FILM STUDIES

VI SEMESTER

CORE COURSE

ENG6 B13

B.A. ENGLISH

(2019 Admission onwards)

CBCSS

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School of Distance Education,
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UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

School of Distance Education

Study Material

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MODULE I

SECTION A

INTRODUCTION TO THE BASIC TERMINOLOGY OF FILMMAKING

I. MISE EN SCENE

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

When applied to the cinema, mise-en-scene refers to everything that appears before the camera and its arrangement—composition, sets, props, actors, costumes, sounds, and lighting. The “mise-en-scene”, along with the cinematography and editing of a film, influence the verisimilitude of a film in the

eyes of its viewers. The various elements of design help express a film's vision by generating a sense of time and space, as well as setting a mood, and sometimes suggesting a character's state of mind. "Mise-en-scene" also includes the composition, which consists of the positioning and movement of actors, as well as objects, in the shot. These are all the areas overseen by the director, and thus, in French film credits, the director's title is metteur en scene, "placer on scene." Andre Bazin, a well-known French film critic and film theorist, describes the mise-en-scene aesthetic as emphasizing choreographed movement within the scene rather than through editing.

For some film critics, it refers to all elements of visual style—that is, both elements on the set and aspects of the camera. For others such as the film critic from the USA Andrew Sarris, it takes on mystical meanings related to the emotional tone of a film. The term is sometimes used to represent a style of conveying the information of a scene primarily through a single shot — often accompanied by camera movement. Mise en scene is nothing other than the technique invented by each director to express the idea and establish the specific quality of his work. In other words, it conveys what is happening in the frame: foreground, background, motion and framing. It is the equivalent of what the stage set is like and what the composition looks like.

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

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

In short, mise-en-scene style is associated with realism and looks more like what an observer might actually see. It is often what you would see in more political or ethically-centred films.

Set design

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

Lighting

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

Space

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

Composition

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

Costume

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

Makeup and hair styles

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

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

II. LONG TAKES

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

combined with the long take. A number of films today make use of the long take. Others through the years include Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), which, through editing, creates the impression of an entire film taking place during one take, and Mike Figgis's Timecode (2000), which shot digitally four ninety-minute takes concurrently.

A long take is an uninterrupted shot in a film which lasts much longer than the conventional editing pace either of the film itself or of films in general, usually lasting several minutes. It can be used for dramatic and narrative effect if done properly, and in moving shots is often accomplished through the use of a dolly or Steadicam. Long takes of a sequence filmed in one shot without any editing are rare in films. The term "long take" is used because it avoids the ambiguous meanings of "long shot", which can refer to the framing of a shot, and "long cut", which can refer to either a whole version of a film or the general editing pacing of the film. However, these two terms are sometimes used interchangeably with "long take". When filming *Rope* (1948), Alfred Hitchcock intended for the film to have the effect of one long continuous take, but the cameras available could hold no more than 1000 feet of 35 mm film. As a result, each take used up to a whole roll of film and lasted up to 10 minutes.

III. DEEP FOCUS

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

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

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

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

IV. SHOTS (CLOSE UP, MEDIUM SHOT, LONG SHOT)

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

1. extreme close-up

2. close-up

3. medium close-up

4. medium shot

5. medium long shot

6. long shot

7. extreme long shot or distance shot

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

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

Close-ups are used for distinguishing main characters. Major characters are often given a close-up when they are introduced as a way of indicating their importance. Leading characters will have multiple close-ups. There is a long-standing stereotype of insecure actors desiring a close-up at every opportunity and

counting the number of close-ups they received. An example of this stereotype occurs when the character Norma Desmond in Sunset Boulevard, announces "All right, Mr. DeMille, I'm ready for my close-up" as she is taken into police custody in the film's finale.

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

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

A **long shot** (sometimes referred to as a full shot or a wide shot) typically shows the entire object or human figure and is usually intended to place it in some relation to its surroundings. It has been suggested that long-shot ranges usually correspond to approximately what would be the distance between the front row of the audience and the stage in live theatre. It is now common to refer to a long shot as a "wide shot" because it often requires the use of a wide-angle lens. When a long shot is used to set up a location and its participants in film and video, it is called an establishing shot.

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

V. CAMERA ANGLE

The camera shot angle is used to specify the location where the camera is placed to take a shot. The position of the camera in relation to the subjects can affect the way the viewer perceives the scene. A scene may be shot simultaneously from multiple camera angles to amplify the cinematic effect and the emotions.

High angle shot

The camera looks down, making the subject look vulnerable or insignificant. It can give the audience a motherly feeling toward the character.

Low angle shot

The camera points upwards, usually making the subject or setting seem grand or threatening.

Wide angle shot (taken with a wide-angle lens)

This has the effect of seeming to exaggerate perspective. It's often used to make the viewer feel that they are close to the action.

Over-the-Shoulder Shot

A shot in which we see a character or main object over another's shoulder, often used in interviews or dialogues.

Shoulder Level Shot

This is when your camera is roughly as high as your subject's shoulders. Shoulder level shots are actually much more standard than an eye level shot, which can make your actor seem shorter than reality. A shoulder level shot can maximize the feeling of superiority when paired with a low angle.

Bird's Eye View Shot or Overhead Shot

An overhead shot is from way up high, looking down on your subject and a good amount of the scenery surrounding him or her. This can create a great sense of scale and movement.

Aerial Shot

Whether taken from a helicopter or drone, this is a shot from way up high. It establishes a large expanse of scenery. The opening shots of one of the best cyberpunk movies Blade Runner use them to establish futuristic cityscapes.

Dutch Angle or Dutch Tilt Shot

For a Dutch angle (Dutch tilt), the camera is slanted to one side. With the horizon lines tilted in this way, you can create a sense of disorientation. This video breaks down a key moment in Mission: Impossible when Ethan first realizes that he's being set up.

Ground Level Shot

A ground level shot is when your camera's height is on ground level with your subject. Needless to say, this shot captures what's going on the ground your subject stands on.

Knee Level Shot

This is when your camera height is about as low as your subject's knees. They can emphasize a character's superiority, if paired with a low angle.

Hip Level Shot

A hip level shot is when your camera is roughly waist-high.

Eye Level Shot

First, consider the most common height: the eye level shot. When your subject is at eye-level they are in a neutral perspective (not superior or inferior). This mimics how we see people in real life - our eye line connecting with theirs.

Reaction shot

A shot showing a character's expression as they react to something.

Reverse angle shot

Usually, the camera looks at the subject, but occasionally the camera shows what the subject is seeing. This is also known as Point of view shot (A shot from a character's point of view). This shot is often used when there are two characters. We cut back and forth between the two characters talking.

VI. EDITING

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

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

otherwise been noted; and even create a vital subconscious emotional connection to the viewer, among many other possibilities.

Chronological editing

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

Cross-cutting or parallel editing

The linking-up of two sets of action that run concurrently and are interdependent within the narrative.

Montage

Montage comes from “Monte” which means ‘to assemble or edit’. Thus, the word conveys a film’s system or rhythm of editing. For example, how quickly it is edited with consequent emotional effect. It is based on the theory that conflict must be inherent in all visual aspects in film, the principles of which include a rapid alteration between sets of shots whose signification occurs at the point of their collision, fast editing and unusual camera angles; also used for spectacular effect. It is a technique in film editing in which a series of short shots are edited into a sequence to condense space, time, and information. The term has been used in various contexts. It was introduced to cinema primarily by Eisenstein, and early Russian directors used it as a synonym for creative editing.

In France, the word "montage" simply denotes cutting. The montage sequence is usually used to suggest the passage of time, rather than to create symbolic meaning as it does in Soviet

montage theory. From the 1930s to the 1950s, montage sequences often combined numerous short shots with special optical effects (fades, dissolves, split screens, double and triple exposures) dance and music. They were usually assembled by someone other than the director or the editor of the movie.

Continuity Editing

It is the predominant style of film editing and video editing in the post-production process of filmmaking of narrative films and television programs. The purpose of continuity editing is to smooth over the inherent discontinuity of the editing process and to establish a logical coherence between shots. In most films, logical coherence is achieved by cutting to continuity, which emphasizes smooth transition of time and space. However, some films incorporate cutting to continuity into a more complex classical cutting technique, one which also tries to show psychological continuity of shots. The montage technique relies on symbolic association of ideas between shots rather than association of simple physical action for its continuity.

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

Continuity cuts

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

Match cut

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

Jump cut

A cut where there is no match between the two spliced shots. Within a sequence, or more particularly a scene, jump cuts give the effect of bad editing. The opposite of a match cut, the jump cut is an abrupt cut between two shots that calls attention to itself because it does not match the shots seamlessly. It marks a transition in time and space but is called jump cut because it jars the sensibilities; it makes the spectator jump and wonder where the narrative has got to. Jean Luc Godard is undoubtedly one of the best exponents of this use of the jump cut.

30-degree rule

The 30-degree rule is a basic film editing guideline that states the camera should move at least 30 degrees between shots of the same subject occurring in succession. If this rule isn't followed a jump cut occurs and there is a risk that the audience starts focusing on the filming technique instead of the story that is

being narrated. The 30-degree change of perspective makes the shots different enough to avoid a jump cut. Too much movement around the subject may violate the 180-degree rule.

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

180-degree rule

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

VII. COLOUR IN THE MOVIES

The first colour cinematography was by means of additive colour systems such as the one patented in England by Edward Raymond Turner in 1899 and tested in 1902. A simplified additive system was developed by George Albert Smith and successfully commercialized in 1909 as Kinemacolor. These early systems used black-and-white film to photograph and project two or more component images through different colour filters. With the present-day technology, there are two distinct processes: Eastman Colour Negative 2 chemistry (camera negative stocks, duplicating inter positive and inter negative stocks) and Eastman Colour Positive 2 chemistry (positive prints for direct projection), usually abbreviated as ECN-2 and ECP-2. Fuji's products are compatible with ECN-2 and ECP-2.

The first motion pictures were photographed on a simple silver halide photographic emulsion that produced a "black-and-white" image—that is, an image in shades of grey, ranging from black to white, which corresponded to the luminous intensity of each point on the photographed subject. Light, shade, form and movement were captured, but not colour. With colour motion picture film, not only is the luminance of a subject recorded, but the colour of the subject, too. This is accomplished by analyzing the spectrum of colours into several regions (normally three, commonly referred to by their dominant colours, red, green and blue) and recording these regions individually. Current colour films do this by means of three layers of differently colour-sensitive photographic emulsion coated onto a single strip of film base.

The first commercially successful stencil colour process was introduced in 1905 by Pathé Frères. Pathé Color, renamed

Pathéchrome in 1929, became one of the most accurate and reliable stencil colouring systems. It incorporated an original print of a film with sections cut by pantograph in the appropriate areas for up to six colours by a colouring machine with dye-soaked, velvet rollers.

A more common technique emerged in the early 1910s known as film tinting, a process in which either the emulsion or the film base is dyed, giving the image a uniform monochromatic colour. This process was popular during the silent era, with specific colours employed for certain narrative effects (red for scenes with fire or firelight, blue for night, etc.) A complementary process, called toning, replaces the silver particles in the film with metallic salts or mordanted dyes. This creates a colour effect in which the dark parts of the image are replaced with a colour (e.g., blue and white rather than black and white). Tinting and toning were sometimes applied together. Tinting and toning continued to be used well into the sound era. In the '30s and '40s, some western films were processed in a sepia-toning solution to evoke the feeling of old photographs of the day. Tinting was used as late as 1951 for Sam Newfield's sci-fi film Lost Continent for the green lost-world sequences. Alfred Hitchcock used a form of hand-colouring for the orange-red gun-blast at the audience in Spellbound (1945). Kodak's Sonochrome and similar pre-tinted stocks were still in production until the 1970s and were used commonly for custom theatrical trailers and snipes.

The first colour systems that appeared in motion pictures were additive colour systems. Additive colour was practical because no special colour stock was necessary. Black-and-white film could be processed and used in both filming and projection. A pioneering three-color additive system was patented in England

by Edward Raymond Turner in 1899. Practical colour in the motion picture business began with Kinemacolour, first introduced in 1906. This was a two-colour system created in England by George Albert Smith, and promoted by film pioneer Charles Urban's The Charles Urban Trading Company in 1908. William Friese-Greene invented another additive colour system called Biocolour, which was developed by his son Claude Friese-Greene after William's death in 1921. Both Kinemacolour and Biocolour had problems with "fringing" or "haloing" of the image, due to the separate red and green images not fully matching up.

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

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

Eastmancolour, introduced in 1950, was Kodak's first economical, single-strip 35 mm negative-positive process

incorporated into one strip of film. This rendered Three-Strip colour photography relatively obsolete, even though, for the first few years of Eastmancolour, Technicolour continued to offer Three-Strip origination combined with dye-transfer printing. The first commercial feature film to use Eastmancolour was the documentary Royal Journey, released in December 1951. Hollywood studios waited until an improved version of Eastmancolour negative came out in 1952 before using it, perhaps most notably in This is Cinerama, which employed three separate and interlocked strips of Eastmancolour negative. This Cinerama was initially printed on Eastmancolour positive, but its significant success eventually resulted in it being reprinted by Technicolor, using dye-transfer. Technicolor continued to offer its proprietary imbibitions dye-transfer printing process for projection prints until 1975, and even briefly revived it in 1998.

VIII. SOUND IN THE MOVIES

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

The primary steps in the commercialization of sound cinema were taken in the mid- to late 1920s. At first, the sound films incorporating synchronized dialogue—known as "talking

pictures", or "talkies"—were exclusively shorts; the earliest feature-length movies with recorded sound included only music and effects. The first feature film originally presented as a talkie was The Jazz Singer, released in October 1927. A major hit, it was made with Vitaphone, the leading brand of sound-on-disc technology. Sound-on-film, however, would soon become the standard for talking pictures.

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

The idea of combining motion pictures with recorded sound is nearly as old as the concept of cinema itself. On February 27, 1888, a couple of days after photographic pioneer Eadweard Muybridge gave a lecture not far from the laboratory of Thomas Edison, the two inventors privately met. Muybridge later claimed that on this occasion, six years before the first commercial motion picture exhibition, he proposed a scheme for sound cinema that would combine his image-casting zoopraxiscope with Edison's recorded-sound technology. No agreement was reached, but within a year Edison commissioned the development of the Kinetoscope, essentially a "peep-show" system, as a visual complement to his cylinder phonograph. The

two devices were brought together as the Kinetophone in 1895, but individual, cabinet viewing of motion pictures was soon to be outmoded by successes in film projection. In 1899, a projected sound-film system known as Cinemacrophonograph or Phonorama, based primarily on the work of Swiss-born inventor François Dussaud, was exhibited in Paris; similar to the Kinetophone, the system required individual use of earphones. An improved cylinder-based system, Phono-Cinéma-Théâtre, was developed by Clément-Maurice Gratioulet and Henri Lioret of France, allowing short films of theatre, opera, and ballet excerpts to be presented at the Paris Exposition in 1900. These appear to be the first publicly exhibited films with projection of both image and recorded sound. Phonorama and yet another sound-film system—Théâtroscope—were also presented at the Exposition.

Three major problems persisted, leading to motion pictures and sound recording largely taking separate paths for a generation. The primary issue was synchronization: pictures and sound were recorded and played back by separate devices, which were difficult to start and maintain in tandem. Sufficient playback volume was also hard to achieve. While motion picture projectors soon allowed film to be shown to large theatre audiences, audio technology before the development of electric amplification could not project to satisfactorily fill large spaces. Finally, there was the challenge of recording fidelity. The primitive systems of the era produced sound of very low quality unless the performers were stationed directly in front of the cumbersome recording devices (acoustical horns, for the most part), imposing severe limits on the sort of films that could be created with live-recorded sound.

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

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

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

The development of commercial sound cinema had proceeded in fits and starts before The Jazz Singer, and the film's success did not change things overnight. September 1928 also saw the release of Paul Terry's Dinner Time, among the first animated cartoons produced with synchronized sound. Soon after he saw

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

During 1929, most of the major European filmmaking countries began joining Hollywood in the changeover to sound. Many of the trend-setting European talkies were shot abroad as production companies leased studios while their own were being converted or as they deliberately targeted markets speaking different languages. The first successful European dramatic talkie was the all-British Blackmail. Directed by twenty-nine-year-old Alfred Hitchcock, the movie had its London debut June 21, 1929. Originally shot as a silent film, Blackmail was restaged to include dialogue sequences, along with a score and sound effects, before its premiere.

Sound

Sound is everything that can be heard in a scene. The key elements that make up sound in a film are:

- Location sound
- Musical score/soundtrack
- Dialogue
- Sound effects
- Voiceover (if used).

The absence of sound in a scene can also be impactful.

Music

Music is used to heighten the emotion and drama of a scene. Audiences are experienced in decoding the style of music to interpret mood or genre, e.g., scary music when a villain appears.

Music can:

- Determine the mood or genre of a film
- Build up or release tension
- Change the emotional or physical status of a character
- Smooth out transitions in an edit to allow a film to flow/link the scenes together
- Highlight or code a theme or message.

Dialogue

The words spoken by characters within the scene. Dialogue can be used to establish character definition and relationships, and to

provide a plot information and back-story. Both the content (words spoken) and the delivery (performance and mood) of dialogue is important for the development of characterisation and narrative within the film world.

Voiceover

This is when an omniscient narrator or a character is heard talking over the images you are seeing on the screen. Voiceovers are often used to provide back-story and either a subjective or objective perspective of the story as it unfolds. They are usually recorded in a studio.

Diegetic and non-diegetic sound

In film language, sound is divided into two terms:

- Diegetic sound has a physical origin in the film world (e.g., a character coughing or the radio playing)

- Non-diegetic sound has no direct origin in the film world (e.g., the soundtrack or the voice of a narrator). In other words, diegetic means within the world of the film, and non-diegetic may be defined as external to the film world.

Absence of non-diegetic music

- As non-diegetic music is very much associated with mainstream cinema and the overt and deliberate manipulation of audience emotions, some realist filmmakers chose to avoid it as much as possible. The absence of non-diegetic music can therefore be used to make scenes seem more realistic, such as in The Blair Witch Project.

Contrapuntal sound

Contrapuntal sound strongly contrasts with the mood or tone of the scene.

Parallel sound

Parallel sound matches the mood or tone of the sequence.

Exaggerated/Pleonastic sound

Directors often use exaggerated sound to heighten emotion or meaning in a scene. Using sound in this way can suggest an incoming threat before the audience sees it. It can be used to reinforce a character's threatening nature when they are present on screen. It can also help to emphasise the emotional impact of a specific action taking place on screen.

Unmotivated sound

Sometimes directors will use sound effects which do not logically match the actions on screen but do add to the emotional impact of a scene. A director might use a record scratching sound to suggest a sudden mishap in a comedy film. An unmotivated swooshing noise is also common to emphasise a character turning their head.

IX. PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND RECEPTION OF FILMS

The film industry consists of the technological and commercial institutions of filmmaking: i.e., film production companies, film studios, cinematography, film production, screenwriting, pre-

production, post production, film festivals, distribution; and actors, film directors and other film crew personnel.

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

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

Film production involves several major stages:

1. Development — the first stage in which the ideas for the film are created, rights to books/plays are bought etc., and the screenplay is written. Financing for the project has to be sought and green lit.

2. Pre-production—Preparations are made for the shoot, in which cast and film crew are hired, locations are selected, and sets are built.

3. Production— the raw elements for the film are recorded during the film shoot.

4. Post-Production—the images, sound, and visual effects of the recorded film are edited.

5. Distribution—the finished film is distributed and screened in cinemas and/or released on DVD.

Development

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

Pre-production

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

Storyboard is a visualization method that creates a blueprint of what the shot sequence should be. The visual images are drawn or made by programs such as Photoshop. There may also be a written caption as needed for each shot. The director is primarily responsible for the storytelling, creative decisions and acting of the film. The unit production manager manages the production budget and production schedule. They also report, on behalf of the production office, to the studio executives or financiers of the film. In production, the video production/film is created and shot. More crew will be recruited at this stage, such as the property master, script supervisor, assistant directors, stills photographer, picture editor, and sound editors. These are just the most common roles in filmmaking; the production office will be free to create any unique blend of roles to suit the various responsibilities possible during the production of a film.

Post-production

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

added. Finally, all sound elements are mixed into "stems", which are then married to pictures, and the film is fully completed ("locked").

Distribution

This is the final stage, where the film is released to cinemas or, occasionally, to consumer media (DVD, VCD, VHS, Blu-ray) or direct download from a provider. The film is duplicated as required and distributed to cinemas for exhibition (screening). Press kits, posters, and other advertising materials are published and the film is advertised and promoted. Film distributors usually release a film with a launch party, press release, interviews with the press, press preview screenings, and film festival screenings. Most of the films have a website. The film plays at selected cinemas and the DVD typically is released a few months later. The distribution rights for the film and DVD are also usually sold for worldwide distribution. The distributor and the production company share profits. Filmmaking also takes place outside of the mainstream and is commonly called independent filmmaking. Since the introduction of DV technology, the means of production have become more democratized. Filmmakers can conceivably shoot and edit a film, create and edit the sound and music, and mix the final cut on a home computer.

However, while the means of production may be democratized, financing, traditional distribution and marketing remain difficult to accomplish outside the traditional system. In the past, most of the independent filmmakers have relied on film festivals to get their films noticed and sold for distribution. However, the Internet has allowed for relatively inexpensive distribution of independent films. As a result, several companies have emerged

to assist filmmakers in getting independent movies seen and sold via mainstream internet marketplaces, oftentimes adjacent to popular Hollywood titles. With internet movie distribution, independent filmmakers who fail to garner a traditional distribution deal now have the ability to reach global audiences.

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

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

A simultaneous release takes place when a movie is made available on many media (cinema, DVD, internet...) at the same time or with very little difference in timing. Simultaneous releases bear great advantages to both consumers, who can choose the medium that most suits their needs, and production

studios that only have to run one marketing campaign for all releases. The flip side, though, is that such distribution efforts are often regarded as experimental and thus, do not receive substantial investment or promotion.

