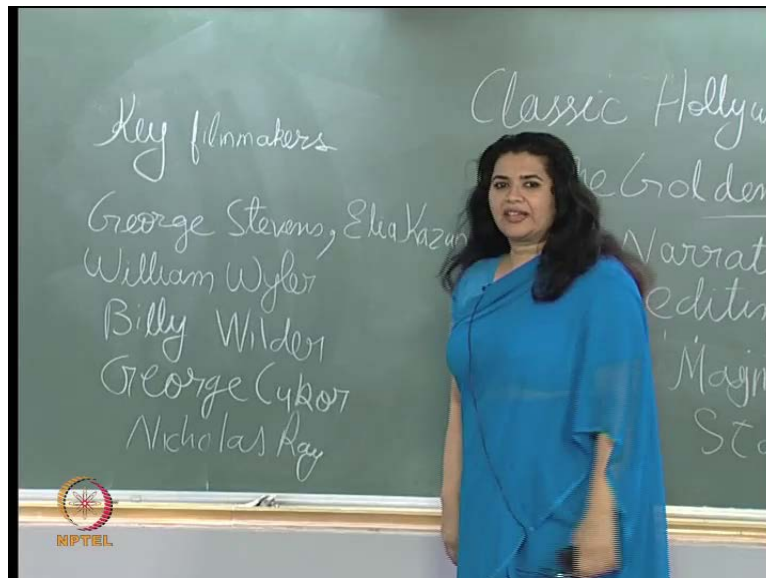


Introduction to Film Studies
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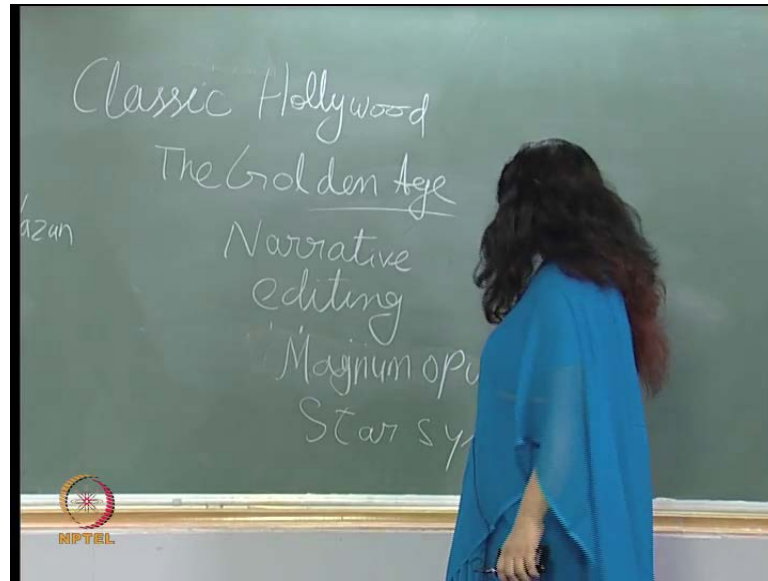
Lecture No. # 23
Classic Hollywood (Contd...)
-Major filmmakers
(George Stevens, William Wyler, Billy Wilder, Elia Kazan, George Cuker)
-Melodramer

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Good morning. Continuing with our discussion of classic Hollywood, better known as the golden age of Hollywood and we were also talking about the period, when Hays code was in existence. So, yesterday we were discussing a couple of directors. Of course, the biggest and the most extravagant of all directors during that period was Cecil B. Demille and also after that we looked at how Frank Capra started making all those very popular sentimentalist and populist movies.

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And, today we are going to again continuing with our discussion of narrative, editing, characterization in the golden age of Hollywood, during the golden age of Hollywood how most movies are at least most well known movies fell in the category of magnum opus. And how studios control stars; so stars system or studio controlled star system, those are the key features that will be discussing.

