

Literature, Culture and Media
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Lecture – 42
Film and Literature I

Dear participants, welcome to the second module of week 9. In the previous module, we have discussed how in its desire to express emotions and sensibilities, people have always tried to link the word with some type of images. In the prehistoric times and in the beginning of the civilizations, we find that different type of actions and activities were pursued for this combined expression.

We have seen how from the days of cave drawings, to theatres, to spectacles, we have gradually grown to the development of technology in such a state that the projection of moving images became a possibility. By the time we come to the 19th century, the debates about the primacy of the image or the primacy of the word for the literate and the cultured people had already started. By the time we find that the 20th century is about to start, cinematography has already become a fully developed art.

And therefore, we find that its association with literature has to be discussed further in detail. In this module, we would discuss to what extent cinema and literature are independent and also interdependent. If we look at cinema, do we look at it only as a mass entertainment medium or do we look at it as an art? When we look at it as an art, is it different from being an entertainment medium only? And if it is an art, how is it different from other mediums of expressions to which it bears a resemblance, particularly the theatre to which it owes a lot of inspiration and also to literature.

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What is cinema?

- Is it a mass entertainment medium or an art?
- And if it is an art, how does it differ from other artistic mediums to which it bears a resemblance, such as theatre and literature?
- Is it a tool of enlightenment that reveals reality as it is, or is it a tool of deception offering merely an “illusion” of reality?
- How does it effect viewers, both cognitively and emotionally?
- Can it change society for the better, or does it merely reproduce relations of power?

These, and many other fascinating questions, have been debated widely by film theorists—many of them also filmmakers—almost since cinema’s inception in the 1890s.

Is it a tool of enlightenment that also reveals reality as it is, or it a tool of deception projecting those images which can only fool a person? And how does it affect the viewers? How does it affect us, both cognitively and emotionally? Can we use cinema as a tool for the change of the society or is it only copying and reproducing relations of power in the given contemporary societies?

There are some fascinating questions which have continuously been debated on by the film theorists, many of them also happen to be filmmakers since the very inception of the cinema. And if we have to put a date to the inception of cinema as we understand it today, I would say that it begins in the last decade of the 19th century. The association of film or cinema with the literary text has always been a very complex issue.

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Film and Literary Text

- “[From a text t]he reader learns only [a limited number of] details and has to expand the picture imaginatively. But in the film representation, the number of details is indeterminate.”
- “Those details are not asserted as such by a narrator but simply presented.”
- “In its essential visual mode, the film does not describe at all but merely presents; or better, it depicts: it renders in pictorial form.”
 - Seymour Chatman, “What Novels Can Do that Films Can’t (and Vice Versa)”

We can quote from Seymour Chatman who says that from a text, a reader can learn only a limited number of details and then the picture has to be filled up imaginatively. And here in any reading of the text, it is the imagination and sensitivity of the reader which comes into the play. However, in the representation through the medium of film, the number of the details are not only indeterminate but they are also presented.

In fact, these details are often not asserted but they are simply presented before the narrator. In its essential visual mode, the film as Chatman says does not describe at all but merely presents or better it depicts. It renders in pictorial form. So the basic difference between a film and literary text is based on the medium. The film uses the pictorial form, the images and the literature uses words.

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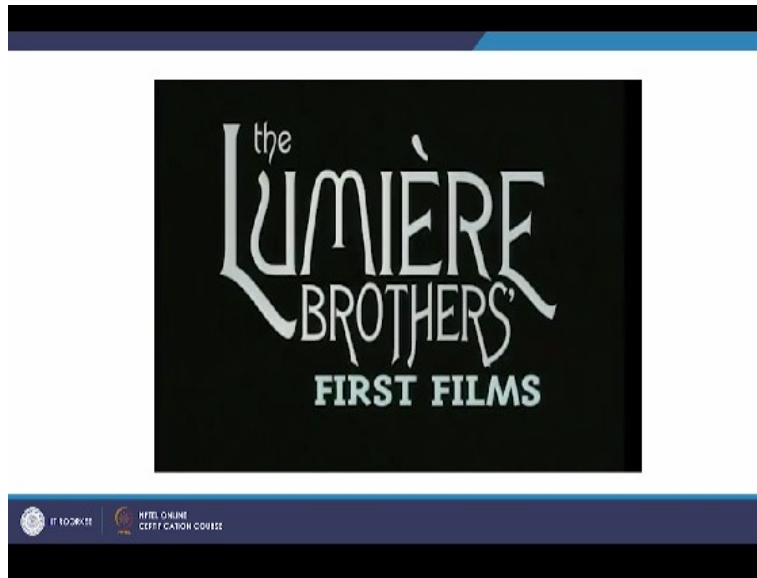
Film and Literature

- March 22, 1895 – start of film history
- Private screening of a short film by Lumiere Brothers, followed by a more public screening in December in the same year – known for documentary realism
- Lumiere brothers use cinema as a way to investigate reality and document history
- Georges Melies – known for fantasy based films
- Melies exploit films for entertainment and imaginative play
 1. Films followed contemporary cultural traditions – fascination with spectacle
 2. Impact of Theatre
 3. Turned to literary materials for all kinds of subject matter

And therefore, we find that they are 2 different genres so to say. The film history begins in 1895 with a private screening of a short film by Lumiere Brothers, and it was followed by a more public screening in December of the same year. And this picture was known for the documentary realism. Lumiere Brothers used cinema as a way to investigate reality and also to document history.

Their attempts were followed by Georges Melies who was known for fantasy based movies. And he exploited films for entertainment and imaginative play. His films followed contemporary cultural traditions that was a fascination with the spectacle under a clear impact of the theatre. And he also turned to literary materials for different kinds of subject matter.

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And here we are going to screen for about 30 seconds the first real motion picture by the Lumiere Brothers. The title of this movie is *Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory in Lyon* produced in 1895.

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Since documentaries and known events can entertain audience in a limited way, films turned to the cultural currency of popular literary tales. These were often action-tableaus:

- 1896 – Rip Van Winkle
- 1900 – Cinderella
- 1902 – Robinson Crusoe
- 1902 – Gulliver's Travels
- 1903 – Uncle Tom's Cabin
- 1904 – The Damnation of Faust

Since these documentaries as Lumiere Brothers had presented and events which are already known to people can entertain audience in a limited way. They have an ear of reporting of a newspaper reporting to them. And therefore, for entertainment, films turned to the cultural currency of popular literary tales. And these tales often based on action. For example, in 1896, we had *Rip Van Winkle*; 1900, *Cinderella*; 1902, *Robinson Crusoe*, also *Gulliver's Travels*;

followed by *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1903; *The Damnation of Faust* in 1904.

And particularly if we look at this list, we find that Cinderella and Robinson Crusoe have been made and remade in various formats of media, not only as films but also as TV serials, as web serials and in other popular mediums. The birth of cinema can also be traced with the first Nickelodeons explosion.