In the course of the years, simultaneous release approaches have gained both praise, with Mark Cuban claiming movies should simultaneously be made available on all media allowing viewers to choose whether to see it at home or at the theatre, and disapproval, with director M. Night Shyamalan claiming it could potentially destroy the "magic" of movie going. A straight to video (or straight-to-DVD or straight-to-Blu-ray depending on the medium upon which the movie is made available) release occurs when a movie is released on home video formats (such as VHS, DVD, etc.) without being released in theatres first, thereby not taking into consideration the "theatrical window". As a result of strong DVD sales, STV releases also achieved higher success and have become a profitable market lately, especially for independent moviemakers and companies.

X. FILM CENSORSHIP

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

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

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

Cinema came to India in 1896 when the first show at Watson hotel, Bombay by Lumière Brothers was presented in July. As the first film in India (Raja Harishchandra) was produced in 1913 by Dadasaheb Phalke, Indian Cinematograph Act was passed and came into effect only in 1920. Censor Boards were placed under police chiefs in cities of Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Lahore and Rangoon. Regional censors were independent.

After Independence autonomy of regional censors was abolished and they were brought under the Bombay Board of Film Censors. With implementation of Cinematograph Act, 1952, the board was unified and reconstituted, as the Central Board of Film Censors. Cinematograph (Certification) Rules were revised in 1983 and since then the Central Board of Film Censors became known as the Central Board of Film Certification.

The CBFC currently issues the following certificates:

1. U- Universal

Unrestricted Public Exhibition throughout India, suitable for all age groups. Films under this category should not upset children

over 4. This rating is similar to the MPAA's G and PG and the BBFC's U and PG ratings. Such films may contain educational, social or family-oriented themes. Films under this category may also contain fantasy violence and/or mild bad language.

2. UA- Parental Guidance

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

3. A- Adults Only

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

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

SECTION B

INTRODUCTION TO FILM GENRES

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

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

The major genres:

1. Narrative

2. Avant Garde

3. Documentary

4. Feature films

5. Short films

1. NARRATIVE

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

Beginning in 1904, American commercial film making became increasingly oriented towards storytelling. The filmmakers could not experiment with the causal, special and temporal relation in many films as the audience could not understand it. They came to assume that a film should guide the spectator's attention, making every aspect of the story on the screen as clear as possible. One of the first well-known narratives ever made was Georges Méliès's *A Trip to the Moon* in 1902. Most films previous to this had been merely moving images of everyday occurrences. Méliès was one of the first directors to progress cinematic technology, which paved the way for narratives as style of film. Many films are based on real occurrences; however, these too fall under the category of a "narrative film" rather than a documentary. This is because films based on real occurrences are not simply footage of the occurrence, but rather hired actors portraying an adjusted, often more dramatic, retelling of the occurrence.

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

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

II. AVANT-GARDE

The term ‘avant-garde’ describes a range of filmmaking styles that are generally quite different from, and often opposed to, the practices of mainstream commercial and documentary filmmaking. Today the term "experimental cinema" prevails, because it is possible to make experimental films without the presence of any avant-garde movement in the cultural field. Experimental film or experimental cinema is a type of cinema. It is an artistic practice relieving both of visual arts and cinema. Its origins can be found in European avant-garde movements of the twenties. While "experimental" covers a wide range of practice, an experimental film is often characterized by the absence of linear narrative, the use of various abstracting techniques out-of-focus, painting or scratching on film, rapid editing - the use of asynchronous sound or even the absence of any sound track. The goal is often to place the viewer in a more active and more thoughtful relationship to the film. At least through the 1960s,

and to some extent after, many experimental films took an oppositional stance toward mainstream culture. Most such films are made on very low budgets, self-financed or financed through small grants, with a minimal crew or, often a crew of only one person, the filmmaker.

Two conditions made Europe in the 1920s ready for the emergence of experimental film. First, the cinema matured as a medium, and highbrow resistance to the mass entertainment began to wane. Second, avant-garde movements in the visual arts flourished. The Dadaists and Surrealists in particular took to cinema. The most famous experimental film is generally considered to be Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's *Un chien Anadolu* (1929). Hans Richter's animated shorts, Oskar Fischinger's abstract films, and Len Lye's GPO films would be excellent examples of more abstract European avant-garde films.

III. DOCUMENTARY

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

In popular myth, the word 'documentary' was coined by Scottish documentarian John Grierson in his review of Robert Flaherty's film *Moana* (1926). Grierson defines documentary as a "creative treatment of actuality". The American film critic Pare Lorentz defines a documentary film as "a factual film which is

dramatic." Filmmakers like Robert Flaherty believed it was acceptable to add fiction to documentaries, as long as the effect on the audience was real. Early film (pre-1900) was dominated by the novelty of showing an event. They were single-shot moments captured on film: a train entering a station, a boat docking, or factory workers leaving work. These short films were called "actuality" films; the term "documentary" was not coined until 1926. Many of the first films, such as those made by Auguste and Louis Lumière, were a minute or less in length, due to technological limitations.

With Robert J. Flaherty's Nanook of the North in 1922, the documentary film embraced romanticism. Paramount Pictures tried to repeat the success of Flaherty's *Nanook* and *Moana* with two romanticized documentaries, *Grass* (1925) and *Chang* (1927), both directed by Merian Cooper and Ernest Schoedsack. Propagandist tradition consists of films made with the explicit purpose of persuading an audience of a point. One of the most notorious propaganda films is Leni Riefenstahl's film *Triumph of the Will* (1935), which chronicled the 1934 Nazi Party Congress and was commissioned by Adolf Hitler. Leftist filmmakers Joris Ivens and Henri Storck directed *Borinage* (1931) about the Belgian coal mining region. Pare Lorentz's *The Plow that Broke the Plains* (1936) and *The River* (1938) and Willard Van Dyke's *The City* (1939) are notable New Deal productions, each presenting complex combinations of social and ecological awareness, government propaganda, and leftist viewpoints.

In Britain, a number of different filmmakers came together under John Grierson. They became known as the Documentary Film Movement. Grierson, Alberto Cavalcanti, Harry Watt, Basil Wright, and Humphrey Jennings amongst others

succeeded in blending propaganda, information, and education with a more poetic aesthetic approach to documentary. Examples of their work include *Drifters* (John Grierson), *Song of Ceylon* (Basil Wright), *Fires Were Started* and *A Diary for Timothy* (Humphrey Jennings). Cinéma vérité (or the closely related direct cinema) was dependent on some technical advances in order to exist: light, quiet and reliable cameras, and portable sync sound. Cinéma vérité and similar documentary traditions can thus be seen, in a broader perspective, as a reaction against studio-based film production constraints.

In the 1960s and 1970s, documentary film was often conceived as a political weapon against neocolonialism and capitalism in general, especially in Latin America. *La Hora de los hornos (The Hour of the Furnaces*, from 1968), directed by Octavio Getino and Fernando E. Solanas, influenced a whole generation of filmmakers. Historical documentaries, such as the landmark 14-hour Eyes on the Prize: *America's Civil Rights Years* (1986 – Part 1 and 1989 – Part 2) by Henry Hampton, *Four Little Girls* (1997) by Spike Lee, and *The Civil War* by Ken Burns, UNESCO awarded independent film on slavery 500 Years Later, expressed not only a distinctive voice but also a perspective and point of views.

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

IV. FEATURE FILMS

A feature film is a film with a full-length running time. According to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, American Film Institute, and British Film Institute, a feature

film runs for 40 minutes or longer, while the Screen Actors Guild states that it is 80 minutes or longer. The majority of feature films are between 70 and 210 minutes long. The Story of the Kelly Gang was the first feature film based on length, and was released in Australia in 1906. The first feature-length adaptation was Les Misérables which was released in 1909. Feature films for children are usually between 70 and 105 minutes. Other early feature films include a version of Oliver Twist, Richard III and From the Manger to the Cross.

A feature film is any film production that has a duration greater than or equal to sixty minutes, or one that has a duration greater than forty-five minutes that is produced in 70 mm format and a minimum of eight image perforations.

The most outstanding characteristics of a feature film are the following:

- They have a duration of 30 minutes or more.
- Feature films longer than 45 minutes are produced on a 70-millimeter
- They have a wide variety of classes and genres.
- The length of the feature film may also vary depending on the country in which it is made.

The origin of the feature film is documented in Lubin's Passion Play, a representation of the Passion produced by the Lubin Manufacturing Company and premiered in January 1903. The film was divided into thirty-one parts and had a total duration of sixty minutes. Sometime later, the French company Pathé Frères launched its own cinematographic representation of the Passion

of Christ: La Vie et la passion de Jésus-Christ, which was divided into thirty-two parts and lasted forty-four minutes.

According to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register, the first feature film ever made was called The Story of the Kelly Gang, a silent film of Australian origin that lasted just over an hour and was written and directed by Charles Tait.

Some examples of feature films that have stood out over time are:

- *Citizen Kane*
- *The Godfather*
- *2001: Space Odyssey*
- *Singing in the rain*
- *Casablanca*
- *Godfather II*
- *Chemmeen*
- *Manichitrathazh*
- *Neelakkuyil*
- *Kodiyettam*
- *Elippathayam*

V. SHORT FILMS

A short film is an audio-visual production that is mainly characterized by its short duration and because it also deals with innovative issues, which are already a little worn or have a different language. In other words, we can define a short film as a film or a film effort in which the duration never exceeds 30 minutes, and which can have a minimum duration of 5 minutes. Also known by the name of short, is a very important part for all those who want to start their lives as new filmmakers, as it is very important because it allows them to put into practice all their skills as future producers. Many of the big film producers started making simple short films, until they settled in the place they enjoy today.

At the beginning of the short films, these were seen as documentary type, and with time, they were also leaning in the area of fiction. At that time, the duration practically depended on the size of the recording roll, which was generally no longer than 10 minutes. By means of the editing they were able to make it take a little longer of time.

Moreover, a short film is any film not long enough to be considered a feature film. No consensus exists as to where that boundary is drawn: the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences defines a short film as "an original motion picture that has a running time of 40 minutes or less, including all credits". The term ‘featurette’ originally applied to a film longer than a short subject, but shorter than a standard feature film. The increasingly rare term short subject means approximately the same thing. An industry term, it carries more of an assumption that the film is shown as part of a presentation along with a feature film. Short is an abbreviation for either term. Short films

can be professional or amateur productions. Short films are often screened at local, national, or international film festivals. Short films are often made by independent filmmakers for non-profit, either with a low budget, no budget at all, and in rare cases big budgets. Short films are usually funded by film grants, non-profit organizations, sponsors, or out of pocket funds. These films are used by indie filmmakers to prove their talent in order to gain funding for future films from private investors, entertainment companies, or film studios. Short films do qualify for Academy Awards if screened in Los Angeles.

The main characteristics of a short film are the following:

- They are short productions that do not exceed thirty minutes.
- They depend on their plot, their origin and the techniques used to make them to classify them.
- You do not need a lot of money to make a short film.
- The place where it takes place is one of the most important aspects of a short film.
- It must have a beginning, a plot and an end.
- The characters that are part of a short film must be convincing and have a specific function within the work.
- Find a way to tell a story concisely.
- It is a format that has been relegated to second place with respect to feature films and documentaries.
- It is the main protagonist of film festivals.

Some outstanding short films in the history of cinema are the following:

- *Escape to Nowhere by Steven Spielberg*
- *Today is Thursday cinema*
- *There's something in the dark*
- *Everyday*
- *One of these days*
- *The curious case of the gradual runner*
- *Ex through history*
- *A bold decision*
- *Professor Brofman*

MINOR GENRES

1. THRILLER

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

whereby he or she presents obstacles that the hero must overcome.

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

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

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

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

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

2. MELODRAMA

The term ‘melodrama’ refers to a dramatic work that exaggerates plot and characters in order to appeal to the emotions. It is a drama, such as a play, film, or television program, characterized by exaggerated emotions, stereotypical characters, and interpersonal conflicts. It refers to dramas of the 18th and 19th centuries in which orchestral music or song was used to accompany the action. The villain was always the central character in melodrama and crime was a favourite theme. The misfortunes of a discharged prisoner is the theme of the sensational *The Ticket-of-Leave Man* (1863) by Tom Taylor. Melodrama films are a subgenre of drama films characterised by a plot that appeals to the heightened emotions of the audience. They generally depend on stereotyped character development, interaction, and highly emotional themes. Melodramatic films tend to use plots that often deal with crises of human emotion, failed romance or friendship, strained familial situations, tragedy, illness, neuroses, or emotional and physical hardship.

Victims, couples, virtuous and heroic characters or suffering protagonists (usually heroines) in melodramas are presented with tremendous social pressures, threats, repression, fears, improbable events or difficulties with friends, community, work, lovers, or family. Film critics sometimes use the term pejoratively to connote an unrealistic, pathos-filled, campy tale of romance or domestic situations with stereotypical characters (often including a central female character) that would directly appeal to feminine audiences.

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

3. MUSICAL FILM

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

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

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

4. HORROR FILM

Horror films are a film genre seeking to elicit a negative emotional reaction from the viewers by playing on the

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

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

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

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

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

5. WESTERN

The Western is a genre of various visual arts, such as film, television, radio, literature, painting and others. Westerns are devoted to telling stories set primarily in the latter half of the 19th century in the American Old West, hence the name. Some

Westerns are set as early as the Battle of the Alamo in 1836. There are also a number of films about Western-type characters in contemporary settings, such as Junior Bonner set in the 1970s and The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada in the 21st century.

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

The Western genre sometimes portrays the conquest of the wilderness and the subordination of nature in the name of civilization or the confiscation of the territorial rights of the original inhabitants of the frontier. The popular perception of the Western is a story that centres on the life of a semi-nomadic wanderer, usually a cowboy or a gunfighter. In some ways, such protagonists may be considered the literary descendants of the knight errant who stood at the centre of earlier extensive genres such as the Arthurian Romances.

Like the cowboy or gunfighter of the Western, the knight errant of the earlier European tales and poetry was wandering from place to place on his horse, fighting villains of various kinds and bound to no fixed social structures but only to his own innate code of honour. And like knights errant, the heroes of Westerns frequently rescue damsels in distress. The Western typically takes these elements and uses them to tell simple morality tales. Westerns often stress the harshness of the wilderness and frequently set the action in an arid, desolate landscape. Specific settings include isolated forts, ranches and homesteads; the

Native American village; or the small frontier town with its saloon, general store, livery stable and jailhouse. Apart from the wilderness, it is usually the saloon that emphasizes that this is the "Wild West": it is the place to go for music (raucous piano playing), women (often prostitutes), gambling (draw poker or five card stud), drinking (beer or whiskey), brawling and shooting. In some Westerns, where "civilization" has arrived, the town has a church and a school; in others, where frontier rules still hold sway, it is, as Sergio Leone said, "where life has no value".

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

6. FANTASY

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

In fantasy films, the hero often undergoes some kind of mystical experience and must ask for assistance from powerful,

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

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

The most common fantasy subgenres depicted in movies are High Fantasy and Sword and Sorcery. Both categories typically employ quasi-medieval settings, wizards, magical creatures and other elements commonly associated with fantasy stories. High Fantasy films tend to feature a more richly developed fantasy world, and may also be more character oriented or thematically complex. Often, they feature a hero of humble origins and a clear distinction between good and evil set against each other in an epic struggle. Many scholars cite J. R. R. Tolkien's novel *The Lord of the Rings* as the prototypical modern example of High Fantasy in literature. Sword and Sorcery movies tend to be more

plot-driven than high fantasy and focus heavily on action sequences, often pitting a physically powerful but unsophisticated warrior against an evil wizard or other supernaturally-endowed enemy.

Another important sub-genre of fantasy films that has become more popular in recent years is Contemporary Fantasy. Such films feature magical effects or supernatural occurrences happening in the "real" world of today. The most prominent example in the early 21st century is the Harry Potter series of films adapted from the novels of J. K. Rowling.

7. ANIMATION

Animation is the technique in which each frame of a film is produced individually, whether generated as a computer graphic, or by photographing a drawn image, or by repeatedly making small changes to a model unit, and then photographing the result with a special animation camera. When the frames are strung together and the resulting film is viewed at a speed of 16 or more frames per second, there is an illusion of continuous movement. The production of animated short films, typically referred to as "cartoons", became an industry of its own during the 1910s, and cartoon shorts were produced to be shown in movie theatres. The most successful early animation producer was John Randolph Bray, who, along with animator Earl Hurd, patented the cel animation process which dominated the animation industry for the rest of the decade. Traditional animation (also called cel animation or hand-drawn animation) was the process used for most animated films of the 20th century. The traditional cel animation process became obsolete by the beginning of the 21st century. Today, animators' drawings and the backgrounds are either scanned into or drawn

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

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

8. FILM NOIR

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

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

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

Josef von Sternberg’s films such as *Shanghai Express* (1932) and *The Devil Is a Woman* (1935), with their hothouse eroticism and baroque visual style, specifically anticipate central elements of classic noir. Italian neorealism of the 1940s, with its emphasis on quasi documentary authenticity, was an acknowledged influence on trends that emerged in American noir. *The Lost Weekend* (1945), directed by Billy Wilder, tells the story of an alcoholic in a manner evocative of neorealism. Most of the film noirs of the classic period were similarly low- and modestly

budgeted features without major stars. Thematically, film noirs were most exceptional for the relative frequency with which they centred on women of questionable virtue. Among the first major neo-noir films was the French *Tirez sur le pianiste* (1960), directed by François Truffaut from a novel by one of the gloomiest of American noir fiction writers, David Goodis. The tone of film noir is generally regarded as downbeat; some critics experience it as darker- "overwhelmingly black".

9. EXPRESSIONISM

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

It was a movement that developed in the early twentieth-century mainly in Germany in reaction to the dehumanizing effect of industrialization and the growth of cities. The term refers to an artistic style in which the artist seeks to depict not objective reality but rather the subjective emotions and responses that objects and events arouse within a person. There was an Expressionist style in the cinema, important examples of which are Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), *The Golem: How He Came Into the World* (1920), Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) and F. W. Murnau's Nosferatu, a *Symphony of Horror* (1922) and *The Last Laugh* (1924). The term "expressionist" is also sometimes used to refer to stylistic devices thought to resemble those of German Expressionism, such as Film Noir cinematography or the style of several of the

films of Ingmar Bergman. More generally, the term expressionism can be used to describe cinematic styles of great artifice, such as the technicolour melodramas of Douglas Sirk or the sound and visual design of David Lynch's films. Expressionist films have many tactics for blending the elements of the shot. They employed stylized surfaces, symmetry, distortion and exaggeration and the juxtaposition of similar shapes. Perhaps the most obvious and pervasive trait of expressionism is the use of distortion and exaggeration. In such films houses are often pointed and twisted, chairs are tall, and staircases are crooked and uneven.

10. HISTORICAL

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

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

11.MYTHOLOGICAL FILMS

These are films made using plot derived from legend and the literary epics. Mythological films have the advantage of familiarity with the story in a way. Everyone understands mythology and seems to have a connection with it. As everyone seems to be familiar with the world of mythology then through films one brings in their perspective in a unique way of storytelling. Earlier, animated films *Hanuman* (2005) and *Bal Ganesh* (2007) had done well at the box office. Some of the films based on Greco-Roman mythology are *Helen of Troy* (1956), *The Odyssey* (1997), and *Hercules* (1997)

12. ROAD MOVIE

A road movie is a film genre in which the main character or characters leave home to travel from place to place. They usually leave home to escape their current lives. The genre has its roots in spoken and written tales of epic journeys, such as the Odyssey and the Aeneid. The road film is a standard plot employed by screenwriters. It is a type of bildungsroman, a story in which the hero changes, grows or improves over the course of the story. The on-the-road plot was used at the birth of American cinema but blossomed in the years after World War II, reflecting a boom in automobile production and the growth of youth culture. Even so, awareness of the "road picture" as a genre came only in the 1960s with Easy Rider and Bonnie and Clyde. Some examples are: *Near Dark* (1987), *The Vanishing* (1988), and *The Week End* (1967).

13. SCI-FI FILM

Sci-fi film or Science fiction film is a genre that uses speculative, fictional science-based depictions of phenomena that are not fully accepted by mainstream science, such as extra-terrestrial lifeforms, alien worlds, extrasensory perception and time travel, along with futuristic elements such as spacecraft, robots, cyborgs, interstellar travel or other technologies. Science fiction films have often been used to focus on political or social issues, and to explore philosophical issues like the human condition. In many cases, tropes derived from written science fiction may be used by filmmakers ignorant of or at best indifferent to the standards of scientific plausibility and plot logic to which written science fiction is traditionally held. The genre has existed since the early years of silent cinema, when Georges Melies' *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) employed trick photography effects. The next major example in the genre was the film *Metropolis* (1927) - being the first feature length science fiction movie. From the 1930s to the 1950s, the genre consisted mainly of low-budget B movies. After Stanley Kubrick's landmark 2001: *A Space Odyssey* (1968), the science fiction film genre was taken more seriously. In the late 1970s, big-budget science fiction films filled with special effects became popular with audiences after the success of Star Wars and paved the way for the blockbuster hits of subsequent decades.

14. DIGITAL FILMS

Digital film is any medium which is used for storage of images in digital cameras. Most of the digital cameras use digital film based on flash memory cards or other removable types of media. This depends on the compatibility of the storage medium with

different types of digital cameras. Digital film has numerous benefits such as faster writing speeds and larger capacities.

Types of digital film are undergoing changes with the rapidly changing digital camera market. Many digital camera manufacturers produce their own proprietary digital film for their cameras. In almost all cases, a USB cable is provided with digital cameras for transferring the stored images from the digital film to a computer. In some cases, the data can be moved from the camera to the computer by manually inserting the medium into the appropriate drive of the computer. There are different types of digital film available in the market with popular ones being Secure Digital, CompactFlash and SmartMedia.