Key film makers yesterday we talked about Cecil B. Demille and Frank Capra. Today we will be talking about George Stevens, Elia Kazan, William Wyler, Billy Wilder, George Cukor, I gave you the homework, and Nicholas Ray. So, William Wyler, he was also a German origin. Yesterday we were talking about how several influential directors of that period were of German origin having fled the oppressive, Nazi regime. During the 1930s Pit Slang was one of those directors, if you remember when we were talking about cinema and modernism; Pit Slang.

So, William Wyler; he worked with Gregg Toland. There was the partnership; there was a successful collaboration between William Wyler and Gregg Toland that cinematographer of Citizen Kane. Andm Citizen Kane if you remember it today, remembered for it is deep focus and montages. William Wyler too, is known for his use of for his employment of deep focus. So, you have to give some credit to Gregg Toland also.

So, use deep focus and focused on background details, you remember that. Deep focus was not just focusing on tight close up. Many directors did that. We are going to look at for example, of cinema of George Stevens in particular, who believed in using tight close ups, beautiful close ups. People like William Wyler and Orson Welles, on the other hand, believed in the deep focus where foreground was important as background was as important as foreground, and all the details, attention to all the details in the frame was important. William Wyler is also known for avoiding close ups. So, he did not believe again in beautifying or prettifying faces, which George Stevens was known for.

And, if you compare him to Frank Capra, William Wyler's most important contribution is avoiding sentimentality and simplistic utopian kind of cinema. He is more sophisticated and more elegant, sensitive, yet he avoids sentimentality; the Capra is sentimentality. His major films; one is Jezebel with Bette Davis. Jezebel was an open competition to gone with the wind and Bette Davis was much appreciated for her turn in this movie along with Henry Fonda. But also important is that she competed, she was one of the contenders for the role of Scarlett O Hara, and she did not get the part. Vivien Leigh famously got the part, but Jezebel again is that trail of a southern bell and she was much appreciated for the role.

William Wyler's other important films; Wuthering heights based on Emily Bronte's novel starring Lawrence Olivier, The letter and the little foxes again with Bette Davis. Mrs. Miniver this is one of the popular films of William Wyler. And The Best Years of Our Lives is about family, whose lives changes once the father of the family returns after the war, Second World War. The Heiress based on a short story Washington square by Henry James starring Montgomery Clift and Olivia De Havilland.

William Wyler proved his versatility with all kinds of john films. He also experimented with nova, film nova that you are already familiar with exploring the darker respect of personality and life. And then he also made a couple of romantic comedies, and the most popular among those romantic comedies is Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn's starrer Roman holiday which was Audrey Hepburn debut movie and which had the Oscar. William Wyler shot major portions of the film on location in Rome. His grandest achievement however was Ben-Hur starring Charlton Heston, and it is an epic. For a long time, the record remained unbroken for earning eleven Academy awards.

Billy Wilder, some like it hot the seven year itch, and all those memorable films. He was born in Austria, so again one of those directors, one of those immigrant directors. Frank Capra was a Sicilian, remember that William Wyler and then Billy Wilder in the same league. He has to leave Germany, because of his Jewish background. Moved to Hollywood in 1934 and started his career as a screen writer.

See, Billy Wilder today may appear dated to many people, because his most films are quite unsubtle, quite melodramatic. We are going to look at what is melodrama, as well. But then he is also known for depiction of mission topic cynicism and skepticism, perhaps that could have been his experience with the Nazi regime. But he also played to the gallery and often made melodramatic and over the top kind of films.

One of his most famous films *Sunset Boulevard* is about an ageing, fading actress played by Gloria Swanson, who lives in an ivory tower. She is in the movie, she is, we are told that she belong to the silent age era. She was the huge star and then of course, as it happens with most actresses, her career started fading away with age and also with the advent of talking pictures. And now she lives all by herself with only one butler and later on we learnt that she was married to that butler, who was also instrumental in giving a push to her career because he was one of the greatest directors of that period. So, what an irony and it is a scattering commentary on Hollywood; a people how relationship change, how hierarchies change, how power structures change.

