

English Language and Literature

SEMESTER V

Core Course VIII – Film Studies

(EN 1543)

Part 2

FILM MOVEMENTS



SOVIET MONTAGE (1924-1930)

- Montage is a technique in film editing in which a series of shots are edited into a sequence to compact space, time, and information.
- Visual montage may combine shots to tell a story chronologically or may juxtapose images to produce an impression or to illustrate an association of ideas.
- Montage technique developed early in cinema, primarily through the work of the American directors Edwin S. Porter and D.W. Griffith.

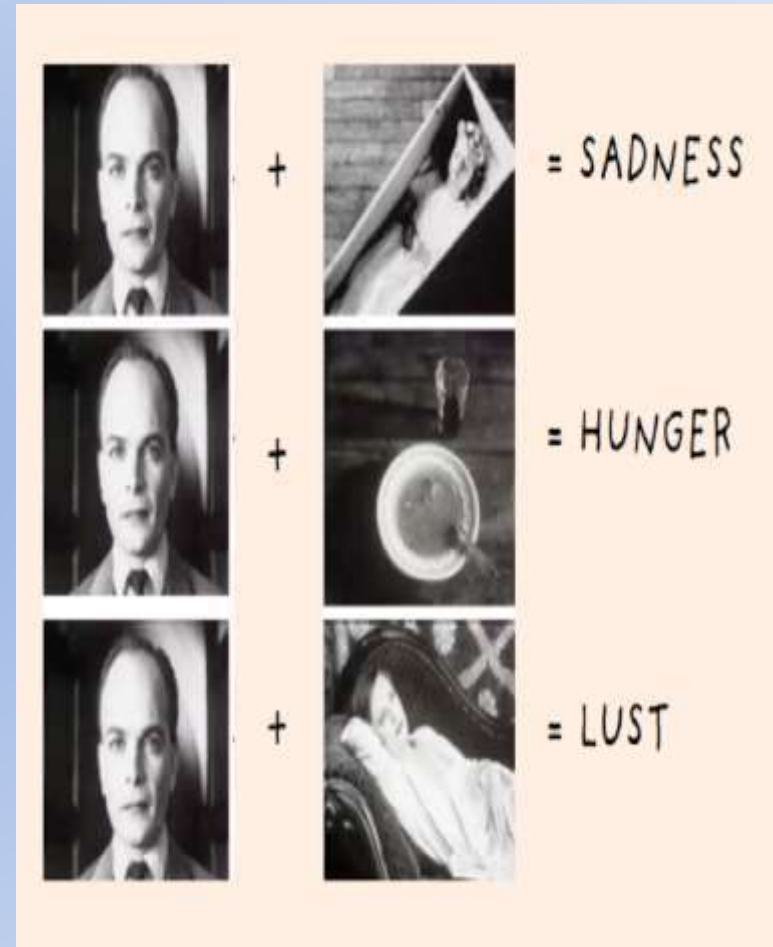
Soviet Montage

- Soviet Montage describes cutting together images that aren't in spatial or temporal continuity.
- Director Lev Kulshov first conceptualized montage theory on the basis that one frame may not be enough to convey an idea or an emotion
- •The audience are able to view two separate images and subconsciously give them a collective context.

- In the 1920s, a lack of film stock meant that Soviet filmmakers often re-edited existing films or learned how to make films by deconstructing old ones rather than shooting new material.
- When they did shoot film, they often had only short lengths of film left over from other productions, so they not only used short shots, they often planned them in great detail.

Kuleshov Effect

- Kuleshov experiment is a good example.
- The basic notion that a subsequent image could affect the viewer's interpretation of the previous one was supported by behavioral psychology theories popular at the time.
- Kuleshov concluded from his experiment that editing created the opportunity to link entirely unrelated material in the minds of the viewers, who were no longer seen as simply absorbing meaning from the images, but actually creating meaning by associating the different images and drawing meaning from their juxtaposition.



- Sergei Eisenstein took this idea a step further and tried to use montage to allow viewers to participate in the film by continually working out in their own minds what the relationships between shots might represent, and what the significance of the juxtapositions were.
- In other words, viewers constantly had to actively invent a synthesis between shots. So for Eisenstein, editing was about affecting the viewer's psyche so that, rather than being manipulated, they would come to an "intellectual perception of revolutionary history."

German expressionism

1919-1927



- German expressionism was an art movement that began life around 1910 emerging in architecture, theatre and art.
- Expressionism art typically presented the world from a subjected view and thus attempted to show a distorted view of this world to evoke a mood or idea.
- The emotional meaning of the object is what mattered to the artist and not the physical reality.