There are many benefits associated with digital film, such as lower prices per storage capacity compared to other alternatives. They also have faster write speeds and can accommodate higher resolution images and shooting in RAW camera mode. The main drawback associated with digital films is that they are not all compatible with different cameras, card readers or other devices. The first digitally filmed and post produced feature film was *Windhorse*, shot in Tibet and Nepal in 1996.

15. TELE-FILMS

A television film (also known as a TV film, television movie, TV movie, telefilm, telemovie, made-for-television film, direct-to-TV film, movie of the week (MOTW or MOW); feature-length drama, single drama and original movie) is a feature-length motion picture that is produced for and is originally distributed by or to a television network, in contrast to theatrical

films, which are made explicitly for initial showing in movie theatres.

16. 3D FILM

3D films have existed in some form since 1915, but had been largely relegated to a niche in the motion picture industry because of the costly hardware and processes required to produce and display a 3D film, and the lack of a standardized format for all segments of the entertainment business. Nonetheless, 3D films were prominently featured in the 1950s in American cinema, and later experienced a worldwide resurgence in the 1980s and 1990s driven by IMAX high-end theatres and Disney-themed venues. 3D films became increasingly successful throughout the 2000s, peaking with the success of 3D presentations of Avatar in December 2009, after which 3D films again decreased in popularity. Certain directors have also taken more experimental approaches to 3D filmmaking, most notably celebrated auteur Jean-Luc Godard in his films 3X3D.

SECTION C

INTRODUCTION TO MAJOR MOVEMENTS AND THEORIES

1. THE SILENT ERA

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

2. CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

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

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

The style of classical Hollywood cinema has been heavily influenced by the ideas of the Renaissance and its resurgence of mankind as the focal point. Thus, classical narration progresses always through psychological motivation, i.e., by the will of a human character and its struggle with obstacles towards a defined goal. In the classical Hollywood style space and time are unified, continuous and linear. They appear as a unified whole to match our perception of time and space in reality. Time in classical Hollywood is continuous, since nonlinearity calls attention to the illusory workings of the medium. The only permissible manipulation of time in this format is the flashback. Likewise, the treatment of space in classic Hollywood strives to

overcome or conceal the two-dimensionality of film ("invisible style") and is strongly centred upon the human body.

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

3. ITALIAN NEOREALISM

Italian Neorealism is a national film movement characterized by stories set amongst the poor and the working class, filmed on location, frequently using non-professional actors. Italian Neorealist films mostly contend with the difficult economic and moral conditions of post-World War II Italy, representing changes in the Italian psyche and conditions of everyday life, including poverty, oppression, injustice and desperation. Italian Neorealism came about as World War II ended and Benito Mussolini's government fell, causing the Italian film industry to lose its centre. Neorealism was a sign of cultural change and social progress in Italy. Its films presented contemporary stories and ideas, and were often shot in the streets because the film studios had been damaged significantly during the war.

In the spring of 1945, Mussolini was executed and Italy was liberated from German occupation. This period, known as the

"Italian Spring," was a break from old ways and an entrance to a more realistic approach when making films. Italian cinema went from utilizing elaborate studio sets to shooting on location in the countryside and city streets in the realist style. Neorealism became famous globally in 1946 with Roberto Rossellini's *Rome, Open City*, when it won the Grand Prize at the Cannes Film Festival as the first major film produced in Italy after the war. Italian Neorealism rapidly declined in the early 1950s.

Neorealist movies are generally filmed with non-professional actors. They are shot almost exclusively on location, mostly in run-down cities as well as rural areas due to its forming during the post-war era. The topic involves the idea of what it is like to live among the poor and the lower working class. The focus is on a simple social order of survival in rural, everyday life. Neorealist films often feature children in major roles, though their characters are frequently more observational than participatory. Vittorio De Sica's 1948 film *Bicycle Thieves* is a representative of the genre, with non-professional actors, and a story that details the hardships of working-class life after the war.

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

4. FRENCH NEW WAVE

The New Wave (French: La Nouvelle Vague) was a term coined by critics for a group of French filmmakers of the late 1950s and 1960s. Although never a formally organized movement, the

New Wave filmmakers were linked by their self-conscious rejection of the literary period pieces being made in France and written by novelists, their spirit of youthful iconoclasm, the desire to shoot more current social issues on location, and their intention of experimenting with the film form. "New Wave" is an example of European art cinema. Many also engaged in their work with the social and political upheavals of the era, making their radical experiments with editing, visual style and narrative part of a general break with the conservative paradigm. Using portable equipment and requiring little or no set up time, the New Wave way of filmmaking presented a documentary style. The films exhibited direct sounds on film stock that required less light. Filming techniques included fragmented, discontinuous editing, and long takes. The combination of objective realism, subjective realism, and authorial commentary created a narrative ambiguity in the sense that questions that arise in a film are not answered in the end.

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

The auteur theory holds that the director is the "author" of his movies, with a personal signature visible from film to film. They praised movies by Jean Renoir and Jean Vigo, and made then-radical cases for the artistic distinction and greatness of

Hollywood studio directors such as Orson Welles, John Ford, Alfred Hitchcock and Nicholas Ray. The beginning of the New Wave was to some extent an exercise by the Cahiers writers in applying this philosophy to the world by directing movies themselves.

Apart from the role that films by Jean Rouch have played in the movement, Chabrol's Le Beau Serge (1958) is traditionally credited as the first New Wave feature. Truffaut, with *The 400 Blows* (1959) and Godard, with Breathless (1960) had unexpected international successes. The French New Wave was popular roughly between 1958 and 1964, although New Wave work existed as late as 1973.

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

5. ASIAN CINEMA

Asian cinema refers to the film industries and films produced in the continent of Asia. However, in countries like the United States, it is often used to refer only to the cinema of East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia. West Asian cinema is sometimes classified as part of Middle Eastern cinema, along with the cinema of Egypt. The cinema of Central Asia is often grouped with the Middle East or, in the past, the cinema of the

Soviet Union during the Soviet Central Asia era. North Asia is dominated by Siberian Russian cinema, and is thus considered part of European cinema.

East Asian cinema is typified by the cinema of Japan, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea, including the Japanese anime industry and action films of Hong Kong. South Asian cinema is typified by the cinema of India, the cinema of Pakistan (including Punjabi and Urdu cinema), the cinema of Bangladesh (Bengali cinema), and the cinema of Nepal. Southeast Asian cinema is typified by the cinema of the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, and other Southeast Asian countries. The cinema of Central Asia and the southern Caucasus is typified by Iranian cinema and the cinema of Tajikistan. West Asian cinema is typified by Arab cinema, Iranian cinema, Israeli cinema (which may overlap with Jewish cinema), and Turkish cinema.

6. THIRD CINEMA

Third Cinema, also called Third World Cinema, aesthetic and political cinematic movement in Third World countries (mainly in Latin America and Africa) meant as an alternative to Hollywood (First Cinema) and aesthetically oriented European films (Second Cinema). Third Cinema films aspire to be socially realistic portrayals of life and emphasize topics and issues such as poverty, national and personal identity, tyranny and revolution, colonialism, class, and cultural practices). The term was coined by Argentine filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, the producers of *La hora de los hornos* (1968; *The Hour of the Furnaces*), one of the best-known Third Cinema documentary films of the 1960s, in their manifesto “Hacia un tercer cine” (1969; “Toward a Third Cinema”).

Third Cinema was rooted in Marxist aesthetics generally and was influenced by the socialist sensibility of German dramatist Bertolt Brecht, the British social documentary developed by producer John Grierson, and post-World War II Italian Neorealism. Third Cinema filmmakers went beyond those predecessors to call for an end to the division between art and life and to insist on a critical and intuitive, rather than a propagandist, cinema in order to produce a new emancipatory mass culture.

Ethiopian-born American cinema scholar Teshome Gabriel identified a three-phase path along which films have emerged from Third World countries. In the first phase, assimilationist films, such as those of Bollywood in India, follow those of Hollywood in focusing on entertainment and technical virtuosity and de-emphasize local subject matter. In the second phase, films feature local control of production and are about local culture and history, but they tend to romanticize the past while neglecting social transformation. Senegalese director Ousmane Sembène's Mandabi (1968; "The Money Order"), about a traditional man confronting modern ways, and Burkinabé director Gaston Kaboré's Wend Kuuni (1983; "God's Gift"), about a mute boy who regains his speech after viewing a tragedy, characterize the second phase. In the third phase, combative films, such as Chilean film director Miguel Littin's La tierra prometida (1973; The Promised Land), place production in the hands of the people (instead of local elites) and use film as an ideological tool.

Despite their geographical and historical specificity, Third Cinema films do not conform to any one aesthetic strategy but instead employ whatever formal techniques—mainstream or avant-garde—that suit the subject at hand. Often, directors and

actors are not full-time professionals. Craftsmanship is discouraged, and more emphasis is placed on the viewers' role in creating the film, inviting them to explore the spaces between representation and reality and become producers rather than consumers of culture.

Third Cinema began in Latin America in 1967 with the strong anticolonial emphasis at the Festival of Latin American Cinema in Viña del Mar, Chile, and the release of The Hour of the Furnaces, a radical and controversial rendering of Argentine history and politics in the 1960s, with its accompanying manifesto, "Towards a Third Cinema." That anticolonial approach then became less doctrinaire in feature films such as Chilean Raúl Ruiz's Tres tristes tigres (1968; Three Sad Tigers), which provided a variety of options for social change in its examination of the Santiago underworld through a single handheld camera, emphasizing the city's atmosphere of entrapment. The Third Cinema approach spread worldwide through international exposure, especially in Europe, overcoming the obstacles of dictators and state sponsorship in the 1970s.

In Africa the Third Cinema was illustrated notably in the films of Sembène, such as Xala (1975) and Moolaadé (2004), with their mixture of African and Western elements and their critical approach to local culture. Another example of Third Cinema was Algerian filmmaker Abderrahmane Bouguermouh's La Colline oubliée (1997; The Forgotten Hillside), which was shot in the Berber language and treated the traditional ways of its mountain-dwelling characters with ambivalence.

Third Cinema films do not have to be located in the Third World. In the British films of the Black Audio Film Collective

(and related groups such as Sankofa), such as John Akomfrah's Handsworth Songs (1986), both the style and the substance of the traditional British documentary approach to race relations were challenged.

7. INDIAN CINEMA

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

Raghupathi Venkaiah Naidu was an Indian artist and a pioneer in the production of silent Indian movies and talkies. Starting

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

Ardeshir Irani released *Alam Ara* which was the first Indian talking film, on 14 March 1931. The Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), an art movement with a communist inclination, began to take shape through the 1940s and the 1950s. A number of realistic IPTA plays, such as Bijon Bhattacharya's *Nabann*a in 1944 prepared the ground for the solidification of realism in Indian cinema, exemplified by Khwaja Ahmad Abbas's *Dharti Ke Lal* (Children of the Earth) in 1946. Following India's independence, the period from the late 1940s to the 1960s is regarded by film historians as the 'Golden Age' of Indian cinema. Some of the most critically acclaimed Indian films of all time were produced during this period. This period saw the emergence of a new Parallel Cinema movement, mainly led by Bengali cinema. *Pather Panchali* (1955), the first part of *The Apu Trilogy* (1955–1959) by Satyajit Ray, marked his entry in Indian cinema. Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak went on to direct many more critically acclaimed 'art films', and they were followed by other acclaimed Indian independent filmmakers such as Mrinal Sen, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Mani Kaul and Buddhadeb Dasgupta. Some filmmakers such as

Shyam Benegal continued to produce realistic Parallel Cinema throughout the 1970s, alongside Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, Buddhadeb Dasgupta and Gautam Ghose in Bengali cinema; Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Shaji N. Karun, John Abraham and G. Aravindan in Malayalam cinema; Nirad Mohapatra in Oriya cinema; and Mani Kaul, Kumar Shahani, Ketan Mehta, Govind Nihalani and Vijaya Mehta in Hindi cinema. However, the 'art film' bent of the Film Finance Corporation came under criticism during a Committee on Public Undertakings investigation in 1976, which accused the body of not doing enough to encourage commercial cinema.

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

SECTION D

INTRODUCTION TO THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF FILM THEORIES

I. REALISM

The term realism comes from a literary and art movement of the nineteenth century which went against the grand tradition of classical idealism and sought to portray 'life as it really was'. The focus was on the ordinary life, especially the lives of the socially deprived and the conditions they had to bear. Film as cinema makes absence the presence, it puts reality up on to the screen. It purports to give a direct and truthful view of the real world through the presentation it provides of the characters and their environment. Realism functions in films on both the narrative level and the figurative (ie., pictorial/ photographic). In this regard the physical realism marries into psychological realism via the narrative structures. Basically, realist films address social issues. There are arguably two types of realism pertaining to film.

1. Seamless realism, whose ideological function is to disguise the illusion of realism. In this type, film technique erases the idea of illusion, creating the 'reality effect'. The use of lighting, colour, sound or editing draws attention to the illusionist nature of the reality effect. The whole purpose is to stitch the spectator into the illusion- keeping reality safe.

2. Aesthetically motivated realism, which attempts to use the camera in a non-manipulative fashion and considers the purpose of realism in its ability to convey a reading of reality, or several

readings even. It was first strongly advocated by French film-makers in the 1930s and subsequently by Andre Bazin in the 1950s. Most of its cast is composed of non-professional actors. It employs long shots using deep focus cinematography, long takes and the 90-degree angled shot that, because it is at eye level, stands as an objective shot.

After the Second World War, the American public wanted a more realistic view of the country. Jean Renoir, one of the major advocates of a politically motivated socio-realist cinema is credited with making the first film of this kind, Toni (1934). Finally, from the late 1950s into the 1960s, new wave cinemas emerged from Britain, France and Germany and provided slice-of-life realist cinema.

II. FORMALISM

A style of filmmaking that emphasizes aesthetic elements with a consciously evident style in the delivery of narrative. Formalist film theory is a theory of film study that is focused on the formal, or technical, elements of a film: the lighting; scoring; sound and set design; use of colour; shot composition; editing. It is a major theory of film study today.

Characteristics of Formalism:

- Camera angles can move towards higher or lower angles.
- A moving camera can be used to emphasize subjective states or create energy and/or mood.
- Lighting can move to more extreme use of colour, light and shadow in the creation of subjective states and visual metaphors.

- Sets and backgrounds stand out or draw attention to themselves.

- Composition within the mise-en-scene can more obviously draw on the elements of formality and organization.

- Scoring is more often used and is extra-diegetic, or combines the diegetic with it to create movement between subjective and objective states.

- Shots can tend to be subjective. This can include Point of View (POV) shots where the camera in a sense becomes the character and we see what the character sees, but more often are composed and designed in such a way that we gain access to the character's subjective experience through these means.

In short, formalist filmmaking tends to have its roots in the world of Art. That frame, which creates the mise-en-scene, prompts the visual artist's desire to use the composition within that frame to create meaning.

III. AUTEUR THEORY

Auteur is a term that dates back to the 1920s in the theoretical writings of French film critics and directors of the silent era. But it can be seen that in Germany, as early as 1913, the term 'author's film' (Autorenfilm) had already been coined. The Autoren film emerged partly as a response to the French Film d'Art (art cinema) movement which began in 1908 and which proved extremely popular. Film d'Art was particularly successful in attracting middle-class audiences to the cinema theatres because of its status of respectability as art cinema.

In France the concept of auteur (in the 1920s) comes from the other direction, namely that the filmmaker is the auteur – irrespective of the origin of the script. Auteur in French literally means "author". Director Francois Truffaut, writing as a critic in the influential French journal Cahiers du Cinema (Cinema Notebook), developed the concept of the auteur in his 1954 essay "A Certain Trend in French Cinema".

Truffaut wrote about the films of several new French filmmakers who he termed auteurs. He drew contrasts between auteurs and directors of mainstream studio movies—who he dismissed as merely "stagers" of a script written by another artist. Truffaut argued that the filmmakers who made the best films were those who wrote and directed their own films and who had a unique, personal vision. Truffaut called that approach La politique des auteurs ("The policy of the authors"). Truffaut's ideas on film were embraced by an era of French filmmakers who were part of what he called La Nouvelle Vague (what English speakers call the French New Wave).

Auteur theory is the idea that the director is the author and primary creative force behind a movie. It shifted some power away from actors, producers, and studio moguls. It shifted power towards the directors- specific types of directors. According to this theory, the director is more than a channel for the script. The auteur director shapes every part of the movie and they are the film's true artist who is the visionary behind it.

The three Components of Auteur Theory

Andrew Sarris, film critic for The New York Times, expanded on Truffaut's writing and set out a more comprehensive

definition for auteurs according to three main criteria: technical competence, distinguishable personality, and interior meaning.

1. Technical competence: Auteurs must be at the top of their craft in terms of technical filmmaking abilities. Auteurs always have a hand in multiple components of filmmaking and should be operating at a high level across the board. "Great director has to at least be a good director" which means that the director's movie must be technically competent.

2. Distinguishable personality/ Signature Style: What separates auteurs from other technically gifted directors is their unmistakable personality and style. When looking at an auteur's collected works, you can generally see shared filming techniques and consistent themes being explored. One of the primary tenets of auteur theory is that auteurs make movies that are unmistakably theirs. This is in sharp contrast with the standard studio directors of the era who were simply translating script to screen with little interrogation of the source material or editorial input. In short, "over a group of films a director must exhibit certain recurrent characteristics of style which serve as signature." One example is Howard Hawks.

3. Interior meaning: Auteurs make films that have layers of meaning and have more to say about the human condition. Films made by auteurs go beyond the pure entertainment-oriented spectacles produced by large studios, to instead reveal the filmmakers' unique perspectives and ruminations on life. In other words, "interior meaning is extrapolated from the tension between a director's personality and his material". It means that the director's innermost soul comes through in the movie. Interior meaning is a tricky thing to get at with a director.

Influence of Auteur Theory on World Cinema

Auteur theory gave rise to writer-director driven films as the studio system lost its stranglehold on American filmmaking in the middle of the twentieth century. These movies went against the grain of mainstream Hollywood entertainment with nuanced points of view and often darker narrative themes.

In France, Truffaut's ideas gave rise to the French New Wave cinema, which included directors like:

- Jean-Luc Godard (Breathless, 1960)
- Agnès Varda (Cléo de 5 à 7, 1962)

In the U.S Auteur theory produced a new generation of filmmakers to explore stories and direct films in the mold of the French auteurs. American Directors who embraced Auteur theory around this time included:

- Arthur Penn (Bonnie and Clyde, 1967)
- Mike Nichols (The Graduate, 1968)
- Stuart Rosenberg (Cool Hand Luke, 1967)

These young American directors were part of what would come to be known as the New Hollywood, and were inspired by Truffaut and embraced many of the tropes and techniques of the French New Wave.

Some of the auteur filmmakers and their defining films are Orson Welles, Citizen Kane (1941), Alfred Hitchcock, Notorious (1948), Spike Lee, Do the Right Thing (1986) David Lynch, Blue Velvet (1986), and more.

IV. APPARATUS THEORY

Baudry (1970) was among the first film theorists to suggest that the cinematic apparatus or technology has an ideological effect upon the spectator. In the simplest instance the cinematic apparatus purports to set before the eye and ear realistic images and sounds. However, the technology disguises how that reality is put together frame by frame. It also provides the illusion of perspectival space. This double illusion conceals the work that goes into the production of meaning and in so doing presents as natural what in fact is an ideological construction, that is, an idealistic reality. In this respect, Baudry argues, the spectator is positioned as an all-knowing subject because he (sic) is all-seeing even though he is unaware of the processes whereby he becomes fixed as such. Thus, the omniscient spectator-subject is produced by, is the effect of the filmic text. A contiguous, simultaneous ideological effect occurs as a result of the way in which the spectator is positioned within a theatre (in a darkened room, the eyes projecting towards the screen with the projection of the film coming from behind the head). Because of this positioning, an identification occurs with the camera (that which has looked, before the spectator, at what the spectator is now looking at). The spectator is thereby interpellated by the filmic text, that is the film constructs the subject, the subject is an effect of the film text (see ideology). That is, the spectator as subject is constructed by the meanings of the filmic text.

Later, after 1975, discussion of the apparatus moved on from this anti-humanist reading of the spectator as subject-effect, and the presupposition that the spectator is male. Now, the spectator is also seen as an active producer of meaning who is still positioned as subject, but this time as agent of the filmic text. That is, she or he becomes the one viewing, the one deriving

pleasure (or fear, which is another form of pleasure) from what she or he is looking at. She or he also interprets and judges the text. On the 'negative' side of this positioning it could be said that, in becoming the camera, the apparatus places the spectator voyeuristically, as a colluder in the circulation of pleasure which is essential to the financial well-being of the film industry (Metz, 1975). The economic viability of the latter depends on the desire of the former to be pleasured. Cinema in this respect becomes an exchange commodity based on pleasure and capital gain pleasure in exchange for money. On the 'positive' side it could be said that as an agent the spectator can resist being fixed as voyeur, or indeed as effect, and judge the film critically.

Apparatus theory is all about the cinematic devices that capture and record optical imagery as required by the demands of the cinematic bible which is the written movie scripts, and how it easily links to the audiences as though like a massive metal chain that never breaks apart. In putting it simply, Apparatus theory is an affinity between the movie audiences and the eyes of the movie cameras being used in a cinematic film. To be able to understand and identify what the audience wants and vice versa and also to make audiences identify themselves and their passions with the movie they watch. Sergei Eisenstein said, the cinematic exquisite essences and worth rely on how to metamorphose the "real world" occurrences within the orb lenses of the cameras.