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Birth of Cinema

The Nickelodeons

- 1905 – Nickelodeons developed
- Nickelodeon was a multi-purpose theater that was popular from about 1900 to 1914
- 5 cents for a small storefront theater show, played to live musical accompaniment
- Audience loved them
- Newspaper critics began denouncing films as “morally objectionable”
- *The Great Train Robbery*

The First Nickelodeon
Pittsburgh, 1905



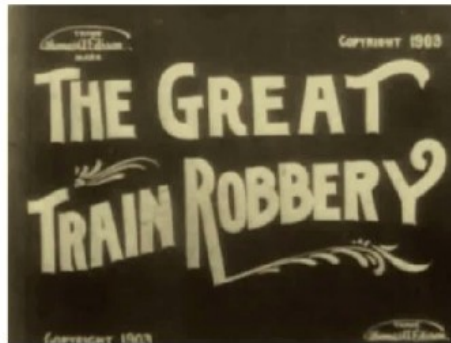


The Nickelodeons were developed in 1905. It was a multipurpose theatre which was very popular for about 10 to 14 years in the first decade of the 20th century. As the name suggests, Nickel is a coin and the Odeon is a Greek word for a roof over theatre. So these Nickelodeons or these theatres were established in America, the first Nickelodeons, the picture of which is presented over here was opened in 1905 in Pittsburgh.

For a small sum of 5 cents, a small storefront theatre show, people could visit them and these were played to live musical accompaniment. The audience simply loved them because for the audience, it was the first live experience of moving images. It was something which was drastically, revolutionary be different from their previous experiences. But the newspaper medium also started to denounce films as being morally objectionable.

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The Great Train Robbery (1903)



A very significantly popular movie was *The Great Train Robbery* which was released in 1903. It was a short movie.

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The Great Train Robbery (1903)

- Established film as a lucrative form of entertainment in the US
- Considered as the first major Western film
- Also, the first film based on a historical event (Butch Cassidy's gang robbery on a train)
- Major Narrative film
- Known for its technical and editing innovations
- Introduction of cross-cutting editing technique for the first time

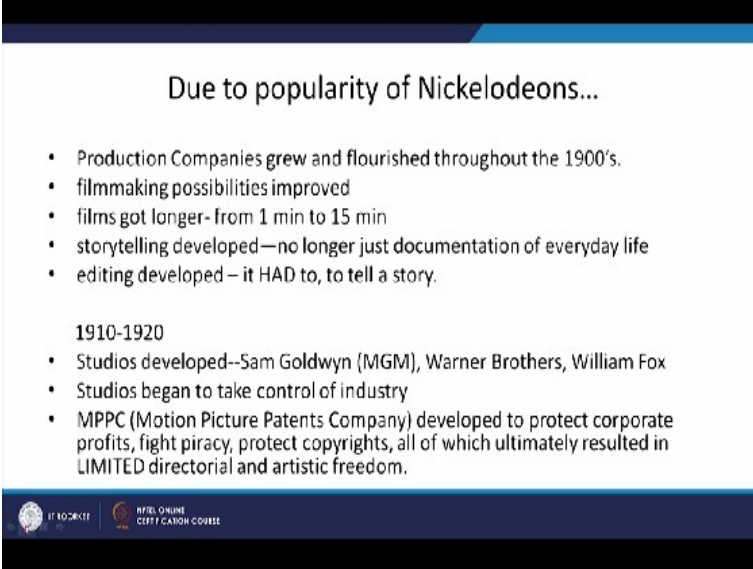
Cross-cutting: cutting between different sets of action that either occur simultaneously or at different times. Helps to build suspense, or to show the relationship between different sets of action.

So this movie changed the way of entertainment for ever. It established films as a lucrative form of entertainment in the USA. And it was considered as the major first Western film introducing this particular genre of films also. This film was also based on a historical event that was a robbery on a train by the gang of Butch Cassidy. It was a major narrative film which was also known for its technical and editing innovations.

For the first time, we find that this movie introduced cross-cutting editing technique and which

became popular for the presentation of action in a summarized and in a way which was attractive to the audience.

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Due to popularity of Nickelodeons...

- Production Companies grew and flourished throughout the 1900's.
- filmmaking possibilities improved
- films got longer- from 1 min to 15 min
- storytelling developed—no longer just documentation of everyday life
- editing developed – it HAD to, to tell a story.

1910-1920

- Studios developed--Sam Goldwyn (MGM), Warner Brothers, William Fox
- Studios began to take control of industry
- MPPC (Motion Picture Patents Company) developed to protect corporate profits, fight piracy, protect copyrights, all of which ultimately resulted in LIMITED directorial and artistic freedom.

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Due to the popularity of the Nickelodeons, we find that the Production Companies grew and flourished during the first decade of the 20th century. The possibilities of film making were also improved and the technological innovations as we have seen in the previous module, films also became longer from 1 minute from 1 reel affair, they became a 15 minutes affair. For a 15-minute projection, people also needed a storyline and therefore, storytelling developed.

It was not just a documentation of everyday life which could entertain people. They wanted a script, something had to be told, a story had to be told. And therefore, in order to tell a story successfully, the techniques of editing were also developed. So it is along this time that by 1920s, we find that various studios had already developed. We had MGM, Warner Brothers, William Fox.

And these studios also began to take control of industry. Motion Picture Patents Company developed to protect corporate profits, fight piracy, protect copyrights, all of which ultimately resulted in limited directorial and artistic freedom.

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1920's – The Silent Film Era

- 1920-1930—American Prosperity after WWI and before Great Depression
- During this period, America becomes leading producers of film in the whole world
- Nickelodeons become Movie Palaces –Movie Palaces open up throughout L.A.—the Egyptian, The Million Dollar Theatre
- Hollywood develops – star system flourishes
- Foreign market dominated by German expressionistic (extremely melodramatic) films- Nosferatu, M, etc.

During the 1920s, we find that it was still the era of the silent film, the American Prosperity after the First World War and before the Great Depression, also drove people towards mass entertainment and the films or the cinematography was the newest fashion which attracted them. During this period, we find that the USA became the leading producer of films in the whole world. Nickelodeons became Movie Palaces and Movie Palaces opened up throughout the Los Angeles.

The Hollywood as such had developed by this time and star system was not only established but it also started to flourish independently. The foreign market was dominated by the German expressionist, particularly by the melodramatic movies which were made by the German movie makers. However, by and large, we find that this genre, this business rather was dominated by the USA.

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Silent Films and Talkies

- Black and white, no dialogue, no sound recorded on film, use of inter titles
- live musical accompaniment, exaggerated expressionistic acting
- visual storytelling—the unique way in which cinema could communicate purely through visuals, slapstick/ physical comedy—Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin
- 1926- Vitaphone- An American invention that synchronized sound with film
- *Don Juan*- 1926- first film with synchronized soundtrack (no more musicians in the theatre), but no dialogue.
- 1927- *The Jazz Singer*-
 - 1st Talkie/Musical—1st words- "Wait a minute! Wait a minute! You ain't heard nothing yet!"
 - mostly silent with 350 spoken words and 6 songs.
 - won 1st Academy Award- 1927.

These silent films were black and white. They did not have any dialogue or any sound recorded on the film. But they could use some inner titles to suggest transitions etc. Often they were played to live musical accompaniment and these movies also had exaggerated expressionistic acting so that the absence of words could be made up by the gestures and postures of the people.