Our lady however, does not look or face to look at reality in the eye and still believes that she is huge. You know what is the famous line in the movie? I am big! It is the pictures that got small Concluding lines of the movie; of course Mr. Demille because she is now so deluded, she murdered, you know she guns down her lover as played by William Holden, who is a screen writer, a struggling screen writer. And he keeps her in good humor because she is supporting him financially. But then when he falls in love with younger woman, more saner woman; she, our heroine, she shoots him and that is the way the movie ends. And while she is taken away by the police and the cameras are all on her and the pictures has been taken by the press photographers and police photographers. And her parting shot is, Mr. Demille that is the reference to Cecil B. Demille, I am ready for my close-up, so the extent of megalomania, the extent of delusion about her own stardom. So, that is the commentary. So, it still reminds as one of his most watchable films.

And, how it is, it is the nova, of course the film nova, fits very neatly into that category. And Louis B. Mayer wanted Billy Wilder to be publicly thrashed, you know depicting Hollywood so negatively; because Hollywood is portrayed as the fake, as the phony, dream factory. And Louis B. Mayer felt that he is biting the hands and that is feeding him and announced that this man deserves to be whipped in public for making a movie like this.

His major films, all very important films for one reason or the other; double indemnity, which is again a film nova starring Barbara Steinbeck; Ace In The Hole Sabrina with Humphrey Bogart and Audrey Hepburn; The Seven Year Itch Marilyn Monroe; Some Like It Hot is the movie in which Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon, are in disguise as women. Remember, you must watch Some Like It Hot And Marilyn Monroe famously plays Sugar Kane in an all-girl band, and these two heroes, they are on the run from gangsters. They have witnessed a murder taking place on Valentine's Day. And then they are on the run and there is no way for them and they dress up as women and join this all-girl band headed by Marilyn Monroe and then the comedy. The Apartment again with Jack Lemmon, Shirley MacLaine and one of his most serious films, The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes where you have young Sherlock Holmes, and it is a romantic movie.

George Stevens, again a major director of golden, Hollywood golden age period from 1904 to 1975. Major themes of his films the outsider, is the protagonist. Somewhere, out of nowhere; a person just walks in a set up and then he takes over, how he look at the society around him, how he disturbs the equilibrium there. So, that is the major theme in George Stevens most movies.

His movies are also about the some versions of American dream and about repressed longings. The reason for all these things, if you read up on George Stevens, his movies definitely are highly moral. But then the moralities are much more complex, much more ambiguous as compare to the simple utopian fantasies of Frank Capra. He was highly regarded by his peers in Hollywood. But the French critics, the very powerful critics of cinema, they disregarded him and dismissed him off. They never thought of him athiar, Andrew who represented the tier critics in America. He too never thought much of George Stevens.

Today George Stevens is regarded as one of the most influential film makers of that period. His major films, and he too explored, he too experimented all kinds of genres. So, there is an adventure picture called Gunga Din with Cary Grant, based on a story by Rudyard Kipling. Applies in the sense; one of the best films, regarded film based on Theodore Dreiser's An American Tragedy starring Montgomery Clift and Elizabeth Taylor. Again, this is about the versions of great American dream. You must watch a place in the sun

And then of course, when we were talking about George Stevens and compared him to William Wyler, George Stevens is known for using beautiful close ups. And now it is accepted that the way he has used close ups of Montgomery Clift and Elizabeth Taylor in a place in the sun no one, no other directors utilized close up as the technique so really, brilliantly, before and after.

His other famous movies Shane which is a western, starring Alan Ladd and it has the famous exchange Shane in the restaurant, in a bar not a restaurant sorry in a bar to one of the tugs in the town. You speaking to me, and the tug responds, I do not see nobody else standing there, it is a, and after that, it was used famously by Taxi driver by Martin Scorsese. What are those lines? You talk to me, while I am the only one here.

Giant again a famous movie based on a novel by Edna Ferber. Starring who? James Dean, Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor, it was shot entirely on location in Texas and one of the three movies in which James being starred.

