaze with relevant film examples.

10. Elaborate on any 3 contributions of Laura Mulvey.

11. Explain Mulvey's "*Woman as Image, Man as Bearer of the Look.*"

12. Elaborate on the influence of Freud on Mulvey's work.

13. Elaborate on the influence of Jacques Lacan on Mulvey's work.

14. Elaborate on Mulvey and Feminist Film Theory.

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