

FILM STUDIES

V SEMESTER

(UG-CCSS – SDE)

OPEN COURSE

***(For candidates with core course
other than English)***

(2011 Admission)



UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

STUDY MATERIAL

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V Semester

FILM STUDIES

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MODULE I

INTRODUCTION TO THE BASIC TERMINOLOGY OF FILMMAKINGS

I. **Mise en scene**

Mise-en-scène is a French term which means, literally, "put in the scene." For film, it has a broader meaning, and refers to almost everything that goes into the composition of the shot, including the composition itself: framing, movement of the camera and characters, lighting, set design and general visual environment, even sound as it helps elaborate the composition. *Mise-en-scène* can be defined as the articulation of cinematic space, and it is precisely space that it is about. ***Mise-en-scène*** is an expression used to describe the design aspects of a theatre or film production, which essentially means "visual theme" or "telling a story" both in visually artful ways through storyboarding, cinematography and stage design, and in poetically artful ways through direction. *Mise-en-scène* has been called film criticism's "grand undefined term".

When applied to the cinema, *mise-en-scène* refers to everything that appears before the camera and its arrangement—composition, sets, props, actors, costumes, sounds, and lighting. The "mise-en-scène", along with the cinematography and editing of a film, influence the verisimilitude of a film in the eyes of its viewers. The various elements of design help express a film's vision by generating a sense of time and space, as well as setting a mood, and sometimes suggesting a character's state of mind. "Mise-en-scène" also includes the composition, which consists of the positioning and movement of actors, as well as objects, in the shot. These are all the areas overseen by the director, and thus, in French film credits, the director's title is *metteur en scène*, "placer on scene." Andre Bazin, a well-known French film critic and film theorist, describes the mise-en-scene aesthetic as emphasizing choreographed movement within the scene rather than through editing.

For some film critic, it refers to *all* elements of visual style—that is, both elements on the set and aspects of the camera. For others, such as U.S. film critic Andrew Sarris, it takes on mystical meanings related to the emotional tone of a film. The term is sometimes used to represent a style of conveying the information of a scene primarily through a single shot—often accompanied by camera movement. *Mise en scene* is nothing other than the technique invented by each director to express the idea and establish the specific quality of his work.

In German filmmaking in the 1910s and 1920s, one can observe tone, meaning, and narrative information conveyed through *mise-en-scène*. These films were a part of the German Expressionism movement in the 1920's, and were characterized by their extreme sets, décor, acting, lighting, and camera angles. The aim of these films is to have an extremely dramatic effect on the audience, often emphasizing the fantastic and grotesque. Perhaps the most

famous example of this is *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) where a character's internal state of mind is represented through set design and blocking. The sets involved stress the madness and horror of the film, as expressionist films are meant to do.

Set design:

An important element of "putting in the scene" is set design—the setting of a scene and the objects (props) visible in a scene. Set design can be used to amplify character emotion or the dominant mood, which has physical, social, psychological, emotional, economic and cultural significance in film.

Lighting:

The intensity, direction, and quality of lighting can influence an audience's understanding of characters, actions, themes and mood. Light (and shade) can emphasize texture, shape, distance, mood, time of day or night, season, glamour; it affects the way colours are rendered, both in terms of hue and depth, and can focus attention on particular elements of the composition. Highlights, for example, call attention to shapes and textures, while shadows often conceal things, creating a sense of mystery or fear. For this reason, lighting must be thoroughly planned in advance to ensure its desired effect on an audience. Cinematographers are a large part of this process, as they coordinate the camera and the lighting.

Space:

The representation of space affects the reading of a film. Depth, proximity, size and proportions of the places and objects in a film can be manipulated through camera placement and lenses, lighting, set design, effectively determining mood or relationships between elements in the story world.

Composition:

It includes the organization of objects, actors and space within the frame. One of the most important concepts with the regard to the composition of a film is maintaining a balance of symmetry. This refers to having an equal distribution of light, colour, and objects and/or figures in a shot. Unbalanced composition can be used to emphasize certain elements of a film that the director wishes to be given particular attention to. This tool works because audiences are more inclined to pay attention to something off balance, as it may seem abnormal.

Costume:

Costume simply refers to the clothes that characters wear. Costumes in narrative cinema are used to signify characters or to make clear distinctions between characters.

Makeup and hair styles:

Establish time period, reveal character traits and signal changes in character.

Acting:

There is enormous historical and cultural variation in performance styles in the cinema. In the early years of cinema, stage acting and film acting were difficult to differentiate, as most film actors had previously been stage actors and therefore knew no other method of acting. Eventually, early melodramatic styles, clearly indebted to the 19th century theatre, gave way in Western cinema to a relatively naturalistic style. This more naturalistic style of acting is largely influenced by Constantin Stanislavski's theory of method acting, which involves the actor fully immersing themselves in their character.

II. Long takes

The long take, a shot of some duration, was not an aesthetic choice when it was first used. Filmmakers in the early days of cinema had no choice but to shoot their works in one continuous take, until the film ran out. Even as it became technically possible to have cuts in films, the finished product would often still look more like a stage drama, with a static camera stringing together a series of narrative sections. Georges Méliès's *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) demonstrates an early use of long takes, albeit ones that tended more toward the theatrical than the cinematic. In the early 1940s, the long take began to assume a more important role in the discussion of film aesthetics. The film critic and theoretician André Bazin has written about cinema's unique ability to capture "reality," through invisible cutting, the use of the long take, and [deep focus](#). Bazin's theories offered an alternative to the [montage theory](#) proposed by the Soviet filmmakers of the 1920s, who favored extensive [editing](#) of their films. Two directors whom Bazin cites often in his writings on the long take and deep focus are Jean Renoir and Orson Welles. Throughout Welles's *Citizen Kane* (1941), for instance, there are a number of examples of deep focus combined with the long take. A number of films today make use of the long take. Others through the years include Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), which, through editing, creates the impression of an entire film taking place during one take, and Mike Figgis's *Timecode* (2000), which shot digitally four ninety-minute takes concurrently.

A long take or oner is an uninterrupted [shot](#) in a film which lasts much longer than the conventional editing pace either of the film itself or of films in general, usually lasting several minutes. It can be used for dramatic and narrative effect if done properly, and in moving shots is often accomplished through the use of a dolly or [Steadicam](#). Long takes of a sequence filmed in one shot without any editing are rare in films. The term "long take" is used because it avoids the ambiguous meanings of "[long shot](#)", which can refer to the framing of a shot, and "long cut", which can refer to either a whole version of a film or the general editing pacing of the film. However, these two terms are sometimes used interchangeably with "long take".

When filming [Rope](#) (1948), [Alfred Hitchcock](#) intended for the film to have the effect of one long continuous take, but the cameras available could hold no more than 1000 feet of [35 mm film](#). As a result, each take used up to a whole roll of film and lasts up to 10 minutes.

III. Deep focus

Deep focus is a technique in which objects very near the camera as well as those far away are in focus at the same time. It is a style or technique of [cinematography](#) and staging with great [depth of field](#), using relatively [wide-angle lenses](#) and small lens apertures to render in sharp focus near and distant planes simultaneously. A deep-focus shot includes foreground, middle-ground, and extreme-background objects, all in focus.

Deep focus is a photographic and cinematographic technique using a large depth of field. Depth of field is the front-to-back range of focus in an image — that is, how much of it appears sharp and clear. Consequently, in deep focus the foreground, middle-ground and background are all in focus. This can be achieved through use of the hyper focal distance of the camera lens.

Deep focus is achieved with large amounts of light and small aperture. It is also possible to achieve the illusion of deep focus with optical tricks or composite two pictures together. It is the aperture of a camera lens that determines the depth of field. Wide angle lenses also make a larger portion of the image appear sharp. The aperture of a camera determines how much light enters through the lens, so achieving deep focus requires a bright *mise en scène*.

The opposite of deep focus is **shallow focus**, in which only one plane of the image is in focus.

In the cinema Orson Welles and his cinematographer Gregg Toland were most responsible for popularizing deep focus. When deep focus is used, filmmakers often combine it with deep *space* (also called deep staging). Deep space is a part of *mise-en-scène*, placing significant actors and props in different planes of the picture. Directors and cinematographers often use deep space *without* using deep focus, being either an artistic choice or because they don't have resources to create a deep focus look, or both.

IV. Shots (close up, medium shot, long shot)

In [filmmaking](#) and [video production](#), a **shot** is a series of [frames](#) that runs for an uninterrupted period of time. In terms of camera distance with respect to the object within the shot there are basically 7 types of shots. They are:

1. extreme close-up
2. close-up
3. medium close-up

4. medium shot
5. medium long shot
6. long shot
7. extreme long shot or distance shot

A **close-up** tightly frames a person or an object. Close-ups are one of the standard shots used regularly with medium shots and long shots. Close-ups display the most detail, but they do not include the broader scene. Moving in to a close-up or away from a close-up is a common type of zooming.

Close-ups are used in many ways, for many reasons. Close-ups are often used as cutaways from a more distant shot to show detail, such as characters' emotions, or some intricate activity with their hands. Close cuts to characters' faces are used far more often in television than in movies; they are especially common in soap operas. For a director to deliberately avoid close-ups may create in the audience an emotional distance from the subject matter.

Close-ups are used for distinguishing main characters. Major characters are often given a close-up when they are introduced as a way of indicating their importance. Leading characters will have multiple close-ups. There is a long-standing stereotype of insecure actors desiring a close-up at every opportunity and counting the number of close-ups they received. An example of this stereotype occurs when the character Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard*, announces "All right, Mr. DeMille, I'm ready for my close-up" as she is taken into police custody in the film's finale.

Close-up shots do not show the subject in the broad context of its surroundings. If overused, close-ups may leave viewers uncertain as to what they are seeing.

A **medium shot** is a [camera angle](#) shot from a medium distance. The dividing line between "[long shot](#)" and "medium shot" is fuzzy, as is the line between "medium shot" and "close-up". In some standard texts and professional references, a full-length view of a human subject is called a medium shot; in this terminology, a shot of the person from the knees up or the waist up is a close-up shot. In other texts, these partial views are called medium shots. (For example, in Europe a medium shot is framed from the waist up). It is mainly used for a scene when you can see what kind of expressions they are using.

A **long shot** (sometimes referred to as a **full shot** or a **wide shot**) typically shows the entire object or human figure and is usually intended to place it in some relation to its surroundings. It has been suggested that long-shot ranges usually correspond to approximately what would be the distance between the front row of the audience and the stage in live theatre. It is now common to refer to a long shot as a "wide shot" because it often

requires the use of a [wide-angle lens](#). When a long shot is used to set up a location and its participants in film and video, it is called an [establishing shot](#).

A related notion is that of an extreme long shot. This can be taken from as much as a quarter of a mile away, and is generally used as a scene-setting, establishing shot. It normally shows an exterior, e.g. the outside of a building, or a landscape, and is often used to show scenes of thrilling action e.g. in a war film or disaster movie. There will be very little detail visible in the shot, as it is meant to give a general impression rather than specific information.

V. Editing

Film editing is part of the creative [post-production](#) process of [filmmaking](#). The term film editing is derived from the traditional process of working with [film](#), but now it increasingly involves the use of digital technology. The film editor works with the raw [footage](#), selecting [shots](#) and combining them into [sequences](#) to create a finished [motion picture](#). Film editing is described as an [art](#) or skill, the only art that is unique to cinema, separating [filmmaking](#) from other art forms that preceded it, although there are close parallels to the editing process in other art forms like [poetry](#) or [novel](#) writing. Film editing is often referred to as the "invisible art" because when it is well-practiced, the viewer can become so engaged that he or she is not even aware of the editor's work. On its most fundamental level, film editing is the art, technique, and practice of assembling shots into a coherent sequence. The job of an editor isn't simply to mechanically put pieces of a film together, cut off film [slates](#), or edit dialogue scenes. A film editor must creatively work with the layers of images, story, dialogue, music, pacing, as well as the actors' performances to effectively "re-imagine" and even rewrite the film to craft a cohesive whole. Editors usually play a dynamic role in the making of a film.

With the advent of digital editing, film editors and their assistants have become responsible for many areas of filmmaking that used to be the responsibility of others. Film editing is an art that can be used in diverse ways. It can create sensually provocative montages; become a laboratory for experimental cinema; bring out the emotional truth in an actor's performance; create a point of view on otherwise obtuse events; guide the telling and pace of a story; create an illusion of danger where there is none; give emphasis to things that would not have otherwise been noted; and even create a vital subconscious emotional connection to the viewer, among many other possibilities.

Chronological editing - editing that follows the logic of a chronological narrative, one event follows subsequently from another, and time and space are logically and unproblematically represented.

Cross-cutting or parallel editing - the linking-up of two sets of action those run concurrently and are interdependent within the narrative.

Montage -is based on the theory that conflict must be inherent in all visual aspects in film, the principles of which include a rapid alteration between sets of shots whose signification occurs at the point of their collision, fast editing and unusual camera angles; also used for spectacular effect. It is a technique in [film editing](#) in which a series of short shots are edited into a sequence to condense space, time, and information. The term has been used in various contexts. It was introduced to cinema primarily by [Eisenstein](#), and early Russian directors used it as a synonym for creative editing. In France the word "montage" simply denotes cutting. The montage sequence is usually used to suggest the passage of time, rather than to create symbolic meaning as it does in [Soviet montage theory](#). From the 1930s to the 1950s, montage sequences often combined numerous short shots with special optical effects ([fades](#), [dissolves](#), [split screens](#), [double and triple exposures](#)) dance and music. They were usually assembled by someone other than the director or the editor of the movie.

Continuity Editing is the predominant style of [film editing](#) and [video editing](#) in the [post-production](#) process of [filmmaking](#) of [narrative films](#) and [television programs](#). The purpose of continuity editing is to smooth over the inherent discontinuity of the editing process and to establish a logical coherence between shots.

In most films, logical coherence is achieved by cutting to continuity, which emphasizes smooth transition of time and space. However, some films incorporate cutting to continuity into a more complex classical cutting technique, one which also tries to show psychological continuity of shots. The [montage](#) technique relies on symbolic association of ideas between shots rather than association of simple physical action for its continuity.

Continuity editing can be divided into two categories: temporal continuity and spatial continuity. Within each category, specific techniques will work against a sense of continuity. In other words, techniques can cause a passage to be continuous, giving the viewer a concrete physical narration to follow, or discontinuous, causing viewer disorientation, pondering, or even subliminal interpretation or reaction, as in the montage style. The important ways to preserve temporal continuity are avoiding the [ellipsis](#), using continuous [diegetic](#) sound, and utilizing the [match on action](#) technique.

Continuity cuts- these are cuts take us seamlessly and logically from one sequence or scene to another. This is an unobtrusive cut that serves to move the narrative along.

A **match cut**, also called a **graphic match** (or, in the French term, *raccord*), is a cut in [film editing](#) between either two different objects, two different spaces, or two different compositions in which an object in the two shots graphically match, often helping to establish a strong continuity of action and linking the two shots metaphorical

Jump cut- cut where there is no match between the two spliced shots. Within a sequence, or more particularly a scene, jump cuts give the effect of bad editing. The opposite of a match cut, the jump cut is an abrupt cut between two shots that calls attention to itself

because it does not match the shots seamlessly. It marks a transition in time and space but is called jump cut because it jars the sensibilities; it makes the spectator jump and wonder where the narrative has got to. Jean Luc Godard is undoubtedly one of the best exponents of this use of the jump cut.

The **30-degree rule** is a basic film editing guideline that states the camera should move at least 30 degrees between shots of the same subject occurring in succession. If this rule isn't followed a jump cut occurs and there is a risk that the audience starts focusing on the filming technique instead of the story that is being narrated. The 30 degree change of perspective makes the shots different enough to avoid a jump cut. Too much movement around the subject may violate the 180-degree rule.

Following this rule may soften the effect of changing shot distance, such as changing from a medium shot to a close-up or extreme close-up. The 30 degree rule has its origin from the beginning of the 20th century. The legendary French filmmaker George Méliès, producer of silent black-and-white film, inspired succeeding filmmakers to heed this rule of angle when cutting between similar or nearly identical clips. When Méliès himself made his famous *A Trip to the Moon* in 1902 he tried to edit together film clips of the same framing and with the same angle, after changing the scene between the shots, to make it look like there was no cut at all. It was the world's first attempt to make special effects. The rule is actually a special case of a more general dictum that states that the cut will be jarring if the two shots being cut are so similar that there appears to be a lack of motivation for the cut. **The axial cut** is a striking violation of this rule to obtain a certain effect.

The **180-degree rule** is a basic guideline regarding the on-screen spatial relationship between a character and another character or object within a scene. An imaginary line called the **axis** connects the characters and by keeping the camera on one side of this axis for every shot in the scene, the first character will always be frame right of the second character, who is then always frame left of the first. If the camera passes over the axis, it is called jumping the line or crossing the line.

VI. Colour in the movies

The first colour cinematography was by means of [additive colour](#) systems such as the one patented in England by [Edward Raymond Turner](#) in 1899 and tested in 1902. A simplified additive system was developed by [George Albert Smith](#) and successfully commercialized in 1909 as [Kinemacolor](#). These early systems used black-and-white film to photograph and project two or more component images through different colour [filters](#).

With the present-day technology, there are two distinct processes: [Eastman Colour Negative 2](#) chemistry (camera negative stocks, duplicating inter positive and inter negative stocks) and [Eastman Colour Positive 2](#) chemistry (positive prints for direct projection), usually abbreviated as ECN-2 and ECP-2. Fuji's products are compatible with ECN-2 and ECP-2.

The first motion pictures were photographed on a simple [silver halide photographic emulsion](#) that produced a "[black-and-white](#)" image—that is, an image in shades of gray, ranging from black to white, which corresponded to the [luminous intensity](#) of each point on the photographed subject. Light, shade, form and movement were captured, but not colour.

With colour motion picture film, not only is the [luminance](#) of a subject recorded, but the [colour](#) of the subject, too. This is accomplished by analyzing the [spectrum](#) of colours into several regions (normally three, commonly referred to by their dominant colours, red, green and blue) and recording these regions individually. Current colour films do this by means of three layers of differently colour-sensitive photographic emulsion coated onto a single strip of [film base](#).

The first commercially successful [stencil](#) colour process was introduced in 1905 by [Pathé Frères](#). *Pathé Color*, renamed [Pathéchrome](#) in 1929, became one of the most accurate and reliable stencil colouring systems. It incorporated an original print of a film with sections cut by [pantograph](#) in the appropriate areas for up to six colours by a colouring machine with dye-soaked, velvet rollers.

A more common technique emerged in the early 1910s known as [film tinting](#), a process in which either the emulsion or the [film base](#) is dyed, giving the image a uniform [monochromatic](#) colour. This process was popular during the silent era, with specific colours employed for certain narrative effects (red for scenes with fire or firelight, blue for night, etc.)

A complementary process, called **toning**, replaces the [silver](#) particles in the film with metallic salts or [mordanted dyes](#). This creates a colour effect in which the dark parts of the image are replaced with a colour (e.g., blue and white rather than black and white). Tinting and toning were sometimes applied together.

Tinting and toning continued to be used well into the sound era. In the '30s and '40s, some western films were processed in a sepia-toning solution to evoke the feeling of old photographs of the day. Tinting was used as late as 1951 for [Sam Newfield](#)'s sci-fi film *Lost Continent* for the green lost-world sequences. [Alfred Hitchcock](#) used a form of hand-colouring for the orange-red gun-blast at the audience in *Spellbound* (1945). Kodak's Sonochrome and similar pre-tinted stocks were still in production until the 1970s and were used commonly for custom theatrical trailers and [snipes](#).

The first colour systems that appeared in motion pictures were [additive colour](#) systems. Additive colour was practical because no special colour stock was necessary. Black-and-white film could be processed and used in both filming and projection. A pioneering three-color additive system was patented in England by [Edward Raymond Turner](#) in 1899. Practical colour in the motion picture business began with [Kinemacolor](#), first introduced in 1906. This was a two-colour system created in England by [George Albert](#)

[Smith](#), and promoted by film pioneer [Charles Urban](#)'s The Charles Urban Trading Company in 1908. [William Friese-Greene](#) invented another additive colour system called Biocolour, which was developed by his son [Claude Friese-Greene](#) after William's death in 1921. Both Kinemacolour and Biocolour had problems with "fringing" or "haloing" of the image, due to the separate red and green images not fully matching up.