Elia Kazan, 1909 to 2003; again, like George Stevens comes from New York theatre background. He was one of the key founders of Actors studio and a key supporter of the Method school of acting and direction remember when we were discussing the method in one of our earlier session. Most of his films are adaptations of plays and novels. He was a theatre director, much before he burst on the scene as the major film maker, he was already a super star director on broad way. So, that is his value. The major theme in all his works, he is interested in social realism, of course because of his background; the New York theatre, method acting and studio actor, which was socialist kind of a set up. So, socialist realism and sympathy for the working class, main themes in works of Elia Kazan, also about sexual repression.

The great American dramatist Arthur Miller and Elia Kazan had long abiding friendship. So, Kazan also directed two of Miller's most successful and popular plays; *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman* that was on Broadway. That was on stage, both highly successful plays. But after that there was a fall out during the period, Arthur Miller refused to testify against fellow communist, whereas Kazan did, and why did Kazan do? Why did he testify at all? Because there was more at stake, Kazan has much more to lose than any one else; because by that time, he was already a major Hollywood director. And he knew that the career as the film director would be over, if he did not testify; so purely materialistic concerns. And he testified, and after that he was not blacklisted. Some people were like, Arthur Miller even for a while, but Kazan was more or less ostracized by his earlier friends.

Miller, while he was on good terms with Kazan, has written a screen play about the Brooklyn waterfront. He had done a lot of research and the script was called *The Hook* and Kazan was to direct it for Columbia pictures. But then after his refusal to testify before HUAC, Arthur Miller was fired. Kazan was still there. He remained on board. And Kazan and Miller stopped talking to each other for a very long time, till Miller came out with the play *After the Fall* (1964), which Kazan directed again.

So, Miller's script after *The Hook* whatever happened to it is based on the Waterfront by Harry Cohn who was the owner of Columbia pictures, he revised the script, modeled it, remodeled it, moulded it to an extent and it turned into *On the Waterfront*. Eventually, the movie was made *On the Waterfront* one of the greatest pictures of Elia Kazan starring Marlon Brando.

East of Eden Elia Kazan is credited with introducing James Dean in the movie. James Dean was essentially a theatre actor belonging to the Actors Studio in New York. But Elia Kazan was instrumental in bringing him to Hollywood and the result was *East of Eden* which, a movie which most of you are familiar with. I hope. Yes.

A Streetcar Named Desire Marlon Brando did the part on stage and Kazan directed it on stage. And then later he repeated the same star cast. The only exception was Vivien Leigh, who was casted as Blanche Dubois in the movie version of it. Who acted on the stage in the same part? Jessica Tandy, but then she was never considered the big star. So,

she lost the part. She was not taken, because she lost the star value. That is how Hollywood functions.

Gentleman's Agreement with Gregory Peck; A Face in the Crowd another very interesting movie in 1957 is about the games media plays in making some non-entity into Viva zapata, what is it about? It is cow boy, cow boy movie set in Mexico starring Marlon Brando. Baby Doll based on play by Tennessee Williams, again like a Streetcar named Desire Wild River with Montgomery Clift, who was another favorite actor of Elia Kazan; another great actor from the actor studio from New York. Splendor in the Grass with Warren Beatty and one of his last pictures was The Last Tycoon When we are talking about this movie starring Robert De Niro, based on life and times of Irving Thalberg, the MGM executive.

George Cukor and this was the homework I gave you. So, what are his movies? Good. My Fair Lady George Cukor, who has been labeled as the women's director. Yes. He directed the movie called The Women and he was forever labeled as women's director. But it was also used in a very derisive way because he was at the closet gay and he later came out in the open. There was nothing ambiguous about it. He was a gay.

And, most of his films are thrillers, screw ball, romantic comedies, even musicals. He was known as women's director and most of the leading lady would be nominated for the Academy awards. He himself received five best director nominations. He directed Greta Garbo in Camille and another great movie of his is The Philadelphia Story with Cary Grant, James Stewart and Katherine Hepburn; very witty, very smart and very elegant. That is George Cukor's basic style. Just like with Ingrid Bergman. A Star Is Born with Judy Garland and then My Fair Lady are his greatest achievements.