What is Expressionism in Cinema?

- Films would use atmospheric lighting, asymmetrical camera angles and highlight many objects and characters with the use of high contrast between dark and light
- Plots that featured in German expressionism were usually occupied with madness, identity of one's self and insanity

Defining Characteristics

- Goal to express feelings in the most direct and extreme fashion possible. . . extreme distortion to express an inner emotional reality rather than surface appearances”.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari,
Robert Wiene, 1919



Form & Style:

Mise en scene most important

- Distortion, stylization of sets, costumes, makeup, acting, lighting
- High contrast (in film, B&W; in the other arts, with colors)



The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari,
Robert Wiene, 1919



Importance of Movement

- Widespread impact, due to Germany's status as #2 filmmaking nation 1918-1933
- The horror genre as a whole owes a debt to the German expressionist films of the 1920's. While many of its motifs can be seen in today's horror films such as shadows and eerie settings, the Universal horror films of the 1930's are perhaps the best films to display the expressionist influence.

Important Practitioners

- Robert Wiene (1873-1938) (*Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, 1919)
- Fritz Lang (1890-1976) (*Die Niebelungen*, including *Siegfried*, 1924; *Metropolis*, 1927)
- F. W. Murnau (1888-1931) (*Nosferatu*, 1922; *Faust*, 1926; *Sunrise* (U.S. release, 1927))

The Death of the Movement

- Displaced artistically by new realism, e.g., “street films”
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- Prominent German Expressionist directors and performers were lured away to Hollywood

French poetic realism

- 1930s – 1940s Poetic realism films are “recreated realism”, stylised and studio bound, rather than approaching the “socio-realism of the documentary”.
- They usually have a fatalistic view of life with their characters living on the margins of society, either as unemployed members of the working class or as criminals.
- After a life of disappointment, the characters get a last chance at love, but are ultimately disappointed again and the films frequently end with disillusionment or death.

- Major themes include disillusionment, disappointment, nostalgia and bitterness. They portray the ominous, disillusioned atmosphere of pre-WWII France.
- The overall tone often resembles nostalgia and bitterness. They are "poetic" because of a heightened aestheticism that sometimes draws attention to the representational aspects of the films.
- leading filmmakers were Julien Duvivier, Marcel Carne, and Jean Renoir.

Italian Neo-Realism

- A style of film characterized by stories set amongst the poor and working class, filmed on location, frequently using nonprofessional actors.
- A moment or a trend in Italian film, rather than an actual school or group of theoretically motivated and like-minded directors and scriptwriters. Its impact nevertheless has been enormous, not only on Italian film but also on **French New Wave** cinema and ultimately on films all over the world.