The first successful [subtractive colour](#) system began with Kodak's Kodachrome system. Using [duplitized film](#), red and green records were exposed. By bleaching away the silver and replacing it with colour dye, a colour image was obtained. Kodachrome, however, did not find much use in the commercial market, and the first truly successful subtractive colour process was William van Doren Kelley's [Prizma](#).

There were other subtractive processes, including [Gasparcolour](#), a single-strip 3-colour system developed in 1933 by the Hungarian chemist Dr. Bela Gaspar. The real push for colour films and the nearly immediate changeover from black-and-white production to nearly all colour film were pushed forward by the prevalence of television in the early 1950s. In 1947, only 12 percent of American films were made in colour. By 1954, that number rose to over 50 percent. The rise in colour films was also aided by the breakup of Technicolor's near monopoly on the medium.

[Eastmancolour](#), introduced in 1950, was Kodak's first economical, single-strip [35 mm](#) negative-positive process incorporated into one strip of film. This rendered Three-Strip colour photography relatively obsolete, even though, for the first few years of Eastmancolour, Technicolor continued to offer Three-Strip origination combined with dye-transfer printing. The first commercial feature film to use Eastmancolour was the documentary [Royal Journey](#), released in December 1951. Hollywood studios waited until an improved version of Eastmancolor negative came out in 1952 before using it, perhaps most notably in [This is Cinerama](#), which employed three separate and interlocked strips of Eastmancolour negative. *This is Cinerama* was initially printed on Eastmancolour positive, but its significant success eventually resulted in it being reprinted by Technicolor, using dye-transfer.

Technicolor continued to offer its proprietary imbibitions dye-transfer printing process for projection prints until 1975, and even briefly revived it in 1998.

VII. Sound in the movies

A **sound film** is a motion picture with [synchronized sound](#), or sound technologically coupled to image, as opposed to a [silent film](#). The first known public exhibition of projected sound films took place in Paris in 1900, but decades would pass before sound motion pictures were made commercially practical. Reliable synchronization was difficult to achieve with the early [sound-on-disc](#) systems, and amplification and recording quality were also inadequate. Innovations in [sound-on-film](#) led to the first commercial screening of [short motion pictures](#) using the technology, which took place in 1923.

The primary steps in the commercialization of sound cinema were taken in the mid- to late 1920s. At first, the sound films incorporating synchronized dialogue—known as "talking pictures", or "**talkies**"—were exclusively shorts; the earliest [feature-length](#) movies with recorded sound included only music and effects. The first feature film originally presented as a talkie was [The Jazz Singer](#), released in October 1927. A major hit, it was made with [Vitaphone](#), the leading brand of sound-on-disc technology. Sound-on-film, however, would soon become the standard for talking pictures.

By the early 1930s, the talkies were a global phenomenon. In the United States, they helped secure Hollywood's position as one of the world's most powerful cultural/commercial systems. In Europe (and, to a lesser degree, elsewhere) the new development was treated with suspicion by many filmmakers and critics, who worried that a focus on dialogue would subvert the unique aesthetic virtues of soundless cinema. In [Japan](#), where the popular film tradition integrated silent movie and live vocal performance, talking pictures were slow to take root. In [India](#), sound was the transformative element that led to the rapid expansion of the nation's film industry—the most productive such industry in the world since the early 1960s.

The idea of combining motion pictures with recorded sound is nearly as old as the concept of cinema itself. On February 27, 1888, a couple of days after photographic pioneer [Eadweard Muybridge](#) gave a lecture not far from the laboratory of [Thomas Edison](#), the two inventors privately met. Muybridge later claimed that on this occasion, six years before the first commercial motion picture exhibition, he proposed a scheme for sound cinema that would combine his image-casting [zoopraxiscope](#) with Edison's recorded-sound technology. No agreement was reached, but within a year Edison commissioned the development of the [Kinetoscope](#), essentially a "peep-show" system, as a visual complement to his [cylinder phonograph](#). The two devices were brought together as the [Kinetophone](#) in 1895, but individual, cabinet viewing of motion pictures was soon to be outmoded by successes in film projection. In 1899, a projected sound-film system known as Cinemacrophonograph or Phonorama, based primarily on the work of Swiss-born inventor François Dussaud, was exhibited in Paris; similar to the Kinetophone, the system required individual use of earphones. An improved cylinder-based system, Phono-Cinéma-Théâtre, was developed by Clément-Maurice Gratioulet and Henri Lioret of France, allowing short films of theater, opera, and ballet excerpts to be presented at the [Paris Exposition](#) in 1900. These appear to be the first publicly exhibited films with projection of both image and recorded sound. Phonorama and yet another sound-film system—Théâtroscope—were also presented at the Exposition.

Three major problems persisted, leading to motion pictures and sound recording largely taking separate paths for a generation. The primary issue was synchronization: pictures and sound were recorded and played back by separate devices, which were difficult to start and maintain in tandem. Sufficient playback volume was also hard to achieve. While motion picture projectors soon allowed film to be shown to large theatre audiences, audio

technology before the development of electric amplification could not project to satisfactorily fill large spaces. Finally, there was the challenge of recording fidelity. The primitive systems of the era produced sound of very low quality unless the performers were stationed directly in front of the cumbersome recording devices (acoustical horns, for the most part), imposing severe limits on the sort of films that could be created with live-recorded sound.

In 1913, Edison introduced a new cylinder-based synch-sound apparatus known, just like his 1895 system, as the Kinetophone; instead of films being shown to individual viewers in the Kinetoscope cabinet, they were now projected onto a screen. The phonograph was connected by an intricate arrangement of pulleys to the film projector, allowing—under ideal conditions—for synchronization. Conditions, however, were rarely ideal, and the new, improved Kinetophone was retired after little more than a year.

In 1919, American inventor [Lee De Forest](#) was awarded several patents that would lead to the first sound-on-film technology with commercial application. In De Forest's system, the sound track was photographically recorded on to the side of the strip of motion picture film to create a composite, or "married", print. If proper synchronization of sound and picture was achieved in recording, it could be absolutely counted on in playback. Over the next four years, he improved his system with the help of equipment and patents licensed from another American inventor in the field, [Theodore Case](#).

Parallel with improvements in sound-on-film technology, a number of companies were making progress with systems in which movie sound was recorded onto phonograph discs. In sound-on-disc technology from the era, a phonograph turntable is connected by a mechanical [interlock](#) to a specially modified [film projector](#), allowing for synchronization.

The development of commercial sound cinema had proceeded in fits and starts before *The Jazz Singer*, and the film's success did not change things overnight.

September 1928 also saw the release of [Paul Terry's *Dinner Time*](#), among the first [animated cartoons](#) produced with synchronized sound. Soon after he saw it, [Walt Disney](#) released his first sound picture, the [Mickey Mouse short *Steamboat Willie*](#).

Yet most American movie theatres, especially outside of urban areas, were still not equipped for sound: while the number of sound cinemas grew from 100 to 800 between 1928 and 1929, they were still vastly outnumbered by silent theatres. The studios, in parallel, were still not entirely convinced of the talkies' universal appeal—through mid-1930, the majority of Hollywood movies were produced in dual versions, silent as well as talking. Though few in the industry predicted it, silent film as a viable commercial medium in the United States would soon be little more than a memory. *Points West*, a [Hoot Gibson Western](#) released by Universal Pictures in August 1929, was the last purely silent mainstream feature put out by a major Hollywood studio.

During 1929, most of the major European filmmaking countries began joining Hollywood in the changeover to sound. Many of the trend-setting European talkies were shot abroad as production companies leased studios while their own were being converted or as they deliberately targeted markets speaking different languages.

The first successful European dramatic talkie was the all-British *Blackmail*. Directed by twenty-nine-year-old [Alfred Hitchcock](#), the movie had its London debut June 21, 1929. Originally shot as a silent, *Blackmail* was restaged to include dialogue sequences, along with a score and sound effects, before its premiere.

VIII. Production, distribution and reception of films

The **film industry** consists of the technological and commercial institutions of **filmmaking**: i.e. film [production companies](#), [film studios](#), [cinematography](#), [film production](#), [screenwriting](#), [pre-production](#), [post production](#), [film festivals](#), [distribution](#); and [actors](#), [film directors](#) and other [film crew](#) personnel.

Filmmaking (often referred to in an academic context as **film production**) is the process of making a [film](#). Filmmaking involves a number of discrete stages including an initial [story](#), [idea](#), or commission, through [scriptwriting](#), [casting](#), shooting, [editing](#), and [screening](#) the finished product before an [audience](#) that may result in a [film release](#) and exhibition. Filmmaking takes place in many places around the world in a range of [economic](#), [social](#), and [political](#) contexts, and using a variety of technologies and [cinematic techniques](#). Typically, it involves a large number of people, and can take from a few months to several years to complete.

Though the expense involved in making [movies](#) almost immediately led film production to concentrate under the auspices of standing production companies, advances in affordable film making equipment, and expansion of opportunities to acquire investment capital from outside the film industry itself, have allowed [independent film](#) production to evolve.

Film production involves several major stages:

1. [Development](#) — the first stage in which the ideas for the film are created, rights to books/plays are bought etc., and the screenplay is written. Financing for the project has to be sought and green lit.
2. [Pre-production](#)—Preparations are made for the shoot, in which cast and [film crew](#) are hired, locations are selected, and sets are built.
3. [Production](#)— the raw elements for the film are recorded during the film shoot.
4. [Post-Production](#)—the images sound, and visual effects of the recorded film are edited.
5. [Distribution](#)—the finished film is distributed and screened in cinemas and/or released on DVD.

Development

In this stage, the project's [producer](#) selects a story, which may come from a [book](#) or a [play](#) or [another film](#) or a [true story](#) or an [original idea](#), etc. After identifying a theme or underlying message, the producer works with writers to prepare a synopsis. Next they produce a [step outline](#), which breaks the story down into one-paragraph scenes that concentrate on dramatic structure. Then, they prepare a [treatment](#), a 25-to-30-page description of the story, its mood, and characters. This usually has little dialogue and [stage direction](#), but often contains drawings that help visualize key points. Next, a [screenwriter](#) writes a [screenplay](#) over a period of several months. A [film distributor](#) may be contacted at an early stage to assess the likely market and potential financial success of the film. Hollywood distributors adopt a hard-headed business approach and consider factors such as the [film genre](#), the target audience, the historical success of similar films, the actors who might appear in the film, and potential directors. All these factors imply a certain appeal of the film to a possible audience. Not all films make a profit from the theatrical release alone, so film companies take DVD sales and worldwide distribution rights into account.

Pre-production

In [pre-production](#), every step of actually creating the film is carefully designed and planned. The [production company](#) is created and a [production office](#) established. The film is pre-visualized by the director, and may be [storyboarded](#) with the help of [illustrators](#) and [concept artists](#). A [production budget](#) is drawn up to plan expenditures for the film. For major productions, [insurance](#) is procured to protect against accidents.

Storyboard is a visualizing method that creates a blueprint of what the shot sequence should be. The visual images are drawn or made by programs such as Photoshop. There may also be a written caption as needed for each shot. The [director](#) is primarily responsible for the storytelling, creative decisions and acting of the film. The [unit production manager](#) manages the [production budget](#) and [production schedule](#). They also report, on behalf of the production office, to the [studio executives](#) or financiers of the film.

In production, the [video production](#)/film is created and shot. More crew will be recruited at this stage, such as the [property master](#), [script supervisor](#), [assistant directors](#), stills [photographer](#), [picture editor](#), and [sound editors](#). These are just the most common roles in filmmaking; the [production office](#) will be free to create any unique blend of roles to suit the various responsibilities possible during the production of a film.

Post-production

Here the video/film is assembled by the [video/film editor](#). The shot film material is edited. The production sound (dialogue) is also edited; music tracks and songs are composed and recorded if a film is sought to have a score; sound effects are designed and recorded. Any

computer-graphic visual effects are digitally added. Finally, all sound elements are mixed into "stems", which are then married to picture, and the film is fully completed ("locked").

Distribution

This is the final stage, where the film is released to [cinemas](#) or, occasionally, to consumer media ([DVD](#), [VCD](#), [VHS](#), [Blu-ray](#)) or direct download from a provider. The film is duplicated as required and distributed to cinemas for exhibition (screening). Press kits, posters, and other advertising materials are published and the film is advertised and [promoted](#). [Film distributors](#) usually release a film with a launch party, press release, interviews with the press, press preview screenings, and [film festival](#) screenings. Most films have a [website](#). The film plays at selected cinemas and the [DVD](#) typically is released a few months later. The distribution rights for the film and DVD are also usually sold for worldwide distribution. The distributor and the production company share profits.

Filmmaking also takes place outside of the mainstream and is commonly called [independent filmmaking](#). Since the introduction of [DV](#) technology, the means of production have become more democratized. Filmmakers can conceivably shoot and edit a film, create and edit the sound and music, and mix the final cut on a home computer. However, while the means of production may be democratized, financing, traditional distribution and marketing remain difficult to accomplish outside the traditional system. In the past, most independent filmmakers have relied on [film festivals](#) to get their films noticed and sold for distribution. However, the [Internet](#) has allowed for relatively inexpensive distribution of independent films. As a result several companies have emerged to assist filmmakers in getting independent movies seen and sold via mainstream internet marketplaces, oftentimes adjacent to popular Hollywood titles. With internet movie distribution, independent filmmakers who fail to garner a traditional distribution deal now have the ability to reach global audiences.

The **distribution of a film** (or **movie**) is the process through which a movie is made available to watch for an audience by a film distributor. This task may be accomplished in a variety of ways; for example, with a theatrical release, a home entertainment release (in which the movie is made available on DVD-video or Blu-ray Disc) or a television program for broadcast syndication and may include digital distribution.

The standard release routine for a movie is regulated by a business model called "release windows". The release windows system was first conceived in the early 1980s, on the brink of the home entertainment market, as a strategy to keep different instances of a movie from competing with each other, allowing the movie to take advantage of different markets (cinema, home video, TV, etc.) at different times. In the standard drill, a movie is first released through movie theatres (theatrical window), then, after approximately 16 and half weeks, it is released to DVD (entering its video window). After an additional number of

months it is released to Pay TV and VOD services and approximately two years after its theatrical release date, it is made available for free-to-air TV.

A simultaneous release takes place when a movie is made available on many media (cinema, DVD, internet...) at the same time or with very little difference in timing.

Simultaneous releases bear great advantages to both consumers, who can choose the medium that most suits their needs, and production studios that only have to run one marketing campaign for all releases. The flip side, though, is that such distribution efforts are often regarded as experimental and thus, do not receive substantial investment or promotion.

In the course of the years simultaneous release approaches have gained both praise, with Mark Cuban claiming movies should simultaneously be made available on all media allowing viewers to choose whether to see it at home or at the theatre, and disapproval, with director M. Night Shyamalan claiming it could potentially destroy the "magic" of movie going.

A straight to video (or straight-to-DVD or straight-to-Blu-ray depending on the medium upon which the movie is made available) release occurs when a movie is released on home video formats (such as VHS, DVD, etc.) without being released in theatres first, thereby not taking into consideration the "theatrical window".

As a result of strong DVD sales, STV releases also achieved higher success and have become a profitable market lately, especially for independent moviemakers and companies.

IX. Film Censorship

Film censorship is carried out by various countries to differing degrees, sometimes as a result of powerful or relentless lobbying by organizations or individuals. Films that are banned in a particular country change over time.

A motion picture rating system is designated to classify films with regard to suitability for audiences in terms of issues such as sex, violence, substance abuse, profanity, impudence or other types of mature content. A particular issued rating can be called a certification, classification, certificate or rating.

The **Central Board of Film Certification** (often referred to as the **Censor Board**) is a statutory censorship and classification body under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. It is tasked with "regulating the public exhibition of films under the provisions of the Cinematograph Act 1952". It assigns certifications to films, television shows, television ads, and publications for exhibition, sale or hire in India. Films can be publicly exhibited in India only after they are certified by the Board.

Cinema came to India in 1896 when the first show at Watson hotel, Bombay by Lumière Brothers was presented in July. As the first film in India (Raja Harishchandra) was produced in 1913 by Dadasaheb Phalke, Indian Cinematograph Act was passed and came into effect only in 1920. Censor Boards were placed under police chiefs in cities of Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Lahore and Rangoon. Regional censors were independent. After Independence autonomy of regional censors was abolished and they were brought under the *Bombay Board of Film Censors*. With implementation of Cinematograph Act, 1952, the board was unified and reconstituted, as the *Central Board of Film Censors*. Cinematograph (Certification) Rules were revised in 1983 and since then the *Central Board of Film Censors* became known as the *Central Board of Film Certification*.

The CBFC currently issues the following certificates:

1. **U- Universal**

Unrestricted Public Exhibition throughout India, suitable for all age groups. Films under this category should not upset children over 4. This rating is similar to the MPAA's G and PG and the BBFC's U and PG ratings. Such films may contain educational, social or family-oriented themes. Films under this category may also contain fantasy violence and/or mild bad language.

2. **UA- Parental Guidance**

All ages admitted, but it is advised that children below 12 be accompanied by a parent as the theme or content may be considered intense or inappropriate for young children. This rating is similar to the MPAA's PG and PG-13 and the BBFC's PG and 12A ratings. Films under this category may contain mature themes, sexual references, mild sex scenes, violence with brief gory images and/or infrequent use of crude language.

3. **A- Adults Only**

Restricted to adult audiences (18 years or over). This rating is similar to the MPAA's R and the BBFC's 15 ratings. Nobody below the age of 18 may buy/rent an A rated DVD, VHS, UMD or watch a film in the cinema with this rating. Films under this category may contain adult/disturbing themes, frequent crude language, brutal violence with blood and gore, strong sex scenes and/or scenes of drug abuse which is considered unsuitable for minors.

4. **S- Restricted to any special class of persons.** This rating signifies that the film is meant for a specialised audience, such as doctors.

QUESTIONS:

1. Write a short note on the following:
 - a. Mise en scene
 - b. Long take
 - c. Deep focus
2. Comment upon the role of set design and lighting in mise en scene.
3. Differentiate 30 degree rule from 180 degree rule.
4. How is a long shot different from a medium shot?
5. What is the role of the Central Board of Film Certification in the production of a film?
6. Write a short note on the different methods of film editing.

MODULE II

INTRODUCTION TO FILM GENRES

In film theory, **genre** refers to the method based on similarities in the narrative elements from which films are constructed. Most theories of film genre are borrowed from literary genre criticism. As with genre in a literary context, there is a great deal of debate over how to define or categorize genres. Besides the basic distinction in genre between fiction and documentary, film genres can be categorized in several ways.

Fictional films are usually categorized according to their setting, theme topic, mood, or format. The setting is the milieu or environment where the story and action takes place. The theme or topic refers to the issues or concepts that the film revolves around. The mood is the emotional tone of the film. Format refers to the way the film was shot or the manner of presentation. An additional way of categorizing film genres is by the target audience.

The major genres:

1. Narrative
2. Avant garde
3. Documentary

I. NARRATIVE

Fictional film or narrative film is a film that tells a [fictional](#) or fictionalized story, event or [narrative](#). In this style of film, believable narratives and characters help convince the audience that the unfolding fiction is real. Lighting and camera movement, among other cinematic elements, have become increasingly important in these films. Great detail goes into the [screenplays](#) of narratives, as these films rarely deviate from the predetermined behaviours and lines of the [screenplays](#) to maintain a sense of realism. Actors must deliver dialogue and action in a believable way, so as to persuade the audience that the film is real life.

Beginning in 1904, American commercial film making became increasingly oriented towards story telling. The film makers could not experiment with the causal, special and temporal relation in many films as the audience could not understand it. They came to assume that a film should guide the spectator's attention, making every aspect of the story on the screen as clear as possible. One of the first well-known narratives ever made was [Georges Méliès's *A Trip to the Moon*](#) in 1902. Most films previous to this had been merely moving images of everyday occurrences. Méliès was one of the first directors to progress cinematic technology, which paved the way for narratives as style of film.