In a way, we can say that it was a visual storytelling, a unique way in which cinema could communicate purely through visuals, slapstick, physical comedies. And therefore, we find that the movies, the short movies by Charlie Chaplin became very popular. In 1926, there was an invention of Vitaphone which synchronized sound with film and we find that *Don Juan* in 1926, that was the first film with synchronized soundtrack.

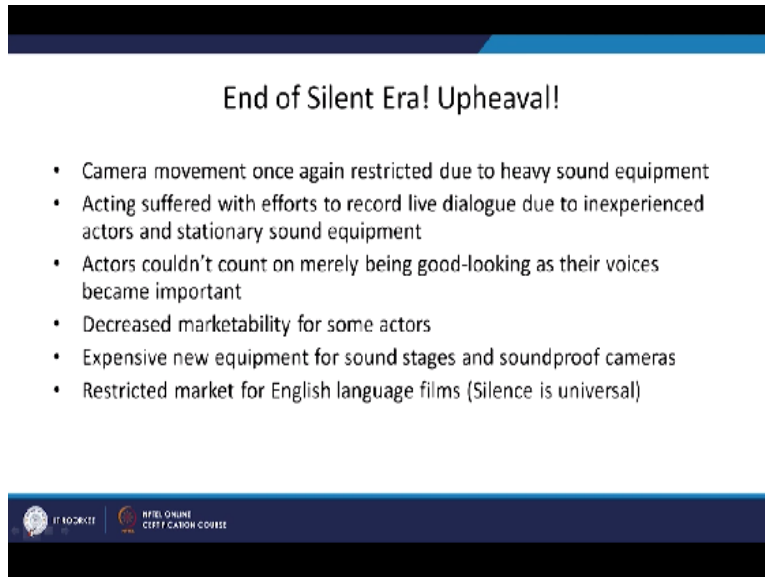
However, it did not have any dialogue but it had the soundtrack of music and therefore, the group of musicians were not required in the theatres when it was played. The first talkie, the first movie with the dialogue was released in 1927 that was *The Jazz Singer*, that was the first talkie or the first musical and the first words were "Wait a minute! Wait a minute! You ain't heard nothing yet!"

It was mostly silent, it had six songs and barely 350 spoken words. It also won the first Academy Award in 1927. So we find that the silent era has ended now and there is an upheaval. Now we find that in this era, while people were still enamoured by the movie, there were certain

restrictions which were being felt by those people who were in the business for making films. The camera movement was restricted because the sound equipment was very heavy and acting also suffered because there was a compulsion to record live dialogue.

The actors were inexperienced in using their voice for the record purposes and the sound equipment was also stationary. So it put several restrictions on the capabilities of the actors to move around and to use their voice effectively. Also those actors who were otherwise good looking but did not have a good voice also suffered and the voice as well as the face became important. And therefore, it resulted into a decreased marketability for some actors.

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End of Silent Era! Upheaval!

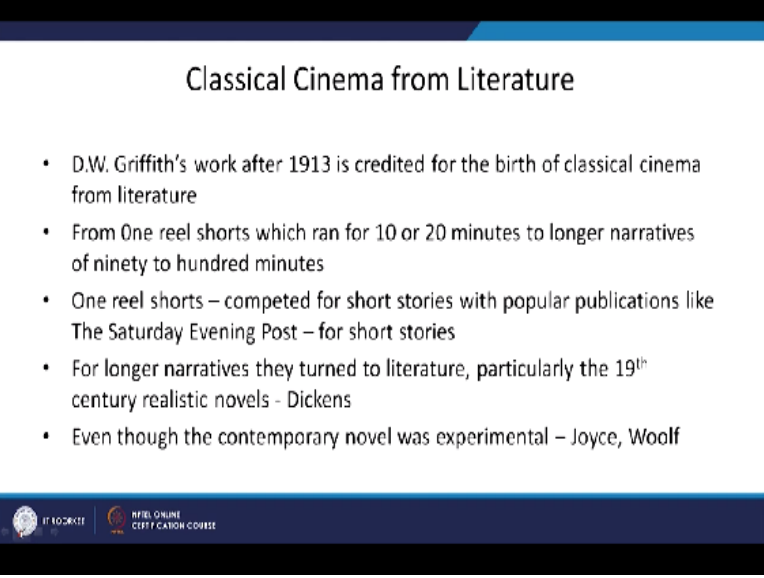
- Camera movement once again restricted due to heavy sound equipment
- Acting suffered with efforts to record live dialogue due to inexperienced actors and stationary sound equipment
- Actors couldn't count on merely being good-looking as their voices became important
- Decreased marketability for some actors
- Expensive new equipment for sound stages and soundproof cameras
- Restricted market for English language films (Silence is universal)

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And very soon we find that new equipments were developed for sound stages, sound proof cameras and then we find that there was a market which became restricted for the English language films. In other countries because the technology was not developed at the same pace, we find that the market was overpowered by the English movies. Whereas silence is universal, a particular language can be understood only by the native speakers.

And therefore, we find that the market was overcrowded by the English based films only. The classical cinema started to draw from literature around this time heavily. And particularly I would refer to the work of D. W. Griffith. His work after 1913 is credited for the birth of classical cinema from literature.

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Classical Cinema from Literature

- D.W. Griffith's work after 1913 is credited for the birth of classical cinema from literature
- From One reel shorts which ran for 10 or 20 minutes to longer narratives of ninety to hundred minutes
- One reel shorts – competed for short stories with popular publications like *The Saturday Evening Post* – for short stories
- For longer narratives they turned to literature, particularly the 19th century realistic novels - Dickens
- Even though the contemporary novel was experimental – Joyce, Woolf

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When the movies started shifting from one reel shorts which ran from 10 to 20 minutes to longer narratives of 90 to 100 minutes, there was a demand for storyline. One reel shorts competed for short stories which were available with popular publications. And therefore, there were many writers who used to publish in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Their short stories were very much in demand.

Because one short story could easily be filmed in a one or reel shorts. But for longer narratives, people needed longer stories and therefore, we find that Griffith started to turn towards the 19th century realistic novels. And particularly we find that the work of Dickens was very much in demand. It is interesting to note that in the beginning of the 20th century, the contemporary novel was moving towards being experimental.

We have novelist like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce who were experimenting with the techniques in order to express the inner goings on of the characters. Whereas the cinema as it was still in the nascent stage, went towards the realistic novels for inspiration.

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- Griffith borrowed from serial novels (e.g., *Perils of Pauline*) for one reel shorts
- Also from poetry (Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" and Tennyson's "Enoch Arden" in 1911)
- He also made a two reel and more faithful version of *Enoch Arden*. Many places showed the two reels as two independent parts; but Griffith treated it as a single film.
- This version altered the direction of the cinema and its relationship with literature: which among other aspects, also introduced the star system!!!

Griffith borrowed from serial novels for one reel shorts, particularly he borrowed from *Perils of Pauline*. Also from poetry because he made one reel shorts based on Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. He also made one reel short on Tennyson's *Enoch Arden*. His film version of *Enoch Arden* based on Tennyson's poem was later on developed into a more faithful version and into a 2 reel version. Many plays showed the 2 reels as 2 independent parts but Griffith always treated it as a single film.