V. SUTURE THEORY

This term means, literally, to stitch up (from the medical term for stitching up a cut or wound). In film theory the system of suture has come to mean, in its simplest sense, to stitch the spectator into the filmic text. As a critical concept it was

introduced into film studies by theorists, starting with Jean-Pierre Oudart (1977), and was based on studies in child psychoanalysis conducted by Jacques Lacan in the 1960s. It is important to note that Lacan primarily addressed the psychology of the male child and that it is feminist Lacanians – Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva – who brought the female child's psychosexual development into a central space for consideration. In a similar way, until recently, in terms of its application to film studies, film theorists have blissfully ignored the case for female spectatorship. However, feminist film theory has significantly redressed this imbalance.

Suture refers to the thematic, visual and editing techniques employed by the director and/or cinematographer to make us forget that the camera is the one doing the looking. As we know, a film is diegetic in nature, that is, the characters occupy their own world within which they interact and perform various activities. Camera and editing techniques show us what to look at and how to view the movie. Pioneered by French film critic and theorist Christian Metz, who adapted Ferdinand de Saussure's concepts of semiology to the language of film, suture techniques are meant to fuse the view of the camera with the view of the audience's eye.

In Martin Scorsese's famous tracking shot from Goodfellas (1990) where Harry takes his girlfriend through the back of the restaurant, we see the world through the pair's eyes. A shot like this allows us to follow every step of the character's movements, making us feel as if we are walking behind them or alongside them and occupying the same space that they are. A scene from Alfonso Cuaron's Children of Men (2006), is a good example of a film breaking suture. Blood spatters on the lens and remains therefore a few minutes, forcing us to acknowledge that what we

are viewing is artificial. In Julian Schnabel's film The Diving Bell and the Butterfly (2007), the protagonist is a stroke victim who can move only his left eye. His head is always tilted to the right and so when we look through his eyes, our view is tilted to the right as well.

VI. CULTURE INDUSTRY

The concept of cultural industries, or creative industries, embraces industries that combine the creation, production, and commercialization of creative content, which can have the form of a good or a service. This term originated from the concept of "culture industry" that was conceptualized by the critical theorists Theodor Adorno (1903–69) and Max Horkheimer (1895–1973). They maintained that mass media had negative effects on people.

Adorno and Horkheimer argued that by being spectators of the ideal world that is represented through advertisement and films, citizens forget their own reality and thus become easily manipulated. They argued that mass media had entertainment as an objective because entertainment is meant to be in agreement, and to be in agreement is possible only by insulating itself from the totality of the social process.

In "Dialectic of Enlightenment", Horkheimer and Adorno argue that "culture today is infecting everything with sameness…each branch of culture is unanimous within itself and all are unanimous together" (Adorno, 94). Thus, industries such as film and television are no longer means to express and proliferate art, but instead capitalist vehicles made to promote conformity. All of these modes of production can, in fact, be consolidated into one industry—the industry of mass culture.

Horkheimer and Adorno spend ample time attacking the film and the businesses that produce it. According to the two authors, "film seeks strictly to reproduce the world of everyday perception" (Adorno, 99). Upon exiting a movie, the audience is supposed to feel as though their real life is an extension of the film they have just witnessed, the truth of their existence almost indistinguishable from what they saw on screen. Furthermore, the essay maintains that "film denies its audience any dimension in which they might roam freely in imagination" (Adorno, 100). The cultural industry exclusively creates products meant to mirror our own lives and promote sameness.

VII. MALE GAZE

In film theory, the point of view of a male spectator is reproduced in both the cinematography and narrative conventions of cinema, in which men are both the subject of the gaze and the ones who shape the action and women are the objects of the gaze and the ones who are shaped by the action. In her psychoanalytic theory of the male gaze, Mulvey argues that in classical Hollywood cinema, the film spectator oscillates between two forms of looking at the female image: voyeuristic looking involves a controlling gaze; fetishistic looking involves an obsessive focus on some erotic detail (see also voyeurism). She claims that these conventions reflect the values and tastes of patriarchal society.

Filmmaker and theorist Laura Mulvey first coined the term "the male gaze" in her seminal 1973 paper Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. Mulvey's essay, published two years later in Screen magazine, was written for an academic audience so it can be a little difficult to understand.

First of all, Mulvey was talking about how our society is structured by, and for the benefit of heterosexual men (i.e., "the Patriarchy"). Men are considered the "active" do-ers of the world, while women are expected to take a more "passive" role supporting the men and/or men's goals. In the context of cinema, it's mostly men who write the films we watch, mostly men who make those films, and it is men who are usually the target audience. Therefore, men are usually given the lead in the stories themselves while female characters are assigned functions that are limited to serving the goals of those male protagonists.

Remember, Mulvey was writing an academic paper for an academic audience. So, when she talks about "pleasure in looking," she's referring to the notion (taken from psychology) that part of why we love movies is because we enjoy watching people without being seen ourselves. "The determining male gaze" is what happens when we put it all together.

Men writing the films, men making the films, men being the protagonists, and men being the target audience all combine into a unified — heterosexual male — perspective of female characters. In other words, we all have been conditioned to adopt the male gaze because that is the way we were "raised" by traditional cinema.

Female characters must perform their story function while also adhering to the heterosexual male sexual fantasy — though not always in a literal way. Simply being beautiful (or "sexy") is all that's needed. We know that the male gaze objectifies female characters. But more importantly, the male gaze also reaffirms the power of the Patriarchy to use women as props in service of the heterosexual male narrative.

In other words, a female character doesn't have to be overly sexualized to be the object of the male gaze, Mulvey explains. What matters is that she incites (passive) the male protagonist to take action (active) toward his ultimate goal.

Mulvey wrote her essay some 50 years ago, so she was mostly referring to the Classical era of mainstream cinema. Let's look at an example that fits Mulvey's references a little better. Aladdin is a traditional family film that was released in 2019. Though 21st century Jasmine has her own goals and stands up for herself throughout the film, she is still objectified by the story and every man in it. To her Sultan father, Jasmine (Naomi Scott) is a precious artifact locked away for safekeeping. To the villain Jafar (Marwan Kenzari), Jasmine is a valuable commodity to be obtained for greater power and influence. And to Aladdin (Mena Massoud), the hero, Jasmine is a prize to be won. Which he ultimately does, with the help of his trusty sidekick, Genie (Will Smith).

The other element of the male gaze we need to talk about is the camera itself. Where we place the camera, and what we include in the frame (camera framing), is just as important to how we view female characters as the way they are written in the screenplay. Bombshell recounts the story of how multiple female on-air talent at Fox News came forward to disclose how they had been sexually harassed (or worse) by sexual predator Roger Ailes (John Lithgow).

VIII. FILM SEMIOTICS

The word 'semiotic' is derived from 'semeion', the Greek word for sign. The modern disciplines of semiotics are invented by Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) and Ferdinand de Saussure

(1857-1913), later published as Course in General Linguistics (1906-1911). Essentially, semiotics is the study of signs. Filmmaking is choosing the precise images for the particular story, and every picture tells a story. It is noteworthy what can be read from a single image. For Peirce, there were multiple types of sign, and three main types are worth discussion. The icon, or a sign which is similar to what it signifies, the index, which is affected by what it represents, and the symbol, a sign that is connected to what it signifies by a law or convention. In other words, Semiotics is a term used to refer to an investigation into how film meaning is created and communicated through signs that are culturally understood. Through semiotics of film the actions and thoughts that take place in relation to the messages of a film are closely connected to the visual signs or cues that are included within the media.

Film is the art of visual abbreviation. Cinema is synesthetic as it arouses senses. Roland Barthes, the French semiotician, states in Mythologies, “trivial aspects of everyday life can be filled with meaning”, and this includes even a character’s hairstyle. The basic tenet of semiotics is that a sign has two parts: the physical, or the sign-as-object and the psychological, or the sign as concept. Filmmakers show and we understand visual signs such as smiles, scars, guns, badges, hairstyle etc. At this point, an important term you should be familiar with is synecdoche, that is, relationship of a part to a whole (the crown represents the king or the queen, the Oval office stands for the President, the badge symbolizes law and order). It is the little things that fill our everyday lives with meaning, and the same holds true for films. Consider Javier Bardem’s hairstyle in No Country for Old Men (2007). Does it say anything about his character? Film images are signs, look at any film poster and you will notice

how posters and publicity materials send signals that tell you about the genre of the film.

A key field of study in semiotics relates to the text (literature, film, or even a piece of music). Films construct meaning through signs. Sign has two parts: Signifier/signified. Signifieris the physical part; or the tangible thing we see/hear. It is what we perceive. Signified is the psychological part, the reaction to the object, the mental picture a signifier evokes; the internal response to the signifier; Signified could mean different things to different people.

The signifier is the vehicle and the signified meaning. The key aspect is that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. Let's consider a scenario where a man gives a woman a red rose. In most cultures this signifies romance or passion though Gertrude Stein famously declared, “A rose is a rose is a rose.” Thus, in American Beauty, (2000) Lester Burnham fantasizes about his teenage daughter’s friend Angela’s body covered in roses that are in a saturated shade of red. A key feature of semiotics is that the sign exists within a system of differences. Thus, a sign is part of a code, which permeates the whole of social life.

Peter Wollen’s discussions of Howard Hawks and John Ford in Signs and Meaning in the Cinema (1969) also uses the auteur-structuralist approach to analyze thematic structures in the films of these two directors. One of the most important early works in theorizing film studies using the structuralist approach was Christian Metz’s Film Language: A Semiotics of Cinema (1968). Metz illustrated the way films signify meaning through semiotic codes through specific arrangements of shots possible in a narrative sequence. Christian Metz followed Jean Louis

Baudry's model for his semiotic-psychoanalytic approach to cinema in a succession of essays written between 1973 and 1976 published together as *Le Signifiant imaginaire* (1977, The Imaginary Signifier, 1982).

In 1969 Jean-Pierre Oudart introduced an important term into film theory, suture, which became a topic of extensive debate for the ways in which subjectivity is expressed in cinema. Daniel Dayan's exploration of Oudart's position in 1974, William Rothman's critique of that position in 1975, as well as Stephen Heath's explication of the concept in Questions of Cinema (1981) and Kaja Silverman's analysis in The Subject of Semiotics (1983) further added to the topic. Semiotics as a cinematic theory received attention from the politicization of theory and criticism from the late 1960s on in the French journals Cinethique and Cahiers du cinema and in the British publication Screen.

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MODULE II

SELECTED ESSAYS ON FILM

THE EVOLUTION OF THE LANGUAGE OF CINEMA (FROM WHAT IS CINEMA?)

Andre Bazin

INTRODUCTION

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

OUTLINE

In the history of cinema, the earlier division was between silent movies and sound movies; and the dividing line was in the year 1928. But Bazin points out some similarities between movies of sound and silent era, and suggests that the real division is

between two opposing trends: "those directors who put their faith in the 'images' and those who put their faith in 'reality". Image can be used in two ways, as plastics and in montage.

1. **Plastics**: (how images are formed on the screen) Plastics include style of the makeup,

of the performance, etc to which lighting is added, and finally, the framing of the shot

which gives its composition.

E.g.: Expressionist movies (German movies).

2. **Montage**: Montage was introduced by Griffith and was masterly adopted by Eisenstein. It is simply the ordering of images in time. Extremely different images are shown to represent yet another image.

E.g.: European movies.

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

The different types of montage techniques are:

1. **Parallel montage**: Conveying a sense of simultaneity of two actions taking place at a geographical distance by means of alternating shots from each.

2. **Accelerated montage**: Creating the illusion of the steadily increasing speed of a locomotive without actually using any image of speed.

3. **Montage by attraction**: The reinforcing of the meaning of one image by associating it with another image not necessarily part of the same episode. (similar in principle to the commonly used ellipsis, comparison and metaphor).

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

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

itself is everything. Through these directors from the silent days Bazin is establishing an alternative tradition for the cinema.

Bazin focuses on the history of the language of cinema. Before the advent of sound Hollywood was not the centre of movies. We had movies in French, Swedish, German etc, as language was not a ruling force. But with the introduction of sound, non-English movies lost their market. Singers came to the foreground instead of actors. John Gilbert is such an actor who lost his chance because of his poor voice. Sound introduced a reality that was not there before. From 1930 to 1940 a common form of cinematic language emerged. It was the triumph of Hollywood during that time. French cinema undoubtedly ranked next, with its trend towards realism. American and French production clearly indicate that the sound film, prior to World War II had reached a well-balanced stage of maturity. By then the talking film has reached a level of technical perfection. From 1940 to 1950 the innovations were in the themes not in the techniques. That is the real revolution took place more on the level of subject matter than of style. Bazin suggests that it was because new subject matter demanded new forms. Eg: Jezebel by William Wyler, Stage Coach by John Ford, Le Jour Se leve by Marcel Carne.

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

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

1. The depth of focus brings the spectator into a realism with the image closer to that which he enjoys with reality.

2. In montage technique it is the director who decides the spectator's focus of attention. But in deep focus the spectator has his own personal choice about the focus.

3. Montage by its very nature rules out ambiguity of expression. Deep focus, on the other hand, reintroduces ambiguity into the structure of the image.

Orson Welles has of course used expressionistic procedures of montage in *Citizen Kane* (1941). But it is the presence of deep focus in between the sequences that gives them a new meaning. In Citizen Kane there is a series of superimpositions. These superimpositions which the talking films had not used for ten

years rediscovered a possible use related to temporal relation in a film without montage.

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

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

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SEMIOTICS AND THE CINEMA: METZ AND WOLLEN

Gilbert Harmen

In this essay, Gilbert Harmen discusses two different proposals of semiotics or semiology of cinema. One is by Christian Metz and another by Peter Wollen. The term semiotics or semiology can be defined as the theory of signs. Similarly, the semiotics of the cinema is the theory of film- as- a- system-of-signs. As per this idea, film is considered as a kind of language and linguistics of the language of film is to be developed.

According to Christian Metz, we will only be interested in certain aspects of film. The concern will be only with the various ways in which particular films can have meaning and significance for normal spectators. The direct concern will be with the nature of the film image, the relation between sound and image, and the effect of various kinds of editing. There will be no direct concern with camera mechanisms, the process of developing and printing films, or the technological structure of the film industry.

In addition to this, Harmen introduces various kinds of films such as narrative feature films, documentaries, travel films, advertising films, instructional films, abstract underground films and so on. It can be seen that Metz restricts the study to narrative feature films while ignoring other types of film. According to Metz, before the existence of narrative film, cinema was conceived as a mere technological resource, a record of events or as a body of specific signifying procedures. Narrative feature films are what we first think of as films. Shorts of various kinds inhabit “border regions”. Their signifying procedures are derived from those in narrative films. Metz

believes that if we restrict our attention to the signifying procedures that are used in feature length narrative films, chances to go wrong are feeble.

Metz also states that we should study denotation before connotation. Denotation is basic because in the first instance, the basic materials of the film- its sounds and images – present a series of events that constitute the plot or story. In other words, the basic material of the film is directly a sign of the denotation. Connotation is secondary in the sense that it is not directly presented by the basic materials of the film in the way denotation or plot is. Connotation is in fact, partly indicated by the denotation. The significance is known as connotation. It is signified by a sign when the sign combines aspects of the basic materials of the film and the story that those aspects denote.

Central questions to the semiotics of the cinema are how narrative films present their plots? How does the cinema indicate successivity, precession, temporal breaks, casualty, adversative relationships, consequence, spatial proximity or distance etc? Regarding the language there are certain questions being raised. How does language indicate one or another state of affairs or series of events?

Metz suggests that films are made up of a series of minimal sequences that he calls “syntagmas”. Syntagmas can be distinguished on the basis of montage and what that montage signifies.

For example,

A series of different views of a house might constitute what Metz calls a “descriptive syntagma”- showing what the house is like and not presenting an event unfolding in time.

Another series of shots showing various effects of war would constitute what he calls a “bracket syntagma”. – in which a number of things are grouped together because of certain associations among those things.

A third series might show alternating shots of two different actions, indicating that they are happening simultaneously. For example, alternating shots of two parties at the opposite ends of a telephone conversation- or alternating shots of pursuer and pursued. According to Metz, there are only a small number of other possible syntagmas.

Metz's own limited investigation cast doubt on the clear distinction between the ways in which plot is indicated and the ways in which other aspects of meaning are indicated. For instance, the bracket syntagma (one of his syntagmas). It is to be noted that his criticism is not merely theoretical. This suggests that there are practical as well as theoretical reasons for the film semioticist to study exactly those aspects of film signification which Metz assigns to connotation, and this is what Peter Wollen proposes to do.

Like Metz, Wollen also believes that the study of film should take the form of a semiotics of the cinema. But he disagrees with Metz’s priorities. He suggests that Metz’s emphasis on how plot is presented due to a commitment to realism in the cinema and additionally, this commitment reflects a mistake in semiotics. According to Wollen, this error can be removed by developing

semiotics in accordance with the theory of signs envisioned by the American philosopher C. S Peirce.

In the opinion of Peirce, there are distinctions between three aspects of a sign: iconic, indexical, and symbolic.

• A sign is an icon – its significance depends on the inner nature of the sign- typically, some sort of qualitative or structural resemblance between the sign and what it signifies. Examples – paintings, diagrams, and colour samples.

• A sign is an index to the extent that its significance depends on a real connection between the signs and what it signifies. Proper names, demonstrative pronouns, evidence at the scene of a crime, and symptoms of a disease are predominantly indices.

• Finally, a sign is a symbol – in Pierce's special sense of this term, to the extent that its significance depends on human convention or an arbitrary decision. Labels on diagrams, Chinese ideograms, and English words are predominantly symbols in this sense.

Most signs have more than one aspect. A sentence of English will have a symbolic aspect because of the conventions on which the meanings of its words depend. It will have an indexical aspect if it contains proper nouns, which have the significance they do because of a real connection between the name and thing named. According to Peirce, the sentence will have an iconic aspect since its significance depends in part on its logical-grammatical structure, which is an internal property of the sentence and is relevant to what other sentences logically imply or are implied by it.

Similarly, a photograph has an indexical aspect, that is, what it pictures and that depends to a large extent on a real connection between the picture and the object photographed. It also has an iconic aspect because of the resemblance between the picture and what is pictured. There may also be a symbolic aspect to the photograph if, for instance, the subject matter is identifiable by appeal to some sort of convention or specification.

Apart from this, Wollen observes in cinema, indexical and iconic aspects as the most powerful and the symbolic as limited and secondary. Wollen states that it is the "submerged" secondary aspect of signs that assume importance in art. Since in the cinema "it is symbolic which is the submerged dimension, we should therefore expect that in the poetry of the cinema, this aspect will be manifested more palpably."

According to Wollen, Metz's error is to take the linguistic analogy too seriously, thus overlooking the fact that film is primarily iconic and indexical rather than symbolic. The role of conventional symbols or codes in film is different from its role in language. The basic linguistic codes are necessary for literary significance. The relevant codes in cinema primarily concern the poetic rather than the literal.

Wollen's first conclusion is, therefore, the opposite of Metz's. As film semioticists, our primary task must be to uncover the codes exploited in films in producing the sort of poetry that films can produce. Wollen's next point is that although signs are often used to communicate messages, they are not always used in that way and are not used that way in films. A poet, an artist, and a film director are using signs but not to communicate any sort of message. They, like the mathematician, scientist, and traveller, are using signs for a different purpose. Like them, they

are constructing signs in order to see what the implications of those signs are. Wollen, therefore, rejects Metz's idea that the purpose of film semiotics is "to study the ordering and functioning of the main signifying units used in the filmic message".

Metz's proposal is due to his linguistic analogy. Language is often used to communicate messages but film is not normally used in that way. Films have meaning and significance but they do not carry messages any more like the other works of art.

According to Wollen, works of art exploit and call attention to various codes. The greatest works "interrogate" their own codes by pitting them against each other. He goes on to argue that an analysis along these lines can enable us to see what is great about a director like Godard (one of the pioneers of the French New Wave Cinema Movement). In addition to this, it can be seen that both Metz and Wollen believe that the theory of film must become part of semiotics.

Harmen opines that we must rely, rather, on Peirce's general theory of signs, which allows us to see that filmic signification, and allows us to understand why the role of codes in films is different from the primary role that linguistic codes play in the everyday use of language. Still, Wollen endorses the idea that we ought "to dissolve cinema criticism and cinema aesthetics into a special province of the general science of signs."

The differences between Wollen and Metz are then really matters of emphasis rather than anything else. Their priorities are different. But Metz would agree with Wollen in the sense that it is important to discover the various symbolic codes that give film its position as a work of art. Wollen can agree that

there is some point to specifying the significance of close-ups, zoom shots, filmic punctuation, and Metz's syntagmas. Both Metz and Wollen agree that films exploit certain codes. Now, what do they mean by codes? The word code as it is ordinarily used is ambiguous. It can mean either cipher or standards.

Metz and Wollen use the term in a way that appears to combine both of these senses. On the one hand, they speak of decoding works of art and they take codes to be systems of signs with meanings. Here code would seem to mean cipher. To decode is to decipher. What would it mean to decode (in this sense) actions done in accordance with the military code? On the other hand, Metz and Wollen also speak, without any sign that they are using the term in a different sense, of codes of dress, and even musical codes. Another question raised is in what sense are there musical codes used. It is certainly not in the sense of ciphers as instrumental music does not encode messages. For instance, a piano solo does not in any obvious way have meaning. It does not represent, indicate, or signify anything. There are various musical structures as codes, but that is certainly stretching a point. We would not normally speak of symphonic or fugal codes.

Harmen next raises the question of what counts as decoding music. He states that it would be supposed to be figuring out what the structure of a piece of music is, learning it as having a certain structure, hearing what there is to hear in the music. Similarly, to decode a style of dress, for instance, the style of dress in westerns, is first to uncover the dress code that is involved and then, perhaps, to indicate the meaning or significance of that code. In this usage, then, any sort of system or structure might be called a code. To decode a work is to

uncover the various structures that are relevant to it and to appreciate their significance for the work in question.