Many films are based on real occurrences; however these too fall under the category of a "narrative film" rather than a [documentary](#). This is because films based on real occurrences are not simply footage of the occurrence, but rather hired actors portraying an adjusted, often more dramatic, retelling of the occurrence.

Since the emergence of [classical Hollywood](#) style in the early 20th century, during which films were selected to be made based on the popularity of the genre, stars, producers, and directors involved, narrative, usually in the form of the [feature film](#), has held dominance in commercial cinema and has become popularly synonymous with "the movies." Classical, invisible filmmaking is central to this popular definition.

Narrative cinema is usually contrasted to films that present information, such as a nature [documentary](#), as well as to some [experimental films](#). In some instances pure documentary films, while [nonfiction](#), may nonetheless recount a story. As genres evolve, from fiction film and [documentary](#) a [hybrid](#) one emerged, called [docufiction](#).

II. AVANT-GARDE

The term 'avant-garde' describes a range of [filmmaking](#) styles that are generally quite different from, and often opposed to, the practices of mainstream commercial and [documentary filmmaking](#). Today the term "experimental cinema" prevails, because it is possible to make experimental films without the presence of any avant-garde movement in the cultural field.

Experimental film or experimental cinema is a type of cinema. It is an artistic practice relieving both of [visual arts](#) and cinema. Its origins can be found in European [avant-garde](#) movements of the twenties. While "experimental" covers a wide range of practice, an experimental film is often characterized by the absence of linear narrative, the use of various abstracting techniques -- out-of-focus, painting or scratching on film, rapid editing -- the use of asynchronous sound or even the absence of any sound track. The goal is often to place the viewer in a more active and more thoughtful relationship to the film. At least through the 1960s, and to some extent after, many experimental films took an oppositional stance toward mainstream culture. Most such films are made on very low budgets, self-financed or financed through small grants, with a minimal crew or, often a crew of only one person, the filmmaker.

Two conditions made Europe in the 1920s ready for the emergence of experimental film. First, the cinema matured as a medium, and highbrow resistance to the mass entertainment began to wane. Second, avant-garde movements in the visual arts flourished. The [Dadaists](#) and [Surrealists](#) in particular took to cinema.

The most famous experimental film is generally considered to be [Luis Buñuel](#) and [Salvador Dalí's](#) [Un chien andalou](#) (1929). Hans Richter's animated shorts, [Oskar](#)

[Fischinger](#)'s abstract films, and [Len Lye](#)'s [GPO](#) films would be excellent examples of more abstract European avant-garde films.

III. DOCUMENTARY

Documentary texts are supposedly those which aim to document reality, attempting veracity in their depiction of people, places and events. However it is impossible to re-present reality without constructing a narrative that may be fictional in places. Certainly, any images that are edited cannot claim to be wholly factual, they are the result of choices made by the photographer on the other end of the lens.

In popular myth, the word 'documentary' was coined by Scottish documentarian [John Grierson](#) in his review of [Robert Flaherty](#)'s film [Moana](#) (1926). Grierson defines documentary as a "creative treatment of actuality". The American film critic [Pare Lorentz](#) defines a documentary film as "a [factual film](#) which is dramatic." Film makers like Robert Flaherty believed it was acceptable to add fiction to documentaries, as long as the effect on the audience was real. Early film (pre-1900) was dominated by the novelty of showing an event. They were single-shot moments captured on film: a train entering a station, a boat docking, or factory workers leaving work. These short films were called "actuality" films; the term "documentary" was not coined until 1926. Many of the first films, such as those made by [Auguste and Louis Lumière](#), were a minute or less in length, due to technological limitations.

With [Robert J. Flaherty](#)'s [Nanook of the North](#) in 1922, documentary film embraced [romanticism](#). [Paramount Pictures](#) tried to repeat the success of Flaherty's [Nanook](#) and [Moana](#) with two romanticized documentaries, [Grass](#) (1925) and [Chang](#) (1927), both directed by [Merian Cooper](#) and [Ernest Schoedsack](#).

Propagandist tradition consists of films made with the explicit purpose of persuading an audience of a point. One of the most notorious [propaganda films](#) is [Leni Riefenstahl](#)'s film [Triumph of the Will](#) (1935), which chronicled the 1934 [Nazi Party Congress](#) and was commissioned by [Adolf Hitler](#). Leftist filmmakers [Joris Ivens](#) and [Henri Storck](#) directed [Borinage](#) (1931) about the Belgian coal mining region. [Pare Lorentz](#)'s [The Plow that Broke the Plains](#) (1936) and [The River](#) (1938) and [Willard Van Dyke](#)'s [The City](#) (1939) are notable [New Deal](#) productions, each presenting complex combinations of social and ecological awareness, government propaganda, and leftist viewpoints.

In Britain, a number of different filmmakers came together under John Grierson. They became known as the [Documentary Film Movement](#). Grierson, [Alberto Cavalcanti](#), [Harry Watt](#), [Basil Wright](#), and [Humphrey Jennings](#) amongst others succeeded in blending propaganda, information, and education with a more poetic aesthetic approach to documentary. Examples of their work include [Drifters](#) ([John Grierson](#)), [Song of Ceylon](#) ([Basil Wright](#)), [Fires Were Started](#) and [A Diary for Timothy](#) ([Humphrey Jennings](#)).

[Cinéma vérité](#) (or the closely related [direct cinema](#)) was dependent on some technical advances in order to exist: light, quiet and reliable cameras, and portable sync sound. Cinéma vérité and similar documentary traditions can thus be seen, in a broader perspective, as a reaction against studio-based film production constraints.

In the 1960s and 1970s, documentary film was often conceived as a political weapon against [neocolonialism](#) and [capitalism](#) in general, especially in [Latin America](#). *La Hora de los hornos* (*The Hour of the Furnaces*, from 1968), directed by [Octavio Getino](#) and [Fernando E. Solanas](#), influenced a whole generation of filmmakers.

Historical documentaries, such as the landmark 14-hour *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years* (1986 – Part 1 and 1989 – Part 2) by Henry Hampton, *Four Little Girls* (1997) by [Spike Lee](#), and *The Civil War* by [Ken Burns](#), UNESCO awarded independent film on slavery *500 Years Later*, expressed not only a distinctive voice but also a perspective and point of views.

Docufiction: [Docufiction](#) is a [hybrid genre](#) from two basic ones, [fiction film](#) and [documentary](#), practiced since the first documentary films were made.

MINOR GENRES

1. THRILLER

Thriller is a broad [genre](#) of [literature](#), [film](#), and [television](#) programming that uses [suspense](#), tension and [excitement](#) as the main elements. Thrillers heavily stimulate the viewer's [moods](#) giving them a high level of [anticipation](#), ultra-heightened expectation, [uncertainty](#), [surprise](#), [anxiety](#) and/or [terror](#). Thriller films tend to be [adrenaline](#)-rushing, gritty, [rousing](#) and [fast-paced](#). [Literary devices](#) such as [red herrings](#), [plot twists](#) and [cliff hangers](#) are used extensively. A thriller is villain-driven plot, whereby he or she presents obstacles that the hero must overcome.

The aim for thrillers is to keep the audience alert and on the edge of their seats. The protagonist in these films is set against a [problem](#) – an [escape](#), a mission, or a [mystery](#). No matter what sub-genre a thriller film falls into, it will emphasize the danger that the protagonist faces. The tension with the main problem is built on throughout the film and leads to a highly stressful climax. The [cover-up](#) of important information from the viewer, and [fight](#) and [chase](#) scenes is common methods in all of the thriller subgenres.

Common subgenres are [psychological thrillers](#), [crime thrillers](#) and [mystery thrillers](#). After the [assassination of President Kennedy](#), the [political thriller](#) and the [paranoid thriller](#) genre became very popular. Another common subgenre of thriller is the [spy](#) genre which deals with fictional [espionage](#). Successful examples of thrillers are [the films of Alfred Hitchcock](#). One of the earliest thriller movies was [Harold Lloyd's](#) comic *Safety Last!* (1923). [Alfred Hitchcock](#) and [Fritz Lang](#) helped to shape the modern-day thriller genre beginning with *The Lodger* (1926) and *M* (1931), respectively.

Characters include criminals, [stalkers](#), [assassins](#), innocent victims (often on the run), menaced women, characters with deep dark pasts, [psychotic](#) individuals, [serial killers](#), [sociopaths](#), [agents](#), terrorists, [cops](#) and escaped [cons](#), [private eyes](#), people involved in twisted relationships, world-weary men and women, psycho-fiends, and more. The themes frequently include terrorism, [political conspiracy](#), pursuit, or [romantic triangles](#) leading to murder.

The Man Who Knew Too Much (1934) was one of the most successful and critically acclaimed films of Hitchcock's British period. [Alfred Hitchcock's](#) first thriller was his third [silent film](#) *The Lodger* (1926). His *Rebecca* (1940) won [Best Picture](#), unusual for a psychological thriller film.

Other examples are: [George Cukor's](#) psychological thriller *Gaslight* (1944), The [film noir](#), *Laura* (1944), *The Spiral Staircase* (1946) *The Lady From Shanghai* (1948) *Sorry, Wrong Number* (1948), *The Third Man* (1949), [Michael Powell's](#) tense *Peeping Tom* (1960), Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), Harold Becker's *Malice* (1993)

2. MELODRAMA

The term melodrama refers to a [dramatic](#) work that exaggerates plot and characters in order to appeal to the emotions. It is a drama, such as a play, film, or television program, characterized by exaggerated emotions, stereotypical characters, and interpersonal conflicts. It refers to dramas of the 18th and 19th centuries in which orchestral music or song was used to accompany the action. The villain was always the central character in melodrama and crime was a favourite theme. The misfortunes of a discharged prisoner is the theme of the sensational *The Ticket-of-Leave Man* (1863) by [Tom Taylor](#).

Melodrama films are a [subgenre](#) of [drama films](#) characterised by a plot that appeals to the heightened emotions of the [audience](#). They generally depend on [stereotyped character](#) development, [interaction](#), and highly emotional themes. Melodramatic films tend to use plots that often deal with crises of human emotion, failed [romance](#) or [friendship](#), strained familial situations, [tragedy](#), [illness](#), [neuroses](#), or emotional and physical [hardship](#). Victims, [couples](#), virtuous and [heroic](#) characters or suffering [protagonists](#) (usually [heroines](#)) in melodramas are presented with tremendous social pressures, [threats](#), [repression](#), [fears](#), improbable events or difficulties with friends, [community](#), [work](#), lovers, or [family](#). Film critics sometimes use the term pejoratively to connote an unrealistic, pathos-filled, [campy](#) tale of romance or domestic situations with stereotypical characters (often including a central female character) that would directly appeal to feminine audiences.

During the 1940s the British [Gainsborough melodramas](#) were very successful with audiences. A director of 1950s melodrama films was [Douglas Sirk](#) who worked with Rock Hudson on *Written on the Wind* and *All That Heaven Allows*, both staples of the genre. Melodramas like the 1990s TV [Moment of Truth movies](#) targeted audiences of American women by portraying the effects of [alcoholism](#), [domestic violence](#), [rape](#) and the like. Typical of the genre is [Angelica Huston's](#) 1999 film *Agnes Browne*.

3. MUSICAL FILM

The musical film is a [film genre](#) in which [songs](#) sung by the [characters](#) are interwoven into the narrative, sometimes accompanied by dancing. The songs usually advance the plot or develop the film's characters, though in some cases they serve merely as breaks in the storyline, often as elaborate "production numbers". A subgenre of the musical film is the musical comedy, which also includes a strong element of [humour](#). The musical film was a natural development of the [stage musical](#) after the emergence of sound film technology.

The 1930s through the 1960s are considered to be the golden age of the musical film, when the genre's popularity was at its highest in the [Western world](#). Musical short films were made by [Lee De Forest](#) in 1923-24. After this, thousands of [Vita phone](#) shorts (1926–30) were made, many featuring bands, vocalists and dancers, in which a musical soundtrack played while the actors portrayed their characters just as they did in silent films: without dialogue. [The Jazz Singer](#), released in 1927 by [Warner Brothers](#), was not only the first film with synchronized dialogue, but the first feature film that was also a musical, featuring [Al Jolson](#) singing "Dirty Hands, Dirty Face;" "Toot, Toot, Tootsie", "[Blue Skies](#)" and "[My Mammy](#)". But, only Jolson's sequences had sound; most of the film was silent. In 1928, Warner Brothers followed this up with another Jolson part-talkie, [The Singing Fool](#), which was a blockbuster hit. The first all-talking feature, [Lights of New York](#), included a musical sequence in a night club. [The Broadway Melody](#) (1929) had a show-biz plot about two sisters competing for a charming song and dance man. Advertised by [MGM](#) as the first "All-Talking, All-Singing, All-Dancing" feature film, it was a hit and won the [Academy Award for Best Picture](#) for 1929.

Other examples are: [The Show of Shows](#) (1929), [Sally](#) (1929), [The Vagabond King](#) (1930), [Bright Lights](#) (1930), [Golden Dawn](#) (1930), [Hold Everything](#) (1930), [The Rogue Song](#) (1930), [Sweet Kitty Bellairs](#) (1930), [Under A Texas Moon](#) (1930), [Bride of the Regiment](#) (1930), [Whoopee!](#) (1930), [The King of Jazz](#) (1930), [Viennese Nights](#) (1930), [Kiss Me Again](#) (1930)

4. HORROR FILM

Horror films are a [film genre](#) seeking to elicit a negative emotional reaction from the viewers by playing on the audience's primal fears. They often feature scenes that [startle](#) the viewer. The [macabre](#) and the [supernatural](#) are frequent themes. Thus they may overlap with the [fantasy](#), [supernatural](#), and [thriller](#) genres. Horror films often deal with the viewer's [nightmares](#), hidden [fears](#), revulsions and [terror](#) of the unknown. Plots within the horror genre often involve the intrusion of an [evil](#) force, event, or personage, commonly of supernatural origin, into the everyday world. Themes or elements prevalent in horror films include [ghosts](#), [vampires](#), [werewolves](#), [curses](#), [Satanism](#), [demons](#), [gore](#), [torture](#), [vicious animals](#), [monsters](#), [zombies](#), [cannibals](#), and [serial killers](#). Conversely, stories of the supernatural are not necessarily always a horror movie as well.

The first depictions of supernatural events appear in several of the silent shorts created by the film pioneer [Georges Méliès](#) in the late 1890s, the best known being *Le Manoir du diable* ([The Haunted Castle](#), 1896) which is sometimes credited as being the first horror film. Another of his horror projects was 1898's *La Caverne maudite* (*The Cave of the Unholy One*, literally "the accursed cave"). [Japan](#) made early forays into the horror genre with *Bake Jizo* and *Shinin no Sosei*, both made in 1898. In 1910, [Edison Studios](#) produced the first film version of [Frankenstein](#), which was thought [lost](#) for many years.

In the early 20th century, the first monster appeared in a horror film: [Quasimodo](#), the [hunchback](#) of Notre-Dame, who had appeared in [Victor Hugo](#)'s novel, [Notre-Dame de Paris](#) (1831). Films featuring Quasimodo included [Alice Guy](#)'s *Esmeralda* (1906), *The Hunchback* (1909), *The Love of a Hunchback* (1910) and *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1911). The first vampire-themed movie was [F. W. Murnau](#)'s [Nosferatu](#) (1922), an unauthorized adaptation of [Bram Stoker](#)'s [Dracula](#).

With advances in technology, the tone of horror films shifted from the Gothic towards contemporary concerns. A stream of usually low-budget productions featured humanity overcoming threats from "outside": [alien invasions](#) and deadly [mutations](#) to people, plants, and insects. In the case of some horror films from Japan, such as [Godzilla](#) (1954) and its sequels, mutation from the effects of nuclear radiation is the major concern. Filmmakers continued to merge elements of science fiction and horror over the following decades.

Horror films' evolution throughout the years has given society a new approach to resourcefully utilize their benefits. The role of women and how women see themselves in the movie industry has been altered by the horror genre. In early times, horror films such as [My Bloody Valentine](#) (1981), [Halloween](#) (1978), and [Friday the 13th](#) (1980) pertained mostly to a male audience in order to feed the fantasies of young men. Their main focus was to express the fear of women and show them as monsters; however, this ideal is no longer prevalent in horror films. Women have become not only the main audience and fans of horror films but also the main protagonists of contemporary horror films. The horror industry is producing more and more movies with the main protagonist being a female and having to evolve into a stronger person in order to overcome some obstacle. Horror is just one genre of movies, yet the influences that it presents to the international community are large.

5. WESTERN

The Western is a genre of various [visual arts](#), such as [film](#), [television](#), [radio](#), [literature](#), [painting](#) and others. Westerns are devoted to telling stories set primarily in the latter half of the 19th century in the [American Old West](#), hence the name. Some Westerns are set as early as the [Battle of the Alamo](#) in 1836. There are also a number of films about Western-type characters in contemporary settings, such as [Junior Bonner](#) set in the 1970s and [The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada](#) in the 21st century.

Westerns often portray how desolate and hard , life was for frontier families. These families are faced with change that would severely alter their way of life. This may be depicted by showing conflict between natives and settlers or [U.S. Cavalry](#) or between cattle ranchers and farmers, or by showing ranchers being threatened by the onset of the [Industrial Revolution](#)

The Western genre sometimes portrays the conquest of the wilderness and the subordination of nature in the name of civilization or the confiscation of the territorial rights of the original inhabitants of the frontier. The popular perception of the Western is a story that centers on the life of a semi-[nomadic](#) wanderer, usually a [cowboy](#) or a [gunfighter](#). In some ways, such protagonists may be considered the literary descendants of the [knight errant](#) who stood at the centre of earlier extensive genres such as the [Arthurian Romances](#). Like the cowboy or gunfighter of the Western, the knight errant of the earlier European tales and poetry was wandering from place to place on his horse, fighting villains of various kinds and bound to no fixed social structures but only to his own innate code of honour. And like knights errant, the heroes of Westerns frequently rescue [damsels in distress](#). The Western typically takes these elements and uses them to tell simple [morality](#) tales. Westerns often stress the harshness of the wilderness and frequently set the action in an arid, desolate landscape. Specific settings include isolated forts, ranches and homesteads; the [Native American](#) village; or the small frontier town with its saloon, general store, livery stable and jailhouse. Apart from the wilderness, it is usually the saloon that emphasizes that this is the "[Wild West](#)": it is the place to go for music (raucous piano playing), women (often prostitutes), gambling (draw poker or five card stud), drinking (beer or whiskey), brawling and shooting. In some Westerns, where "civilization" has arrived, the town has a church and a school; in others, where frontier rules still hold sway, it is, as [Sergio Leone](#) said, "where life has no value".

With the advent of sound in 1927-28 the major Hollywood studios rapidly abandoned Westerns, leaving the genre to smaller studios. By the late 1930s the Western film was widely regarded as a 'pulp' genre in Hollywood, but its popularity was dramatically revived in 1939 by the release of John Ford's landmark Western adventure [Stagecoach](#), which became one of the biggest hits of the year released through United Artists, and made [John Wayne](#) a major screen star.

6. FANTASY

It is a [genre](#) of [fiction](#) that commonly uses [magic](#) and other [supernatural](#) phenomena as a primary element of [plot](#), [theme](#), or [setting](#). Many works within the genre take place in [imaginary worlds](#) where magic is common. Fantasy is generally distinguished from the genre of [science fiction](#) by the expectation that it steers clear of scientific themes, though there is a great deal of overlap between the two, both of which are subgenres of [speculative fiction](#).

In fantasy films, the hero often undergoes some kind of [mystical](#) experience and must ask for assistance from powerful, superhuman forces. [Ancient Greek](#) mythological figures or [Arabian Nights](#)-type narratives are the typical storylines. [Flying carpets](#), magic swords and [spells](#), [dragons](#), and ancient religious relics or objects are common elements. Usually, the main characters in fantasies are [princes](#) or princesses. Some fantasy-type films might also include quasi-religious or supernatural characters such as [angels](#), lesser [gods](#), and [fairies](#) or in the case of live action/animation hybrids [cartoon](#) characters. Strange phenomena and incredible characters (like monstrous characters that are divine or evil spirits or [magicians](#) and sorcerers) are put into fantasy films, and often overlap with [supernatural films](#).