This version altered the direction of the cinema and its relationship with literature, which among other aspects had also introduced the star systems. So we find that this system of stars, no, the celebrity of a film, because of the presence of a particular individual in it, also dates back to the early decades of the 20th century. Now it is at this moment that the criticism of the film versus the criticism of the novel was started by the people. It is already well established in the beginning of the 20th century that they are 2 independent yet interdependent art forms.

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Criticism of the Film vs. Criticism of the Novel

- as they are two, independent yet interdependent art forms
- Aims to explore the essence of the cinema and provide conceptual frameworks for understanding film's relationship with literature

And people tried to explore the essence of this cinema and provide conceptual frameworks for understanding films' relationship with literature in order to understand these 2 different forms of expression.

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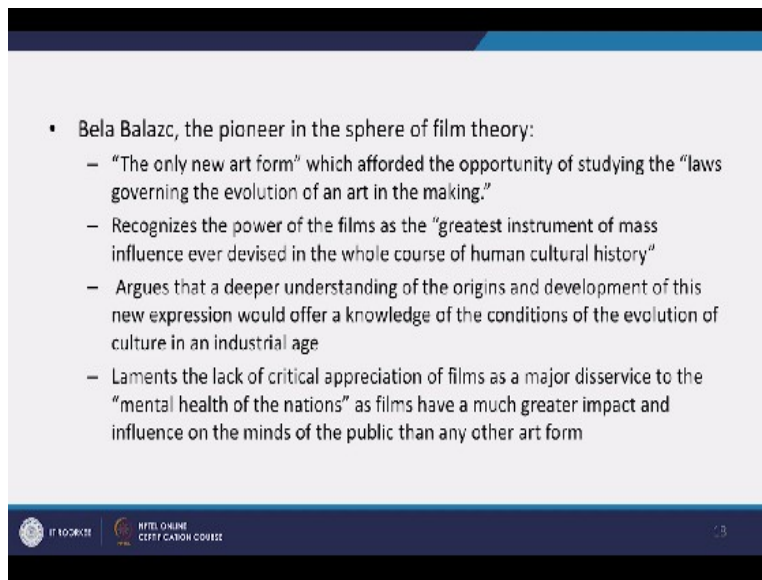
What does an Art Form Communicate?

- Why do you read a Novel or a Story (if at all!)
- Why do you watch a film?
- What do you hope to get in a TV serial based on literature?

If we come to the expression of an individual or an individual's sensitivity or the sensitivity of the people, then what are our expectations from any art form. For example, if we read a novel or a story, what exactly we want in it? When we watch a film, do we want anything in it? Or when we look at a TV serial which is based on literature, when we watch a movie which is based on literature, what are our expectations in it?

Do we look at a movie only for the entertainment? Do we read a novel or a story only for the entertainment? Or do we have certain other expectations? So we find that critics as well as film makers were struggling to find out answers to these questions. It is very pertinent to refer to certain critics who were writing in the early days of the development of movie.

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- Bela Balazs, the pioneer in the sphere of film theory:
 - “The only new art form” which afforded the opportunity of studying the “laws governing the evolution of an art in the making.”
 - Recognizes the power of the films as the “greatest instrument of mass influence ever devised in the whole course of human cultural history”
 - Argues that a deeper understanding of the origins and development of this new expression would offer a knowledge of the conditions of the evolution of culture in an industrial age
 - Laments the lack of critical appreciation of films as a major disservice to the “mental health of the nations” as films have a much greater impact and influence on the minds of the public than any other art form

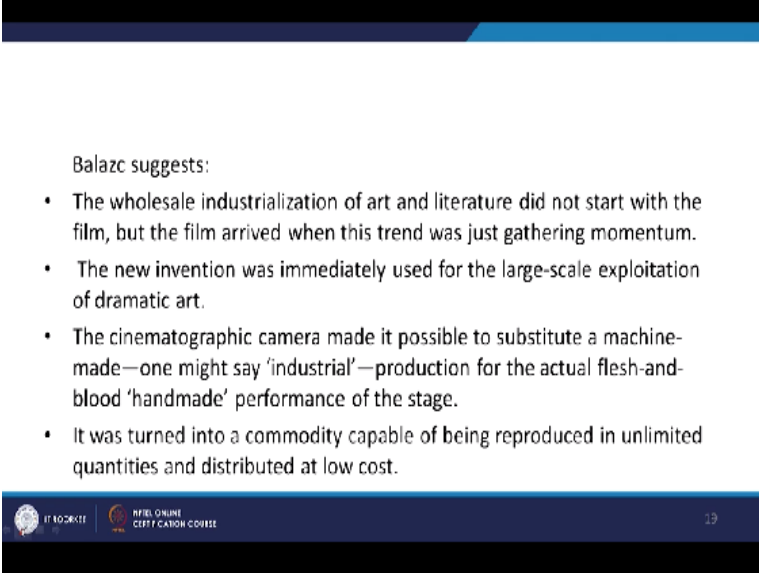
I would refer here to Bela Balazs, the pioneer in the sphere of film theory who had written that the film is the only new art form which can afford the opportunity of studying the laws governing the evolution of an art in the making. As it is progressing day by day, it is still not an established art form. It also does not have any history to which it can fall back on. And therefore, he finds it very interesting.

He also recognizes the power of the films as being the greatest instrument of mass influence ever devised in the whole course of human cultural history. And he argues that a deeper understanding of the origins and developments of this new expression would offer a knowledge of the conditions of the evolution of culture in an industrial age. Now here it is noteworthy that he is referring to the development or the evolution of culture in an industrial age.

And therefore, we also have to remember the close connections which cinema as an art form has with industry with technology and also with the market forces of the capitalist era. Balazs also laments the lack of critical appreciation of films as a major disservice to the mental health of the

nations as in his opinion, films have a much greater impact and influence on the minds of the public than any other art form.

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Balzac suggests:

- The wholesale industrialization of art and literature did not start with the film, but the film arrived when this trend was just gathering momentum.
- The new invention was immediately used for the large-scale exploitation of dramatic art.
- The cinematographic camera made it possible to substitute a machine-made—one might say 'industrial'—production for the actual flesh-and-blood 'handmade' performance of the stage.
- It was turned into a commodity capable of being reproduced in unlimited quantities and distributed at low cost.

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He suggests therefore that the wholesale industrialization of art and literature did not start with the film. But in his opinions, films arrived only when there was this trend already established and this trend of industrialization and commercialization of art in a big way was gaining momentum. The invention of films, cinematography was immediately grabbed and used for large scale exploitation of dramatic art, and the camera made it possible to substitute a machine made, one might say industrial production of the actual flesh and blood handmade performance of the stage.

And therefore, it was turned into a commodity capable of being reproduced in unlimited quantities and distributed at low cost. So we find that Balzac here has presented a very interesting argument. He says that cinema is the product of a world where the commercialization of art had already started and since the commercialization of art had already started, cinema as a particular art form was captured by those people.

And it was utilized particularly because the technology had made the larger reproduction and distribution easier. His scholarship on films recognizes the unique position of film as an art form whose origin and development is coextensive with the growth of industrialization.

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- Balazs scholarship on films recognizes the unique position of film as an art form whose origin and development is co-extensive with the growth of industrialization.
- Film emerges as a site that encapsulates the contradictions of the society and culture in a post-industrial and post-modern society.
- Critical appreciation of film affords us the ability to understand and explore the various impulses, drives, and ideological frameworks that dominate and direct one's perceptions of reality.