Nicholas Ray in 1911 to 1979, what did he make? Rebel without a Cause Most popular movie Rebel without a cause, he was celebrated as an athiar by the critics of cinema. And Jean-Luc Godard called Nicholas Ray, the highest and greatest of praises cinema is Nicholas ray

Interestingly, Nicholas Ray studied architecture under Frank Lloyd right, and he is known for his use of colors and his preference for using cinema scope, mode of projection. We have been talking about cinema scope, remember? Like Kazan, he was also involved in the left wing theatre in New York. He was closely associated with

Kazan for a very long time. And again like Kazan, some of the major themes that appear in his films is that the motive for the tragic hero; the Loners the Misfits who were eyes on the scene, individual versus society. His most significant films in are they Live by night in a Lonely Place Johnny Guitar and of course most famous is Rebel without a Cause with James Dean and Natalie Wood. Is there anyone in this class who has not watched Rebel without a cause, yes. You must watch it. If you know the east of Eden you must watch as well, it is one of the James most celebrate. Yes he worked only in three films, he could not take too much of an effort.

Giant by George Stevens may be little difficult to watch; because it does not have the coherent plot, Giant axe; one of the major criticisms against Giant and although George Stevens won the best director award, Academy award for the movie, but Giant is still remembered as movie that render too much. It does not have the focus plot, but Rebel without a cause is a highly watchable movie.

So, after the great directors, let us talk about the classic narrative. We have been talking about it for a quite a while. And one of the phrases attached to classic narrative is based on an affirmative consequential model. That is, it followed that cause and effect approach. That story demands a closure.

Golden age of Hollywood was also the age of magnum opus. It is widely believed that it Gone with the wind Ben Hur or The Ten Commandments are attempted, today it is not possible to make them; because of the shear extravaganza. They were possible at one point, but not anymore.

Now, a star system; a star system is also important for a movie and how studio controlled stars. So, some of the all time great stars like Betty Davis, like Cary Grant, like Katherine Hepburn and Clark Gable, they were all under contract by studios. And that is one of the features of classic Hollywood. With the emergence of new Hollywood, soon we are going to discuss about new Hollywood period also. So, these are major binaries, how stars became more and more independent after a certain period, once the studios have started losing control over them. But there was a point, where stars could not do anything without the permission of the studios. Everything was controlled. Everything, even the personal lives were governed by the studios.

We have been talking about editing techniques. So, classic Hollywood period, of course is known for the linear narration, if you remember what linear narration is. Linear editing techniques or devices are those were which do not call any attention to themselves.

Then, we come to that period, where when Godard's views his jump cut very effectively. Montage, of course it is a way of calling attention whatever happening, but deep focus to. But more or less, editing during classic Hollywood period was linear and continuous; where individual shots were ordered according to the temporal sequence of events. So, no jumping back and forth in time; it was all very linear. So, ordered according to the temporal sequence of events. That is what we mean by linear editing.

Now, if we had the stars and why did we have stars because stars guaranteed box office returns and stars has to be projected in a certain way. So, images of the stars were very important; how they were in the real life and how they would be on screen. Everything was controlled by the studios.

So, there is a very interesting story about Elizabeth Taylor, why did she marry so many times. Why did she marry first time at all? She was married, who was the first husband? Nicky Hilton. He was the owner of the Hilton hotels. The sign of Hilton group of hotels. And she was married off by age seventeen. And why was she married off at age seventeen? Because MGM, who controlled her, she was under contract by the MGM studio. They were just coming out with the picture starring Elizabeth Taylor called Father of the Bride Have you heard of that title? Spencer Tracy is the father; bride is played by young Elizabeth Taylor, who was just sixteen or seventeen at that point.

And the studio felt that Elizabeth Taylor does not have a grown up image. How do we release the movie about Elizabeth Taylor getting married, when she does not even have a proper relationship. The best way is to marry her off and find a groom, an appropriate groom. So, her, this match between Nicky Hilton and Elizabeth Taylor was not made by her parents, but by the studio bosses. So, that was extent of control. So, if you read Elizabeth Taylor's biography how to be a Movie Star you will come across all these interesting tidbits.