Furthermore, any system of assumptions, beliefs, ideology, or stereotypes that is relied on or alluded to in a film or the work of art can be called a code. For, to "decode" the work is also to see how its significance is affected by such things. Instrumental music is not a language, a system of signs. It has no meaning. It does not represent or signify anything. An understanding of the musical structure plays a role in our appreciation of music, but that is not to say that an understanding of the significance of musical signs plays a role in our appreciation of music.

It is true of our understanding and appreciation of films. To appreciate something about the structure of a film is not necessarily to appreciate something that functions as a sign. Neither Metz nor Wollen has given any reason at all for identifying film theory with film semiotics. Indeed, it is not or should be clear that there is nothing to be said for such an identification.

Harmen also pointed out that even film theory cannot be identified with the semiotics of the cinema. Semiotics of the cinema might be a useful subject in its own right. Both Metz and Wollen envision a science of signs.

Harmen raises questions such as what makes them think that there is such a science or could be one and what are its laws and its principles. This is being explained with Pierce's distinction between the iconic, indexical, and symbolic aspects of signs. He says one can spend a considerable amount of time separating out the relevant components in various cases. That can be fun, for a while, but it does not constitute science.

Part of the problem is that Pierce's use of the term sign is a technical one which counts as signs rather than different sorts of things. Words are not normally signs in any ordinary sense of the term sign, nor are pictures or diagrams. The sense in which road signs are signs is different from the sense in which smoke is a sign of fire. Smoke means fire and the word combustion means fire, but not in the same sense of means. The word mean is ambiguous. To say 'smoke' means fire is to say that smoke is a symptom, sign, indication, or evidence of fire. To say that the word combustion means fire is to mean that people use the word to mean fire. The word is not normally a symptom, sign, indication, or evidence of fire. Furthermore, there is no ordinary sense of the word to mean in which a picture of a man means a man or means that man. This suggests that Pierce's theory of signs would comprise at least three rather different subjects:

1. A theory of intended meaning

2. A theory of evidence and

3. A theory of pictorial depiction. There is no reason to think that these theories must contain common principles.

4. The study of representation which is different and also a relevant subject.

In our scientific, practical, and aesthetic thinking, we often let certain things stand for or represent others, so that relations among the first things can represent corresponding relations among the others. We do this for several reasons:

- To see how a battle went, or might go, and so forth. This sort of representation may seem to be exactly what Peirce had in mind when he spoke of signs, since the relation that leads us to let one thing stand for another might be iconic, indexical,

conventional, or just arbitrary choice. But, in fact this sort of representation is a much narrower phenomenon than what Peirce had in mind. Pictures do not ordinarily in this sense "stand for" what they depict. Words do not "stand for" their meanings and evidence does not "stand for" what it indicates.

Metz observes that in the film M, a loose balloon caught in overhead wires symbolizes the death of a girl who we earlier saw always holding a balloon.

Sometimes, we arbitrarily let one thing stand for another. Sometimes, we find that it is "natural" to take a particular thing to stand for another. We might try to discover under what conditions such representation seems "natural", although there is, in fact, no reason to suppose that we will ever be able to do this.

To conclude, Metz and Wollen advocate replacing film theory and criticism with a semiotics of the cinema. Many aspects of film aesthetics appear to be part of semiotics only because of an equivocation in the use of the word code. The theory of signs, in Peirce's sense, contains no laws, or general principles. At best it contains a few categories of classification. Semiotics is really a collection of three or four disparate subjects. It is not obvious that a close study of any of these subjects will be particularly fruitful for the study.

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VISUAL PLEASURE AND NARRATIVE CINEMA

Laura Mulvey

Laura Mulvey (born August 15, 1941) is a British feminist film theorist. She is Professor of Film and Media Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London. She was Director of Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image (BIMI) from 2012 to 2015. She is the author of Visual and Other Pleasures (1989); Citizen Kane (1992); Fetishism and Curiosity (1996); Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image (2006); and Afterimages: On Cinema, Women and Changing Times (2019). She has co-edited British Experimental Television (2007); Feminisms (2015); and Other Cinemas: Politics, Culture and British Experimental Film in the 1970s (2017). Mulvey made six films in collaboration with Peter Wollen, including Riddles of the Sphinx (1977), and two films with artist and filmmaker Mark Lewis.

Mulvey is best known for her essay, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", written in 1973 and published in 1975 in the influential British film theory journal Screen. (It also appears in a collection of her essays entitled "Visual and Other Pleasures" and numerous other anthologies.) This article was one of the first major essays that helped shift the orientation of film theory towards a psychoanalytic framework, influenced by the theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. Prior to Mulvey, film theorists such as Jean-Louis Baudry and Christian Metz attempted to use psychoanalytic ideas in their theoretical accounts of the cinema, but Mulvey's contribution was to

inaugurate the intersection of film theory, psychoanalysis, and feminism. (2020)

Mulvey states that she intends to use Freud and Lacan's concepts as a "political weapon." She then used some of their concepts to argue that the cinematic apparatus of classical Hollywood cinema inevitably put the spectator in a masculine subject position, with the figure of the woman on screen as the object of desire and "the male gaze." In the era of classical Hollywood cinema, viewers were encouraged to identify with the protagonist of the film, who were and still are overwhelmingly male. Meanwhile, Hollywood women characters of the 1950s and '60s were, according to Mulvey, coded with "to-be-looked-at-ness" while the camera positioning and the male viewer constituted the "bearer of the look." Mulvey suggests two distinct modes of the male gaze of this era: "voyeuristic" (i.e., seeing woman as image "to be looked at") and "fetishistic" (i.e. seeing woman as a substitute for "the lack," the underlying psychoanalytic fear of castration).

Mulvey argues that the only way to defeat the patriarchal Hollywood system is to radically challenge and re-shape the filmic strategies of classical Hollywood with alternative feminist methods. She calls for a new feminist avant-garde filmmaking that would rupture the narrative pleasure of classical Hollywood filmmaking. Mulvey incorporates the Freudian idea of phallocentrism into "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". Specifically relating the phallocentric theory to film, Mulvey insists on the idea that film and cinematography are inadvertently structured upon the ideas and values of a patriarchy. Within her essay, Mulvey discusses several different types of spectatorships that occur while viewing a film. Viewing a film involves subconsciously engaging in the understanding of

male and female roles. The "three different looks", as they are referred to, explain just exactly how films are viewed in relation to phallocentrism. The first "look" refers to the camera as it records the actual events of the film. The second "look" describes the nearly voyeuristic act of the audience as one engages in watching the film itself. Lastly, the third "look" refers to the characters that interact with one another throughout the film.

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

In her "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" Laura Mulvey utilizes psychoanalysis theory as a "political weapon" to demonstrate how the patriarchal subconscious of society shapes our film watching experience and cinema itself. According to Mulvey, the cinematic text is organized along lines that are corresponding to the cultural subconscious which is essentially matriarchic. Mulvey argues that the popularity of Hollywood films is determined and reinforced by pre-existing social patterns which have shaped the fascinated subject.

Mulvey's analysis in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" combines semiotic methodology of cinematic means of

expression with psychoanalytic analysis of desire structures and the formation of subjectivity. The semiotic end of Mulvey's analysis enables the deciphering of how films produce the meanings they produce, while the psychoanalytic side of the article provides the link between the cinematic text and the viewer and explains his fascination through the way cinematic representations interact with his (culturally determined) subconscious.

Mulvey's main argument in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" is that Hollywood narrative films use women in order to provide a pleasurable visual experience for men. The narrative film structures its gaze as masculine. The woman is always the object of the reifying gaze, not the bearer of it (this has something reminiscent of John Berger's "Ways of Seeing"). The cinematic gaze is always produced a masculine both by means of the identification produced with the male hero and through the use of the camera. Mulvey identifies two manners in which Hollywood cinema produces pleasure, manners which arise from different mental mechanisms. The first involves the objectification of the image, and the second one the identification with it. Both mechanisms represent the mental desires of the male subject. The first form of pleasure relates to what Freud termed as scopophilia or the pleasure derived from subjecting someone to one's gaze. The second form of pleasure which operates alongside the scopophilia is the identification with the represented character which is brought about by needs stemming from the Freudian Ego.

Both mechanisms discussed in the previous section, Mulvey says, are gendered. Scopophilia in films is a structure which functions on an axis of passive/active with the man always on the active gazing side and the woman on the passive "to-be-

looked-at-ness" side. This is done in two completing manners, with both the male figure within the diegesis and the camera looking at the woman and directing the viewer's objectifying gaze. In plain words, the woman in films is meant to be looked at.

The distinction between the passive woman and active man is also manifested in the structure of the cinematic narrative. The films Mulvey surveys revolve around a dominant male figure with which the viewer can identify. This identification is similar to Lacan's mirror stage in which the narcissistic fragmented subject experiences himself as whole and potent in a reflected self-image. Methods that produce cinematic realism aid in this mirror-like identification which reinforces the ego.

According to Mulvey, the female cinematic figure is a paradoxical one. She combines attraction with the playing on deep fears of castration. The male subconscious has two ways of escaping his fear of castration. One is the demystification of the female figure is the dismantling of her mysteries (in films: the female figure is punished or saved by the male figure). The other way to escape fear of being castrated by the woman is through the fetishization of her (for instance as the glamorous unobtainable star). Films, according to Mulvey, attempt to resolve the tension between being attracted to the woman and fearing her, and therefore they provide for the needs of the masculine form of desire.

Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" was criticized on the one hand for reinforcing heterosexuality and on the other hand for assuming a passive, un-negotiating viewer.

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THE VOICE OF THE DOCUMENTARY

Bill Nicholas

According to Bill Nichols we can identify six different modes of filmmaking. These modes of filmmaking give us a loose framework to understand how films are made. Each filmmaker has a distinct style of filmmaking. They are discussed in the context of their emergence. Each mode has grown out of the other mode and has emerged as a result of dissatisfaction of the filmmakers with the earlier modes. The modes of filmmaking do however give us a sense of history of the emergence of different styles of filmmaking. The emergence of these modes of filmmaking are also associated with the emergence of technology. They can use a combination of several modes of filmmaking. Nor is it necessary that recent films have to necessarily follow a mode of filmmaking that is more recent. A filmmaker today could decide to use a mode of filmmaking that may not be the most recent.

Bill Nichols identifies six modes of filmmaking. These are in order of their emergence and progress as follows:

i) Poetic documentary

ii) Expository documentary

iii) Observational documentary

iv) Participatory documentary

v) Reflexive documentary

vi) Performative mode

POETIC DOCUMENTARY

The poetic mode was introduced in the 1920s. Such a mode is not a linear mode of filming. The filming style moves away from the simple factual telling of a story. The actors are not cast as full-bodied characters. The poetic mode gives us alternative forms of reality. For example, if you have to show an actor crying then in the poetic mode the filmmaker could just show rainfall. If you have to show a person running then again you could just show the beauty of a horse racing. In order to highlight the importance of a game for the nation one could just show the game with patriotic music playing in the background. It gives us an alternative form of reality instead of just telling us about the reality in a straightforward manner. They are abstract and loose in genre just like a poem.

The film could be about a city and it may just give us a sense of the city by showing famous landmarks like India Gate, Lotus Temple, Qutub Minar, Connaught Place, Metro and a huge statue of the God Hanuman. The moment one sees these landmarks perhaps interspersed with shots of pigeons flying, traffic jams and corn sellers with just music in the background you get a sense of Delhi the capital of India and the filmmaker may also show shots of these places from the past marking the passage of time. Francis Thompson's N.Y., N.Y. (1957).

The poetic mode may also use historical footage, freeze frames, slow motion, tinted images, and occasional titles to identify places, some narratives and also music to build the mood.

EXPOSITORY DOCUMENTARY

Arose in the 1920s and is still very popular. It is used in television news and reality television shows. Nature and science documentaries too use this mode extensively. Biographies too are largely shot in this mode. This mode is also often referred to as the Voice of God commentary mode in which the speaker is heard but not seen for example think of several films in which there is a voiceover. The expository mode was dominated by professionally trained male voices.

Expository mode relies heavily on logic and the voice dominates. The images are subordinate and are edited in a way so as to maintain a continuity with the narration. The voice over appears as the dominant mode and as the voice of authority. It speaks in a voice and tone of logic and authority.

Expository documentaries facilitate generalization and large-scale dissemination of information. For instance, the film on family planning mentioned above relies on common sense and supports a common sense understanding of family planning from different parts of India in a logical and coherent manner. As sociologists we understand that common sense is limited by time and place thus the common sense which the expository mode relies on is also limited by time and place. It loses its relevance once the context in terms of time changes.

OBSERVATIONAL DOCUMENTARY

This mode arose from the availability of 16 mm cameras and magnetic tape recorders in the 1960s. The observational mode found the poetic mode too abstract and the expository mode too moralizing. The observational mode relies on facts and often has

no voiceovers and music. The actors behave as if no film maker was there. The development of the 16 mm camera and light weight sound recorders such as the Nagra aided the development of the observational mode since it also meant that the filmmaker could move around freely without being intrusive. The people were observed as it is in their natural surroundings behaving spontaneously. David MacDougall's New Boys, a part of the Doon School Chronicles shot in 1997 is an example.

The film maker adopts a fly on the wall approach assuming that his presence because of the lightweight camera and synchronous sounds is almost non-intrusive. But it raises the ethical question of indirect intrusion. The mere presence of a filmmaker may have an effect on the behaviour of the participants. The observational documentary also faces the issue of seeking the consent of the people being filmed. The question is also of whether the consent is written or verbal. The consent also varies from situation to situation.

Observational films give the sense of real time. The filmmaker shoots in a manner in which the experience is lived. For example, David MacDougall's film New Boys shows the silences, the pauses and the empty spaces almost as if we were living the experience. The filmmaker needs to have disciplined detachment. It allowed filmmakers to record unobtrusively what folks did when not explicitly addressing the camera. It stresses the non-intervention of filmmakers. The control is with the participants. Editing doesn't construct a time frame or rhythm, but enhances the impression of lived or real time. This mode limits filmmakers to the present moment and requires disciplined detachment from events themselves. It uses indirect address, speech overheard, synchronous sound, and relatively long takes.

Its sense of observation comes from

• The ability of filmmaker to include representative revealing moments;

• Sounds and images recorded at moment of observational filming in contrast to voice-over of expository mode

• Illustrations do not serve generalizations but a specific slide of reality

• The presence of camera on scene

• Use of synchronous sound

• Long takes

Some of the film makers associated with this style are Michel Brault, Robert Drew, Robert Flaherty, Richard Leacock, Jean Rouch and Dziga Vertov. Some films using this style of film making are After Life (1999), Bad Boys (1961) and Children of Hiroshima (1952).

PARTICIPATORY DOCUMENTARY

Anthropology and Sociology have advocated the use of participant observation for observing the lives of people. Participant observation involves the filmmaker being in the field for long periods of time and becoming one with the subjects being observed. The researcher is also expected to be able to maintain a sense of objectivity and distance from those being observed. In the Participatory mode the filmmaker is there in the front of the camera and becomes one with the people being observed. The filmmaker is in no way masked as he is in the

poetic mode by abstractions; as he is in the expository mode by voice overs and as he is in the observational mode by adopting a fly on the wall approach. This mode became popular in the 1960s when synchronous sound recording became possible. This mode is often seen in the cases where the filmmaker is interviewing the subjects. It gives a sense to the audience about what it means to be involved with the process of filmmaking. The film Photographic Memory, 2011 by Ross McElwee is an example of this kind of film. The director is shown interacting with his son and the film shows the trials and tribulations of a child growing up into an argumentative teenager.

Other examples include Chronicles of Summer by Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin; Portrait of Jason. Dziga Vertov's *The Man with a Movie Camera*.

The cinema and the cinéma-vérité movements or truthful cinema adopted this style of filmmaking. This style of filmmaking is attributed to Jean Rouch and inspired by Dziga Vertov and Robert Flaherty. The filmmaker can be present in front of the camera and can even provoke the subject in terms of a stylised interaction. The role of the camera is always acknowledged. The audience gets a sense of what it means to negotiate the relationship between the filmmaker and the subject. We get a sense of who controls.

The filmmakers may also engineer a scene. *In Chronicles of a Summer*, 1961 for example Rouch narrates an incident where a Jewish deportee from France who has spent time in a German Concentration camp during World War II narrates her experiences using a lightweight portable sound recorder. The camera follows her at a distance and Rouch comments that it is almost as if the camera is absent.

The other styles of filming could be one in which the filmmaker's voice could give the main perspective for example as seen in the film Sorrow and Pity, 1970. The filmmaker could also be like an investigative reporter or he could even be in a reflective and responsive mode. The filmmaker in a reflective mode could also move towards a diary and a personal testimonial mode. The participatory mode could also involve interviews. The filmmaker could use several interviews and put them together in the form of a single story. Examples include Eyes on The Prize, on the history of the civil rights movement.

In the participatory mode thus, we are able to cover a diverse range of topics that could vary from giving us a sense of history or perhaps the interviewer's own attempt to give us a sense of history or as a sense of their encounters with their surrounding world.

REFLEXIVE DOCUMENTARY

This style of filmmaking calls attention to the process of filmmaking. It draws the viewers' attention to how a particular representation gets constructed. In the participatory mode we saw a process of negotiation between the filmmaker and the subject. In the reflexive mode the focus is on the negotiation between the filmmaker and the audience. The filmmaker asks the audience to view the film as a construct, as a version that has been constructed by the filmmaker. It draws our attention to the audience's assumptions and expectations from the documentary films. For instance, the audience assumes that in a documentary makeup and costume are not important. But that is not really the case. They are of importance in the process of filmmaking. We, as an audience, are forced to think about how we view the world around us, what our expectations are from the world around us.

The Reflexive style jars us out of complacency as an audience and forces us to think about the films as a construct. It forces us to question the 'truth 'as we see it. Dziga Vertov' films The Man with the Movie Camera conveys the impression of how a film is constructed by showing us the cameraman and how he is filming a particular scene. Vertov also shows us how in the process of editing the filmmaker constructs a story. The film may also rely on trained actors to tell us a story which is 'true'.

The feminist documentaries of the 1970s are examples of the reflexive mode of filmmaking where the audience becomes conscious of the various forms of discrimination against women. They challenge our perception of the world around us by questioning the dominant ideas of masculinity and femininity.

PERFORMATIVE MODE

This mode of filmmaking raises the question of what knowledge is and how it gets constructed. Performative mode stresses on how our understanding of the world around us stems from our personal experiences. The way that we view the world stems from our subjectivity. The meaning that is attached to the process of knowledge construction clearly stems from the experience and memory of an individual. The performative mode helps us understand how the world around us is constructed through our emotions and affections. The emotional complexity of experience influences the filmmaker's perspective. An autobiographical note may also enter these kinds of documentaries. The filmmaker himself is the subject of the film he is making. He is not invisible. Nick Broomfield's style of filmmaking is an example of this kind of filmmaking. Broomfield in his films also includes with Aileen Wuornos in Aileen Wuornos: The Selling of a Serial Killer, Broomfield's

films are as much about the making of a documentary as they are the main story, offering an onscreen reality that is small-scale and seemingly honest, but always entertaining. It could be argued that on-screen Broomfield portrays a naivety and innocence that often diverts the interview subject from his true intentions. He plays a part, acting for the sake of the audience, drawing a side from his subjects that might not be entirely natural.

According to Bill Nicholas, documentaries change like those of narrative films and they have a history. New strategies must constantly be fabricated to re-present "things as they are" and still others to contest this very representation. Among the major styles of documentaries particular attention is given to one strategy which is both the newest and, in some ways, the oldest of them all.

The direct – address style of the Griersonian tradition was the first thoroughly worked-out mode of documentary. It employed a supposedly authoritative yet often presumptuous off-screen narration. In many cases this narration effectively dominated the visuals, though in films like Night Mail or Listen to Britain, it is poetic and evocative. After World War II, the Griersonian mode fell into disfavour and it has little contemporary currency-except for television news, game and talk shows, ads and documentary specials.

Its successor, 'cinema verite' promised an increase in the "reality effect" with its directness, immediacy, and impression of capturing untampered events in the everyday lives of particular people. Films like Chronicle of a Summer, Le Joli Mai, Lonely Boy, Back-Breaking Leaf, Primary and The Chair built on the new technical possibilities offered by portable

cameras and sound recorders which could produce synchronous dialogue under location conditions. The style seeks to become "transparent" in the same mode as the classical Hollywood style- capturing people in action, letting the viewers come to conclusions about them unaided by any implicit or explicit commentary. Such films seldom offered the sense of history, context or perspective that viewers seek.

A third style incorporated direct address (character or narrator speaking directly to the viewer), usually in the form of the interview. In a host of political and feminist films, witness participants step before the camera to tell their story. Sometimes profoundly revealing, sometimes fragmented and incomplete, such films have provided the central model for contemporary documentary. The interview-oriented film has problems of its own.

More recently, a fourth phase seems to have begun, with films moving towards more complex forms where epistemological and aesthetic assumptions become more visible. These new self-reflexive documentaries mix observational passages with interviews, voice-over of the film-maker with intertitles.

Documentaries always were forms of re-presentation. It was never clear windows onto "reality". The film-maker was always a participant-witness and an active fabricator of meaning, a producer of cinematic discourse rather than a neutral or all-knowing reporter of the way things truly are. In documentary the most advanced, modernist work draws its inspiration less from post-structuralist models of discourse than from the working procedures of documentation and validation practiced by ethnographic film-makers. These new forms, like their predecessors, seem more "natural" or even "realistic" for a time.

But the success of every form breeds its own overthrow: it limits, omits, disavows, represses (as well as represents). In time, new necessities bring new formal inventions.

In the evolution of documentary, the contestation among forms has centred on the question of "voice". By voice, Nicholas means something narrower than style which conveys to us a sense of a text's social point of view, of how it is speaking to us, and how it is organizing the materials it is presenting to us. Voice is not restricted to any code or feature such as dialogue or spoken commentary. Voice is perhaps similar to that intangible, more like pattern formed by the unique interaction of all a film's codes, and it applies to all modes of documentary. Politically, they forfeit their own for that of others. Formally, they disavow the complexities of voice and discourse, for the apparent simplicities of faithful observation or respectful representation, the treacherous simplicities of an unquestioned empiricism.