Film emerges in his opinion as a site that encapsulates the contradictions of the society and culture in a post-industrial and post-modern society. And critical appreciation of films affords us the ability to understand and explore the various impulses, drives and ideological frameworks that dominate and direct one's perceptions of reality.

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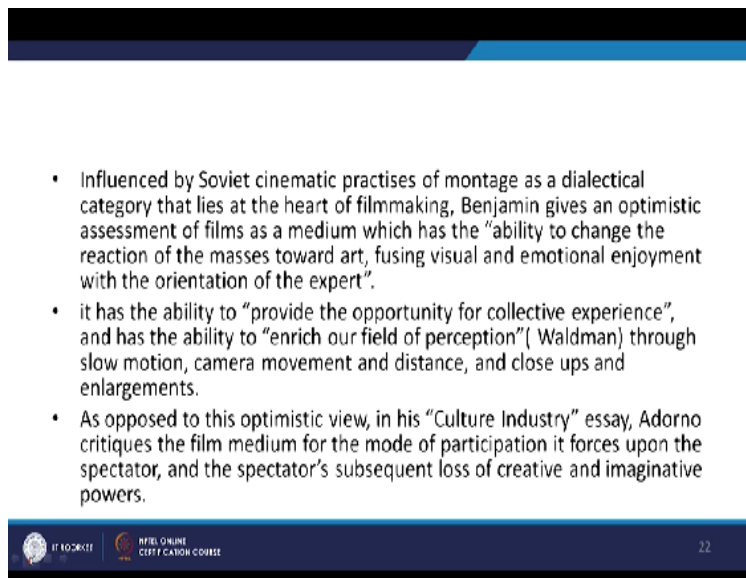
- Walter Benjamin (1936) recognized the revolutionary potential of the film as an art form in his essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in which he argues that mechanical reproduction inaugurated a drastic change in the way we understand the conception and function of art.
- The "democratization" of art forms—as they become available and accessible to a greater number of people—is at the heart of the revolutionary potential of an art form like film that promotes the "revolutionary criticism of traditional concepts of art".

The revolutionary potential which a film as an art form possess, is also highlighted by Walter Benjamin in his very interesting essay titled "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," published in 1936. So we can see that when cinema as a medium of art form was developing, people were still grappling with the various dimensions it may have and whether the mechanical reproduction of an art form is necessary for a culture or not. So Benjamin argues that

mechanical reproduction inaugurated a drastic change in the way people understood the conception and function of art.

Prior to that, the conception and function of art was viewed in a different manner. He also says that the democratization of art forms, as they became available and accessible to a greater number of people, is at the very heart of the revolutionary potential of an art form like film that promotes, and I quote, "The revolutionary criticism of traditional concepts of art." So Benjamin has also viewed the cinema as a revolutionary criticism of traditional concepts of art and looks at its revolutionary potential in a positive manner.

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- Influenced by Soviet cinematic practises of montage as a dialectical category that lies at the heart of filmmaking, Benjamin gives an optimistic assessment of films as a medium which has the "ability to change the reaction of the masses toward art, fusing visual and emotional enjoyment with the orientation of the expert".
- it has the ability to "provide the opportunity for collective experience", and has the ability to "enrich our field of perception"(Waldman) through slow motion, camera movement and distance, and close ups and enlargements.
- As opposed to this optimistic view, in his "Culture Industry" essay, Adorno critiques the film medium for the mode of participation it forces upon the spectator, and the spectator's subsequent loss of creative and imaginative powers.

Benjamin has been influenced by the Soviet cinematic practises of montage as a dialectical category. And therefore, he says that cinema as a medium has the ability to change the reaction of the masses towards art fusing visual and emotional enjoyment with the orientation of the expert. It has the ability to provide the opportunity for collective experience. And has the ability to enrich our field of perception through slow motion, different types of camera motions, distances, close ups and enlargements.

So we find that Benjamin has also talked about the collective experiences, the emotional enjoyment fused with the visual appeal of the cinema. As opposed to this optimistic view, we find that Adorno has criticized the film industry in his essay on *Culture Industry*. He says that the

film, the mode of participation which the film makes it possible for us or opens up for the people, it forces upon the spectator a mode of participation in which there is no possibility for having creative and imaginative powers.

Adorno's idea is that the spectator simply looks at certain visuals, certain images and he is not able to participate in any creative and imaginative way. He argues therefore, that the sound film surpasses the theatre of illusion to such an extent that it leaves no possibility to respond critically to what is being shown without losing the thread of the story.

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- He argues that the "sound film surpasses the theatre of illusion" to such an extent that it leaves no room to respond critically to what is being shown without losing the thread of the story.
- The relentless rush of facts that make up the diegetic universe of the film are designed in such a way that the spectator's power of observation is utilized only in the apprehension of this spectacle, thus, leaving little time for critical appreciation.
- But Adorno's discussion of the film is limited to its production and functioning under monopoly capitalism. It generalizes its assumptions about the culture industry under monopoly capitalism.

His idea is that if a viewer does not want to lose the thread of the story, has to keep on looking at the screen and while the spectator is so much enclosed in looking at the screen, he or she is not able to look at it critically. So relentlessly the images move on and therefore, the spectators power of observation is utilized only in watching these images and the critical appreciation is not possible. However, Adorno's discussion of the film is limited to its production and functioning under monopoly capitalism. Outside that perhaps it does not have much validity.

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- While a lot of scholarship exists on adaptation studies that revolve around the adaptation of literature into film
- These debates often focus on the fidelity discourse and judge films on whether they have been successful in replicating the original intent and vision of the literary work or whether the films intervene to provide a perspective on the original.

While a lot of scholarship exists on adaptation studies that revolve around the adaptation of literature into film, we find that these debates often focus on the fidelity discourse and judge films on whether they have been successful in replicating the original intent and vision of the literary work or whether these films have intervened to provide a perspective on the original. So the fidelity criticism of the movie, adapting a particular piece of literature is very popular.

And I think it is the communist way of looking at this relationship. Film and literature are often viewed as being related fields.

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Film and Literature: Related Fields

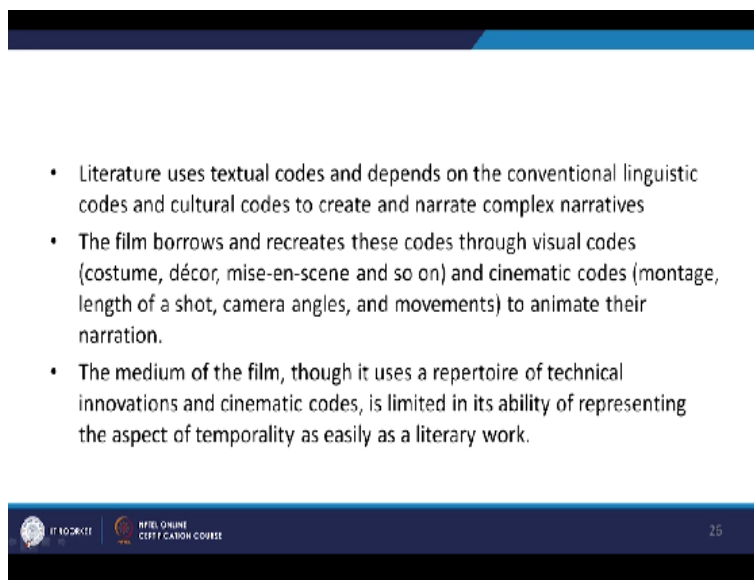
- Bluestone's (1957: 2) famously asserted that the novel (or literature) and film are "overtly compatible, secretly hostile"
- They both share a narrative—the series of events/actions sequentially or logically connected by virtue of emplotment;
- What makes them different art forms is "narration" (Macfarlane 19).
- Both film and literature have the ability to create "worlds" or "lives" with a degree of verisimilitude and immediacy that cannot be achieved by other art forms
- Both these literary forms depend on the reader/spectator to use perceptual codes and reading strategies to apprehend and comprehend the minutiae of the world or the story that they represent.