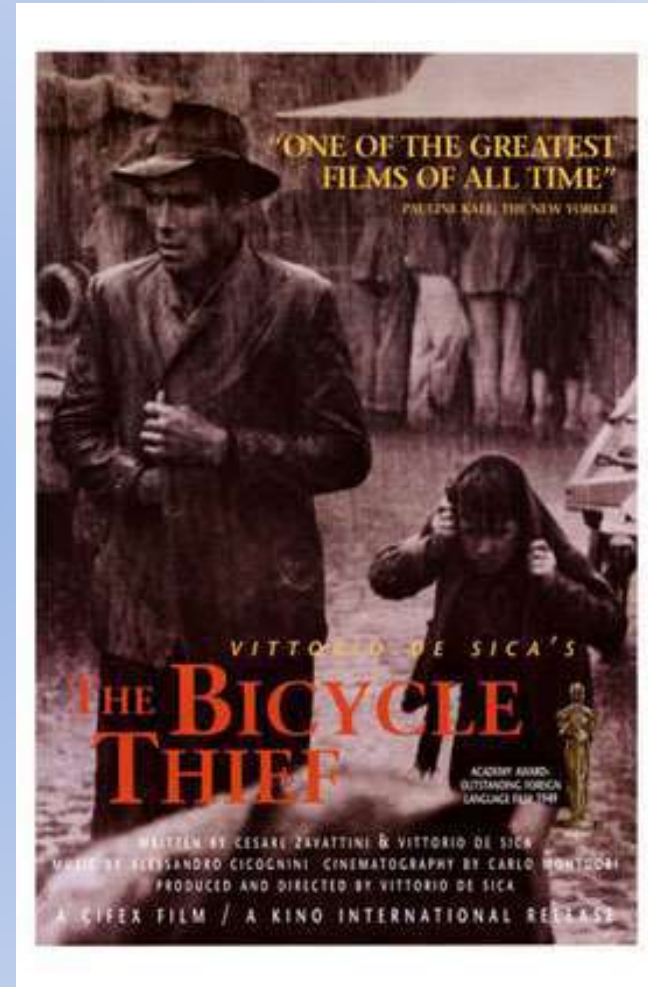
COMMON FEATURES

- ❖ An avoidance of neatly plotted stories in favour of loose, episodic structure .
- ❖ A new democratic spirit with emphasis on the value of ordinary people.
- ❖ A compassionate point of view [towards the poor and the oppressed] and a refusal to make facile moral judgments.
- ❖ Noticeable long take style.
- ❖ Poor neighbourhood and readymade location.
- ❖ There is the occasional improvisation of scripts.
- ❖ Avoided editing and lighting of the location

- Since this movement was also an opposition to Hollywood and its Happy ending films, realist directors made it as a point not to make films with happy ending.
- The use of conversational speech, not literary dialogue.
- The avoidance of artifice in editing, camerawork, and lighting in favour of a simple ‘styleless’ style.
- Till day neo-realism films are considered as documentary styled films.

Best directors of Italian Neo-realism

- 1. Vittorio Di Sica
- 2. Federico Fellini
- 3. Robert Rossellini
- 4. Luchino Visconti



French New Wave (1959 – c. 1970)



- Young director fighting to make personal films that defy the conventional industry” Rebellious against what came before in France.
- Mostly male film fans self-educated at French Cinematheque in Paris (founded by Henri Langlois—the documentary *Henri Langlois*)

French New Wave: Origins

- A very coherent group, many wrote for the journal *Cahiers du Cinema* in their 20's
 - *Cahiers* co-founded and edited by Andre Bazin (1918-1958)
 - The *Cahiers* group:
 - François Truffaut
 - Jean-Luc Godard
 - Alain Resnais
 - Claude Chabrol
 - Eric Rohmer
 - Jacques Rivette



French New Wave: Origins

- Tend to break the rules of continuity editing and using free editing style.
- Often drew attention from audiences by discontinuity, reminding them that they are watching a movie.
- For example, the editing style they always used is jump cut.

French New Wave: Substance

- “Film of the camera, not of the pen”
- A wide variety of genres and approaches, almost always treated in a “revisionist” way—e.g., film noir, gangster cinema turned on its side for a film like Godard’s *Breathless*, Truffaut’s *Shoot the Piano Player*, or Melville’s *Le Samourai*
- Urban scenes “captured with the immediacy of Direct Cinema”.

FILM TECHNIQUES

- Experimenting with different filming techniques, subject matter and methods of editing.
- Jump cuts.
- Existential themes.
- Improvised dialogue and plotting.
- Direct sound recording
- Natural lighting, Shooting on location.
- Long takes.
- Low budget approach & Rapid changes of scenes.

French New Wave Directors:

- Claude Chabrol
- Jean-Luc Godard
- Alain Resnais
- Jacques Rivette
- Eric Rohmer
- François Truffaut

IMPACTS

- Veritable explosion of films that rejected old subjects and old forms as well.
- The films were increasingly politicized as the 1960's progressed.
- This New Wave spread to countries like Britain, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Brazil and so on.

Classical Hollywood Cinema

The Duel side of the classical period



Classical Narrative of Hollywood

- “A chain of events in a cause-effect relationship occurring in time and space” by Bordwell and Thompson, Film art.
- The term classical Hollywood cinema was coined by David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson.
- Over 40 yrs from 1917 to 1960s there were distinctive collection of movies which had the similar way of story telling which was called the Classical Hollywood cinema. The film style have a set of unwritten rules which was widely accepted by the film makers

The 3 Act Structure

- Routine life (Introduction of the Problem)



- Problem solving (The character logically works through the problem creating a story)



- Problem Resolved (end of the problem where the life comes back to normal)

3 Systems of narrative films

- Narrative logic
- Representation of time
- Representation of space

(BGM and Editing applies for all the three above)

(Lighting and camera movements play an important role in classical Hollywood movies.)



Film Style

- The classical Hollywood style falls directly in between Realism and Formalism.
- Although the film is shot in a controlled environment by the directors orders the environment has to look realistic and believable to the viewers



Editing

- Editing plays a major role in films because they are important to make the film move forward.
- In classical period the Type of editing which was mostly preferred was continuity editing.
- The important goal of this type of editing is to make the cuts invisible.