So, heroes had to be of certain stature and they were projected in a certain manner on screen. So, image of stars was very important. Billy Wilder famously said. You know what he said about stars? Billy Wilder? Never try to change the image of a star. It is a far

crime from the New York method of acting; where stars do whatever possible to change their image. But Billy Wilder believed that a star should be a star. So, Marilyn Monroe should be a star and never try to change Marilyn Monroe. She is a good comic actor. So, that is the way she should be projected. They acted in two movies together, both classic; seven year Itch and some like it hot yes .That is what he said, she is Marilyn Monroe and people want to see her in a certain way And marlin was desperate to change her image. If you remember, there was a period when she wanted to be taken seriously as an actor. And then one of her last movies was the Misfits the Misfits written by her husband Arthur Miller and it was a very serious movie, where she was given a good dramatic part.

But then by Hollywood believed in maintaining, the star's image on screen. So, John Wayne, the eternal cow boy, the eternal western hero should be projected as a western hero in all his movies. So, movie after movie, he would be the same John Wayne.

Gary cooper, high minded and principled. So, that is the image carried with him and that is what reflected in films as well. So, Gary cooper is high note, high minded, high principle hero.

To maintain this stardom, it was very important that the actor should be made to look as beautiful as possible. Their bodies, their faces were very important, till the advent of these method actors. So, looks very important for actors.

So, close up shots; Classic Hollywood employed plenty of close up shots, because the actors was good looking. Exchanging looks between characters; that was extremely important. A certain look has to be the, you know, you know the principles of mesa song how the scene is constructed. So, exchange of looks. Eye line matching shots; some of you will be doing presentation soon. So, think of what is eye line matching shots. We are talking about x characters exchanging looks, tight close up, if you look at the posters of the film like Notorious a place in the sun Casablanca, you will understand what I am trying to say. So, actor's image, how important it was; if marlin was the comic actor, then she had to be projected that way over and again.

Audrey Hepburn was essentially known for her style, her flawless spotless style. She patronized the Italian fashion designer, and she was known for her classic dress sense; sophisticated style. So, that was very obvious in all her films. Sabrina for example, is

ultimate homemade to her style. Roman holiday and then of course her Breakfast at Tiffany's. So, actress image was extremely important, yeah, yeah. We will be talking about Hitchcock as well. Hitchcock is at the center. Hitchcock is always at the center. He is one of the greatest and most popular and most successful. Anyone else would like to talk about we will be discussing about Hitchcock in another session; only a class for Hitchcock.

So, from here, I would like to take you to the concept of melodrama. Melodrama, of course, we Indians is no any strangers to melodrama in cinema. But classic Hollywood was also quite fond of melodramatic situation. This highly popular jand is often used in a very derisive way. He is very melodramatic; that means, over the top, it is not certain. So, most of us do not like to watch melodramatic performances or plots, but it is extremely popular and there are reasons for its popularity.

We often believe that melodrama is that kind of john that believes in manipulating audiences emotions. So, how do you manipulate audience's emotions? Give me some example. You have been watching so much, all these techniques, so much of discussion on cinema. Very soon, I will be giving you very tough assignments to write, very tough quizzes to attempt. So, you have to tell me, and now I have your attention.

So, tell me how does melodrama, how do film makers manipulate the audience's emotions, focus on films. Please, yes. Music comes later. What else? Exactly, close up shots. Close up shots, linear editing, cause and effect, right mesa songs. Give me some great melodramatic directors you know. Let us not talk about Hollywood at this point. Let us talk about our own situation. Who are the greatest of all? Ok, why do you think Mani is melodramatic? Give me reasons, point taken. Anyone would like to contest him? My again question is, I will repeat it. How much do you think? How far do you think Manirathnam exploits or manipulates the audience's emotions? How much does he do? To what extent, I am not contesting you at all. I am just questioning the audience here. Srinath any comments here. So, all of us agree here, let me, his kind of, his brand of cinema is highly manipulated and melodramatic.