Fantasy films are most likely to overlap with the film genres of science fiction and [horror](#). When the narrative of a fantasy film tends to emphasize advanced [technology](#) in a fantastic world, it may be considered predominantly a science fiction film. Or when the supernatural/fantasy forces are specifically intended to frighten the audience, a fantasy film falls more within the horror genre. Animated films featuring fantastic elements are not always classified as fantasy, particularly when they are intended for children.

The most common fantasy subgenres depicted in movies are [High Fantasy](#) and [Sword and Sorcery](#). Both categories typically employ quasi-medieval settings, wizards, magical creatures and other elements commonly associated with fantasy stories. High Fantasy films tend to feature a more richly developed fantasy world, and may also be more character-oriented or thematically complex. Often, they feature a hero of humble origins and a clear distinction between good and evil set against each other in an epic struggle. Many scholars cite [J. R. R. Tolkien](#)'s novel [The Lord of the Rings](#) as the prototypical modern example of High Fantasy in literature. Sword and Sorcery movies tend to be more plot-driven than high fantasy and focus heavily on action sequences, often pitting a physically powerful but unsophisticated warrior against an evil wizard or other supernaturally-endowed enemy. Another important sub-genre of fantasy films that has become more popular in recent years is [Contemporary Fantasy](#). Such films feature magical effects or supernatural occurrences happening in the "real" world of today. The most prominent example in the early 21st century is the [Harry Potter](#) series of films adapted from the novels of [J. K. Rowling](#).

7. ANIMATION

Animation is the technique in which each frame of a film is produced individually, whether generated as a computer graphic, or by photographing a drawn image, or by repeatedly making small changes to a model unit, and then photographing the result with a special [animation camera](#). When the frames are strung together and the resulting film is viewed at a speed of 16 or more frames per second, there is an illusion of continuous movement.

The production of animated short films, typically referred to as "cartoons", became an industry of its own during the 1910s, and cartoon shorts were produced to be shown in [movie theatres](#). The most successful early animation producer was [John Randolph Bray](#), who, along with [animator Earl Hurd](#), patented the [cel animation](#) process which dominated the animation industry for the rest of the decade. Traditional animation (also called cel animation or hand-drawn animation) was the process used for most animated films of the 20th century. The traditional cel animation process became obsolete by the beginning of the 21st century. Today, animators' drawings and the backgrounds are either scanned into or drawn directly into a computer system.

Examples of traditionally animated feature films include [Pinocchio](#) (United States, 1940), [Animal Farm](#) (United Kingdom, 1954), and [Akira](#) (Japan, 1988). Traditional animated films which were produced with the aid of computer technology include [The Lion King](#) (US, 1994) [Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi \(Spirited Away\)](#) (Japan, 2001), and [Les Triplettes de Belleville](#) (France, 2003).

[2D animation](#) figures are created on the computer using 2D [bitmap graphics](#) or created and edited using 2D [vector graphics](#). [3D animation](#) is digitally modelled and manipulated by an animator. To manipulate a mesh, it is given a digital skeletal structure that can be used to control the mesh. This process is called rigging. [Toy Story](#) (1995, USA) is the first feature-length film to be created and rendered entirely using 3D graphics. 2D animation techniques tend to focus on image manipulation while 3D techniques usually build virtual worlds in which characters and objects move and interact. 3D animation can create images that seem real to the viewer.

8. FILM NOIR

Film noir is a [cinematic](#) term used primarily to describe stylish [Hollywood crime dramas](#), particularly those that emphasize cynical attitudes and sexual motivations. Hollywood's classic film noir period is generally regarded as extending from the early 1940s to the late 1950s. Film noir of this era is associated with a [low-key black-and-white](#) visual style that has roots in [German Expressionist cinematography](#). Many of the prototypical stories and much of the attitude of classic noir derive from the [hard boiled](#) school of [crime fiction](#) that emerged in the United States during the [Depression](#).

The term *film noir*, French for "black film", first applied to Hollywood films by French critic [Nino Frank](#) in 1946, was unknown to most American film industry professionals of the classic era. Film noir encompasses a range of plots—the central figure may be a private eye ([The Big Sleep](#)), a plainclothes policeman ([The Big Heat](#)), an aging boxer ([The Set-Up](#)), a law-abiding citizen lured into a life of crime ([Gun Crazy](#)), or simply a victim of circumstance ([D.O.A.](#)). Though the noir mode was originally identified with American productions, films now customarily described as noir have been made around the world. Many pictures released from the 1960s onward share attributes with film noirs of the classic period, often treating noir conventions in a [self-referential](#) manner. Such latter-day works in a noir mode are often referred to as [neo-noirs](#).

Film noir's aesthetics are deeply influenced by [German Expressionism](#), an artistic movement of the 1910s and 1920s that involved theatre, photography, painting, sculpture, and architecture, as well as cinema. Fritz Lang's magnum opus, *M*—released in 1931, two years before his departure from Germany—is among the first major crime films of the [sound era](#) to join a characteristically noirish visual style with a noir-type plot, one in which the [protagonist](#) is a criminal.

[Josef von Sternberg's](#) films such as *Shanghai Express* (1932) and *The Devil Is a Woman* (1935), with their hothouse eroticism and baroque visual style, specifically anticipate central elements of classic noir. [Italian neorealism](#) of the 1940s, with its emphasis on quasi-documentary authenticity, was an acknowledged influence on trends that emerged in American noir. *The Lost Weekend* (1945), directed by [Billy Wilder](#), tells the story of an alcoholic in a manner evocative of neorealism. Most of the film noirs of the classic period were similarly low- and modestly budgeted features without major stars. Thematically, film noirs were most exceptional for the relative frequency with which they centred on women of questionable virtue. Among the first major [neo-noir](#) films was the French *Tirez sur le pianiste* (1960), directed by [François Truffaut](#) from a novel by one of the gloomiest of American noir fiction writers, [David Goodis](#). The tone of film noir is generally regarded as downbeat; some critics experience it as darker- "overwhelmingly black"

9. EXPRESSIONISM

Expressionism was a [modernist movement](#), initially in poetry and painting, originating in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century. Its typical trait is to present the world solely from a subjective perspective, distorting it radically for emotional effect in order to evoke moods or ideas. Expressionist artists sought to express meaning or emotional experience rather than physical reality.

It was a movement that developed in the early twentieth-century mainly in Germany in reaction to the dehumanizing effect of industrialization and the growth of cities. The term refers to an artistic style in which the artist seeks to depict not objective reality but rather the subjective emotions and responses that objects and events arouse within a person.

There was an Expressionist style in the cinema, important examples of which are [Robert Wiene's](#) *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), *The Golem: How He Came Into the World* (1920), [Fritz Lang's](#) *Metropolis* (1927) and [F. W. Murnau's](#) *Nosferatu, a Symphony of Horror* (1922) and *The Last Laugh* (1924). The term "expressionist" is also sometimes used to refer to stylistic devices thought to resemble those of German Expressionism, such as [Film Noir](#) cinematography or the style of several of the films of [Ingmar Bergman](#). More generally, the term expressionism can be used to describe cinematic styles of great artifice, such as the technicolor melodramas of [Douglas Sirk](#) or the sound and visual design of [David Lynch's](#) films. Expressionist films have many tactics for blending the elements of the shot. They employed stylized surfaces, symmetry, distortion and exaggeration and the juxtaposition of similar

shapes. Perhaps the most obvious and pervasive trait of expressionism is the use of distortion and exaggeration. In such films houses are often pointed and twisted, chairs are tall, and staircases are crooked and uneven.

10. HISTORICAL

The historical drama is a [film genre](#) in which stories are based upon historical events and famous persons. Some historical dramas attempt to accurately portray a historical event or [biography](#), to the degree that the available historical research will allow. Other historical dramas are fictionalized tales that are based on an actual person and their deeds, such as [Braveheart](#), which is loosely based on the 13th century knight [William Wallace](#)'s fight for [Scotland](#)'s independence.

This kind of movies is a detailed description of one event in the past that was important to many people. For example, the film *Cleopatra* relates the history of a woman who was queen of ancient Egypt. Another aspect of Historical movies is that they are often filmed in the same place where the original event occurred. This is the case with *Schindlers List*, which was filmed in Krakow, Poland. Another important element of history movies is that they are very expensive to make because of the costumes, the kind of director, and the actors.

11. MYTHOLOGICAL FILMS

These are films made using plot derived from legend and the literary epics. Mythological films have the advantage of familiarity with the story in a way. Everyone understands mythology and seems to have a connection with it. As everyone seems to be familiar with the world of mythology then through films one brings in their perspective in a unique way of storytelling. Earlier, animated films *Hanuman* (2005) and *Bal Ganesh* (2007) had done well at the box office.

Some of the films based on Greco-Roman mythology are *Helen of Troy* (1956), *The Odyssey* (1997), and *Hercules* (1997)

12. ROAD MOVIE

A road movie is a film genre in which the main character or characters leave home to travel from place to place. They usually leave home to escape their current lives. The genre has its roots in spoken and written tales of epic journeys, such as the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*. The road film is a standard plot employed by screenwriters. It is a type of bildungsroman, a story in which the hero changes, grows or improves over the course of the story.

The on-the-road plot was used at the birth of American cinema but blossomed in the years after World War II, reflecting a boom in automobile production and the growth of youth culture. Even so, awareness of the "road picture" as a genre came only in the 1960s with *Easy Rider* and *Bonnie and Clyde*.

Some examples are: *Near Dark*(1987), *The Vanishing*(1988), and *The Week End*(1967)

Questions:

1. Which is the first well-known narrative film made by [Georges Méliès](#)
2. [Luis Buñuel](#) and [Salvador Dalí](#)'s *Un chien andalou* which is generally considered to be the most famous experimental film came out in the year.....
3. Write a short note on the major film genres
4. Define 'docufiction'
5. Briefly describe the different types of film genres.

Answers:

1. [A Trip to the Moon](#) in 1902
2. 1929

MODULE III

INTRODUCTION TO MAJOR MOVEMENTS AND THEORIES

A. FILM MOVEMENTS:

1. THE SILENT ERA

A silent film is a [film](#) with no synchronized [recorded sound](#), especially with no spoken [dialogue](#). In silent films for entertainment the dialogue is transmitted through muted gestures, [mime](#) and [title cards](#). The idea of combining motion pictures with recorded sound is nearly as old as film itself, but because of the technical challenges involved, synchronized dialogue was only made practical in the late 1920s. After the release of [The Jazz Singer](#) in 1927, "[talkies](#)" became more and more commonplace. Within a decade, popular widespread production of silent films had ceased.

2. CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

Classical Hollywood cinema or the classical Hollywood narrative, are terms used in [film history](#) which designate both a visual and sound style for making motion pictures and a mode of production used in the [American film industry](#) between 1927 and 1963. Classical Hollywood Cinema is a term that has been coined by David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson in their seminal study of the same name. This period is often referred to as the "golden age of Hollywood." Classical style is fundamentally built on the principle of [continuity editing](#) or "invisible" style.

During the golden age of Hollywood, which lasted from the end of the [silent era](#) in American cinema in the late 1920s to the early 1960s, films were prolifically issued by the Hollywood studios. The start of the golden age was arguably when [The Jazz Singer](#) was released in 1927. Most Hollywood pictures adhered closely to a genre—Western, [slapstick](#) comedy, musical, animated cartoon, biopic (biographical picture). Film making was still a business, however, and motion picture companies made money by operating under the [studio system](#). MGM dominated the industry and had the top stars in Hollywood, and was also credited for creating the Hollywood star system altogether. Another great achievement of American cinema during this era came through [Walt Disney](#)'s animation. In 1937, Disney created the most successful film of its time, [Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs](#). The apogee of the studio system may have been the year 1939, which saw the release of such classics as [The Wizard of Oz](#), [Gone with the Wind](#), [Stagecoach](#), [Mr. Smith Goes to Washington](#), [Destry Rides Again](#), [Young Mr. Lincoln](#), etc

The style of classical Hollywood cinema has been heavily influenced by the ideas of the [Renaissance](#) and its resurgence of mankind as the focal point. Thus, classical narration progresses always through psychological motivation, i.e. by the will of a human character and

its struggle with obstacles towards a defined goal. In the classical Hollywood style space and time are unified, continuous and linear. They appear as a unified whole to match our perception of time and space in reality. Time in classical Hollywood is continuous, since [non-linearity](#) calls attention to the illusory workings of the medium. The only permissible manipulation of time in this format is the [flashback](#). Likewise, the treatment of space in classic Hollywood strives to overcome or conceal the two-dimensionality of film ("invisible style") and is strongly centred upon the human body.

The classic [Hollywood](#) narrative is structured with an unmistakable beginning, middle and end, and generally there is a distinct resolution at the end. The characters in Classical Hollywood Cinema have clearly definable traits, are active, and very goal oriented. They are causal agents motivated by psychological rather than social concerns. Maybe the single most important and most influential element of cinematic form that characterizes classical Hollywood cinema is continuity editing. The editing is subservient to the flow of the narrative and is usually constructed in a way that it does not draw attention onto itself.

3. ITALIAN NEOREALISM

Italian [Neorealism](#) is a national film movement characterized by stories set amongst the poor and the working class, filmed on location, frequently using non-professional [actors](#). Italian Neorealist films mostly contend with the difficult economic and moral conditions of post-[World War II Italy](#), representing changes in the Italian psyche and conditions of [everyday life](#), including [poverty](#), oppression, injustice and desperation.

Italian Neorealism came about as [World War II](#) ended and [Benito Mussolini's government](#) fell, causing the Italian film industry to lose its center. Neorealism was a sign of cultural change and social progress in [Italy](#). Its films presented contemporary stories and ideas, and were often shot in the streets because the film studios had been damaged significantly during the war.

In the spring of 1945, Mussolini was executed and Italy was liberated from German occupation. This period, known as the "Italian Spring," was a break from old ways and an entrance to a more realistic approach when making films. Italian cinema went from utilizing elaborate studio sets to shooting on location in the countryside and city streets in the realist style. Neorealism became famous globally in 1946 with Roberto Rossellini's [Rome, Open City](#), when it won the Grand Prize at the Cannes Film Festival as the first major film produced in [Italy](#) after the war. Italian Neorealism rapidly declined in the early 1950s.

Neorealist movies are generally filmed with nonprofessional actors. They are shot almost exclusively on location, mostly in run-down cities as well as rural areas due to its forming during the post-war era. The topic involves the idea of what it is like to live among the poor and the lower working class. The focus is on a simple social order of survival in rural, everyday life. Neorealist films often feature children in major roles, though their characters

are frequently more observational than participatory. [Vittorio De Sica](#)'s 1948 film [Bicycle Thieves](#) is a representative of the genre, with non-professional actors, and a story that details the hardships of working-class life after the war.

Some Major works are [Open City](#) ([Roberto Rossellini](#), 1945), [Shoeshine](#) ([Vittorio De Sica](#), 1946) [Paisan](#) ([Roberto Rossellini](#), 1946) [Bicycle Thieves](#) ([Vittorio De Sica](#), 1948) [The Earth Trembles](#) ([Luchino Visconti](#), 1948) [Bitter Rice](#) ([Giuseppe De Santis](#), 1949) [Umberto D.](#) ([Vittorio De Sica](#), 1952)

4. FRENCH NEW WAVE

The New Wave ([French](#): La Nouvelle Vague) was a [term](#) coined by critics for a group of [French filmmakers](#) of the late 1950s and 1960s. Although never a formally organized movement, the New Wave filmmakers were linked by their self-conscious rejection of the literary period pieces being made in France and written by novelists, their spirit of youthful [iconoclasm](#), the desire to shoot more current social issues on location, and their intention of experimenting with the film form. "New Wave" is an example of [European art cinema](#). Many also engaged in their work with the social and political upheavals of the era, making their radical experiments with editing, visual style and narrative part of a general break with the conservative paradigm. Using portable equipment and requiring little or no set up time, the New Wave way of filmmaking presented a documentary style. The films exhibited direct sounds on film stock that required less light. Filming techniques included fragmented, discontinuous editing, and long takes. The combination of objective realism, subjective realism, and authorial commentary created a narrative ambiguity in the sense that questions that arise in a film are not answered in the end.

Some of the most prominent pioneers among the group, including [François Truffaut](#), [Jean-Luc Godard](#), [Éric Rohmer](#), [Claude Chabrol](#), and [Jacques Rivette](#), began as critics for the famous film magazine [Cahiers du cinéma](#). Cahiers co-founder and theorist [André Bazin](#) was a prominent source of influence for the movement. By means of criticism and editorialization, they laid the groundwork for a set of concepts, revolutionary at the time, which the American film critic Andrew Sarris called [auteur theory](#). Cahiers du cinéma writers critiqued the classic "Tradition of Quality" style of [French Cinema](#).

The auteur theory holds that the director is the "author" of his movies, with a personal signature visible from film to film. They praised movies by [Jean Renoir](#) and [Jean Vigo](#), and made then-radical cases for the artistic distinction and greatness of Hollywood studio directors such as [Orson Welles](#), [John Ford](#), [Alfred Hitchcock](#) and [Nicholas Ray](#). The beginning of the New Wave was to some extent an exercise by the Cahiers writers in applying this philosophy to the world by directing movies themselves.

Apart from the role that films by [Jean Rouch](#) have played in the movement, Chabrol's [Le Beau Serge](#) (1958) is traditionally credited as the first New Wave feature. Truffaut, with

[The 400 Blows](#) (1959) and Godard, with [Breathless](#) (1960) had unexpected international successes. The French New Wave was popular roughly between 1958 and 1964, although New Wave work existed as late as 1973.

New Wave critics and directors studied the work of western classics and applied new avant garde stylistic direction. The [low-budget](#) approach helped filmmakers get at the essential art form and find what was, to them, a much more comfortable and contemporary form of production. The movies featured unprecedented methods of expression, such as long [tracking shots](#). Also, these movies featured [existential](#) themes, such as stressing the individual and the acceptance of the [absurdity](#) of human existence.

5. INDIAN CINEMA

The cinema of India consists of films produced across India. Following the screening of the [Lumière](#) moving pictures in London (1895) cinema became a sensation across Europe and by July 1896 the Lumière films had been in show in Bombay. The first Indian film released in India was [Shree pundalik](#) a silent film in [Marathi](#) by [Dadasaheb Torne](#) on 18 May 1912 at 'Coronation Cinematograph', Mumbai. Some have argued that Pundalik does not deserve the honour of being called the first Indian film because it was a photographic recording of a popular Marathi play, and because the cameraman—a man named Johnson—was a British national and the film was processed in London. The first full-length motion picture in India was produced by [Dadasaheb Phalke](#). Dadasaheb is the pioneer of Indian film industry a scholar on India's languages and culture, who brought together elements from [Sanskrit](#) epics to produce his [Raja Harishchandra](#) (1913), a silent film in [Marathi](#). The female roles in the film were played by male actors. The film marked a historic benchmark in the film industry in India. [Dadasaheb Phalke](#) is the Father of Indian cinema. The [Dadasaheb Phalke Award](#), for lifetime contribution to cinema, was instituted in his honour, by the [Government of India](#) in 1969, and is the most prestigious and coveted award in [Indian cinema](#).

[Raghupathi Venkaiah Naidu](#) was an Indian artist and a pioneer in the production of silent Indian movies and talkies. Starting from 1909, he was involved in many aspects of Indian cinema's history, like travelling to different regions in Asia, to promote film work. During the early twentieth century cinema as a medium gained popularity across India's population and its many economic sections. Tickets were made affordable to the common man at a low price. The content of Indian commercial cinema was increasingly tailored to appeal to these masses. Young Indian producers began to incorporate elements of India's social life and culture into cinema. Others brought with them ideas from across the world. This was also the time when global audiences and markets became aware of India's film industry.