Many documentarists would appear to believe what fiction film makers only feign to believe, or openly question; that film-making creates an objective representation of the way things really are. Such documentaries use the magical template of verisimilitude without the story teller's open resort to artifice. Very few admit that all film-making is a form of discourse fabricating its effects, impressions and point of view.

Yet it especially behooves the documentary film-maker to acknowledge what she / he is actually doing. Not in order to be accepted as modernist for the sake of being modernist, but to fashion documentaries that may more closely correspond to a contemporary understanding of our position within the world so that effective political/ formal strategies for describing and challenging that position can emerge. Strategies and techniques

for doing so already exist. But before discussing this tendency further, we should first examine the strengths and limitations of cinema verité and the interview-based film. They are well-represented by two recent and highly successful films: *Soldier Girls* and *Rosie the Rivetter*.

Soldier Girls presents a contemporary situation: basic army training as experienced by women volunteers. Purely indirect or observational, Soldier Girls provides no spoken commentary, no interviews or titles, and like Fred Wiseman's films, it arouses considerable controversy about its point of view. What struck that viewer as powerful criticism, though, may strike another as an honest portrayal of the tough-minded discipline necessary to learn to defend oneself, to survive in harsh environments, to kill. As in Wiseman's films, organizational strategies establish a preferred reading-in this case, one that favours the personal over the political, that seeks out and celebrates the eruptions of individual feeling and conscience in the face of institutional constraint, that re-writes historical process as the expression of an indomitable human essence whatever the circumstance. But these strategies, complex and subtle like those of realist fiction, tend to ascribe to the historical material itself meanings that in fact are an effect of the film's style or voice, just as fiction's strategies invite us to believe that "life" is like the imaginary world inhabited by its characters.

A pre-credit sequence of training exercises which follows three women volunteers ends with a freeze-frame and iris-in to isolate the face of each woman. Similar to classic Hollywood-style vignettes used to identify key actors, this sequence inaugurates a set of strategies that links Soldier Girls with a large part of American cinema verite (Primary, Salesman, An American Family, the Middletown Series). It is characterized by a

romantic individualism and a dramatic, fiction-like structure, but employing "found" stories rather than the wholly invented ones of Hollywood. Scenes in which Private Hall oversees punishment for Private Alvarez and in which the women recruits are awakened and prepare their beds for Drill Sergeant Abing's inspection prompt an impression of looking in on a world unmarked by our, or the camera's, act of gazing. And those rare moments in which the camera or person behind it is acknowledged certify more forcefully that other moments of "pure observation" capture the social presentation of self we too would have witnessed had we actually been there to see for ourselves. When Soldier Girls' narrative-like tale culminates in a shattering moment of character revelation, it seems to be a happy coincidence of dramatic structure and historical events unfolding. In as extraordinary an epiphany as any in all of verite, tough-minded Drill Sergeant Abing breaks down and confesses to Private Hall how much of his own humanity and soul has been destroyed by his experience in Vietnam. By such means, the film transcends the social and political categories which it shows but refuses to name. Instead of the personal becoming political, the political becomes personal.

We never hear the voice of the film-maker or a narrator trying to persuade us of this romantic humanism. Instead, the film's structure relies heavily on classical narrative procedures, among them: (1) a chronology of apparent causality which reveals how each of the three women recruits resolves the conflict between a sense of her own individuality and army discipline; (2) shots organized into dramatically revelatory scenes that only acknowledge the camera as participant-observer near the film's end, when one of the recruits embraces the film-makers as she leaves the training base, discharged for her "failure" to fit in;

and (3) excellent performances from characters who "play themselves" without any inhibiting self-consciousness. (The phenomenon of filming individuals who play themselves in a manner strongly reminiscent of the performances of professional actors in fiction could be the subject of an extended study in its own right.) These procedures allow purely observational documentaries to asymptotically narrow the gap between a fabricated realism and the apparent capture of reality itself which so fascinated Andre Bazin.

This gap may also be looked at as a gap between evidence and argument. Documentary displays a tension arising from the attempt to make statements about life which are quite general, while necessarily using sounds and images that bear the inescapable trace of their particular historical origins. These sounds and images come to function as signs; they bear meaning, though the meaning is not really inherent in them but rather conferred upon them by their function within the text as a whole. We may think we hear history or reality speaking to us through a film, but what we actually hear is the voice of the text, even when that voice tries to efface itself.

This is not only a matter of semiotics but of historical process. Those who confer meaning (individuals, social classes, the media and other institutions) exist within history itself rather than at the periphery, looking in like gods. Hence, paradoxically, self-referentiality is an inevitable communicational category. A class cannot be a member of itself, the law of logical typing tells us, and yet in human communication this law is necessarily violated. Those who confer meaning are themselves members of the class of conferred meanings (history). For a film to fail to acknowledge this and pretend to omniscience-whether by voice-of-God commentary or by claims of "objective knowledge"-is to

deny its own complicity with a production of knowledge that rests on no firmer bedrock than the very act of production. (What then becomes vital are the assumptions, values, and purposes motivating this production, the underpinnings which some modernist strategies attempt to make more clear.

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Observational documentary appears to leave the driving to us. No one tells us about the sights we pass or what they mean. Even those obvious marks of documentary textual-ity-muddy sound, blurred or racked focus, the grainy, poorly lit figures of social actors caught on the run-function paradoxically. Their presence testifies to an apparently more basic absence: such films sacrifice conventional, polished artistic expression in order to bring back, as best they can, the actual texture of history in the making. If the camera gyrates wildly or ceases functioning, this is not an expression of personal style. It is a signifier of personal danger, as in Harlan County, or even death, as in the street scene from The Battle of Chile when the camera man records the moment of his own death.

This shift from artistic expressiveness to historical revelation contributes mightily to the phenomenological effect of the observational film. *Soldier Girls, They Call Us Misfits*, its sequel, *A Respectable Life*, and Fred Wiseman's most recent film, *Models*, propose revelations about the real not as a result of direct argument, but on the basis of inferences we draw from historical evidence itself.

And where observational cinema shifts from an individual to an institutional focus, and from a metonymic narrative model to a metaphoric one, as in the highly innovative work of Fred Wiseman, there may still be only a weak sense of constructed meaning, of a textual voice addressing us. A vigorous, active and retroactive reading is necessary before we can hear the voice of the textual system as a level distinct from the sounds and images of the evidence it adduces, while questions of adequacy remain. Wiseman's sense of context and of meaning as a function of the text itself remains weak, too easily engulfed by the fascination that allows us to mistake film for reality, the impression of the real for the experience of it. The risk of reading *Soldier Girls* or Wiseman's *Models* like a Rorshach test may require stronger counter-measures than the subtleties their complex editing and mise-en-scene provide.

This strategy complicates the voice of the film in an interesting way. It adds a contemporary, personal resonance to the historical, compilation footage without challenging the assumptions of that footage explicitly, as a voice-over commentary might do. We ourselves become engaged in determining how the women witnesses counterpoint these historical "documents" as well as how they articulate their own present and past consciousness in political, ethical, and feminist dimensions.

We are encouraged to believe that these voices carry less the authority of historical judgment than that of personal testimony-they are, after all, the words of apparently "ordinary women" remembering the past. As in many films that advance issues raised by the women's movement, there is an emphasis on individual but politically significant experience.

The reinstitution of direct address through the interview has successfully avoided some of the central problems of voice-over narration, namely authoritative omniscience or didactic reductionism. There is no longer the dubious claim that things are as the film presents them, organized by the commentary of an all-knowing subject. Such attempts to stand above history and explain it create a paradox. The emergence of so many recent documentaries built around strings of interviews strikes me as a strategic response to the recognition that neither can events speak for themselves nor can a single voice speak with ultimate authority. Interviews diffuse authority. A gap remains between the voice of a social actor recruited to the film and the voice of the film.

Not compelled to vouch for their own validity, the voices of interviewees may well arouse less suspicion. Yet a larger, constraining voice may remain to provide, or withhold, validation. In *The Sad Song of Yellow Skin, The Wilmar 8, Harlan County, USA, This is Not a Love Story, or Who Killed the Fourth Ward,* among others, the literal voice of the film-maker enters into dialogue but without the self-validating, authoritative tone of a previous tradition. Of course, these less assertive authorial voices remain complicit with the controlling voice of the textual system itself, but the effect upon a viewer is distinctly different.

Still, interviews pose problems. Their occurrence is remarkably widespread-from The Hour of the Wolf to The MacNiel /Lehrer Report and from Housing Problems (1935) to Harlan County, USA. The greatest problem, at least in recent documentaries, has been to retain that sense of a gap between the voice of interviewees and the voice of the text as a whole. It is most

obviously a problem when the interviewees display conceptual inadequacy on the issue but remain unchallenged by the film.

In documentaries, when the voice of the text disappears behind characters who speak to us, we confront a specific strategy of no less ideological importance than its equivalent in fiction films. When we no longer sense that a governing voice actively provides or withholds the imprimatur of veracity according to its own purposes and assumptions, its own canons of validation, we may also sense the return of the paradox and suspicion interviews should help us escape: the word of witnesses, uncritically accepted, must provide its own validation. Meanwhile, the film becomes a rubber stamp. To varying degrees this diminution of a governing voice occurs through parts of *Word Is Out, The Wobblies, Babies and Banners and Prison for Women*. The sense of a hierarchy of voices becomes lost. Ideally this hierarchy would uphold correct logical typing at one level without denying the inevitable collapse of logical types at another (the voice of the text is not above history but part of the very historical process upon which it confers meaning). But at present a less complex and less adequate side tracking of paradox prevails. The film says, in effect, "Interviewees never lie." Interviewees say, "What I am telling you is the truth." We then ask, "Is the interviewee telling the truth?" But find no acknowledgement in the film of the possibility, let alone the necessity, of entertaining this question as one inescapable in all communication and signification.

As much as anyone, Emile de Antonio, who pioneered the use of interviews and compilation footage to organize complex historical arguments without a narrator, has also provided clear signposts for avoiding the inherent dangers of interviews. Unfortunately, most of the film-makers adopting his basic

approach have failed to heed them. De Antonio demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the category of the personal. He does not invariably accept the word of witnesses, nor does he adopt rhetorical strategies (Great Man theories, for example) that limit historical understanding to the personal. In de Antonio and in his followers, there is no narrator, only the direct address of witnesses.

This contestation is not simply the express support of some witnesses over others, for left against right. It is a systematic effect of placement that retains the gaps between levels of different logical types. De Antonio's overall expository strategy in In the *Year of the Pig*, for example, makes it clear that no one witness tells the whole truth. De Antonio's voice (unspoken but controlling) makes witnesses contend with one another to yield a point of view more distinctive to the film than to any of its witnesses (since it includes this very strategy of contention).

De Antonio's hierarchy of levels and reservation of ultimate validation to the highest level (the textual system or film as a whole) differs radically from other approaches. John Lowenthal's The Trials of Alger Hiss, for example, is a totally subservient endorsement of Hiss's legalistic strategies. de Antonio seems unusually close to validating uncritically what interviewees say, the subtle voice of his mise-en-scene preserves the gap, conveying a strong sense of the distance between the sensibilities or politics of those interviewed and those of the larger public to whom they speak.

De Antonio's films produce a world of dense complexity: they embody a sense of constraint and over-determination. Not everyone can be believed. Not everything is true. Characters do not emerge as the autonomous shapers of a personal destiny. De

Antonio proposes ways and means by which to reconstruct the past dialectically, as Fred Wiseman reconstructs the present dialectically. Rather than appearing to collapse itself into the consciousness of character witnesses, the film retains an independent consciousness, a voice of its own. The film's own consciousness (surrogate for ours) probes, remembers, substantiates, doubts. It questions and believes, including itself. It assumes the voice of personal consciousness at the same time as it examines the very category of the personal. Neither omniscient deity nor obedient mouthpiece, de Antonio's rhetorical voice seduces us by embodying those qualities of insight, skepticism, judgment and independence we would like to appropriate for our own. Nonetheless, though he is closer to a modernist, self-reflexive strategy than any other documentary film-maker in America-with the possible exception of the more experimental feminist film-maker, Jo Ann Elam-de Antonio remains clearly apart from this tendency. He is more a Newtonian than an Einsteinian observer of events; he insists on the activity of fixing meaning, but it is meaning that does, finally, appear to reside "out there" rather than insisting on the activity of producing that "fix" from which meaning itself derives.

Subjectivity, consciousness, argumentative form and voice remain unquestioned in documentary theory and practice. Often, film-makers simply choose to interview characters with whom they agree. A weaker sense of skepticism, a diminished self-awareness of the film-maker as producer of meaning or history prevails, yielding a flatter, less dialectical sense of history and a simpler, more idealized sense of character. Characters threaten to emerge as stars - flashpoints of inspiring, and imaginary,

coherence contradictory to their ostensible status as ordinary people.

These problems emerge in three of the best history films we have (and in the pioneering gay film, *Word Is Out*), undermining their great importance on other levels. *Union Maids, With Babies and Banners*, and *The Wobblies* flounder on the axis of personal respect and historical recall. The films simply suppose that things were as the participant witnesses recall them, and lest we doubt, the film-makers respectfully find images of illustration to substantiate the claim. (The resonance set up in Rosie the Rivetter between interviews and compilation footage establishes a perceptible sense of a textual voice that makes this film a more sophisticated, though not self-reflexive, version of the interview-based documentary.) What characters omit to say, so do these films, most noticeably regarding the role of the CPUSA in *Union Maids* and *With Babies and Banners*. Banners, for example, contains one instance when a witness mentions the helpful knowledge, she gained from Communist Party members. Immediately, though, the film cuts to unrelated footage of a violent attack on workers by a goon squad. It is as if the textual voice, rather than provide independent assessment, must go so far as to find diversionary material to offset presumably harmful comments by witnesses themselves!

These films naively endorse limited, selective recall. The tactic flattens witnesses into a series of imaginary puppets conforming to a line. Their recall becomes distinguishable more by differences in force of personality than by differences in perspective. Backgrounds loaded with iconographic meanings transform witnesses further into stereotypes (shipyards, farms, union halls abound, or for the gays and lesbians in *Word Is Out*, bedrooms and the bucolic out-of-doors). We sense a great relief

when characters step out of these closed, iconographic frames and into more open-ended ones, but such "release" usually occurs only at the end of the films where it also signals the achievement of expository closure - another kind of frame. We return to the simple claim, "Things were as these witnesses describe them, why contest them?" - a claim which is a dissimulation and a disservice to both film theory and political praxis. On the contrary, as de Antonio and Wiseman demonstrate quite differently, Things signify, but only if we make them comprehensible.

Documentaries with a more sophisticated grasp of the historical realm establish a preferred reading by a textual system that asserts its own voice in contrast to the voices it recruits or observes. Such films confront us with an alternative to our own hypotheses about what kind of things populate the world, what relations they sustain, and what meanings they bear for us. The film operates as an autonomous whole, as we do. It is greater than its parts and orchestrates them: (1) the recruited voices, the recruited sounds and images; (2) the textual "voice" spoken by the style of the film as a whole (how its multiplicity of codes, including those pertaining to recruited voices are orchestrated in to a singular, controlling pattern); and (3) the surrounding historical context, including the viewing event itself, which the textual voice cannot successfully rise above or fully control. The film is thus a simulacrum or external trace of the production of meaning we undertake our-selves every day, every moment. We see not an image of imaginary unchanging coherence, magically represented on a screen, but the evidence of an historically rooted act of making things meaningful comparable to our own historically situated acts of comprehension.

This foregrounding of an active production of meaning by a textual system may also heighten our conscious sense of self as something also produced by codes that extend beyond ourselves. An exaggerated claim, perhaps, but still suggestive of the difference in effect of different documentary strategies and an indication of the importance of the self-reflexive strategy itself.

Self-reflexiveness can easily lead to an end-less regression. It can prove highly appealing to an intelligentsia more interested in "good form" than in social change. Yet interest in self-reflexive forms is not purely an academic question. Cinema verité and its variants sought to address certain limitations in the voice-of-God tradition. The interview-oriented film sought to address limitations apparent in the bulk of cinema verite, and the self-reflexive documentary addresses the limitations of assuming that subjectivity and both the social and textual positioning of the self (as film-maker or viewer) are ultimately not problematic.

Modernist thought in general challenges this assumption. A few documentary film-makers, going as far back as Dziga-Vertov and certainly including Jean Rouch, and the hard-to-categorize Jean-Luc Godard, adopt the basic epistemological assumption in their work that knowledge and the position of the self in relation to the mediator of knowledge, a given text, are socially and formally constructed and should be shown to be so. Rather than inviting paralysis before a centreless labyrinth, however, such a perspective restores the dialectic between self and other: neither the "out there" nor the "in here" contains its own inherent meaning. The process of constructing meaning overshadows constructed meanings. And at a time when modernist experimentation is old hat within the avant-garde and a fair amount of fiction film-making, it remains almost totally unheard of among documentary film-makers, especially in North

America. It is not political documentarists who have been the leading innovators. Instead, it is a handful of ethnographic film-makers like Timothy Asch (The Ax Fight), John Marshall (Nai!) and David and Judith MacDougall who, in their meditations on scientific method and visual communication, have done the most provocative experimentation.

Take the MacDougalls' *Wedding Camels* (part of the Turkana trilogy), for example. The film, set in Northern Kenya, explores the preparations for a Turkana wedding in day-to-day detail. It mixes direct and indirect address to form a complex whole made up of two levels of historical reference-evidence and argument-and two levels of textual structure observation and exposition.

Though *Wedding Camels* is frequently observational and very strongly rooted in the texture of everyday life, the film-makers' presence receives far more frequent acknowledgment than it does in *Soldier Girls*, Wiseman's films, or most other observational work.

Wedding Camels also makes frequent use of intertitles which mark off one scene from another to develop a mosaic structure that necessarily admits to its own lack of completeness even as individual facets appear to exhaust a given encounter. This sense of both incompleteness and exhaustion, as well as the radical shift of perceptual space involved in going from apparently three-dimensional images to two-dimensional graphics that comment on or frame the image, generates a strong sense of a hierarchical and self-referential ordering.

For example, in one scene Naingoro, sister to the bride's mother, says, "Our daughters are not our own. They are born to be given out." The implicit lack of completeness to individual identity

apart from social exchange then receives elaboration through an interview sequence with Akai, the bride. The film poses questions by means of intertitles and sandwiches Akai's responses, briefly, between them. One intertitle, for example, phrases its question more or less as follows, "We asked Akai whether a Turkana woman chooses her husband or if her parents choose for her." Such phrasing brings the film-maker's intervention strongly into the foreground.

The structure of this passage suggests some of the virtues of a hybrid style: the titles serve as another indicator of a textual voice apart from that of the characters represented. They also differ from most documentary titles which, since the silent days of Nanook, have worked like a graphic "voice" of authority. In *Wedding Camels*, the titles, in their mock-interactive structure, remain closely aligned with the particulars of person and place rather than appearing to issue from an omniscient consciousness. They show clear awareness of how a particular meaning is being produced by a particular act of intervention. This is not presented as a grand revelation but as a simple truth that is only remarkable for its rarity in documentary film. These particular titles also display both a wry sense of humour and a clear perception of the meaning an individual's marriage has for him or her as well as for others (a vital means of countering, among other things, the temptation of an ethnocentric reading or judgment). By "violating" the coherence of a social actor's diegetic space, intertitles also lessen the tendency for the interviewee to inflate to the proportions of a star witness. By acting self-reflexively such strategies call the status of the interview itself into question and diminish its tacit claim to tell the whole truth. Other signifying choices, which function like Brechtian distancing devices, would include the separate

"spaces" of image and intertitle for question/response; the highly structured and abbreviated question/answer format; the close up, portrait-like framing of a social actor that pries her away from a matrix of ongoing activities or a stereotypical background, and the clear acknowledgment that such fabrications exist to serve the purposes of the film rather than to capture an unaffected reality.

Though modest in tone, *Wedding Camels* demonstrates a structural sophistication well beyond that of almost any other documentary film work today. Whether its modernist strategies can be yoked to a more explicitly political perspective (without restricting itself to the small avant-garde audience that exists for the Godards and Chantal Akermanns), is less a question than a challenge still haunting us, considering the limitations of most interview-based films.

Changes in documentary strategy bear a complex relation to history. Self-reflexive strategies seem to have a particularly complex historical relation to documentary form since they are far less peculiar to it than the voice-of-God, cinema verite or interview-based strategies. Although they have been available to documentary (as to narrative) since the 'teens, they have never been as popular in North America as in Europe or in other regions (save among an avant-garde). Why they have recently made an effective appearance within the documentary domain is a matter requiring further exploration. Large cultural preferences concerning the voicing of dramatic as well as documentary material seem to be changing. In any event, the most recent appearances of self-reflexive strategies correspond very clearly to deficiencies in attempts to translate highly ideological, written anthropological practices into a proscriptive agenda for a visual anthropology (neutrality, descriptiveness, objectivity, "just the

facts" and so on). It is very heartening to see that the realm of the possible for documentary film has now expanded to include strategies of reflexivity that may eventually serve political as well as scientific ends.

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MODULE III

CASE STUDIES OF EARLY CLASSICS

THE GOLD RUSH (1925)

Directed by Charlie Chaplin

INTRODUCTION

The Gold Rush is a dramatic comedy written and directed by Charlie Chaplin in 1925. Charles Chaplin made *The Gold Rush* out of the most unlikely sources for comedy. The first idea came to him when he was viewing some stereoscope pictures of the 1896 Klondike gold rush, and was particularly struck by the image of an endless line of prospectors snaking up the Chilkoot Pass, the gateway to the gold fields. At the same time, he happened to read a book about the Donner Party Disaster of 1846, when a party of immigrants, snowbound in the Sierra Nevada, were reduced to eating their own moccasins and the corpses of their dead comrades. Chaplin - proving his belief that tragedy and ridicule are never far apart - set out to transform these tales of privation and horror into a comedy. He decided that his familiar tramp figure should become a gold prospector, joining the mass of brave optimists to face all the hazards of cold, starvation, solitude, and the occasional incursion of a grizzly bear.