Bluestone has asserted that the novel and film are overtly compatible but secretly hostile. They

both share a narrative, a series of events and actions which unfold in a sequential manner or may be logically connected by virtue of their emplotment. What makes them different art forms is narration. The way of narration is very different. Both film and literature have to create a world. They have to represent or depict lives with a degree of verisimilitude and immediacy that cannot be achieved by any other art form.

At the same time, we can say that both these literary forms and both these forms of expression depend on the capability of the reader or the spectator to use the perception as a code, the reading strategies in order to apprehend the intent of the writer and at the same time to comprehend the connectivity of the images which are being presented before him. Various literature uses textual codes and depends on conventional linguistic codes, cultural ways to create and narrate complex narratives, film has created its own codes.

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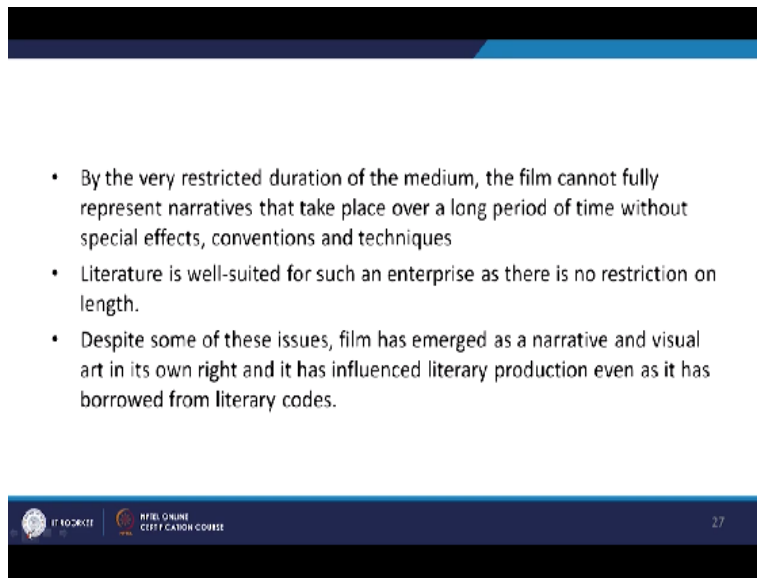
- Literature uses textual codes and depends on the conventional linguistic codes and cultural codes to create and narrate complex narratives
- The film borrows and recreates these codes through visual codes (costume, décor, mise-en-scene and so on) and cinematic codes (montage, length of a shot, camera angles, and movements) to animate their narration.
- The medium of the film, though it uses a repertoire of technical innovations and cinematic codes, is limited in its ability of representing the aspect of temporality as easily as a literary work.

It does have certain visual codes. For example, it can use costumes, decor, mise-en-scene, etc. It has also developed certain cinematic codes like montage, length of a shot, camera angle, and movement to animate their narration. It uses words also because the dialogue is important in any movie nowadays.

But at the same time, we find that it has also developed its parallel codes. The medium of the film, though it uses a repertoire of technical innovations and different cinematic codes, is limited

still in its ability of representing the aspect of temporality as easily as a piece of literature. The duration of the medium of cinema is restricted. A film cannot fully, in detail represent narratives that have developed over a long passage of time without taking help of certain special effects, conventions, and techniques.

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- By the very restricted duration of the medium, the film cannot fully represent narratives that take place over a long period of time without special effects, conventions and techniques
- Literature is well-suited for such an enterprise as there is no restriction on length.
- Despite some of these issues, film has emerged as a narrative and visual art in its own right and it has influenced literary production even as it has borrowed from literary codes.

On the other hand, literature can really direct the reader in a stepwise step manner towards the progression in linear time. Despite some of these issues, we find that film has emerged as a narrative and visual art in its own right and it has also influenced literary production even as it has borrowed from literary codes. In our discussions in the next module, we would see how films and literature influence each other. Normally we understand that literature has been adopted by the films but we find that film also has a deep impact on literature.

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- Films offer us the opportunity to unravel the discursive means through which power relations are organized in the service of status quo.
- In the modern times, films reflect the mechanisms of these power relations in the creation of vocabularies to understand identity and community in popular culture;
- Thus, the films are analogous to the literary texts that contain narratives of conflict between individual and society.

Films also offer us the opportunity to unravel the discursive means through which power relations are organized in the service of status quo. In the modern times, films reflects the mechanisms of these power relations in the creation of vocabularies to understand identity and community in popular culture. Thus the films are analogous to the literary texts that contain narratives of conflict between individual and society.

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What is unique about film as compared to other arts?

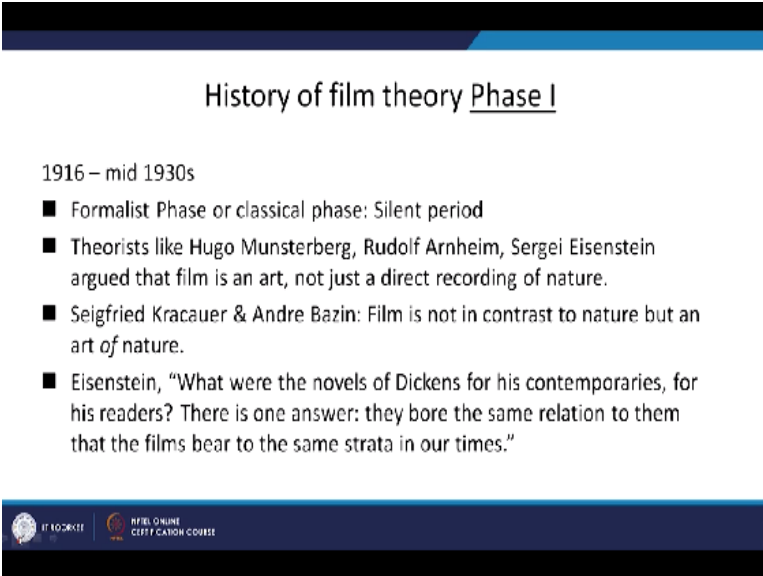
- a. Its formal qualities (techniques of film making, genre etc)
- b. Its need for capital investment
- c. Its relation to mass audience

So now let us discuss what is unique about film as compared to other arts. To begin with, we can say that there are certain formal qualities, the techniques of film making, genre, etc. which differentiate it from other arts. At the same time, it has a need for capital investment in comparison to any other art. Most of the arts are developed on the basis of the patronage system

and the need for capital investment was never as great as we find them in the movies.