[Ardeshir Irani](#) released [Alam Ara](#) which was the first Indian talking film, on 14 March 1931. The [Indian People's Theatre Association](#) (IPTA), an art movement with a communist inclination, began to take shape through the 1940s and the 1950s. A number of realistic IPTA plays, such as [Bijon Bhattacharya's Nabanna](#) in 1944 prepared the ground for the

solidification of realism in Indian cinema, exemplified by [Khwaja Ahmad Abbas's *Dharti Ke Lal*](#) (Children of the Earth) in 1946. Following [India's independence](#), the period from the late 1940s to the 1960s is regarded by film historians as the 'Golden Age' of Indian cinema. Some of the most critically acclaimed Indian films of all time were produced during this period. This period saw the emergence of a new [Parallel Cinema](#) movement, mainly led by [Bengali cinema](#).

[Pather Panchali](#) (1955), the first part of [The Apu Trilogy](#) (1955–1959) by Satyajit Ray, marked his entry in Indian cinema. Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak went on to direct many more critically acclaimed '[art films](#)', and they were followed by other acclaimed Indian independent filmmakers such as [Mrinal Sen](#), [Adoor Gopalakrishnan](#), [Mani Kaul](#) and [Buddhadeb Dasgupta](#). Some filmmakers such as [Shyam Benegal](#) continued to produce realistic Parallel Cinema throughout the 1970s, alongside Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, [Buddhadeb Dasgupta](#) and [Gautam Ghose](#) in Bengali cinema; [Adoor Gopalakrishnan](#), [Shaji N. Karun](#), [John Abraham](#) and [G. Aravindan](#) in [Malayalam cinema](#); [Nirad Mohapatra](#) in [Oriya cinema](#); and [Mani Kaul](#), [Kumar Shahani](#), [Ketan Mehta](#), [Govind Nihalani](#) and [Vijaya Mehta](#) in Hindi cinema. However, the 'art film' bent of the Film Finance Corporation came under criticism during a Committee on Public Undertakings investigation in 1976, which accused the body of not doing enough to encourage commercial cinema.

The 1970s did, nevertheless, see the rise of commercial cinema in form of enduring films such as [Sholay](#) (1975), which solidified [Amitabh Bachchan's](#) position as a lead actor. The devotional classic [Jai Santoshi Ma](#) was also released in 1975. India is the world's largest producer of films. Enhanced technology paved the way for upgrading from established cinematic norms of delivering product, altering the manner in which content reached the target audience. [Visual effects](#) based, [super hero](#) and science fiction films like [Krrish](#), [Enthiran](#), [Ra One](#) and [Eega](#) emerged as [blockbusters](#). Indian cinema found markets in over 90 countries where films from India are screened.

B. FILM THEORIES:

1. SERGEI EISENSTEIN:

Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein: (January 23, 1898 – February 11, 1948) was a pioneering [Soviet Russian film director](#) and [film theorist](#), often considered to be the "Father of Montage." He is noted in particular for his [silent films](#) [Strike](#) (1924), [Battleship Potemkin](#) (1925) and [October](#) (1927), as well as the [historical epics](#) [Alexander Nevsky](#) (1938) and [Ivan the Terrible](#). His work profoundly influenced early filmmakers owing to his innovative use of and writings about [montage](#).

Eisenstein was a pioneer in the use of [montage](#), a specific use of [film editing](#). He and his contemporary, [Lev Kuleshov](#), two of the earliest film theorists, argued that montage was the essence of the cinema. His articles and books- particularly *Film Form* and *The Film Sense* - explain the significance of montage in detail.

His writings and films have continued to have a major impact on subsequent filmmakers. Eisenstein believed that editing could be used for more than just expounding a scene or moment, through a "linkage" of related images. Eisenstein felt the "collision" of shots could be used to manipulate the emotions of the audience and create film metaphors. He believed that an idea should be derived from the juxtaposition of two independent shots, bringing an element of collage into film. He developed what he called "methods of montage":

1. Metric: where the editing follows a specific number of frames, cutting next shot no matter what is happening within the montage. This montage is used to elicit the most basal and emotional of reactions in the audience.
2. Rhythmic: includes cutting based on continuity, creating visual continuity from edit to edit
3. Tonal: uses the emotional meaning of the shots to elicit a reaction from the audience even more complex than from the metric or rhythmic montage.
4. Over tonal: is the culmination of metric, rhythmic and tonal montage to synthesize its effects on the audience for an even more abstract and complicated effect.
5. Intellectual: uses shots which, combined, elicit an intellectual meaning.

In his later writings Einstein argues that montage, especially intellectual montage, is an alternative system to continuity editing. Einstein's montage theories are based on the idea that montage originates in the 'collision' between different shots in an illustration of the idea of thesis and antithesis. This basis allowed him to argue that montage is inherently dialectical, thus it should be considered a demonstration of Marxism and Hegelian philosophy. His collisions of shots were based on conflicts of scale, volume, rhythm, motion as well as more conceptual values such as class.

In his initial films, Eisenstein did not use professional actors. His narratives eschewed individual characters and addressed broad social issues, especially [class conflict](#). He used stock characters, and the roles were filled with untrained people from the appropriate classes; he avoided casting [stars](#). Eisenstein's vision of [communism](#) brought him into conflict with officials in the ruling regime of [Joseph Stalin](#). Like many [Bolshevik](#) artists, Eisenstein envisioned a new society which would subsidize artists totally, freeing them from the confines of bosses and budgets, leaving them absolutely free to create, but budgets and producers were as significant to the Soviet film industry as the rest of the world. The fledgling war and revolution wracked and isolated new nation did not have the resources to nationalize its film industry at first. When it did, limited resources- both monetary and equipment- required production controls as extensive as in the capitalist world.

2. **ANDRE BAZIN:**

André Bazin (April 18, 1918 – November 11, 1958) was a renowned and influential [French film critic](#) and [film theorist](#). Bazin was born in [Angers, France](#), in 1918. Bazin started to write about film in 1943 and was a co-founder of the film magazine [Cahiers du cinéma](#) in 1951, along with [Jacques Doniol-Valcroze](#) and [Lo Duca](#).

He argued for films that depicted what he saw as "objective reality" (such as documentaries and films of the [Italian neorealism](#) school) and directors who made themselves "invisible" (such as [Howard Hawks](#)). He advocated the use of [deep focus](#) ([Orson Welles](#)), wide shots ([Jean Renoir](#)) and the "shot-in-depth", and preferred what he referred to as "true continuity" through [mise en scène](#) over experiments in editing and visual effects. This placed him in opposition to film theory of the 1920s and 1930s, which emphasized how the cinema can manipulate reality. The concentration on objective reality, deep focus, and lack of [montage](#) are linked to Bazin's belief that the interpretation of a film or scene should be left to the spectator. Bazin also preferred long [takes](#) to montage editing. In fact to Bazin, reality and everything that can support it such as sound, deep focus, and invisible editing, defines what film should be.

Bazin, who was influenced by [personalism](#), believed that a film should represent a director's personal vision. This idea had a pivotal importance in the development of the [auteur theory](#). Bazin also is known as a proponent of "appreciative criticism", the notion that only critics who like a film should review it, thus encouraging constructive criticism.

3. AUTEUR THEORY:

Auteur theory, theory of filmmaking in which the director is viewed as the major creative force in a [motion picture](#). In [film criticism](#), auteur theory holds that a [director's film](#) reflects the director's personal creative vision, as if they were the primary "auteur" (the [French](#) word for "author"). In spite of the production of the film as part of an industrial process, the auteur's creative voice is distinct enough to shine through all kinds of studio interference and through the collective process. In law, the film is treated as a work of art, and the auteur, as the creator of the film, is the original [copyright](#) holder.

Auteur theory has influenced film criticism since 1954, when it was advocated by film director and critic [François Truffaut](#). This method of film analysis was originally associated with the [French New Wave](#) and the film critics who wrote for the French film review periodical [Cahiers du Cinéma](#). Auteur theory was developed a few years later in the United States through the writings of [The Village Voice](#) critic [Andrew Sarris](#). Sarris used auteur theory as a way to further the analysis of what defines serious work through the study of respected directors and their films. The championed filmmakers such as [Akira Kurosawa](#), [Satyajit Ray](#), [Alfred Hitchcock](#), [Howard Hawks](#), and [Jean Renoir](#) are known as absolute 'auteurs' of their films. Although [André Bazin](#), co-founder of the Cahiers, provided a forum for Auteurs to flourish, he explained his concern about its excesses in his article "On the Auteur Theory". Another element of Auteur theory comes from [Alexandre Astruc's](#) notion of

the *caméra-stylo* or "camera-pen," which encourages directors to wield cameras as writers use pens and to guard against the hindrances of traditional storytelling.

Starting in the 1960s, some film critics began criticising auteur theory's focus on the authorial role of the director. One reason for the backlash is the collaborative aspect of shooting a film, and in the theory's privileging of the role of the director. In Kael's review of [Citizen Kane](#), a classic film for the auteur model, she points out how the film made extensive use of the distinctive talents of co-writer [Herman J. Mankiewicz](#) and cinematographer [Gregg Toland](#).

4. CHRISTIAN METZ

Christian Metz (December 12, 1931- September 7, 1993) was a [French film theorist](#), best known for pioneering the application of [Ferdinand de Saussure's](#) theories of [semiology](#) to [film](#). Metz was born in [Béziers](#). During the 1970s, his work had a major impact on film theory in France, Britain, Latin America and the United States.

Metz applied both [Sigmund Freud's](#) [psychology](#) and [Jacques Lacan's](#) [mirror theory](#) to the cinema, proposing that the reason film is popular as an art form lies in its ability to be both an imperfect reflection of reality and a method to delve into the unconscious dream state.

Christian Metz was a film theorist first made famous for his semiotic approach to cinema studies. Having been a proponent of semiotics for some time, Metz's *The Imaginary Signifier* was his first incorporation of the psychoanalytic approach to cinema studies. Metz's *The Imaginary Signifier* is his work on psychoanalytic theory, and how it can apply to cinema studies. By applying Freudian psychoanalysis to the film going experience, Metz illustrates how a film satisfies three important desires: the desire for ego, the desire to desire, and the desire for the object through fetishism.

Metz's writing does eventually offer a cogent and concise beginning to a psychoanalytic film theory. What is especially fascinating and ultimately satisfying to the reader is how Metz explicates upon his understanding and his conception of the cinema. He backs up his opinions with knowledge and logical assumptions about not only how we consume media, but about how forms of media differ from one another, and how we must understand the unique cinematic signifier.

5. LAURA MULVEY:

Laura Mulvey (born August 15, 1941) is a [British feminist film theorist](#). She was educated at [St Hilda's College, Oxford](#). She is currently professor of [film](#) and [media studies](#) at [Birkbeck, University of London](#). She worked at the [British Film Institute](#) for many years before taking up her current position.

Mulvey is best known for her essay, "[Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema](#)". Her article is one of the first major essays that helped shift the orientation of [film theory](#) towards a

[psychoanalytic framework](#), influenced by the theories of [Sigmund Freud](#) and [Jacques Lacan](#). Prior to Mulvey, film theorists such as [Jean-Louis Baudry](#) and [Christian Metz](#) used [psychoanalytic](#) ideas in their theoretical accounts of the cinema, but Mulvey's contribution was to inaugurate the intersection of [film theory](#), [psychoanalysis](#) and [feminism](#). Mulvey states that she intends to use Freud and Lacan's concepts as a "political weapon." She then used some of their concepts to argue that the cinematic apparatus of [classical Hollywood cinema](#) inevitably put the spectator in a masculine subject position, with the figure of the woman on screen as the object of desire and "the male gaze." In the era of classical Hollywood cinema, viewers were encouraged to identify with the protagonist of the film, who were and still are overwhelmingly male. Meanwhile, Hollywood women characters of the 1950s and '60s were, according to Mulvey, coded with "to-be-looked-at-ness" while the camera positioning and the male viewer constituted the "bearer of the look." Mulvey suggests two distinct modes of the [male gaze](#) of this era: "voyeuristic" (i.e. seeing woman as image "to be looked at") and "fetishistic" (i.e. seeing woman as a substitute for "the lack," the underlying psychoanalytic fear of castration).

Mulvey argues that the only way to annihilate the patriarchal Hollywood system is to radically challenge and re-shape the filmic strategies of classical Hollywood with alternative feminist methods. She calls for a new feminist avant-garde filmmaking that would rupture the narrative pleasure of classical Hollywood filmmaking. Mulvey incorporates the Freudian idea of [phallocentrism](#) into "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". Specifically relating the phallogentric theory to film, Mulvey insists on the idea that film and cinematography are inadvertently structured upon the ideas and values of a patriarchy. Within her essay, Mulvey discusses several different types of spectatorship that occur while viewing a film. Viewing a film involves subconsciously engaging in the understanding of male and female roles. The "three different looks", as they are referred to, explain just exactly how films are viewed in relation to phallocentrism. The first "look" refers to the camera as it records the actual events of the film. The second "look" describes the nearly [voyeuristic](#) act of the audience as one engages in watching the film itself. Lastly, the third "look" refers to the characters that interact with one another throughout the film.

The main idea that seems to bring these actions together is that "looking" is generally seen as an active male role while the passive role of being looked at is immediately adopted as a female characteristic. It is under the construction of patriarchy that Mulvey argues that women in film are tied to desire and that female characters hold an "appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact". The female actor is never meant to represent a character that directly effects the outcome of a [plot](#) or keep the story line going, but is inserted into the film as a way of supporting the male role and "bearing the burden of [sexual objectification](#)" that he cannot.

MODULE IV

SELECTED FILM TEXTS

ESSAY 1: THE EVOLUTION OF THE LANGUAGE OF CINEMA

AUTHOR: ANDRE BAZIN

INTRODUCTION

In almost all forms of art, realism was the first mode of expression, and formalism came only later. But in cinema formalism came first- film introduced all techniques and artefacts in the very beginning itself. Theorists who observe that film has achieved perfection before the introduction of sound (1928), rather assume that sound has destroyed the perfection achieved by the 'images'. Realism which came with the introduction of sound was considered as a means of surrendering to chaos. Perhaps for this reason, Charlie Chaplin movies used sound only in 1941, though sound has been introduced in 1928. Andre Bazin, the champion of Neorealism, attacks images (montage) used in the silent movies as opposed to realism. To Bazin the cinema is inherently realistic because of the mechanical mediation of the camera.

SUMMARY

In the history of cinema the earlier division was between silent movies and sound movies; and the dividing line was in the year 1928. But Bazin points out some similarities between movies of sound and silent era, and suggests that the real division is between two opposing trends: "those directors who put their faith in the 'images' and those who put their faith in 'reality'". Image can be used in two ways, as plastics and in montage.

1. Plastics: (how images are formed on the screen) Plastics include style of the makeup, of the performance, etc to which lighting is added, and finally, the framing of the shot which gives its composition.
E.g.: Expressionist movies (German movies).
2. Montage: Montage was introduced by Griffith and was masterly adopted by Eisenstein. It is simply the ordering of images in time. Extremely different images are shown to represent yet another image.
E.g.: European movies.

In American movies the use of montage is almost 'invisible'. That is, they make use of 'continuity editing' (a form of montage in which editing is not explicit). Continuity editing is used for just one purpose, namely, to analyse an episode according to the material or dramatic logic of scene.

The different types of montage techniques are:

1. Parallel montage: Conveying a sense of simultaneity of two actions taking place at a geographical distance by means of alternating shots from each.
2. Accelerated montage: Creating the illusion of the steadily increasing speed of a locomotive without actually using any image of speed.
3. Montage by attraction: The reinforcing of the meaning on one image by associating it with another image not necessarily part of the same episode.(similar in principle to the commonly used ellipsis, comparison and metaphor)

Taking this category into consideration, Bazin defines montage as 'the creation of a sense or meaning not proper to the images themselves, but derived exclusively from their juxtaposition'. So the meaning is not in the image, it is the shadow of the image projected onto the field of consciousness of the spectator. He attacks montage again on the ground that it imposes its interpretation of an event on the spectator. The well known experiment of Kuleshov with the shot of Mozhukin in which a smile was seen to change its significance according to the image that precedes it, sums up perfectly the properties of montage.

In order to prove that it is not just the expressionism of montage and image that constitute the essence of cinema, he takes into consideration three directors from the silent days- Flaherty, Murnau and Stroheim. In their films montage plays no part. Flaherty, who is famous for his documentaries made use of realism in his *Nanook of the North*. Montage could suggest the time involved in Nanook hunting the seal. But Flaherty confines himself to showing the actual waiting period. Murnau is interested in the reality of dramatic space. Montage plays no more of a decisive part in *Nosferatu* than in *Sunrise*. He does not cheat on the uncompromising realism of a film whose settings are completely natural. Stroheim rejects photographic expressionism and the tricks of montage. In his films reality itself is everything. Through these directors from the silent days Bazin is establishing an alternative tradition for the cinema.

Bazin focuses on the history of the language of cinema. Before the advent of sound Hollywood was not the centre of movies. We had movies in French, Swedish, German etc, as language was not a ruling force. But with the introduction of sound, non-English movies lost their market. Singers came to the foreground instead of actors. John Gilbert is such an actor who lost his chance because of his poor voice. Sound introduced a reality that was not there before. From 1930 to 1940 a common form of cinematic language has emerged. It was the triumph of Hollywood during that time. French cinema undoubtedly ranked next, with its trend towards realism. American and French production clearly indicate that the sound film, prior to world war II had reached a well balanced stage of maturity. By then the talking film has reached a level of technical perfection. From 1940 to 1950 the innovations were in the themes not in the techniques. That is the real revolution took place more on the level of

subject matter than of style. Bazin suggests that it was because new subject matter demanded new forms.

Eg: *Jezebel* by William Wyler, *Stage Coach* by John Ford, *Le Jour Se leve* by Marcel Carne.

Bazin then talks about the evolution of editing since the advent of sound. In 1938 there was an almost universal standard pattern of editing. Silent films were based on the plastics and montages. In Hollywood movies continuity editing was prominent. Introduction of sound made movies less plastic. There was a move towards realism, eliminating both plastic impressionism and montage of images.

Deep focus came with the introduction of lenses. Jean Renoir wonderfully used it in his *La Regle du jeu* and later Orson Welles in his *Citizen Kane*. Deep focus was more close to realism. Soft focus (focusing on a single object) only appeared with montage. Introduction of deep focus paved way for long takes. Montage was thus replaced by long takes or panning shots. Hitchcock, the master of continuity editing never favoured long takes. Deep focus does not completely exclude the use of montage; but it becomes a part of the plastics. Bazin does not completely deny that montage has added considerably to the progress of film language. Deep focus on the other hand, in addition to affecting the structure of film language also affects the relationship of the minds of the spectator to the image. Deep focus is more economical, simpler and at the same time a more subtle way of getting the most out of a scene. Some of the advantages of deep focus are:

1. The depth of focus brings the spectator into a realism with the image closer to that which he enjoys with reality.
2. In montage technique it is the director who decides the spectator's focus of attention. But in deep focus spectator has his own personal choice about the focus.
3. Montage by its very nature rules out ambiguity of expression. Deep focus, on the other hand, reintroduces ambiguity into the structure of the image.

Orson Welles has of course used expressionistic procedures of montage in *Citizen Kane* (1941). But it is the presence of deep focus in between the sequences that gives them a new meaning. In *Citizen Kane* there is a series of superimpositions. These superimpositions which the talking films had not used for ten years rediscovered a possible use related to temporal relation in a film without montage.

Welles' appearance in 1941 marks the beginning of a new period. *Citizen Kane* is part of a general movement confirming that everywhere up to a point there had been a revolution in the language of the screen. Cinema was taking a new turn. Italian Neo realism proved itself different from the previous forms of film realism with its absence of expressionism and effects of montage. (E.g.: *Bicycle Thief*). Neo realism gave back to the cinema a sense of ambiguity of reality.

According to Bazin the decade from 1940 to 1950 marks a decisive step forward in the development of the language of the film. So the actual division in the history of cinema is not between silent and sound movies. If we look at cinema as an edited thing (with montage techniques) then sound may destroy its perfection. But if we look at cinema as a reality it will not be perfect without sound. So sound adds perfection only in the realistic mode. It is in 1940 that sound and realism was wonderfully blended. Welles' *Citizen Kane* is the best example. Films of 1930 to '40 though it used sound, were not perfect for they preserved the essentials of montage. Bazin is not trying to belittle the films of 1930 to '40, instead he is talking about the highest expression of which was found in the films of the 1940s.