THE FILM

The Gold Rush abounds with now-classic comedy scenes. The historic horrors of the starving 19th century pioneers inspired

the sequence in which Charlie and his partner Big Jim (Mack Swain) are snowbound and greedy. Charlie cooks and eats his boot, with all the airs of a gourmet. In the eyes of the delirious Big Jim, he is transformed into a chicken - a triumph both for the cameramen who had to affect the elaborate trick work entirely in the camera; and for Chaplin who magically becomes a bird. For one shot another actor took a turn in the chicken costume, but it was unusable: no one else had Chaplin's gift for metamorphosis.

The lone prospector's dream of hosting a New Year dinner for the beautiful dance-hall girl provides the opportunity for another famous Chaplin set-piece, the dance of the rolls. The gag had been done before, by Chaplin's one-time co-star Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle in *The Rough House* (1917); but Chaplin gives unique personality to the dancing legs created out of forks and rolls. When the film was first shown audiences were so thrilled by the scene that some theatres were obliged to stop the film, roll it back and perform an encore.

The Gold Rush was the first of his silent films which Chaplin revived, with the addition of sound, for new audiences. For the 1942 reissue he composed an orchestral score, and replaced the inter-titles with a commentary which he spoke himself. Among the scenes he trimmed from the film was the lingering final embrace with Georgia, with whom he had maintained a long and often romantic friendship. Perhaps some private and personal feelings caused him to replace the kiss with a more chaste shot of the couple walking off, simply holding hands.

Today, *The Gold Rush* appears as one of Chaplin's most perfectly accomplished films. Though he himself was inclined to be changeable in his affections for his own work, to the end of

his life he would frequently declare that of all his films, this was the one by which he would most wish to be remembered.

There is a moment in *The Gold Rush* which captures the essential tone of the film. Having survived near-starvation, privation, and isolation, Chaplin's lone-prospector, a barely-disguised reprise of his iconic 'tramp,' spears a pair of potatoes which he then transforms into a pair of dancing feet. There is a hint of fancy in the way that Chaplin manipulates his improvised props, a celebration of food in a world of want. The display he puts on is a show; and a show requires an audience, the creation of relationships. It is a moment in which the return of normalcy, the mundane, is celebrated. And so, the film underlines its deconstruction of the American pioneer, revealing not in grand adventure, but the lived experience of the impoverished and the desperate.

Considering its name, there is remarkably little wealth on show in *The Gold Rush*. There are dilapidated cabins, worn and broken equipment, and weather-worn faces aplenty but little evidence of that around which the film ostensibly revolves. Indeed, the early part of the film evidences murder, abandonment, and abject desperation - albeit wrapped in masterful and ironic comedic routines. The sight of Chaplin and his equally desperate interlocutor sharing a meal of boiled footwear with imagined and forced delight certainly adds laughter to the desperation; but it never entirely erases the underlying trauma at the heart of the scene. Behind every chewed piece of leather, every begrudging bite, lies murder in the Arctic wastes and an uncertain future. Seeing Chaplin turn into a chicken before the eyes of his starving companion is deeply humorous; the implied attempt at murder which it predicts, less so. So much for the gold.

The American frontier, the pioneering experience, so often one of the most celebrated parts of American mythology, is here broken down into a study of depression, of the human spirit pressed against the limit of reasonable endurance. Naturally, Chaplin finds comedic gold in the situation, but so too does he explore other facets of the human experience. Friendship and comradeship are forged in the heart of desperation, the essential interpersonal spirit is reinforced even in the face of abject failure, but rarely is it glorified. Chaplin's prospector survives but he can hardly be said to flourish - and when he does it is the product of blind luck rather than skill, an uncharacteristically sympathetic world bending to accommodate its most lovable buffoon. It is a fortuitous turn of events, and an extraordinary one. In the end, the pioneer succeeds. He attains riches, finds hope for the future and, of course, gets the girl. But that attained happiness feels like a fevered dream, the delirious, self-indulgent fantasy of the starving and desperate pioneer first encountered by the audience. Perhaps somewhere the real pioneer lies starving and unconscious, dreaming about, rather than attaining, his goals.

The singularity of the escape, and the harshness of the climate in which the pioneer searches for riches provides an analogy with the desperation of poverty. The inhospitable snow-topped mountains provide the metaphor for hopelessness and isolation; the crisp white snow and the searing storm provide little hope of food, nor shelter. The power of the elements and the frailty of the cabin, coupled with the danger of the appearing bear allude to the human struggle for material gain. Much of Chaplin’s work is replete with biography and lived experience. Chaplin’s childhood themes are replicated in *The Gold Rush* – help is a distant dream; Chaplin's pioneer is marooned on the storm-

swept mountain teetering on the edge of a cliff, secured only by the knot of a rope and the placement of a rock. Chaplin's skilful use of imagery betrays the struggle for life while living on the edge, often oblivious to the lurking perils. The unsustainability of life, the lack of food, company and love speaks of the perennial movement around poverty stricken East London that Chaplin experienced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as a child.

Separated from his mother as a result of her mental instability, Chaplin was subjected to the harsh realities of the late Victorian children's home before the genesis of a selective British welfare state in 1906. State help in the Victorian economic and social model was anathema; state welfare was in influential works such as Samuel Smiles' *Self Help* (1858) the precursor to laziness and dependence - the development of wealth and happiness was achieved by hard work, dedication and an ascetic lifestyle, much like the search for gold on bleak mountain pastures. Relief from its scourges was more likely to be found in personal relationships and the unity of communities than from striking gold. Chaplin's comedic ballet atop the mountain resonates with communal efforts of escapism from treacherous surroundings. He and his companion are saved from certain death by personal relationships – the same narrative of surviving the harsh conditions for working class Victorian Britain.

A film about the American pioneer becomes instead a study of universal poverty underwritten by first-hand experience. Careful, if not always perfect, execution gives life and levity to those otherwise weighty themes. There is beauty in the film's photography, particularly the rich, busy, but elegantly composed shots within the tavern. In that space Chaplin's pioneer is framed by pillar and post, his form standing in the lonely foreground; in

the back, a happy ensemble dances and drinks and carouses. The comedy is almost perfectly realised. Confrontations emphasise the pioneer's inherent cowardice, his unsuitability for life on the wilderness, whilst luck (and at least a little guile), once again, happily carry him through the day, turning the disaster that is the life of the impoverished into the stuff of working-class laughter and escapism.

Still, for all its successes, the film does not always succeed in attaining the depth of some of Chaplin's other feature length films. It is certainly funny, and it has a heart - but not one as large as 1921's *The Kid*. There is a social commentary, but it does not cut with the same razor-sharp insight as 1941's *The Great Dictator*, nor does its pathos come close to touching 1952's "Limelight." But if *The Gold Rush* fails to succeed without qualification, it is a reflection more of Chaplin's other successes than it is any failures he made with this film. If the social commentary here is not always as sharp as in some of his other films, the comedy redeems it. If the setting is not always as vibrant as those Chaplin had attained in the past, a new set of camera tricks and special effects compensates for that shortfall.

The Gold Rush is not, then, an unqualified success - but that does not mean that it is not wonderful. Like so much of Chaplin's work from the 1920s and 1930s it combines whimsy and pathos with a sharp appreciation for life below the poverty line. It revels in expertly realised humour to draw out sympathy for its characters and, ultimately, all of those who suffer as Chaplin did during his childhood in London. Despite being a film about the life of American pioneers, it remains unable to escape the shadow cast by its creator's own history of poverty and desperation. It is an escapist fantasy, rooted in traumas of the past, deeply felt and never set aside. It is, then, a film about

space and character; and it is a gentle revenge fantasy, the dramatization of blind luck and the buffoon. It is, in other words, quintessentially Chaplin.

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400 BLOWS (1959)

Directed by Francois Truffaut

The *400 Blows* is the debut film of French director Francois Truffaut. The film was released in 1959 in France and was an unexpected success. The film was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay and at the Cannes Film Festival for the Palm d'Or. Truffaut won Best Director at Cannes.

Director François Truffaut relives his childhood in the form of Antoine in The *400 Blows*, a film which showcases the spatial and personal limitations of youth set up by a social structure made for adults. Childhood in The 400 Blows becomes a stifling world of overcorrection and surveillance for young Antoine,

where spaces meant for youth only serve to illustrate the ways adolescents must sneak under the judgemental and demanding eyes of teachers, parents, and other authority figures. Antoine is one of these children that discounts the authority of adults, and is therefore marked as a bad child. Despite his delinquent social status, it is evident that Antoine is no worse behaved than other boys his age and that it is his environment that works against him.

The main character in the movie is a young troubled boy named Antoine, who lives in Paris with his mother and his stepfather. Antoine gets into trouble frequently at school and has a tough relationship with his teachers and his peers, often getting into conflict and having physical fights with his classmates.

Gradually, the movie reveals that Antoine is not the only one to blame for his behaviour. Towards the end of the film, the viewer learns that Antoine knows that the man married to his mother is not his biological father, and that he was raised by his grandmother for a big portion of his childhood because his mother was unable to take care of him, and that his mother wanted to get an abortion after she found that she was pregnant with Antoine and that Antoine was frequently let alone to do as he pleased because his parents were seldom home.

Despite its focus on youth, the film is filled with mature themes and motifs. Antoine feels abandoned by his family and he often tries to find comfort in his friends rather than at home. In fact, the relationship Antoine has with one of his classmates, René, is stronger than the relationship he has with his own parents. At the observation center, Antoine longs to see Rene more than he wants to see his own mother. Among the other themes tackled in the film is the idea that the children have no freedom, and are

controlled by the school system in an almost tyrannical way. The film was well-received by audiences and critics at the time of its release and it marked the beginning of what is known as the French New Wave, one of the most iconic film movements in cinematic history.

STORYLINE

After setting his camera in search of the Eiffel Tower through the opening credits, Truffaut sets us down inside a classroom. As the students take a test, they pass around a picture of a pin-up model. Antoine Doinel draws a moustache on the woman and is caught with it, and as punishment is sent to the corner without recess privileges. It is in his nature to rebel, and so he writes a poem on the wall about the fact that he has been unfairly punished. Following recess, the class returns and their teacher recites the poem, "The Hare," asking everyone to copy it down. Antoine, however, must stay in the corner and clean his poem off the wall.

At home, Antoine takes money hidden in the mantle, sets the table for dinner, gets flour from the store for his mother and takes out the garbage. His mother is especially hard on him, and his father—who is actually his stepfather—shows him inconsistent affection.

His parents don't set the alarm the next morning, so Antoine is late for school. On his way, he runs into his best friend, René, and the two boys decide to skip school. On their day of hooky, Antoine and René go to the movies and play games, and at the end of the day Antoine spots his mother kissing another man, and she sees him. They do not talk about it. At home later that night, Antoine and his father cook dinner together as Mrs.

Doinel is working late. When Antoine's mother arrives late that night, she and Mr. Doinel get into a contentious argument. When Antoine returns to school the next day he tells his teacher that his mother has died in order to get out of being punished for skipping. The lie works, until his parents arrive at school. His dad slaps him in front of his class, and Antoine decides to never return home again. He sends a note to his parents outlining that he has run away and sleeps in a printing plant that René shows him that night.

The next day, Mrs. Doinel picks Antoine up from school. She bathes him and offers him an uncharacteristic amount of love and warmth. As she puts him to bed, Antoine's mother makes a deal with him that if he is in the top 5 for his next essay, she will give him 1,000 francs. After making the deal, Antoine becomes obsessed with Balzac, and is inspired by the writer for his next essay. He even makes a shrine to Balzac in a small box in his parent's apartment. After putting a candle in the shrine, however, he starts a small fire that almost burns the house down. Mr. Doinel scolds him, but his mother comes to his defense, and suggests that they should be less hard on him, and should all go to the movies. The family has an uncharacteristically fun evening together.

When he hands in his paper, Antoine expects to get high marks, but his composition instructor gives him an F. It turns out that Antoine just plagiarized Balzac and passed it off as his own work. Suspended from class for the rest of the term, Antoine decides that he really cannot go back to his parents' house now, so René offers him a vacant room in his own parents' house.

René and Antoine steal a bit of cash from René’s mother’s stash to go to the movies, and they wind up smoking cigars and

drinking wine in his bedroom. All of this turns into a plan to get money so that they can live the life they hope for, free from their parents' watchful gaze. Without any way to make money, the two boys resort to stealing. Antoine goes to Mr. Doinel's office after hours and steals his typewriter to sell.

As they cannot sell the typewriter, Antoine brings it back to the office, but is caught by a guard while putting it back. Mr. Doinel decides to turn him in to the police, and have him sent off to a state home for children.

Mrs. Doinel meets with the judge, and she is willing to let her son be taken to a juvenile observation center. Here, she reveals that Mr. Doinel is not Antoine's biological father. At the juvenile observation center, Antoine goes to a psychologist and reveals that he knows he is not Doinel's son, and that he also knows his mother wanted to abort him during her pregnancy. It was his grandmother who stopped her from doing it. When Mrs. Doinel next visits her son, she says that she is giving up custody of him once and for all. With no one to care for him, Antoine breaks out of the observation center and makes a run for it, ending up on the beach, unsure of what to do next.

Francois Truffaut came on to the filmmaking scene during the French New Wave, and many critics categorize The *400 Blows* as marking the start of the movement, though this is debated. The "New Wave" describes a group of filmmakers who didn't shoot scenes in studios, relied heavily on available light, filmed mainly with handheld cameras, used black and white film stock, and broke with many of the filmic conventions of the mainstream. Jean Renoir had a major influence on Truffaut and set him on a path towards becoming one of the mavericks of the New Wave.

A defining photographic component of Truffaut's work on The *400 Blows* is the way that he holds a shot for a long time. The longest in this film is 1 minute and 21 seconds: the tracking shot as Antoine is running away from the observation centre. This style was also a favourite of Andre Bazin, a man that came to become Truffaut's surrogate father, who believed that too many cuts in a film took away the beauty and art in the film.

Truffaut's ability to find the poetic in the mundane is on display in *The 400 Blows* as well. For example, during the scene in which Antoine takes out the garbage, we see the lights go out, and then Antoine turns them back on. During the war the French had to have their lights be set to automatically turn off in order to save power; Truffaut used this to his benefit by allowing it to emphasize a filthy everyday chore of taking out the trash. Truffaut was influenced by the realities of life, its small details and mundanities. He had a particular talent for showcasing these everyday occurrences and giving them weight and meaning on-screen.

Alfred Hitchcock was another important influence, and we see a Hitchcockian move during the scene when Antoine gets on a tilt-a-whirl carnival ride. The sequence has both a gleeful and a terrifying tone, as we watch Antoine spin. Finally, Balzac and Proust were two French authors that had a great influence on Truffaut, and were his favourites. In fact, Balzac is a prominent reference point in *The 400 Blows*, as Antoine begins to read his work and becomes intoxicated by the master's prose.

Major Themes

"Liberty, Equality and Fraternity"

These words are carved into the exterior of the school Antoine attends. It is also the national motto of France. We see these three words rather briefly after Antoine has been placed in the corner by the French teacher for being caught with an image of a pinup girl. The slogan has an ironic bent in The 400 Blows, as we can clearly see that Antoine is systematically deprived of liberty and equality by his teachers and in his home life with his parents. Antoine is also betrayed by the fraternity of his classmates, and his only friend and ally is René. The deprivation of these three rights—rhetorically central to the school and to France itself—casts an even more ironically tragic light on Antoine's experience.

Solitude

Throughout the film we see Antoine struggle with his parents, teachers and other adults who don't seem to give him attention or care. This deprivation of affection pushes Antoine further and further away from what is deemed to be “normal,” because he has no one to relate to. The first time we see Mrs. Doinel listening to Antoine is when he returns home after sleeping in the paper factory. She isn’t emotionally connected with her son, and when he begins to tell her about why he’s struggling, she doesn’t attempt to go any deeper with him. In the absence of real affection, Antoine isolates himself to find solace. All of Antoine's personal issues push him to the outskirts of society and away from normal connection. He flees the observation center and runs to the beach, fully alone. With no one else

around, he walks into the water a bit, and then stares at his last and only companion—Truffaut's camera.

Sex & amp; Pregnancy

Truffaut uses mirrors in an early scene to express Antoine being in a state of figuring out his sexual identity, as he combs his hair at his mother's vanity with multiple mirrors capturing his image. Shortly after this scene, Antoine goes to the store to buy flour for his mother, and walks up to hear two older women talking graphically about a woman giving a bloody birth. The thought makes Antoine queasy, and we see an adolescent coming in contact with the adult world of sexuality.

Additionally, the film starts with schoolboys passing around the image of the pinup girl. It is an image that fascinates the young boys, and it also gets them into trouble. The school is all boys, and while these boys are already looking at women, some even having sex (so says Antoine to the psychologist), they aren't being integrated with girls. It isn't until their day wandering around town that we see Antoine and his friend René interacting with a girl, as they walk through a park each of them holding one of her hands.

Sex is also explored when Antoine catches his mother kissing a man, who isn't her husband, in the street. The fact that Antoine sees the affair actually happening creates confusion in the young man about sex and commitment. Indeed, Antoine is already confused about these aspects of life, as he knows that he is the product of an illegitimate affair, and that his mother initially wanted to abort him when he was in her womb.

Betrayal

Throughout the film we see Antoine's parents having the opportunity to be there for him, to do what's right, but constantly letting him down and meeting his actions with punishment and neglect. By the end of the film, they give up their parental rights to the state, and try to wash their hands clean of him. This betrayal is magnified when we find out that Antoine has known his mother never wanted to have him, that she wanted an abortion, and that Doinel is not his real father. The people who are meant to be responsible for his well-being let him down at every turn, and Antoine can rely on no one but himself (and René).

Antoine's Imagination and Mind

Part of what makes Antoine so badly suited to everyday life and normal schooling is the fact that he is very intellectually curious and alert when he wants to be. His wayward attitude is not only due to the neglect of the adults in his life, but also due to his being trapped in his own mind, often dreaming up new schemes and hardly paying attention to the world around him. He wants nothing more than to have freedom from the institutions that tie him down, but this has partly to do with his desire to be an adult, to pursue and do whatever he chooses. After his mother makes the deal with him that she'll give him 1,000 francs if he writes a good essay, he begins reading Balzac. He has a passion for Balzac that surely few of his classmates share, even building a shrine for the novelist, but his passion cannot translate into the classroom, where he is expected to think inside a very narrow box. When Mr. Doinel takes Antoine to the police chief, he notes that Antoine is particularly spacey, always lost in thought, and dreaming about something else. Even though this is one of

Antoine's virtues, and what makes him a reflective child, it is not celebrated by the adults in his life and he is punished for it.

Punishment

While the viewer gets the sense that perhaps more love would give Antoine a better sense of proportion and motivate him to do well in school and behave better, this is not the ethic touted by the adults in his life. Instead, force and punishment are the norm. The film is a series of mishaps in which Antoine is punished by the adults in his life. He is suspended, slapped in the face, scolded, and eventually put in a jail of sorts. When Mrs. Doinel asks the judge how she might better control her son, he says, "Perhaps you exercise control too inconsistently." While there is some truth to this statement, the viewer also knows that the adults in his life are exceedingly emotionally negligent of the young Antoine, who simply wants to feel wanted and loved by his parents. Antoine contends not only with the consequences for his actions, but also a philosophy of accountability that favours punishment and force rather than understanding and curiosity.

Freedom vs. Captivity

Antoine has a strong drive to break free from whatever confines he finds himself in. He longs to not have to go to school, to wander the streets, and to make his own way in the world without the disapproval of hypocritical adults. He achieves freedom when he stays away from home for the night and wanders the streets, stealing a bottle of milk from a delivery man. Then later, he finds freedom when he stays at René's house. These tastes of freedom, however, are punished harshly, and when his stepfather doesn't know what else to do with him,

Antoine is put in a tiny cell. In the back of a barred truck, Antoine looks at the bright lights of Paris and the world of possibility, but cries that he is kept from it, behind bars. By the end, Antoine manages to escape captivity, climbing under a fence and running away from the observation center. He finally achieves the freedom that he's longed for, and makes his way to a beach, looking out at the ocean (which he has never seen)—an image of wild abandon and ultimate freedom.

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8½ (1963)

Directed by Federico Fellini

8 1/2 is an Italian avant-garde film written and directed by Federico Fellini that was released in 1963. Its title derives from its position as the eighth and a half film that Fellini directed. The film is produced by Angelo Rizzoli, and has garnered two 1963 Academy Awards (for Best Foreign Language Film and Best Costume Design) and was nominated for Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, and Best Art Direction in black-and-white. Besides, it won prizes for best director, producer, original story, screenplay, music, cinematography, and supporting actress from the Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists that year. Its

exhibition at the third Moscow International Film Festival in 1963 likewise made a huge splash.

8 1/2 was based on Fellini's real experiences and persona is pronounced enough as to be apparent even to someone unfamiliar with the director's backstory. *8 1/2* is often ranked as one of Fellini's best works, and indeed as one of the world's top films of all time. It remains a treasured artifact of Italian and world cinema.

An early title for what is now *8 1/2* was "La bella confusione," or "A Beautiful Confusion." This was an appropriate title at the time, since Federico Fellini was long unsure about the premise of his next film after his successful La Dolce Vita. At one point, Fellini even wrote to his producer, Angelo Rizzoli, to say that he would give up on the film that would become *8 1/2*. While writing the letter, however, he was interrupted by his film crew celebrating a birthday; at the celebration, his crew, which had been growing frustrated with his lack of communication about the film they were waiting to shoot, toasted him and the film in an act of goodwill. Embarrassed, Fellini went home and ripped up the letter, deciding to push forward with the project (Kezich 239).