The master of melodrama; nobody manipulates emotions as well as Karan Johar, and that too in a very glamorized situation. Give me an example, where Karan Johar makes use of music, mesa song, characters, close ups, etcetera. Give me a shot, give me a scene. The

mother is always with the thali, as far as I can remember in that movie. So, that is mesa song; mother with the thali, I mean what could be more emotional? In Deewar the mother is always going to the temple. The younger son, the dutiful and beautiful son is so obedient. He would always go to the upstairs with his mother. The rebellion son would never do so. There is a binary; there is up and down. So, he is always down, but he is not that melodramatic. He tries; he does try to bring on that brushtian element of elenation. But in Karan Johar's films, however popular they may be there is an attempt to manipulate the audience's emotion.

One classic movie, I will give you an example. Mother India. Mother India which is the movie of the fifties, starring the great Nargis, directed by the great Mehboob Khan, and if you watch it, it is a text that is often taught at film schools. But if you watch the movie you will find that every attempt is to every emotion out of the audience. They just, this story takes place in a rural India, and we are told that her husband had left the family, he was abandoned because he loses both his arms in the accident. And the lady Nargis is left with a couple of the children. And some of the children die on the way because of the starvation and natural causes and whatever. And then there is the... I mean this is the mother of all melodramatic scenes; because she has lost her bulls as well. So, she now tied herself to the cart and ploughs the field. And that is Mother India. That is, yes. So, it is the highly regarded movie. I mean, Nargis came to be regarded as Mother India Afterwards, a lady in white, she is India; symbolizes every virtue of a good Indian woman.

You see, that is the way mother, so the sacrificing mother; a mother who depressed her own longings or desires. The mother who is willing to, she does not hesitate to shoot her own son dead by the end of the movie. So, just like in... And Deewar is nothing but the modern version of mother India, so an ideal woman, yeah. Sacrificing mother is the serious type. No, will never succeed. Therefore, Citizen Kane You have Citizen Kane, which is a very, not hero in the classic sense. He is not a high minded, high principle, Gary Cooper kind of hero, John Wayne kind of hero. He is not fighting corrupt system, corrupt order, and corrupt establishment. He is a highly ambitious man; megalomania... So, the movie is anything, but melodrama. So, it will never reach those heights. Love, sex and recent several issues, but it will never be a block buster. It is not melodramatic.

But Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham unbeatable, unsurpassable, that can there is nothing as melodramatic as that movie. And the song plays in the background at every emotional situation and that number of times, it plays, any other comment. And we are, we are in a nation of melodramatic cinema. So, we can go on and go about this.

Amar Akbar Anthony the other day I was talking about lost and found formula. What happens? In the first reel, the father, poor man who has loses all his young sons. One is brought up by the Hindu; another is brought up by the Muslim, that is, Akbar and third by preist, that is, Anthony Bachchan; so Amar Akbar Anthony Now, they are all grown up; somewhere in the mid-twenties or something. So, Amar is the police officer; Akbar is performer, singer, tawal whatever and Anthony is a bootlegger, a small time goon. Now there is a road accident where the mother, who is now blind. She is also separated. So, everyone is separated in this family. And mother met with an accident and she is dire need of blood. So, what happens?

So, these three sons arrive on the scene without knowing that this lady is their mother. They do not recognize. Mother does not recognize her sons; of course it has been a long time. The son's does not know that this lady is their mother. But somehow, so happens that all of the sons happen to be in the hospital at the same time, when the mother is brought for treatment. She is unconscious, she needs blood, and all three sons donate their blood to this mother.

And then see we are shown the classic mesa song, where there is a bottle of blood and sons are donating their blood and all through the same tube. It is very interesting medically that the entire family has the same blood group, and there is the very sentimental song playing in the background. Yes.

(Audio not clear)

They separate with a song and they are united with a song, and all of them remember every world of the song. And thus, yeah Karan Arjun of course taste the cake in the bakery and the baker everything, and Karan Arjun, Ram Lakhan, so as melodramatic as they come. So, we will continue with this tomorrow. Thank you very much.