Space and Time

- **The time and space are unified and linear to match the perception of reality in the films**
- **For example: They prefer to take a 180° shot to move around the characters than using jump cuts.**

Mise en scène



- **The term was originated in theaters which means Staging a scene in a aesthetical arrangement of actors, set, lightings, props that the audience sees in a particular frame.**
- **The Mise en scène is designed by production designer in collaboration with the Director of the film he is working in.**
- **Each element in the Mise en scène adds to the films mood to the Audience.**

Summary

- **Classical Hollywood style is so predictable**
- **In the development of the plot and the story every scene is motivated**
- **The classical movie answers all the questions in the story by the course of the movie so by the end of a classical narrated cinema the audience does not leave home with a startled feeling like most of the contemporary films gives us today.**

History of Indian Cinema

- Indian cinema dates all the way back to 1913. Dhundiraj Govind Phalke (1870 - 1944) affectionately called Dadasaheb Phalke is considered as the '**father of Indian Cinema**'.
- The silent film *Raja Harishchandra*, the first-ever Indian feature film is created by Dadasaheb Phalke in the year 1913.
- The first full-length story film of Phalke was completed in 1912 and released at the Coronation cinema on April 21, 1913, for special invitees and members of the Press. The film was widely acclaimed by one and all and proved to be a great success.
- The phenomenal success of *Raja Harishchandra* was kept up by Phalke with a series of mythological films that followed - *Mohini Bhasmasur* (1914), significant for introducing the first woman to act before the cameras - **Kamalabai Gokhale**.

1920-1945

- The early 1920s saw the rise of several new production companies, and most films made during this era were either mythological or historical in nature.
- *Alam Ara* - 1931 saw the release of *Alam Ara*, the first talkie, and the film that paved the way for the future of Indian cinema.
- The film is a love story between a prince and a gypsy girl, based on a Parsi play written by Joseph David.
- Both the movie and its music were widely successful, including the hit song "De de khuda ke naam per", which was also the first song of the Indian cinema.
- The number of production companies began to skyrocket, as did the number of films being produced each year—from 108 in 1927, to 328 in 1931.
- Color films soon began to appear. Giant movie palaces were built.
- The WWII years saw a decrease in the number of films produced as a result of limited imports of film stock and government restrictions on the maximum allowed running time.

Birth of the new wave

- It was around 1947 that the industry went through significant changes.
- It was during this time that the modern Indian film was born.
- The historical and mythological stories of the past were now being replaced by **social-reformist** films, which turned an often critical eye on certain social practices.

THE GOLDEN AGE

- 50s and 60s were considered as the Golden Age of Indian cinema.
- The first International Film Festival of India held in early 1952 at Bombay had a great impact on the Indian Cinema.
- The big turning point came in 1955 with the arrival of Satyajit Ray and his classic *Pather Panchali* which opened up a new path leading the Indian film to the World Film scene.
- The 1950s saw filmmakers such as **Bimal Roy** and **Satyajit Ray** focusing on the lives of the lower classes, who until then were mostly ignored as subjects.
- Inspired by social and political changes, as well as cinematic movements in both the US and Europe, the 1960s saw the birth of India's own New Wave, founded by directors such as **Ray, Mrinal Sen, and Ritwik Ghatak.**

The *Masala* Film

- Manmohan Desai, one of the more successful Bollywood directors of the 1970s who is considered by many to be the father of the *Masala* film, defended his approach thus: “I want people to forget their misery.
- The mixture of action, romance, comedy and of course musical numbers is a model that still dominates the Bollywood industry, and though greater attention is now paid to plot, character development, and dramatic tension, it is, in most cases, sheer star power that accounts for a film’s success

HISTORY OF MALAYALAM CINEMA(1920s &30s)

- **The Silent Era**
- The first Malayalam cinema was produced and directed by, J C Daniel, a dentist by profession who didn't had any prior experience with cinema.
- His film *Vigathakumaran* was released in 1928, but failed economically.
- But it is notable that while mythological films ruled all over the Indian cinema arena, J C Daniel had the courage to produce the first ever Malayalam film with a social theme.
- The economic failure of *Vigathakumaran* discouraged him from producing further films.
- The ill luck of Malayalam cinema continued.
- The second film *Marthandavarma* based on a novel of the same name by C V Raman Pillai, directed by P V Rao and produced by Sunderraj released in 1933.
- But due to a legal confrontation regarding the rights of the film, the producer had to withdraw the film from cinema halls after few exhibitions.
- By *Marthandavarma* the history of silent Malayalam cinema too came to an end.