Questions:

1. Which are the major kinds of films that gave Hollywood its overwhelming superiority in the period from 1930 to '40?

American comedy, the burlesque film, the dance and vaudeville film, the crime and the gangster film, psychological and social drama, horror or fantasy film, and the Western.

2. Who were the directors whose names stand out in 'stark sombre realism'/poetic realism?

Jacques Feyder, Jean Renoir, Marcel Carne, Julien Duvivier.

3. According to Bazin which are the two different trends among the directors?

He groups all directors between the years 1920 to 1940 into two groups: one which bases their integrity in the image (the imagists) and another which base their integrity in reality (the realists). The imagists are broken down into two camps, those working with the plastics (lighting, decor, composition, acting) and those working with the editing (the montagists). The realists do not distort time (like the montagists) or space (like the expressionists) but attempt to depict true reality. The major exponents of the realist camp are F.W. Murnau, Eric Von Stroheim, Robert Flaherty, Carl Dreyer, and Jean Renoir. The montagists are Abel Gance, D.W. Griffith, Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevelod Pudovkin.

4. Write a short note on Bazin's views on deep focus.

Deep focus:

It maintains the unity of space and the relationship between the objects within that space. It gives the spectator, according to Bazin, the freedom to direct his/her own control over the viewing process, including what to look at, in what order, for how long, and to make their own synthesis of that viewing process. Together they maintain the ambiguity - the existential ambiguity present all around us in life- of that space.

5. Comment on the role of sound in cinema.

Bazin underplays the importance of sound transition to emphasize his spatial-temporal ontological theory of realism. He realized how important a step sound was

toward realism, eliminating the need for expressivity and "denaturalization" that was a large part of silent cinema. However, Bazin overlooks just how important a psychological role sound played in achieving the impression of reality, and the impression of space and depth that were so important to him. Sound added immensely to realism in cinema.

6. Differentiate soft focus from deep focus.

Soft focus is a technique of softening of a part of the image for an effect. The soft focus effect is an indirect means in which to place value in the shot which is being focused; it transcribes in the frame the dramatic hierarchy which montage expresses in time.

7. Write a short note on the evolution of editing since the advent of sound.

8. Critically analyse Bazin's essay 'The Evolution of the Language of Cinema'

ESSAY 2: WHAT IS WRONG WITH INDIAN FILMS?

AUTHOR: SATYAJIT RAY

INTRODUCTION

Satyajit Ray, the renowned Indian film maker, in his work *Our Films Their Films* talks on film making and film makers, and presents them in two sections. 'Our Film' is devoted mainly to his own experiences and contains many interesting anecdotes, but also has observations to offer on trends in Indian films. 'Their Films' deals with some films from abroad that have become landmarks in the history of the cinema from the silent era to the present day. His essay 'What's wrong with Indian films?' is taken from the collection *Our Films Their Films*

SUMMARY

Cinema has developed much from its initial stage to the century's most potent and versatile art form. Initially it was used variously as an extension of photography, as a substitute for the theatre and the music hall, and as a part of the magician's paraphernalia. Today, the cinema commands respect accorded to any other form of creative expression. Its greatness lies in the fact that it combines the cold logic of science with the subtlest abstractions of the human imagination. Cinema, says Ray, is basically the expression of a concept or concepts in aesthetic terms; terms which have crystallized through the incredibly short years of its existence-no matter who makes it and how.

Considering the fact that cinema has found the greatest impetus in America, Ray points out the presence of Griffith and the vast sensation mongering public as the factors that led to the growth of cinema in a country, which has no deep-rooted cultural and artistic traditions. The cinema has now attained a stage where it can handle Shakespeare and psychiatry with equal facility. Cinema has now reached a stage of maturity with the developments in colour and three-dimensional photography.

India took up film production surprisingly early. The first short was produced in 1907 and the first feature in 1913. By the twenties it had reached the status of big business. The film production in India is quantitatively second only to Hollywood; but the same cannot be

said of its quality. There has yet been no India Film which could be acclaimed on all counts. Where other countries have achieved, we have only attempted and that too not always with honesty, so that even our best films have to be accepted with the gently apologetic proviso that it is 'after all an Indian film'.

Ray then analyses the various factors that caused this lack of maturity of Indian films. The producers will blame 'the mass', which 'goes in for this sort of things', the technicians will blame 'the tools' and the director will blame 'the adverse conditions'. But taking Italian cinema into consideration Ray points out that, better things have been achieved under much worse conditions. So the reason lies elsewhere.

When the language of the cinema gradually evolved the all important functions of the cinema turned out to be 'movement'. In India movement was equated with action and action with melodrama. Moreover Indian music is largely improvisational. Along with these elementary confusions, two other factors are responsible for the present state of Indian films.

Firstly, the superficial aspects of the American style were imitated with reverence. Stories have been written based on Hollywood success and the clichéd preserved with care. Even where the story has been genuinely Indian one, the background has revealed an influence of the jazz idiom.

Secondly, in the adoptions of novels, one of two courses has been followed: either the story has been distorted to conform to the Hollywood formula, or it has been produced with such devout faithfulness to the original that the purpose of filmic interpretations has been defeated.

According to Ray what the Indian cinema needs today is not more gloss, but more imagination, integrity and intelligent appreciation of the limitations of the medium. Our technicians often complain about the absence of primary tools of film making. But such complaints are not valid, because our success lies in the way we use the available tools. What our cinema needs today is a style, an idiom, a sort of iconography of cinema, which would be uniquely and recognizably Indian.

But there are some obstacles to this, namely the influence of Western civilization in every aspects of our life; and the tendency to European costume, architecture etc. as functional elements of cinema which creates incongruity within the frame. Ray points out examples from a popular Bengali film to substantiate his point, which shows the heroine weeping to distraction with her arms around a wireless-an object she associates in her mind with her estranged lover who was once a radio singer.

However in *Kalpana*, Uday Shankar used some such visual dissonances in a conscious and consistent manner so that they became part of his cinematic style. But the truly Indian film should be devoid of such inconsistencies and look for its material in the more basic aspects of Indian life, where habit and speech, dress and manner, background and

foreground, blend into a harmonious whole. It is only in drastic simplification of style and content that hope for the Indian cinema resides. At present, it would appear that nearly all the prevailing practices go against such simplification.

Apart from this there are several other factors that stand in the way of the evolution of a distinctive style, such as starting a production without adequate planning, some-times even without a shooting script; a penchant for convolutions of plot and counter-plot rather than the strong, simple unidirectional narrative; the practice of sandwiching musical numbers in the most unlyrical situation etc.

Ray concludes his essay with an optimistic tone by bringing into light the changes in the trends of film making in India. IPTA's *Dharti ke Lal* is an instance of a strong simple theme put over with style, honesty and technical competence. Shankar's *Kalpana*, shows a respect for tradition. Hence it is asserted that the raw material of the cinema is life itself. It is incredible that a country which has inspired so much painting and music and poetry should fail to move the film maker. He has only to keep his eyes and ears open.

QUESTIONS

1. Why, according to Ray, cinema found its greatest impetus in America?

The presence of Griffith and the vast sensation mongering public with its constant demand for something new are the factors that led to the growth of cinema in a country, which has no deep-rooted cultural and artistic traditions.

2. Name two factors responsible for the lack of maturity of Indian films

Firstly, Indian films tried to imitate the superficial aspects of the American style. Stories have been written based on Hollywood success and the clichéd preserved with care. Even where the story has been genuinely Indian one, the background has revealed an influence of the jazz idiom.

Secondly, in the adoptions of novels, one of two courses has been followed: either the story has been distorted to conform to the Hollywood formula, or it has been produced with such devout faithfulness to the original that the purpose of filmic interpretations has been defeated.

3. According to Ray, how can Indian films achieve a stage of maturity?
4. Critically analyse the issues discussed in Ray's essay "what's wrong with Indian films?"

ESSAY 3: STRUCTURE AND MEANING IN CINEMA IN MOVIES AND METHODS

AUTHOR: RONALD ABRAMSON

INTRODUCTION:

Abramson's essay is a careful, point-by-point dissection of Peter Wollen's arguments in *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*. By focussing on the contradictions in Wollen's case (*Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*), and by comparing his approach to the alternatives mapped out by Pasolini (in *The Cinema of Poetry*), Abramson concludes that a structural-semiological study of cinema cannot assume a controlling code, a langue or syntax, as the instrumental foundation of film communication.

SUMMARY:

Ronald Abramson in his essay "**Structure and Meaning in the Cinema**" analyses the idea of the language film with reference to Peter Wollen's arguments regarding the film language. He points out the contradictions in Wollen's case by comparing his approach to that of Pasolini's. Film belongs to the system of natural signs which is expressive and meaningful as opposed to the system of 'arbitrariness' of language. According to Wollen, cinema is a language without a code and it cannot be referred to a 'pre-existent code' unlike the verbal language in which the 'signifiers' pre-exist the 'message' (a pre-existent code is the langue of a language).

Abramson refers to Wollen's bungled approach in applying the concepts of 'archetype' and 'structure' to the cinema. Then he passes on to Pasolini's views on literary and cinematic languages. According to Pasolini, cinema exists as a meaningful form of communication as is a literary work. The language that we use to communicate with our environment serves an instrumental basis for cinema. He says that everyone is in a constant rapport with the signs, images or rather the objects in the environment around. The objects for instance the 'physiognomy of people, their gestures, their actions and traffic signals, indicators, clocks' etc are rich with meaning. Pasolini says that the world of humans is expressed by means of significant images and he refers to it as 'im-signs' (image-signs). For him this world holds for memory and dreams. He compares cinema to a dream sequence which is a series of im-signs with close-ups, long-shorts etc. This complex world of images in the environment is proposed as the 'instrumental' foundation of cinematic language too.

The characteristic features of film language as proposed by Pasolini: According to Pasolini, the cinematic language is essentially concrete and there are no generic (specific) images. The film maker draws his own im-signs, his own dictionary. The second characteristic feature of cinematic language is that it has a style before it has syntax. The linguistic instrument on which cinema is founded has no logical construction, no a priori structure; it is irrational and therefore arbitrary.

In this discussion, Wollen tries to define the relationship between cinematic signs and reality and Pasolini attempts to demarcate the differences between the two. Hence the triadic division of signs as proposed by Wollen proves to be obscure. Wollen in his theoretical deliberations recognizes that cinema is a natural sign system, where as in practice he treats films as if it is based on a rational foundation. Ignoring the 'natural code' and 'syntax', the meaning of cinema could not be understood and a structure could not be derived. Therefore Wollen is found differing in his analysis of cinematic language.

According to auteur critics the meaning of a film is not be found in the story-line or script of the film. The thematic content of a film is disclosed by an analysis of the film's mise-en-scene, which gives meaning and structure to a film. When a director's style is found to be consistent and distinguished by a personal vision and world view, and then the status of "auteur" is conferred on that director. According to auteur critics meaning did not pre-exist the visual style or mise-en-scene of the film. Meaning and structure of a film exists only after the concrete and individual expression by the director. It is not apriori. The auteur critics state that there is no pre-existent text and the language of the film is stylistic before being grammatical. Wollen instead says that meaning and structure of film is based on a pre-existing text: a scenario, a book in other words a script. For auteur critics meaning is conceptual rather than verbal. The meaning of the films of an auteur is linked to the style and mode of expression of the films. It is here that Wollen contradicts equating meaning with verbal. Wollen says Abramson is wrong to state that there emerged two schools of auteur those who insisted on revealing a core of meanings, of thematic motifs, and those who stressed style and mise-enscene. Visual style and mise-en-scene is what the auteur theory is all about.

Wollen later on gives emphasis to the semantic dimension of a film and attempts a "structural approach" to a director's work. Quoting Geoffrey Nowell-Smith on the auteur theory, Wollen says that it is the pattern of motifs that give a work its particular structure. Earlier Wollen has equated the "semantic dimension" with verbal –narrative elements and differentiated from style and expressiveness. Wollen tries to find a rational linguistic instrument for cinematic language. He is looking for a dictionary and grammar. For Wollen meaning in a film is based on something which has a meaning before hand and then can be stylized or made expressive. For Pasolini, it is the visual style of an auteur that confers on the work both its formal and its structural relations. It is the structure of a film which gives its meanings and style before it is grammatical. There are no hard and fast rules for the making of a film even for a metteur-en-scence.

Wollen finds the meaning of the films of a metteur-en-scence and an auteur exist a priori and it is not grounded in the script. The meaning of a film is "linguistic" rather than being stylistic. In comparing cinematic to myth and its relation to language, Wollen's method reduces the structure of a film to a "mythical schema" says Abramson. The meaning of a film is reduced to the structure of a myth. Hence Abramson proposes the term "verbalism" or

“narrativism” for Wollen’s method, rather than “structuralism”. He concludes acknowledging Pasolini’s analysis that cinema is a language without a code and its further analysis is based on this fact.

Questions

1. Which is the work by Pasolini that Abramson refers to ?

Ans: *The Cinema of Poetry*

2. Which is the work by Peter Wollen that Ronald Abramson refers to?

Ans: *Signs and Meaning in Cinema*.

Answer the following in two or three sentences each:-

1. What is meant by ‘im-signs’?

Ans: The objects, concepts, ideas etc expressed by means of significant images in films. The term is proposed by Pasolini.

2. “This is the world of memory and of dreams.” What does Pasolini mean by this statement?

Ans: Pasolini says that all dreams are a series of im-signs which have all the characteristics of the cinematic sequence: close-ups, long shots, etc.

Answer the following in 75 words each:

1. What are the basic characteristics of the film language according to Pasolini?

Ans: According to Pasolini, the cinematic language is essentially concrete and there are no generic (specific) images. The film maker draws his own im-signs, his own dictionary. The second characteristic feature of cinematic language is that it has a style before it has syntax. The linguistic instrument on which cinema is founded has no logical construction, no a priori structure; it is irrational and therefore arbitrary.

Essay

1. Discuss Pasolini’s approach to cinematic language as opposed to Peter Wollen’s as mentioned by Abramson.

ESSAY 4: SWAYAMVARAM: CLASSIC PROPHECIES IN FILM AND PHILOSOPHY

AUTHOR: C.S. VENKITESWARAN

INTRODUCTION:

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO NEW WAVE FILMS

The "New Wave" originally *La Nouvelle Vague* was a blanket term coined by critics for a group of French filmmakers like Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut, Eric Rohmer, Jacques Rivette, Claude Chabrol and others of the late 1950s and 1960s. These filmmakers were marked by their self-conscious rejection of the concept of classical cinema, and obsession with experimenting new forms. "New Wave" is an example of European art cinema which differed from the classical cinema. In the new trend, continuity editing system, the cause and effect driven narrative and the goal oriented protagonist were not crucial to the film. The protagonists of such movies were shorn of heroism and would often wander around aimlessly for the whole movie, with nothing important happening to drive him from one activity into another. They also often violated the 30 degree rule and resorted to jump cuts to cause a jarring effect on the viewer, something similar to the alienation technique used by Brecht's theatre to divert the attention of the audience from the story and prompting them to think and ask questions. The movies belonging to this genre sometimes tended to be ambiguous, open-ended and even intertextual. The characters in these cinemas did not stand out with their makeup and costumes but were mostly shown in casual outfits and devoid of glamour to be closer to truth. Many members of the "New Wave" also engaged with the social and political upheavals of the era, making major experiments with editing, visual style and narrative part of a general break with conservative model.

Alexandre Astruc's manifesto, "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: The Camera-Style", published in *L'Ecran*, on 30 March 1948 outlined some of the ideas that were later expanded upon by [François Truffaut](#) and the *Cahiers du cinéma*. It argues that "cinema was in the process of becoming a new means of expression on the same level as painting and the novel: "a form in which an artist can express his thoughts, however abstract they may be, or translate his obsessions exactly as he does in the contemporary essay or novel. Truffaut also credits the American director [Morris Engel](#) and his film "[Little Fugitive](#)" with helping to start the French New Wave."The French New Wave was popular roughly between 1958 and 1964, although New Wave work existed as late as 1973. The [socio-economic](#) forces at play shortly after World War II strongly influenced the movement. Politically and financially drained, France tended to fall back on the old popular pre-war traditions

They were especially against the French "cinema of quality", the type of high-minded, literary period films held in esteem at French film festivals, often regarded as "untouchable" by criticism. New Wave critics and directors studied the work of western classics and applied new avant garde stylistic direction. The [low-budget](#) approach helped filmmakers get the essential art form and find what was, to them, a much more comfortable and contemporary form of production. [Charlie Chaplin](#), [Alfred Hitchcock](#), [Orson Welles](#), [Howard Hawks](#), [John Ford](#), and many other forward-thinking [film directors](#)

were held up in admiration while standard [Hollywood films](#) bound by traditional narrative flow were strongly criticized. French New Wave might have also been influenced by [Italian Neorealism](#).

The movies featured unprecedented methods of expression, such as long [tracking shots](#) (like the famous traffic jam sequence in Godard's 1967 film [Week End](#)). Also, these movies featured [existential](#) themes, such as stressing the individual and the acceptance of the [absurdity](#) of human existence. Filled with irony and sarcasm, the films also tend to reference other films.

Many of the French New Wave films were produced on tight budgets; often shot in a friend's apartment or yard, using the director's friends as the cast and crew. Directors were also forced to improvise with equipment (for example, using a shopping cart for tracking shots). The cost of film was also a major concern; thus, efforts to save film turned into stylistic innovations. For example, in [Jean-Luc Godard's Breathless](#) (*À bout de souffle*), after being told the film was too long and he must cut it down to one hour and a half he decided (on the suggestion of [Jean-Pierre Melville](#)) to remove several scenes from the feature using [jump cuts](#), as they were filmed in one long take. Parts that did not work were simply cut from the middle of the take, a practical decision and also a purposeful stylistic one.

The cinematic stylistics of French New Wave brought a fresh look to cinema with improvised dialogue, rapid changes of scene, and shots that go beyond the common 180° axis. The camera was used not to mesmerize the audience with elaborate narrative and illusory images, but to play with the expectations of cinema. The techniques used to shock and awe the audience out of submission and were so bold and direct that Jean-Luc Godard has been accused of having contempt for his audience. His stylistic approach can be seen as a desperate struggle against the mainstream cinema of the time, or a degrading attack on the viewer's supposed naivety. Either way, the challenging awareness represented by this movement remains in cinema today. Effects that now seem either commonplace, such as [a character stepping out of their role in order to address the audience directly](#), were radically innovative at the time.

The Malayalam New Wave

The growth of Film Society Movement (started in 1960) and the screenings of world classics forced a drastic change in Malayalee film sensitivity during the early 1970s. The growth of the film society movement in Kerala introduced the works of the French and Italian New Wave directors to the discerning Malayali film enthusiasts. A new movement often termed as the '**New Wave Malayalam Cinema**' or the '[Malayalam Parallel Cinema](#)' emerged. It was also referred to as 'art' cinema. [Adoor Gopalakrishnan](#) made his first film *Swayamvaram* in 1972, which made Malayalam cinema noticed at International film arena. [G Aravindan](#) through his *Uttarayanam* in 1974 accelerated this

radical change in Malayalam cinema. [K. P. Kumaran](#)'s *Adhithi* (1974) was another film which was acclaimed by the critics. [Cinematographers who won the National Award](#) for their work on Malayalam films in the 1970s were [Mankada Ravi Varma](#) for *Swayamvaram* (1972), [P. S. Nivas](#) for *Mohiniyattam* (1977), and [Shaji N. Karun](#) for *Thampu* (1979). [John Abraham](#), [K. R. Mohanan](#), [K. G. George](#), and G. S. Panikkar were products of the [Pune Film Institute](#) who made significant contributions. These artists started seeing Malayalam cinema as a medium of expression and thought of it as a tool to revitalize society. They sought new mediums to express 'the self' and existential angst of the period. Even in the 1950s experiments have been carried out in these lines and *Newspaper Boy* (1955) is a classic example. It was the reflection of neo-realism in cinema, an Italian movement of the fifties, which had also paved the way for New Wave cinema.

Another major stream of Malayalam cinema that appeared during the 1970s, which was a synthesis of the highly commercial popular cinema and the parallel cinema from which the masses always stayed away, was the '[middle-stream cinema](#)'. These films, mainly from directors like [K G George](#), [Padmarajan](#) and [Bharathan](#), had meaningful themes but had popular forms of presentation and had influenced a generation of film viewers.