Even in the theatre, even in the best stage, we find that it was never as costly as the making of a film was. It is a team effort unlike any other art form practiced earlier. At the same time, it also has a unique relation to the mass audience. Several aspects of it can be compared with the theatre performance but we find that the differences are too significant to put them in the same category. Let us try to have a look deeply of the history of film theory. In the first phase, we find which we can put somewhere around till mid 1930s.

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History of film theory Phase I

1916 – mid 1930s

- Formalist Phase or classical phase: Silent period
- Theorists like Hugo Munsterberg, Rudolf Arnheim, Sergei Eisenstein argued that film is an art, not just a direct recording of nature.
- Seigfried Kracauer & Andre Bazin: Film is not in contrast to nature but an art of nature.
- Eisenstein, "What were the novels of Dickens for his contemporaries, for his readers? There is one answer: they bore the same relation to them that the films bear to the same strata in our times."

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It was the silent period and it is known as formalist phase or a classical phase. We do have theorists like Hugo Munsterberg, Rudolf Arnheim, Sergei Eisenstein who argued that film is an art and not just a direct recording of nature. We also have critics like Seigfried and Bazin who say that film is not in contrast to nature but an art of nature. Eisenstein has written in detail comparing the art form with the novels written by Dickens in the previous century.

And I quote from him, he says "What were the novels of Dickens for his contemporaries, for his readers? There is one answer, they bore the same relation to them that the films bear to the same strata in our lives." Eisenstein wants to suggest that the contemporary audience is as organically related to the medium of films as Dickens' readers were related to his novels.

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History of film theory: Phase III

1970s:

- Inspired from Linguistics, drawing upon the works of Chomsky and Saussure, film makers started questioning the systems of meaning that allow communication of all kind to exist
- Lacan, Derrida, Strauss, Foucault, Freud's theories were applied on film analysis

In the second phase which is limited to the decade of 1960s and 1970s, we find that the classical phase was being challenged by those writers and film makers who were responding to the historical conditions, the decade of 1960s has been a violent decade of the 20th century. The effects of Vietnam war were being felt in the American societies.

There were riots in America and France also. And knowledge was constantly being redefined by literature and social sciences in the context of these disturbances. So we find that the ways in which classical phase responds to art, nature, society, gender and language, etc., was also being challenged in this second phase.

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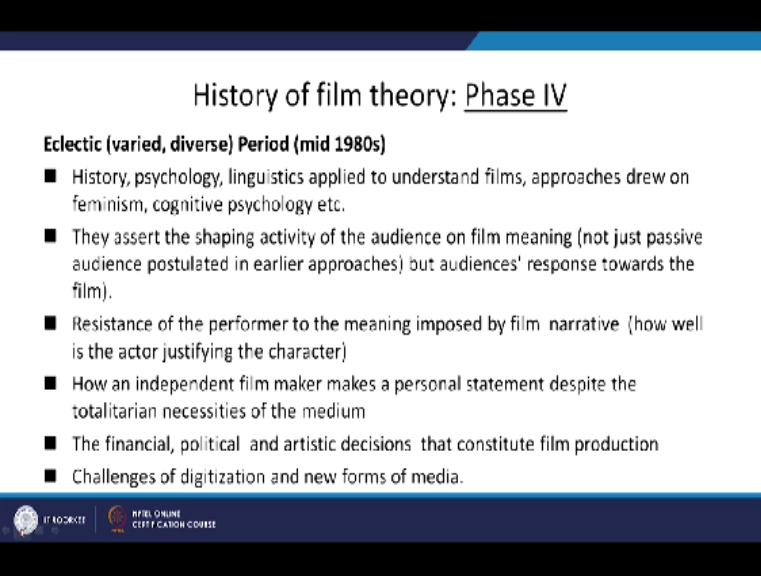
History of film theory: Phase III

1970s:

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- Lacan, Derrida, Strauss, Foucault, Freud's theories were applied on film analysis

It was followed by another phase in 1970s where inspired from linguistics, people and film makers started to draw upon the works of Chomsky and Saussure and started questioning the systems of meaning that allowed communication of all kind to exist. Various theories of Lacan, Derrida, Strauss, Foucault, Freud, etc. were applied on film analysis.

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The slide is titled "History of film theory: Phase IV" and is set against a white background with a blue header and footer. The title is centered at the top. Below the title, the text "Eclectic (varied, diverse) Period (mid 1980s)" is displayed. A bulleted list follows, detailing various aspects of film theory during this period. The footer contains two logos: "UT DORSET" and "RFDL ONLINE CERTIFICATE COURSE".

History of film theory: Phase IV

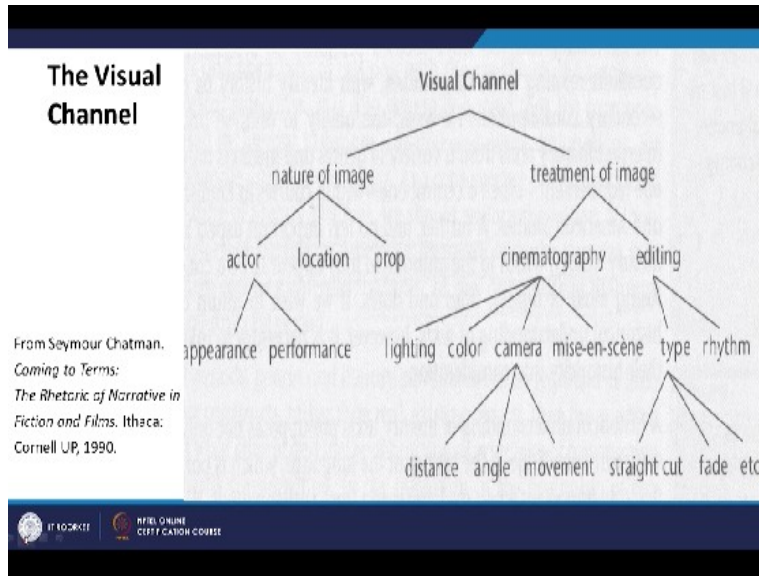
Eclectic (varied, diverse) Period (mid 1980s)

- History, psychology, linguistics applied to understand films, approaches drew on feminism, cognitive psychology etc.
- They assert the shaping activity of the audience on film meaning (not just passive audience postulated in earlier approaches) but audiences' response towards the film).
- Resistance of the performer to the meaning imposed by film narrative (how well is the actor justifying the character)
- How an independent film maker makes a personal statement despite the totalitarian necessities of the medium
- The financial, political and artistic decisions that constitute film production
- Challenges of digitization and new forms of media.

The fourth phase of the history of film theory is rather eclectic. So we find that in this time, the various aspects of human knowledge were applied to understand films and approaches drew on feminism, cognitive psychology, etc. in a much more significant way in comparison to what was being done in the third phase.

They assert the shaping activity of the audience on film meaning and say that audience are not just passive, as postulated in earlier approaches but their response towards the films should also be taken into consideration. The resistance of the performed to the meaning imposed by film narrative was also discussed a lot. So we find that these other challenges of digitization and new forms of media were also being felt in this eclectic period. And cinema as a visual medium of art was gearing up to accommodate and understand these changes.