- The First Talkie
- Indian cinema had already entered the talkie age even before *Marthandavarma* was released.
- ***Balan***, the first Malayalam cinema with a sound track was released in **1938**. Produced by Tamilian, T R Sunderam at the Modern Theatres, Balan was directed by Notani.
- Even though this film could be considered irrelevant in artistic sense, its economic success created a base to the Malayalam film industry.
- Followed by the success of *Balan*, *Jnambika* was released in 1940.

HISTORY OF MALAYALAM CINEMA(1940s &50s)

- The first major film studio, Udaya, was established in 1947.
- 1950s : Themes from very relevant social issues.
- Linked with the material from literature, drama, and politics.
- *Jeevithanauka, (1951)*
- *Jeevithanouka* was a turning point for Malayalam cinema.
- This highly dramatic musical film, which narrated the story of ego clashes in a joint family, was mainly directed towards the women audience.
- *Jeevithanouka* was a huge success, and can be considered as the first 'super hit' of Malayalam cinema.
- *Neelakkuyil – 1954*
- Wins the President's silver medal.
- Scripted by novelist, Uroob, Directed by P. Bhaskaran and Ramu Kariat.
- **Newspaper Boy -1955** - Contains elements of Italian neorealism.

HISTORY OF MALAYALAM CINEMA(1960s)

- After the success of *Neelakuyil*, films with authentic Malayalam stories set in the backdrops of Kerala villages started arriving.
- Ramu Karyat, the director of *Neelakkuyil* directed ***Chemmeen(1965)***.
- First Malayalam film to win the National Film Award for Best Film.
- Post-Chemmeen Era
- The post-Chemmeen Malayalam cinema arena saw an upsurge in quality films, mainly based on literary works of some of the best writers of Kerala.
- First colour film ***Kandam Bacha Coat*** 1961.
- Other notable films
- ***Murapennu*** - The renowned Malayalam writer M T Vasudevan Nair made his film debut by writing screenplay for *Murapennu*.
- ***Oolavum Theeravum*** by P N Menon .
- ***Odeyil Ninnu*** by K.S.Sethumadhavan.
- ***Bhargavi Nilayam*** A.Vincent.

The Malayalam New Wave

- The growth of film society movement and the screenings of world classics forced a drastic change in Malayalee film sensitivity during the early 1970s.
- A new movement often termed as the 'New Wave Malayalam Cinema' or the '**Malayalam Parallel Cinema**' emerged.
- Adoor Gopalakrishnan made his first film *Swayamvaram* in **1972**, which made Malayalam cinema noticed at International film arena.
- The first Malayalam film to participate in an international film festival.
- G Aravindan through his *Uttarayanam* in 1974 accelerated this radical change in Malayalam 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.

Film Adaptation

- A film adaptation is the transfer of a written work, in a whole or in part, to a feature film. It is a type of derivative work. Whether adhering strictly to the source material or interpreting concepts derived from the original work, adaptation is necessarily extensions or interpretations of the original story.
- **Close Adaptation**, when the text is translated as directly as possible into the language of film.
- **Intermediate** Adaptation is all about departing from the text, significantly reinterpreting it, but retains its core structure. Most of the adaptations come under the Intermediate adaptation.
- The concept which the text is used only as an inspiration for the film adaptation comes under the concept of **Loose Adaptation**.

FIDELITY

- The term ‘fidelity’ is closely discussed with the concept of adaptation.
- The degree **of fidelity** represents how faithful the film adaptation is to the original text. Even a faithful adaptation might take many forms. When an adaptation is compared with the literary work it is based on, the stress is on the ways the film creators move within the field of inter-textual connections and how they employ the means of expression offered by the film art to convey meanings.
- In order to be seen as a good adaptation, a film had to come to terms with what was considered as the ‘spirit’ of the book and to take into account all layers of the book’s complexity. For instance if one were to take a canonical realist novel and ask five faithful and realist directors to adapt it, the result would vary widely for a very simple reason. Film makers had to be seen as readers with their own rights and each adaptation – as a result of individual reading process.
- Adaptations were seen by most critics as inferior to the adapted texts, **as minor, subsidiary, derivative or secondary products**, lacking the symbolic richness of the books and missing their spirit.

Elision and Interpolation

- Eric Von attempted a literal adaptation of Frank Norris's novel *Mc Teague* in 1924 with his film *Greed*. The resulting film was 9 1/2 hours long. It was cut at studio to four hours and then to two hours. The end result was a film that was largely incoherent. Therefore, elision is nearly mandatory.
- In some cases, however, film adaptations will also interpolate scenes or invent characters. Film makers will invent new characters or create stories that were not present in the source material at all.