On a parallel level the commercial cinema in this period saw several worker class themed films which mostly had [M. G. Soman](#) and [Sukumaran](#) in the lead followed by the emergence of a new genre of pure action themed films, in a movement led by action star [Jayan](#) who is usually considered the first genuine commercial superstar of Malayalam cinema. But this was short-lived, and almost ended with Jayan's untimely death while performing a [stunt](#) in a film called *Kolilakkam* (1980). Nevertheless, he paved way for different films and future actors who proved their talents in both commercial and art genres, the most famous of them being [Mammooty](#) and [Mohanlal](#).

C.S.VENKATESWARAN'S SWAYAMVARAM:

C.S.Venkateswaran in the essay 'Swayamwaram' critically analyses Adoor Gopalakrishnan's innovative film *Swayamvaram* which belongs to the '**New Wave Malayalam Cinema**' or the '[Malayalam Parallel Cinema](#)'. The film which was produced in 1972 was a milestone in Malayalam filmhood as it marked the beginning of a new genre that was different from the mainstream commercial cinema of the time.

According to him the Indian new cinema was actually an educated middle class reaction to the post-independence socio-political situation. The films termed 'new wave' or 'offbeat' were products and expressions of a particular period and milieu and were different from the films of earlier times and the commercial, 'popular' cinema of the period. These movies brought in an entirely different emotional and visual experience. The setting of Malayalam 'new wave' was caught between the past and the future. These movies lacked belief in the values of the past and hopes for the future. Malayalam new wave movies were not content

with the sugary solutions provided by the new cinema in other languages. Unlike other languages these films reflected the peculiar socio-economic and political situation of Kerala which had done away with the chains of the feudal past and was yet to come into terms with a vision for the future. Joint family system had disintegrated due to the land reforms. This gave rise to a new sense of self. The Nehruvian dreams had set by the 70's and the hopes aroused by the communist movement went damp with it being just another political party. These films reflected the essence and confusion of the period- the key words being Naxalbari, Vietnam war, Che, Hippie-ism Existentialism, etc. A desire for self-expression marked the films of this genre. Aduro Gopalakrishnan's *Swayamwaram* is said to be the trend-setter. The struggle for existence and self-expression dominate the movie.

Swayamwaram begins with a journey both literally and metaphorically. The journey marks the beginning of Viswam and Seetha's life together as well as a departure from the usual norms of Malayalam cinema and the arrival of the Malayalam new wave. It was produced by "Chitraloka"- a film society and its audience was mainly middle class intellectuals, film buffs and students. The dominant themes revolve around personal survival, self-expression and choices. The film is also devoid of unnecessary songs, stunts and buffoonery. It is about a nuclear family and its struggles.

Swayamwaram revolves around the lives Viswam and Seetha (played by Madhu and Sarada). These lovers come to the city with hopes and aspirations. Staying at a 'respectable' hotel, Viswam looks for a job. Unfortunately the couple moves down the social scale to more humble surroundings. The bus journey is more than a mere shift to the city. It is journey from the chains of the past to a freer future. In the city disillusionment sets in. The bus also stands for a microcosm of the society with people from different walks as co-passengers. While the journey is commonplace for the others, it is the most important journey of their life for the protagonists. This insularity is yet another important feature of the new wave cinema.

The past of the couple is not explained and is irrelevant. Neither is their background specified in terms of region, caste and class, again marking a deliberate break from the past. The important factor is their 'choice'- their decision to elope or rather escape. The title thus is very relevant - 'swayam-varam' meaning 'one's own choice'. The opening scenes convey romantic optimism about freedom, love, job and passion which later gives way to pessimism.

Life has something different in store for them. Viswam's endeavours at the tutorial college, the publisher, and the saw mill are all a failure. Viswam realizes that it is a thoroughly closed world with no scope for change. Disillusionment with politics is evident when Viswam passes a public political meeting without showing any interest in it. Towards the end the couple also find that one's own choices seldom find fulfillment. Their journey leads them to another world of unfreedom. Viswam meets with death and

Seetha is left to face an uncertain future. She is alone and the door is closed. The rattling at the door sets oneself thinking, whether it is just the play of wind or a well-wisher. She is left with yet another choice but this time her choices are limited.

The External World

The heroes and heroines of the new wave cinema were not tied to their external world. They were no longer defined by their class or caste. The depiction was internal – about existential angst, love conflicts, creativity, etc. In *Swayamvaram* the external world is a threat for Seetha and Viswam. From the beginning the couple appears like an island fighting to hold itself against the outside world. The terrible knocks on the door at the hotel, the drunkards, and the pickpockets are all a threat from the outside. The early optimism is marked by top angle shots of the couple watching the world 'below' from the top window of the hotel. This depicts the contrast in the two worlds which later is levelled when they shift to a small house in the suburbs. The eye level shots mark the 'lower' world inhabited by neighbours that include smuggler Vasu, Kalyani the prostitute among others. Seetha and Viswam try to insulate themselves against these outside elements which are a sharp contrast to the respectable middle class life they aspire for. This threat extends to his workplace and street as well. The stare of the person whose job he has grabbed (enacted by Gopi) and the invitation of the sex worker are equally frightening.

The claustrophobic mood of the second half stands in sharp contrast to the vast, colourful and open landscapes in the beginning. Medium shots lend a contemplative quality to the visuals. The split between the characters and the world is brought in by proper camera movements.

The Motif of Death

In earlier films the story and the problems of the individual represented his entire society. In the case of new wave films the society was just a backdrop that helped reflect the protagonist's internal conflicts more effectively. While the earlier narratives were about the possibilities of a better life, the new wave films were obsessed with the worthlessness of life and how death brings a sense of completion to it. *Swayamwaram* is full of instances that show Viswam's obsession with death. Once Viswam is found lying on the railway tracks, just to tease Seetha during the romantic scenes. Later both of them are seen lying beside each other on sea shore, reminding one of the last scene of Ramu Kariat's *Chemmeen* where the lovers unite in death.

The Idea of the Aesthetic

The idea of the aesthetic or creativity is also a major theme. Like Viswam, many of the new wave heroes were aspiring writers who were disillusioned with the political value

systems of the time. They escaped to the city to free themselves from feudal bondages and in search of modes for self-expression. Viswam's novel titled 'Nrivriti' (Ecstasy) fails to get published. In the struggle for survival, his creativity is forgotten –leading to another internal fall. His art is the product of his self-expression which fades away before the harsh realities of life. The belief, that creativity and art as obverse ordinary life was also a mark of the period.

References to commercial cinema are abundant in the film. This reflects the self-consciousness inherent in new wave films and also functioning as meta-narrative on art and creativity. In the first part of the film when the couple embraces, the 'colourful' posters of commercial cinema in the background actually point to their illusions about love and life. The sea-shore seen is again a reminiscent of the last scene of *Chemmeen*. When Viswam's at the publisher's office, the editor refers to a successful writer who became famous through commercial films. Then there is the instance of the tutorial-proprietor who went broke trying to produce a class film. There is also a comment on the moral degradation in commercial film with reference to actress 'Jayarani'. Viswam does not want his novel to have a flowery, happy ending like in 'films'. In short, according to C.S. Venkateswaram the movie *Swayamvaram* makes a statement on art and creativity which is a characteristic feature of the new wave project.

Conclusion

C.S.Venkatesaram sums up saying that the beautiful and evocative images of *Swayamvaram* are still fresh in the minds of the viewers. M.B. Sreenivasan's music and Mankada Ravivarma's cinematography lends a haunting quality to the movie. A unique feature of Adoor's films is that all the characters have significant roles. No one has a 'minor role' to play. *Swayamvaram* is indeed a landmark movie, a trail blazer about the uncertainties and anxieties of the middle class; the limitation of choices; intellectual crisis of middle class and their journey for illusion to reality.

MODULE: V

CASE STUDIES OF CLASSIC CINEMA

CINEMA 1: *BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN*

DIRECTOR: **SERGEI EISENTEIN**

Battleship Potemkin is a 1925 [silent film](#) directed by [Sergei Eisenstein](#). It presents a dramatized version of the [mutiny](#) that occurred in 1905 when the crew of the [Russian battleship Potemkin](#) rebelled against their officers of the [Tsarist](#) regime.

Eisenstein wrote the film as a [revolutionary propaganda](#) film, but also used it to test his theories of "[montage](#)". The revolutionary Soviet filmmakers of the [Kuleshov](#) school of filmmaking were experimenting with the effect of [film editing](#) on audiences, and Eisenstein attempted to edit the film in such a way as to produce the greatest [emotional](#) response, so that the viewer would feel [sympathy](#) for the rebellious [sailors](#) of the Battleship Potemkin and hatred for their cruel overlords. In the manner of most [propaganda](#), the characterization is simple, so that the audience could clearly see with whom they should sympathize.

Eisenstein's film is structured around five episodes: Men and maggots, Drama on the quarterdeck, An appeal from the dead, The Odessa steps and Meeting the Squadron

As sketched by Eisenstein's film, the crew members of the battleship, cruising the Black Sea after returning from the war with Japan, are mutinous because of poor rations. There is a famous close-up of their breakfast meat, crawling with maggots. After officers throw a tarpaulin over the rebellious ones and order them to be shot, a firebrand named Vakulinchuk cries out, "Brothers! Who are you shooting at?" The firing squad lowers its guns, and when an officer unwisely tries to enforce his command, full-blown mutiny takes over the ship.

Onshore, news of the uprising reaches citizens who have long suffered under czarist repression. They send food and water out to the battleship in a flotilla of skiffs. Then, in one of the most famous sequences ever put on film, czarist troops march down a long flight of steps, firing on the citizens who flee before them in a terrified tide. Countless innocents are killed, and the massacre is summed up in the image of a woman shot dead trying to protect her baby in a carriage--which then bounces down the steps, out of control.

The most celebrated scene in the film is the massacre of civilians on the [Odessa Steps](#) (also known as the [Potemkin Stairs](#)). This scene has been described as one of the most influential in the history of cinema, because it introduced concepts of film editing and montage to cinema. In this scene, the [Tsar](#)'s soldiers in their white summer tunic's march

down a seemingly endless flight of steps in a rhythmic, machine-like fashion, firing volleys into a crowd. A separate detachment of mounted [Cossacks](#) charges the crowd at the bottom of the stairs. The victims include an older woman wearing [pince-nez](#), a young boy with his mother, a student in uniform and a teenage schoolgirl. A mother pushing an infant in a baby carriage falls to the ground dying and the carriage rolls down the steps amidst the fleeing crowd. The massacre on the steps, which never took place, was presumably inserted by Eisenstein for dramatic effect and to demonise the Imperial regime. That there was, in fact, no czarist massacre on the Odessa Steps scarcely diminishes the power of the scene. The czar's troops shot innocent civilians elsewhere in Odessa, and Eisenstein, in concentrating those killings and finding the perfect setting for them, was doing his job as a director. It is ironic that he did it so well that today the bloodshed on the Odessa Steps is often referred to as if it really happened.

The Battleship Potemkin is conceived as class-conscious revolutionary propaganda, and Eisenstein deliberately avoids creating any three-dimensional individuals (even Vakulinchuk is seen largely as a symbol). Instead, masses of men move in unison, as in the many shots looking down at Potemkin's foredeck. The people of Odessa, too, are seen as a mass made up of many briefly glimpsed but starkly seen faces. The dialogue (in title cards) is limited mostly to outrage and exhortation. There is no personal drama to counterbalance the larger political drama.

The movie was ordered up by the Russian revolutionary leadership for the 20th anniversary of the Potemkin uprising, which Lenin had hailed as the first proof that troops could be counted on to join the proletariat in overthrowing the old order.

CINEMA 2: ***BICYCLE THIEVES***

DIRECTOR: VITTORIO DE SICA

Vittorio de Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* is one of the masterpieces of [Italian Neorealism](#). It is adapted for the screen by [Cesare Zavattini](#) from a novel by [Luigi Bartolini](#).

In post-World War II Rome, Antonio Ricci is desperate for work to support his wife Maria, his son Bruno, and his baby. He is offered a position posting advertising bills but tells Maria that he cannot accept because the job requires his bicycle, which he has pawned. Maria resolutely strips the bed of her [dowry](#) bed sheets—prized possessions for a poor family—and takes them to the pawn office, where they are exchanged for Antonio's hocked bicycle. (A memorable shot shows the sheets being added to a mountain of bedding pawned by other families suggesting extreme poverty of post war Rome.) Along the way Maria insists to Antonio's derision on leaving money for a seer who had prophesied Antonio would find work.

On his first day of work Antonio is atop a ladder when a young man snatches the bicycle. He gives chase but is thrown off the trail by the thief's confederates. The police take a

report but warn that there is little they can do. Advised that stolen goods often find their way to the [Piazza Vittorio](#) market, Antonio goes there with several friends and his small son Bruno. They locate a bike that might be Antonio's and summon an officer, but the serial number does not match. At the [Porta Portese](#) market Antonio and Bruno spot the thief with an old man. They pursue the thief but he eludes them. They demand the thief's identity from the old man, but he feigns ignorance. They follow him into a church, but he slips away from them. Antonio has Bruno wait by a bridge while Antonio searches for the old man. Suddenly there are cries that a boy is drowning. Antonio rushes toward the commotion and is relieved to see that the drowning boy is not Bruno. Antonio treats Bruno to lunch in a restaurant, where they momentarily forget their troubles, but on seeing a rich family enjoying a fine meal, Antonio is again seized by his calamity and tortures himself by reckoning his lost earnings.

They near a football stadium. Inside a game is underway, while outside, rows of bicycles await their owners. Antonio sees an unattended bicycle near a doorway. He gives Bruno some money, telling him to take the streetcar and wait at [Monte Sacro](#). Antonio circles the unattended bicycle, summons his courage, and jumps on it. The [hue and cry](#) is instantly raised, and Bruno, who has missed the streetcar, is stunned to see his father surrounded and pulled from the bike. The bicycle's owner slaps the hat from Antonio's head. As Antonio is being muscled toward the police station, the owner notices Bruno, who is carrying Antonio's hat. In a moment of compassion, the owner decides to let him go. Film ends with a shot showing Antonio and Bruno walking slowly off amid a buffeting crowd.

Neorealism never got more real than in Vittorio de Sica's 1948 classic *Bicycle Thieves*. Antonio drops everything to go on a desperate odyssey through the streets of Rome with his little boy Bruno to get his bike back, pleading and accusing and uncovering scenes of poverty similar to theirs wherever they go. They create uproar in classic crowd moments: in the streets, in a market, in a church mass. Faces always gather avidly around the pair, all commenting, complaining and generally magnifying the father and son's distress and mortification.

As with all fables, the heart of this story's power is not in the style of the telling, but in the power of the situation it describes. At the same time, this situation, this story has become practically synonymous with the style and milieu of Italian Neorealism, with its socio-economic concerns, its loosely structured storytelling, and the unpolished realism of its real locations and untrained actors. In a word, the film is an ideal marriage of form and meaning.

De Sica pioneered a lean, stark presentation with non professional actors. The style with its subject matter based on hard post war life, epitomizes Italian neorealism. The film is bringing the previously ignored working classes to the screen. Like many of the neo-realist directors his primary aim in the film is to use the camera to show how people lived, whilst maintaining an objective distance. The non professional actors give fine performances and

lend the film a documentary like air, even though the narrative itself is fictional. The film is a conscious backlash against the Hollywood middle class melodrama, shown ironically in the film itself when a poster of Rita Hayworth is pasted to an advertising board. The film contains all the elements of typical neo-realism: harsh cinematography, poverty of the principle characters, urban squalor and of course, a lack of judgement at the character's predicament.

CINEMA 3: **THE GOD FATHER**

DIRECTOR: [FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA](#)

The Godfather is a 1972 American [crime film](#) directed by [Francis Ford Coppola](#) and produced by [Albert S. Ruddy](#) from a screenplay by [Mario Puzo](#) and Coppola. The story, spanning the years 1945 to 1955, centers on the transformation of [Michael Corleone](#) from reluctant family outsider to ruthless [Mafia boss](#) while also chronicling the [family](#) under the patriarch [Vito Corleone](#).

On the day of his only daughter's wedding, [Vito Corleone](#) hears requests in his role as the Godfather, the [Don](#) of a New York crime family. Vito's youngest son, [Michael](#), in a [Marine Corps](#) uniform, introduces his girlfriend, [Kay Adams](#), to his family at the sprawling reception. Vito's godson [Johnny Fontane](#), a popular singer, pleads for help in securing a coveted movie role, so Vito dispatches his [consigliere](#), [Tom Hagen](#), to the abrasive studio head, [Jack Woltz](#), to secure the casting. Woltz is unmoved until the morning he wakes up in bed with the severed head of his prized [stallion](#).

Shortly before Christmas 1945, drug Baron [Virgil "The Turk" Sollozzo](#), backed by the Corleones' rivals, the Tattaglias, asks Vito for investment in the emerging drug trade and protection through his political connections. Vito disapproves of drug dealers, so he sends his enforcer, [Luca Brasi](#), to spy on them. The family then receives two fish wrapped in Brasi's vest, imparting that he "sleeps with the fishes". An assassination attempt by Sollozzo's men lands Vito in the hospital, so his eldest son, [Sonny](#), takes command. Sollozzo kidnaps Hagen to pressure Sonny to accept his deal. Michael thwarts a second assassination attempt on his father at the hospital, but is accosted by corrupt police captain McCluskey, who breaks his jaw; Sonny retaliates by having Tattaglia's son killed. Michael comes up with a plan to hit Sollozzo and McCluskey that his brother approves over Hagen's objections: on the pretext of settling the dispute, Michael lures the pair to a restaurant, retrieves a planted handgun and murders them.

Despite a clampdown from the authorities, the [Five Families](#) erupt in open warfare and the brothers fear for their safety. Michael takes refuge in Sicily, and [Fredo Corleone](#) is sheltered by associate [Moe Greene](#) in [Las Vegas](#). Sonny attacks his brother-in-law [Carlo](#) on the street for abusing his sister [Connie](#). When it happens again, Sonny speeds for her home but assassins ambush him at a highway toll booth and riddle him with submachine gun fire. Michael's time abroad has led to marriage to [Apollonia Vitelli](#). Their euphoria is shattered

when a car bomb intended for him takes her life. Vito, saddened to learn that, despite his hopes, Michael has become involved in the family business, decides to end the feuds. Believing that the Tattaglias were under orders of the now dominant Don [Emilio Barzini](#), he promises, before the heads of the Five Families, to withdraw his opposition to their heroin business and forgo revenge for Sonny's murder. His safety guaranteed, Michael returns home and over a year later marries Kay.

With his father at the end of his career and his surviving brother too weak, Michael takes the reins of the family, promising his wife to make the business legitimate within five years. He allows rival families to pressure Corleone enterprises even as he plans to move family operations to Nevada and delegates New York business to members who stay behind. Hagen, upset when Michael replaces him with Vito, is mollified by the older man's reassurance about their long-range plans for him. When Michael travels to Las Vegas to buy out Greene's stake in the family's casinos, Greene derides the Corleones as a fading power. To add injury to insult, Michael sees Fredo falling under Greene's sway.

Vito collapses and dies in his garden while playing with Michael's son, [Anthony](#). At the funeral, *caporegime* [Salvatore Tessio](#) arranges a meeting between Michael and Don Barzini, signalling his treachery as Vito had warned. The meeting is set for the same day as the christening of Connie's son, to whom Michael will stand as godfather. As the christening proceeds, Corleone assassins, acting on Michael's orders, murder the other New York dons and Moe Greene. Tessio is told that Michael is aware of his betrayal and taken off to his death. After Carlo is questioned by Michael on his involvement in setting up Sonny's murder and confesses he was contacted by Barzini, *caporegime* [Peter Clemenza](#) kills him with a wire [garrote](#). Michael is confronted by Connie, who accuses him of having her husband killed. He denies killing Carlo when questioned by Kay, an answer she accepts. As Kay watches warily, Michael receives his [capos](#), who address him as the new Don Corleone.