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The visual channel can also be very easily understood on the basis of this diagram which I have adopted from Seymour Chatman and we can understand that different challenges which are faced in the visual channelization of our images have been presented in this tree diagram. Film theory and film criticism are 2 different words, 2 different terms and they have to be understood in this perspective.

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Film Theory and Film Criticism

- **Film Theory** is a way of looking at movies from a particular intellectual or ideological perspective. It is concerned with many areas of investigation,
 - The film text itself – its structural properties and meanings
 - The film text's connection to culture and history
 - The relationship between film and reality and anti-realism (formalist theory)
 - The production of movies as the result of art, economics or technology.
 - Our psychological reaction to the world projected on the screen.
- **Film Criticism** is generally focused on evaluating a film's artistic merit and appeal to the public.

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Film theory is a way of looking at movies from a particular intellectual or ideological perspective. It is concerned with many areas of investigation. For example, the film text itself, the structural properties and meanings of the text, its connection to culture and history, the relationship between reality, film as well as the anti-realism of films, the production of movies as

a result of art, economics, or technology and the psychological reaction of the audience to the images projected on the screen.

On the other hand, film criticism is generally focused on evaluating a film's artistic merit and appeal to the public.

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A Film's Meaning

1. **Explicit Meaning**- everything that a movie presents on its surface. Our ability to notice associations and relationships among the many pieces of information in the film.
2. **Implicit Meaning**- an association, connection, or inference that a viewer makes on the basis of the explicit story and form of the film. Lying below the surface of explicit meaning- closest to the everyday sense of the word meaning
3. **Ideological Meaning** - body of ideas expressed by a film that reflects beliefs on the part of filmmakers, characters, or the time and place of the movie's setting. Ideological meaning is the product of social, political, economic, religious, philosophical, psychological, and sexual forces that shape the filmmakers' perspectives.

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A film's meaning can also be different. It can be explicit which is very direct as it is being presented on the surface. And at the same time, it can also be an implicit meaning which is being narrated by the film as an association, connection, or inference that a viewer makes on the basis of the explicit story and form depicted in the movie. So what lies below the surface of the explicit meaning is the connotative meaning, the implicit meaning of a film.

A film may also have an ideological meaning. A body of ideas expressed by a film that reflects beliefs on the part of the filmmakers, characters, etc. or the time and place of the settings of the movie. Ideological meaning is the product of social, political, economic, religious, philosophical, psychological or sexual forces that shape the perspectives of the filmmaker, not the film viewer but the filmmaker. So an understanding of these different approaches helps us in understanding the movies in a better manner.

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1- Semiotic Approaches

Include the study of signs and sign processes, indication, analogy, symbolism, likeness, allegory etc. Should not be confused with the Saussurean tradition called semiology.

1. Realist – True to life, represents reality – based on photographic objectivity
2. Formalist – Montage, construction, combining; meaning evolves from juxtaposition of shots which show mood/conflict/juxtaposition
3. Rhetorical- Persuasive, Give message; lets you know why war is bad etc.
4. Mise-en-scene – Environment is created by lighting, sets, movements, costumes etc; futuristic films

So when we look at these approaches, we find that there may be either semiotic. For example, what type of signs and sign processes have been used in the movie. Semiotic approaches include the study of signs and sign processes, indication, analogy, symbolisms, etc. and it should not be confused with the Saussurean tradition which is called semiology.

So the semiotic approaches may be realist which may be based on their presentation of reality in a photographic manner which may be true to life or they may be formalist using montage, construction, combining, so that the meaning evolves from the juxtaposition of shots which show different types of moods or conflicts, etc. Or they may be rhetorical, persuasive, trying to pass on message in a moral way.

For example, war is bad, etc. Or mise-en-scene in which a particular type of environment is created by lighting, sets, movements, costumes, etc., so the futuristic films can also be put into this category. Another approach is the structuralist one where it can be a mythic one based on the myths, the traditional myths, the Greek myths, or even the contemporary myths. The feminist approaches and as we have discussed feminism in detail, we will not repeat it here.

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2- Structuralist Approaches

- Mythic
- Feminist
- Sociological
- Political, eg., Marxist. An economic and political program. The idea of the proletariat as hero, rising up and creating a classless society with prosperity for all was reflected in the films of: Dovshenko, Pudovkin, Vertov
- Psychoanalytic. Art may reveal emotional dynamics not deliberately fashioned by the artist. Expressions of sexual desire in art are intertwined with incompletely suppressed aggression, fear and guilt. A critic can link an artwork and an artist's biographical background within an interpretation that reveals unconscious manifestations of desire, aggression, fear and guilt.
 - Films with notable Freudian influences: Ingmar Bergman's *Fanny & Alexander* (1982), Alfred Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945) & *Vertigo* (1958), Ken Russell's *Altered States* (1980)

The sociological approaches can also be there. The political approaches have also been very popular in the period movies. For example, the Marxist approach has been a very popular one in which the proletariat is projected as a hero, rising up and creating a classless society with prosperity for all. And the Marxist vision of society is particularly portrayed in the movies of Dovshenko and Pudovkin. The psychoanalytical movies have also become very popular and they may reveal emotional dynamics which are not deliberately fashioned by the artist.

So for example, expression of sexual desire in art are intertwined with incompletely suppressed aggression, fear, and guilt. And a critic can link an artwork and an artist's biographical background with an interpretation that reveals unconscious manifestations of desire, aggression, fear and guilt. So there have been several movies with notable Freudian influences on them including some movies by Ingmar Bergman as well as some famous movies of Alfred Hitchcock for example *Spellbound* and *Vertigo*.

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The Id, Ego and Superego in Hitchcock's *Psycho*



In fact, Hitchcock's *Psycho* is considered to be a reading in the Freudian understanding of our psyche including the discussions of Id, Ego and Superego presenting them through the characters, weaving them in the plots of and the themes of the movie. At the same time, there may be contextual approaches and in the contextual approaches, we find that the Auteur is the most popular one.

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3-Contextual Approach

1. **Auteur/Author; Directorial Style.** Postulates that the film director is the "author" of a film. Has roots in 1920s France; its popularity peaked there in the 1950s with the influential film journal *Cahiers du cinema*, founded and edited by Andre Bazin. A director must have made a significant body of films (oeuvre) to be considered an auteur. Helps in identifying those directors whose work displays ideological and stylistic consistency.
2. **Genre – Westerners, war, horror**
3. **Historical Studies and Period dramas**

It is based on the directorial style of an author. It postulates that the film director is the author of a movie. It has roots in the 1920s French cinema and its popularity peaked there in the 1950s with an influential film journal which was founded and edited by Andre Bazin. A director also must have made a significant number of films to be considered an auteur. It helps in identifying

those directors whose work displays ideological and stylistic consistencies.

There can be some other genres also. For example, Westerners, war, horror, etc. There may be historical studies, cultural studies, period dramas, etc. So we find that these type of approaches help us to view the cinema as a particular art form detailing it in terms of its possible impact on the audience. We will continue this discussion from the perspective of the association of film with literature and to what extent these 2 genres have been mutually benefitted by each other. Thank you.