The image of the Mafia as a feudal organization with the Don as both the protector of the small fry and the collector of obligations from them for his services is now a commonplace [trope](#) which *The Godfather* helped to popularize. Similarly, the recasting of the Don's family as a figurative "royal family" has spread beyond fictional boundaries into the real world as well. This portrayal is echoed in the more sordid reality of lower level Mafia "familial" entanglements depicted in various post-*Godfather* Mafia fare, such as Scorsese's [Mean Streets](#) and [Casino](#), and also to the grittier [hard-boiled](#) pre-*Godfather* films.

The Godfather is widely regarded as one of the [greatest films in world cinema](#) and as one of the most influential, especially in the [gangster](#) genre. The film was for a time the [highest grossing picture ever made](#), and remains [the box office leader for 1972](#). It won three [Oscars](#) that year: for [Best Picture](#), for [Best Actor](#) (Brando) and in the category [Best Adapted Screenplay](#) for Puzo and Coppola.

CINEMA 4: CHARULATA

DIRECTOR: SATYAJIT RAY

INTRODUCTION:

Charulata is a 1964 film by Bengali director [Satyajit Ray](#), based upon the novella [Nastanirh](#) ("The Broken Nest") by [Rabindranath Tagore](#). It features [Soumitra Chatterjee](#), [Madhabi Mukherjee](#) and [Sailen Mukherjee](#). *Charulata* won Satyajit Ray his second [Silver Bear for Best Director](#) at the [15th Berlin International Film Festival](#) in 1965. *Charulata* also won the [Golden Lotus Award for Best Film](#) at the [National Film Awards](#) in 1965.

SUMMARY

The film tells the story of a lonely housewife, known as Charu, who lives a wealthy, secluded and idle life in 1870's [Calcutta](#). Her husband, Bhupati, runs a newspaper, *The Sentinel*, and spends more time at work than with his wife. Bhupati is an upper class Bengali intellectual with a keen interest in politics and the freedom movement. Charu is interested in the arts, literature and poetry. Though Bhupati loves his wife, he has no time for her. She has little to do in the house run by a fleet of servants. Sensing her boredom, Bhupati invites Charu's elder brother Umapada and wife Manda to live with them. Umapada helps in running of the magazine and the printing press. Manda with her silly and crude ways is no company for the sensitive and intelligent Charulata.

Amal, Bhupati's younger cousin comes on a visit. Bhupati asks him to encourage Charu's cultural interests. Amal is young, handsome and is of the same age group as Charu. He has literary ambitions and shares her interests in poetry. He provides her with much needed intellectual companionship and attention. An intimate relationship develops between Charulata and Amal. There is a hint of rivalry when she publishes a short story on her own without his knowledge. He realizes that Charulata is in love with him but is reluctant to reciprocate due to the guilt involved.

Meanwhile, Charu's brother and sister-in-law who were guests in the house swindle Bhupati of his money and run away. It destroys Bhupati's newspaper and the press. The episode shatters Bhupati who admits his hurt to Amal. He tells Amal that now Amal is the only one he can trust.

Amal is overcome with guilt of betraying his cousin. He is also uncomfortable with Charu's higher intellect that he has helped nurture. He leaves unannounced, to marry and go away to England for higher studies. He leaves behind a letter to Charu. Charu is heartbroken but hides her disappointment. Bhupati accidentally enters her room and finds her crying over Amal. Bhupati realizes Charu's feelings for Amal. He is broken, shocked and bewildered by it. He rushes out of the house, wanders aimlessly in his carriage. On his return, Charu and

Bhupati make a hesitant gesture to reach out, but their extended hands remain frozen in a tentative gesture.

Ray conveys the innermost feelings and thoughts of his characters without any dazzling technique and with minimal dialogue. Ray's most personal movie describes the unadulterated love and longing of an intelligent woman for her younger brother-in-law, while the husband is pursuing his intellectual hobby of running a radical English newspaper in Calcutta, Charulata is left to confide her creative passions with her artistic and poetic brother-in-law, it is difficult to define where this crosses the line from admiration to love but the emotion evolves naturally to blossom into something more than matronly affiliation, whether there is an element of lust left for the audience to decide with small trivial domestic details, but the relationship is a satire on the security of the Indian marriage. Charu is adored by her husband who is one of the most respectable aristocrats in the higher social echelons in colonial Calcutta, their political discussions are just as enthusiastic as their exploration of piano and music, this is a private sacred world and when a virtuous woman finds herself heeding thoughts which are ambivalent to her breeding, she spurns herself and almost becomes a stranger to herself, the internal strife is beautifully depicted through other characters surrounding her, the domestic chores and her observations of the street life from her balcony, the Edwardian decor of the town house and the cloistered garden are the backdrop to this shy and mellow drama, it is too quaint to call it a romance and it is too bold in its conclusion to be labelled as anything but a ground-breaking drama. It finally is a profoundly poetic look at the attitudes to matrimony and the development of a relation between a man and woman, Ray is neither preaching nor sermonising, he observes a slice of a domestic event and very naturally translates it upon the screen. The performances by Soumitra Chatterjee as the young man who escapes from the house to get away from his feelings and Mahdabi as Charulata are poetically realised against a desperate passion, which is all consuming but still very potent, the scene stealer is the husband who walks away with all the plaudits in the shocking yet liberating finale. The trivia here are more important than the most crucial details and the culture is explored with a sensitivity yet sophistication which makes this one of the greatest comments on human relationships in cinema, that the fragility of this exquisite piece is streamlined to the very end in a perfect balance is to the credit of a ray of genius called Saryajit Ray.

CINEMA 5: [RASHOMON](#)

DIRECTOR: **AKIRA KUROSAWA**

INTRODUCTION:

Rashomon introduced Kurosawa and the [cinema of Japan](#) to Western audiences, albeit to a small number of theatres, and is considered one of his masterpieces. The film won the [Golden](#)

[Lion](#) at the [Venice Film Festival](#) and also received an [Academy Honorary Award](#) at the [24th Academy Awards](#).

Screenplay: Akira Kurosawa, [Shinobu Hashimoto](#)

Cinematography: [Kazuo Miyagawa](#)

PLOT SUMMARY:

Rashomon (1950) is a Japanese crime drama, which is produced with both philosophical and psychological overtones. An episode (rape and murder) in a forest is reported by four witnesses, each from their own point of view. A priest, a woodcutter and another man are taking refuge from a rainstorm in the shell of a former gatehouse called Rashômon. The priest and the woodcutter are recounting the story of a murdered samurai whose body the woodcutter discovered three days earlier in a forest grove. Both were summoned to testify at the murder trial, the priest who ran into the samurai and his wife travelling through the forest just before the murder occurred. Three other people who testified at the trial are supposedly the only direct witnesses: a notorious bandit named Tajômaru, who allegedly murdered the samurai and raped his wife; the white veil cloaked wife of the samurai; and the samurai himself who testifies through the use of a medium. The three tell a similarly structured story - Tajômaru kidnapped and bound the samurai so that he could rape the wife - but which ultimately contradict each other, the motivations and the actual killing being what differ. The woodcutter reveals at Rashômon that he knows more than he let on at the trial, thus bringing into question his own actions. But another discovery at Rashômon and the resulting actions from the discovery bring back into focus the woodcutter's own humanity or lack thereof.

In ancient Japan, a woman is raped and her husband killed. The film gives us four viewpoints of the incident - one for each defendant - each revealing a little more detail. In 12th century Japan, a samurai and his wife are attacked by the notorious bandit Tajomaru, and the samurai ends up dead. Tajomaru is captured shortly afterward and is put on trial, but his story and the wife's are so completely different that a psychic is brought in to allow the murdered man to give his own testimony. He tells yet another completely different story. Finally, a woodcutter who found the body reveals that he saw the whole thing, and his version is again completely different from the others.

Rashomon is a large gate that once stood at the southern end of Suzaku Avenue, between modern day Kyoto and Nara.

Bandit story:

Tajômaru, a notorious brigand claims that he tricked the samurai to step off the mountain trail with him and look at a cache of ancient swords he discovered. In the grove he tied the samurai to a tree, and then brought the woman there. She initially tried to defend herself with

a dagger, but was eventually "seduced" by the bandit. The woman, filled with shame, then begged him to duel to death with her husband, to save her from the guilt and shame of having two men know her dishonor. Tajōmaru honorably set the samurai free and dueled with him. In Tajōmaru's recollection they fought skillfully and fiercely, but in the end Tajōmaru was the victor and the woman ran away. At the end of the story to the court, he is asked about an expensive dagger owned by the samurai's wife: he says that, in the confusion, he forgot all about it, and that it was foolish of him to leave behind such a valuable object.

The Wife's story:

The samurai's wife tells a different story to the court. She says that Tajōmaru left after raping her. She begged her husband to forgive her, but he simply looked at her coldly. She then freed him and begged him to kill her so that she would be at peace. He continued to stare at her with a look of loathing. His expression disturbed her so much that she fainted with dagger in hand. She awoke to find her husband dead with the dagger in his chest. She attempted to kill herself, but failed in all her efforts.

The Samurai's story:

The court then hears the story of the deceased samurai, told through a [medium](#). The samurai claims that Tajōmaru, after raping his wife, asked her to travel with him. She accepted and asked Tajōmaru to kill her husband so that she would not feel the guilt of belonging to two men. Tajōmaru, shocked by this request, grabbed her, and gave the samurai a choice of letting the woman go or killing her. ("For these words alone," the dead samurai recounted, "I was ready to pardon his crime.") The woman fled, and Tajōmaru, after attempting to recapture her, gave up and set the samurai free. The samurai then killed himself with his own dagger; later, somebody removed the dagger from his chest.

The Woodcutter's story:

Back at Rashōmon gate (after the trial), the woodcutter explains to the commoner that the samurai's story was a lie. The woodcutter had actually witnessed the rape and murder, he says, but just did not want to get too involved at the trial. According to the woodcutter's new story, Tajōmaru begged the samurai's wife to marry him, but the woman instead freed her husband. The husband was initially unwilling to fight Tajōmaru, saying he would not risk his life for a spoiled woman, but the woman then criticized both him and Tajōmaru, saying they were not real men and that a real man would fight for a woman's love. She spurred the men to fight one another, but then hid her face in fear once they raise swords; the men, too, were visibly fearful as they begin fighting. They began a duel that was much more pitiful than Tajōmaru's account had made it sound, and Tajōmaru ultimately won through a stroke of luck. After some hesitation he killed the samurai, and the woman fled in horror. Tajōmaru could not catch her, but took the samurai's sword and left the scene limping.

Climax:

At the temple, the woodcutter, priest, and commoner are interrupted from their discussion of the woodcutter's account by the sound of a crying baby. They find the baby abandoned in a basket, and the commoner takes a kimono and an amulet that have been left for the baby. The woodcutter reproaches the commoner for stealing from the abandoned baby, but the commoner chastises him. Having deduced that the woodcutter in fact stole the dagger from the scene of the murder, the commoner mocks him, "a bandit calling another a bandit". The commoner leaves Rashōmon, claiming that all men are motivated only by [self-interest](#).

These deceptions and lies shake the priest's faith in humanity. He is brought back to his senses when the woodcutter reaches for the baby in the priest's arms. The priest is suspicious at first, but the woodcutter explains that he intends to take care of the baby along with his own children, of whom he already has six. This simple revelation recasts the woodcutter's story and the subsequent theft of the dagger in a new light. The priest gives the baby to the woodcutter, saying that the woodcutter has given him reason to continue having hope in humanity. The film closes on the woodcutter, walking home with the baby. The rain has stopped and the clouds have opened revealing the sun in contrast to the beginning where it was overcast.

INFLUENCE OF SILENT FILM AND MODERN ART:

Kurosawa's admiration for [silent film](#) and [modern art](#) can be seen in the film's minimalist sets. Kurosawa felt that sound cinema multiplies the complexity of a film: "Cinematic sound is never merely accompaniment, never merely what the sound machine caught while you took the scene. Real sound does not merely add to the images, it multiplies it." Regarding *Rashomon*, Kurosawa said, "I like silent pictures and I always have... I wanted to restore some of this beauty. I thought of it, I remember in this way: one of techniques of modern art is simplification, and that I must therefore simplify this film

Accordingly, there are only three settings in the film: [Rashōmon](#) gate, the woods and the [courtyard](#). The gate and the courtyard are very simply constructed and the [woodland](#) is real. This is partly due to the low budget that Kurosawa got from Daiei, the producer of the film.

Symbolic use of light:

Rashomon was shot directly into the sun. In the shots of the actors, Kurosawa wanted to use natural light, but it was too weak; they solved the problem by using a mirror to reflect the natural light. The result is to make the strong sunlight look as though it has traveled through the branches, hitting the actors. The rain in the film had to be tinted with black ink because camera lenses could not capture rain made with pure water.

Film critic, [Robert Altman](#) compliments Kurosawa's use of "dappled" light throughout the film, which gives the characters and settings further ambiguity. In his essay "Rashomon",

[Tadao Sato](#) suggests that the film (unusually) uses sunlight to symbolize evil and sin in the film, arguing that the wife gives in to the bandit's desires when she sees the sun. However, Professor Keiko I. McDonald opposes Sato's idea in her essay "The Dialectic of Light and Darkness in Kurosawa's *Rashomon*". She says the film conventionally uses light to symbolize "good" or "reason" and darkness to symbolize "bad" or "impulse". She interprets the scene mentioned by Sato differently; pointing out that the wife gives herself to the bandit when the sun slowly fades out. McDonald also reveals that Kurosawa was waiting for a big cloud to appear over Rashomon gate to shoot the final scene in which the woodcutter takes the abandoned baby home; Kurosawa wanted to show that there might be another dark rain any time soon, even though the sky is clear at this moment. Unfortunately, the final scene appears optimistic because it was too sunny and clear to produce the effects of an overcast sky.

Allegorical and symbolic content

The film depicts the [rape](#) of a woman and the murder of her [samurai](#) husband through the widely differing accounts of four [witnesses](#), including the bandit/rapist, the wife, the dead man (speaking through a medium), and lastly the narrator, the one witness that seems the most objective and least biased. The stories are [mutually contradictory](#) and not even the final version can be seen as unmotivated by factors of ego and face. Even the actors kept approaching Kurosawa wanting to know the truth, which he claimed was not the point of the film as he intended it to be an exploration of multiple realities rather than an exposition of a particular truth. Later film and TV uses of the "[Rashomon effect](#)" focus on revealing "the truth" in a now conventional technique that presents the final version of a story as the truth, an approach that only matches Kurosawa's film on the surface. Due to its emphasis on the subjectivity of truth and the uncertainty of factual accuracy, *Rashomon* has been read by some as an allegory of the defeat of Japan at the end of World War II. James F. Davidson's article "Memory of Defeat in Japan: A Reappraisal of *Rashomon*" in the December 1954 issue of the *Antioch Review*, is an early analysis of the World War II defeat elements.

Another allegorical interpretation of the film is mentioned briefly in a 1995 article "Japan: An Ambivalent Nation, an Ambivalent Cinema" by David M. Desser. Here, the film is seen as an allegory of the [atomic bomb](#) and Japanese defeat. It also briefly mentions James Goodwin's view on the influence of post-war events on the film.

Symbolism runs rampant throughout the film and much has been written on the subject. Bucking tradition, Miyagawa directly filmed the sun through the leaves of the trees, as if to show the light of truth becoming obscured. The gatehouse that we continually return to as the 'home' location for the storytelling serves as a visual metaphor for a gateway into the story, and the fact that the three men at the gate gradually tear it down and burn it as the stories are told is a further comment on the nature of the truth of what they are telling.

Influence on philosophy

Rashomon plays a central role in [Martin Heidegger](#)'s dialogue between a Japanese person and an inquirer. Where the inquirer praises the film early on for being a way into the "mysterious" Japanese world, the Japanese person condemns the film for being too European and dependent on a certain objectifying realism not present in traditional Japanese [noh](#) plays.

The [political scientist Graham Allison](#) claimed to have used *Rashomon* as a starting point for his magnum opus, *Essence of Decision*, in which he told the story of the [Cuban Missile Crisis](#) from three different theoretical viewpoints (and, as a result, the Crisis is described and explained in three entirely different ways).

"Rashomon" is a brilliant but bleak and very dramatic examination of epistemology, the philosophy of knowledge, the need for certainty and its frail attainment.

The film never shows us the incident as it happened, it only shows us the incident in flashback, rather multiple flashbacks as narrated by each of the protagonists and the ostensible eyewitness. In a "conventional" film the viewer would expect the flashbacks to be linear; the flashbacks would depict pieces of the "truth" or the "true facts of the case" as they unfolded sequentially in time, with each flashback adding to and completing the entire narrative. At the end the viewer would know what "actually happened", pass a judgment, and leave satisfied. But this is where Kurosawa deviates from the set norms. In a brilliant masterstroke, Kurosawa shows each flashback as different; each version of the incident as narrated by a protagonist has a different take on what happened in the forest. The viewer is then left with the question – what "really" happened in the forest? And that is where the film moves into the realms of the classic. For most of us "reality" is something that is objective and independent of us. What is "real" exists independently of us and would continue to exist even if we were not present.

CINEMA6: **CHEMMEEN**

DIRECTOR: [RAMU KARIAT](#)

Chemmeen is a 1965 [Malayalam romantic drama film](#) based on the highly acclaimed [novel of the same name](#) by [Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai](#) and directed by [Ramu Kariat](#) from a screenplay by [S. L. Puram Sadanandan](#).

The film tells the story of a pre-marital and later extra marital relationship between Karuthamma, the daughter of an ambitious Hindu fisherman, and Pareekutty, the son of a Muslim trader. The theme of the film is based around the popular belief among the fishermen communities along the coastal [Kerala](#) State in southern India regarding chastity. If a married fisher woman was faithless when her husband was out in the sea, the Sea Goddess (Kadalamma literally meaning Mother Sea) would consume him. The film is usually cited as

the first notable creative film in South India. It was also the first South Indian film to win the [Indian President's Gold Medal for the Best Film](#), which it did so in 1965.

Karuthamma is the daughter of an ambitious Hindu fisherman, Chembankunju. She is in love with a young Muslim fish trader, Pareekutty. Chembankunju's only aim in life is to own a boat and net. Pareekutty finances Chembankunju to realise this dream. This is on a condition that the haul by the boat will be sold only to him. Karuthamma's mother Chakki comes to know about the love affair of her daughter with Pareekutty, and reminds her daughter about the life they lead within the boundaries of strict social tradition and warns her to keep away from such a relationship. The fisherfolks believe that a fisherwoman has to lead a life within the boundaries of strict social traditions and an affair or marriage with a person of another religion will subject the entire community to the wrath of the sea.

Karuthamma sacrifices her love for Pareekutty and marries Palani, an orphan discovered by Chembankunju in the course of one of his fishing expeditions. Following the marriage, Karuthamma accompanies her husband to his village, despite her mother's sudden illness and her father's requests to stay. In his fury, Chembankunju disowns her. On acquiring a boat and a net and subsequently adding one more, Chembankunju becomes more greedy and heartless. With his dishonesty, he drives Pareekutty to bankruptcy. After the death of his wife, Chembankunju marries Pappikunju, the widow of the man from whom he had bought his first boat. Panchami, Chembankunju's younger daughter, leaves home to join Karuthamma, on arrival of her step mother. Chembankunju's savings is manipulated by his second wife. The setbacks in life turns Chembankunju mad.

Meanwhile, Karuthamma has endeavoured to be a good wife and mother, but scandal about her old love for Pareekutty spreads in the village. Palani's friends ostracize him and refuse to take him fishing with them. By a stroke of fate, Karuthamma and Pareekutty meet one night and their old love is awakened. Palani, at sea alone and baiting a shark, is caught in a huge whirlpool and is swallowed by the sea. Next morning, Karuthamma and Pareekutty, are also found dead hand in hand, washed ashore. At a distance, there lies a baited dead shark.

Chemmeen was recognized as a technically and artistically brilliant cinema. Incidentally, it was also one of the first Malayalam movies in colour. It was also a prominent instance of collaborative work involving technicians from [Bollywood](#) such as Hrishikesh Mukherjee and Manna Dey with those of [South India](#). The commercial success of this movie is believed to have brought a sea-change in the way Malayalam films were made. *Chemmeen* has won the President's gold medal.