Filmmaking itself was reaching a kind of identity crisis at the time, since the early 60s saw the introduction of colour film, which would later achieve dominance over black-and-white (Kezich 238). Perhaps equally important was the introduction of "auteur theory," developed by French theorists and filmmakers like Andre Bazin and Francois Truffaut. According to auteur theory, film directors should be assigned more stylistic and authorial credit for a film, since they possess singular control over the vision for a film, a realization that film scholar D.A.

Miller has called the "emancipation proclamation of 'personal' filmmaking" (Miller 13).

As Fellini geared up to shoot *8 1/2*, auteur theory was not only a popular theory, but a bonafide commercial force, since a well-known director's name on the marquee was often how theatres sold tickets (Miller 12). This phenomenon is a palpable backdrop in *8 1/2*, wherein the film's success lives and dies on Guido's articulation of his creative vision for it.

In 1960, Fellini also began to log his dreams by sketching and writing about them in a journal, another clear influence on what would become *8 1/2*. The idea for this journal came when Fellini attempted to explain one of his dreams to famed Jungian psychologist Ernest Bernhard, who suggested that he keep an animated dream log. The result was Fellini's Books of Dreams, several leather-bound volumes of drawings in ink and felt-tip pen.

"When I was about six or seven,' he wrote, 'I was convinced that we lived two existences—one with our eyes open, and one with them closed" (Fellini, qtd in Tornabuoni 103).

In an illustration from 1961, for example, Fellini talks with a cardinal. "In a dark room weakly illuminated by candles," Fellini writes, "Cardinal Montini stares into the darkness with his icy eyes...It is evident that he does not believe for a moment the Christian message that critics, scholars, and priests have found in my films" (Fellini, qtd in Tornabuoni 104).

Although many of the direct influences on Fellini in *8 1/2* remain hazy, friend and biographer Tullio Kezich, supposes that Fellini drew on Ingmar Bergman's Wild Strawberries, the

writing of Marcel Proust (which deals heavily with memory and dreams), and Pieter Bruegel's paintings of the Tower of Babel. Today, *8 1/2* has itself inspired numerous films and will continue to influence filmmaking for a long time.

STORYLINE

Guido Anselmi is an Italian filmmaker whose success both in his career and in his love-life has brought him to the point of utter exhaustion, even physical collapse. Rehab and recovery will take place at a sumptuous, expensive and exclusive spa. While taking time off, Guido employs a popular critic, Carini Daumier, to look over the ideas he is mulling over for the subject of his next film. What he hears is not good: the ideas are lifeless, confusing and ultimately far too weak to be worth filming.

During his stay, Guido is constantly having visions. The Ideal Woman is a major character in these hallucinations and he interprets her as the key to finding the perfect subject to film next. Meanwhile, his mistress arrives from Rome to see how he is doing, but he sets her up in another hotel and then proceeds to do everything he can to avoid her.

His production crew relocates to the spa to help him get started on this next idea. Their arrival appears to be in vain, however, because Guido is committed to one thing above almost all else: avoiding as best he can his crew, nosy reporters and even the actors waiting to find out their roles. Pressure is mounting on Guido to move from the idea process to the filming process, but all he seems capable of producing are more visions which range from a dance with a hooker on the beach while still in school to punishment by the Catholic staff of the school. Guido wonders

if these memories could possibly serve as a movie idea, but the critic rejects their sentimentality.

Guido looks forward to enjoying the rare opportunity of a personal audience with a Cardinal of the Catholic Church, which will take place in a sauna. Confessing to an overwhelming sense of unhappiness despite having everything any man could want, Guido is hoping for some kind of special insight or guidance. What he gets instead is rote recitations from the catechism that offer no help at all.

Guido invites his wife, from whom he is estranged, to join him and bring her friends. As they dance, there is the hint of reconciliation, but ultimately, he deserts her in order to be with his movie crew which is inspecting a rocket replica on the beach to be used for the film. When Guido talks to his wife's best friend Rosella, he makes a startling confession: he wants to make an honest movie, but he has nothing honest to say.

An encounter with several of the important women in his life leads to a long and involved fantasy in which they are Guido's harem who bathe him and treat him like a sultan. A showgirl rebels against such submission, however, and the fantasy turns dark with the woman attacking Guido through the most powerful weapon they have: forcing him to confront the ugly honesty about his empty life. Guido regains control and whips them back into submission.

Guido's producer then confronts him about the delays in starting his next film and forces Guido to watch the screen tests he's made. The tests turn out to be for roles that are consistent with the characters that have played a part in the narrative so far, including the prostitute on the beach and the Cardinal in the

sauna. Also watching is Guido's wife, who runs from the room after witnessing how her husband has chosen to portray her.

The vision of the Ideal Woman is realized in the person of an actress named Claudia. When he takes Claudia to visit one of the proposed sets, he explains that the movie will be about a creative burnout finding redemption through his concept of the Ideal Woman. Claudia expresses interest in the idea, but ultimately disapproves of it, saying that it won't be possible to sympathize with a man who lacks the capacity to love another human being.

Rejected by the personification of his vision of the Ideal Woman, Guido announces the production is being shut down. The producer nevertheless promises a press conference at the rocket ship set on the beach while Guido desperately attempts to escape the rush of journalists begging for information. Finally cornered amidst expectation of some sort of response, Guido crawls beneath a table and in his final fantasy shoots himself.

The rocket ship set is being disassembled by the crew amid news that the film has been permanently called off. The critic asserts that this decision was the only wise thing to do, but Guido has had a revelation. The epiphany is simple: rather than trying to film as a way of resolving personal issues that could help others, he need only accept life on the terms he lives it. Asking Luisa for help in making this a reality, she reluctantly agrees to try.

A troupe of clowns suddenly appear, led by Guido dressed as a child, and together they turn the rocket into a circus where all the people who have played a role in Guido's memories parade down some steps. Guido directs them via a large megaphone

into the circus ring and his mistress steps forward to inform him that she has figured out what he was attempting to say all along. Her message is that Guido needs everybody who enters his life and cannot be complete unless they are always there when he needs them. Everybody joins hands and starts running around the ring with the last to enter the circle being Guido and his wife.

MAJOR THEMES

Cinema

The nature of cinema itself dominates 8 1/2, since the film is largely structured around Guido's loss of faith in his creative voice. Throughout the film, people offer unsolicited advice on cinema's role in the world. The first to do so is the writer, Daumier, who boldly states that cinema lags behind all other artistic mediums by 50 years. Later in the film, a clergyman tells Guido that cinema has the ability to "educate or corrupt millions of souls." Even characters to whom we are only briefly introduced mercilessly probe Guido on the topic of art and life; this reaches its climax at the press conference, where reporters harass Guido, asking him everything from "Are you afraid of the atomic bomb?" to "Do you really think your life can be of interest to others?" Throughout the film, Guido remains silent on the topic of cinema, with the exception of his conversation with Claudia, to whom he confesses he just wants to make an "honest film." Authenticity, then, emerges as the ultimate goal of cinema, as opposed to pure artifice or pure memoir. This underlies Guido's final monologue in the film, wherein he realizes, "now everything’s all confused again, like it was before. But this confusion is me as I am, not as I’d like to be."

Fellini plays with the question of cinema's purpose formally, as well, particularly by using his own camera to investigate Guido's emotional journey through his dreams and fantasies. Often, when we enter Guido's dreams or fantasies, the camera guides us in such a way that the fantasy initially appears to be real, without the conventional dissolves or other filmic editing tricks. For example, when Guido imagines Luisa and Carla becoming friends, Fellini cuts directly from reality (Guido smiling at Carla) to fantasy (Carla singing) so that it is unclear at first whether we are being told the truth or lied to. This creates an explicit tension between the personal and the artificial, as they are blended together in one deft cut. Such formal choices constitute Fellini's formal meta-interrogation of cinema's ability to lie and tell the truth.

Purity

Purity, particularly as an analog to the notion of truth, is a strong theme throughout 8 1/2. For starters, we meet Guido at a spa whose water supposedly purifies one's system regardless of the specific ill with which it is plagued. Throughout the film, water and the color white stand in as visual representations of purity; this is at work in the spa, which is built from white stone and tended by nurses clothed in white. This is also where we meet Claudia, Guido's ideal woman (who likewise wears white), in one of Guido's fantasies. Later on in the film, Guido explicitly calls Claudia a "symbol of purity and spontaneity," but when we meet her in person, she wears black and pokes holes in Guido's ideas about love and truth. This is one of many ways in which Fellini complicates the notion of pure or objective truth; when supposedly angelic Claudia tells him he's an unsympathetic character, for example, he realizes she isn't his ideal woman, saying, "You're a pain like the others." Even the spa water,

supposedly pure and healthy, makes Carla sick. Contrastingly, even Seraghina, supposedly the devil, lives by the sea. Using white and water as empty symbols of false purity, Fellini sets up his audience for Guido's final realization: that he must embrace the messiness of his life and cease to pursue perfection.

Realism

Authenticity and realism, especially as they relate to filmmaking, are the abstract ideals to which Guido aspires, yet he is unable to master them. He explicitly mentions this when in the car with Claudia, to whom he confesses he just wants to make an honest movie; her part in the film, he explains, will be "both young and ancient, a child yet already a woman, authentic and radiant." In moments like this, it seems like Guido has a clear vision for the film as one of realism and honesty. Later in the scene, however, he admits that there is neither a part for Claudia nor a film to be made, and we see that his endeavour to make an honest film (in response, of course, to accusations from his wife and friends that he is a liar) is a sham. Throughout, the question of what genre of film Guido is making is a salient one; in the same breath, various acquaintances and critics ask him if he's capable of making a film about love yet beg him to stop making films about his personal life. Late in the film, we find out he's making a science fiction movie about an escape from Earth after thermonuclear war, a premise that seems steeped in artifice and surrealism.

This desire for realism functions not merely as a genre of film but also as a yardstick for the women with whom Guido interacts, many of whom constitute absurd archetypes for femininity. Carla is silly and cartoonish in her bombshell aesthetic, and Claudia manifests chiefly in Guido's imagination

as his ideal woman, unrealistic in her virtue. Of course, these feminine archetypes reach their climax in Guido's harem fantasy, which is complete with an aging can-can dancer and a Danish stewardess, neither of which are realistic, but rather childish images of femininity. Ultimately, even as her authenticity is complicated by her onscreen portrayal (especially during Guido's screen tests), Luisa is the most "realistic" of all the women in Guido's life, and consequently, he reaffirms his commitment to her.

Dreams and Fantasies

Fellini's *8 1/2* is as much about cinema and art as it is about dreams and fantasies. Our introduction to the film is through one of Guido's dreams, in which he escapes from a suffocating traffic jam and flies away but eventually crashes down to earth—a fitting metaphor for the ups and downs of his creative ambitions. Indeed, to the extent that the film is structured at all, it is structured by the fluid transition from reality to Guido's subconscious. For example, when Guido chats with a clergyman at the spa, he sees a plump woman on a nearby hill, prompting a recollection of Seraghina, which we see after a hard cut and with virtually no indication that what follows is a memory. By blending reality, dream, and even fantasy so fluidly, Fellini asks us to assign them the same value in understanding Guido's character. Just as we see him form an endearing bond with Seraghina, who is otherwise a pariah, we also see him indulge in a chauvinistic fantasy in which his wife toils away while he is pleasured by a whole harem of women. Guido, in short, is complicated, and dreams or fantasies are the primary way in which we access the boundary between his meek public self and his complicated private self. This sets up the audience for Guido's ultimate realization that he must embrace the chaos that

is his selfhood, represented by the film's final fantasy sequence. There, Guido's reality, dreams, and fantasies collide on a single stage, offering a surreal, even macabre vision of what it is to accept oneself.

Mortality

Guido's fear of mortality is a theme that haunts both his dreams and his waking life. In the film's very first sequence, for example, Guido escapes from a smoking car and crashes to the ground from a great height. In his next dream, he chats with his dead father about his tomb and later helps lower his father into a freshly dug grave. Even Guido's overarching goal—to make an honest movie for the first time—characterizes him as a character in search of legitimate achievement before he dies. This anxiety about aging is clearly present in his escapades with women, both real and fantastical, since nearly all of his mistresses (Carla, Claudia, the Danish stewardess) are younger than his wife, Luisa. This is notably untrue of Jacqueline Bonbon, the showgirl who Guido orders to retire from pleasing him in his fantasy. Her retirement eventually galvanized a rebellion amongst the girls in Guido's fantastical harem, since they believe it is unfair that Guido is much older than them yet passes judgement on their age. Real-life Claudia likewise calls Guido an "old man" near the end of the film, confirming his worst fear. Ultimately, Guido seems to accept his own aging and death, just as he accepts the reality of his imperfect life. Indeed, the final sequence of the film, in which everyone from Guido's past and present march together in a circle, seems to gesture at the circle of life that will eventually call for Guido's death. The final shot of the film, wherein a little boy is left alone in the dark, likewise seems to symbolize the fact that even the little boy that we've watched grow into an old man (Guido) will someday die.

Memory

Memory is integral to the way in which Guido relates to his past through dreams, fantasies, and real life. It is notable that all of Guido's dreams and fantasies are populated by real people from his past and present; even Claudia, to whom we are introduced in several of Guido's fantasies (in which she is nameless), is eventually revealed to be a woman from Guido's past. As Guido navigates the production of the film he'll never make, he is often haunted by his past, and memories are often juxtaposed with reality much like dreams are in the film. For example, when Guido chats with the clergymen at the spa, he is reminded of his childhood encounters with Seraghina, triggering a lengthy remembrance of the Catholic punishment he received as a result. In episodes like this, it is evident that the past is never truly dead for Guido, but rather fluidly woven into his present, and even into his dreams. Guido's memory of his father, for example, appears in a dream, wherein his father coexists with the living (Guido's mother and Luisa). This melding of memory with present experience culminates in the film's final sequence, in which everyone from Guido's past and present join together for a celebration of Guido's life. This viscerally embodies the fusion of Guido's past with his present, as both are represented equally in this morbidly absurd circus.

Religion

Guido's complicated relationship to religion is evident throughout *8 1/2*, since it is one of the primary ways in which Guido attempts to find meaning and authenticity in preparation for his film. Even the spa at which we meet Guido is a religious domain; before we even see Guido's face, we hear a doctor prescribe him a dose of holy water to drink every hour. He also

visits the local clergy in the guise of doing research for his film, instead using these interviews to seek advice on his own artistic and personal life. In the first of these visits with the local cardinal, Guido lapses into a memory of Seraghina, a seaside prostitute that he visited as a child. Through this memory, we see that Guido was caught with Seraghina and subsequently punished by the church in ways that seem severe given the innocent nature of the childhood indiscretion. Even so, Guido probes—and is probed by—the cardinal and other members of the clergy in two separate meetings. In one of these meetings, a priest essentially tells Guido he doesn't believe cinema as a medium is fit to represent divine love.

All this contributes to Guido's growing confusion about the role of cinema and art, a frustration that he only reconciles when he realizes that he must embrace the messiness of his life and its flaws. Ultimately, this conclusion seems rather Catholic in nature, since it emphasizes the inevitability of sin. The finale of the film seems to lend itself to this reading, since the image of Guido's friends and family marching, dressed in white, in a circle to celebrate his life seems almost funereal in nature and perhaps even gestures at the ascent to heaven that we see Guido nearly achieve in his opening dream sequence.

Conclusion

Fellini's *8½* is the prime example of the cinema of bliss, as are many other Italian films of this period. Fellini's *8½* has a unique atmosphere that is able to emphasize the film's essentia as auto analysis of Fellini's own life, as exploration of the Italian male psyche and of the cinema itself, thus making it a prime example of the cinema of bliss. This is evidenced by the fact that the entire film is essentially the main character Guido's stream of

consciousness. Furthermore, the film uses what Robert T. Eberwein (1984) has characterized as the dream screen strategy, a technique that makes the audience question where (or when) they are in any given scene. This is a technique that Fellini very elegantly employed in a subsequent film, *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965).

Fellini cleverly tips off the audience by indicating the transition from reality into fantasy; he does so by including shots throughout the film of Guido touching his glasses or nose right before he enters into one of his fantasies or flashbacks. All of this works to better portray the profound complexity of the main character's (and Fellini's) psychological makeup.

The finale of *8½* is arguably one of the most famous scenes in the history of Italian cinema. It depicts all of the characters dressed in white and directed by Guido himself to dance together, making one giant circle. The surroundings fade to black and all that is left is the circus band and eventually young Guido by himself. The aesthetic significance of this finale lies in the fact that it is representing “meta-cinema” in its purest form, as we see Guido direct the cast. So, we’ve been involved in a film narrative regarding the making of a film. But intricacy intensifies as Guido joins the dancing circle, becoming part of “another” film, Fellini’s, and now the engaged viewers must re-situate their gaze as spectators of a film under Fellini’s direction. The film closes with a fade to black and young Guido left alone playing his instrument. By leaving the audience with only one character at the very end, Fellini is creating a sense of emptiness and dissatisfaction, a characteristic essential for the cinema of bliss. Moreover, the circle or circus ring represents the amalgamation of the real (Fellini’s film and consciousness) with the imaginary (Guido’s film and consciousness); it also

represents Guido's, and ultimately Fellini's, ability to resolve his conflicts and have his life back in sync. The audience watches the story of Fellini come full circle with the story of Guido while still feeling a bit empty at the very end, making this finale the perfect example of cinema of bliss.

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THE MIRROR (1975)

Directed by Anderi Tarkovsky

Andrei Tarkovsky was one of the most popular and well-respected filmmakers in the Soviet Union from the 1960s to the 1980s. After releasing five feature narrative films in the USSR, he left his home country to live as an expatriate in western Europe, where he completed two more narrative films as well as a documentary. The use of religious, spiritual, and artistic themes in Andrei Tarkovsky's films often conflicted with the state-sanctioned policies on these topics in the Soviet Union. Although he did not label himself a dissident, his tumultuous relationship with the Soviet Union regarding the freedom of his artistic expression inspired him to delve deeper into these themes in his work. The widespread appeal of his films confirms that many people, both in the Soviet Union and abroad, were not

as strictly supportive of Soviet policies as the state would have hoped.

He made the semi-autobiographical film, *The Mirror*. This film is also a work of visual poetry, with a nonlinear narrative that is conveyed with a stream of conscious dialogue combined with poetic voice overs of original works by his father, the poet Arseny Tarkovsky. When examining the screenplays that he wrote, it is interesting to look at his formatting choices. Instead of using a typical script format, which concretely separates dialogue and scene descriptions, Tarkovsky writes his screenplays like a dialogue-heavy novel. This would make sense given Tarkovsky's respect for and his desire to be included in Russian literary traditions, which he admires from an artistic standpoint.

Due to his opinions on filmmaking as an art form, as well as his regard for his own abilities as a filmmaker, Tarkovsky produced a plethora of written sources during his career that gave readers a more detailed understanding of his personal opinions and ideas than his films ever could. Many of these sources delivered his theoretical thoughts on film as an artistic medium, such as his book *Sculpting in Time* (1986). Furthermore, his translated diaries between 1970 and his death in 1986 allow for a degree of access to Tarkovsky on a personal level unparalleled by the other sources

The Mirror

In 1975, Tarkovsky released *The Mirror*, a project he had long been preparing to produce. His original script had been rejected prior to his production of Solaris, but he eventually received permission to make it following the success of that movie. The

film offered a semi autobiographical account of his life and followed a nonlinear narrative structure. The use of long takes, varying chromatic schemes, and poetic voice overs contribute to the oneiric imagery of the film and tie it into the theme of memory. Of the project, he said in a retrospective interview in 1978 with Claire Devarrieux:

The subject of my film is a man who unites women and children. However, he is not accomplished as a son or a husband, and the children lack a man, a father. So, he's the storyteller, he says offscreen. We only see him when he is six, and then when he is twelve, during the war. Relationships have been broken and the storyteller has to renew them, in order to find his moral equilibrium, but he is unable to do so. He lives with the hope that he will be able to pay his love debt back, but that debt is one which nobody can get rid of … The Mirror is not a casual title. The storyteller perceives his wife as the continuation of his mother, because wives resemble mothers, and errors repeat themselves—a strange reflection. Repetition is a law, experience does not get transmitted, everyone has to live it. As with Solaris, a common theme throughout the Mirror is that of memory. Tarkovsky gives the viewer a sense of memory by breaking the narrative structure up nonlinearly. In doing this, he offers images and sounds that reflect the thought process of a person who is remembering their own life. He does this intentionally; when discussing film editing and narrative structure, he says, "I see it as my professional task then, to create my own, distinctive flow of time … and to one person it will seem one way, to another, another … the distortion of time can be a means of giving it rhythmical expression."

The semi-autobiographical nature of *The Mirror* allows Tarkovsky to fully embrace the sense of time and rhythmic

expression he wishes to give. Another way Tarkovsky utilizes the theme of memory is by the repetition of his cast in different time periods in the movie. The narrator, Alexei, appears only as a child on screen. However, his adult voice is present throughout the film as well. Alexei's mother Maria and wife Natalia are portrayed by the same actress, Margarita Terekhova, who inhabits the screen as these two characters independent of one another, depending on the chronological point of the narrative. These choices lead the viewer to view these characters as memories; in reality, they would not look like the same person, but their visual resemblance is a product of remembering them.

Tarkovsky makes heavy use of oneiric (dreamy) imagery in *The Mirror*. In one sequence, shot in a single long take, Alexei the child watches with his family from their country house as their barn burns down. During the sequence, a bottle falls off a table without being touched. The barn is also burning while it is raining, making the scene visually striking in a way that reflects the visuals of a dream. Another famed dreamlike sequence occurs when Maria washes her hair. The black and white chromatic scheme of the scene makes the image seem foreign to the viewer, as does Terekhova's performance. She keeps her head down with her hair covering her face, creating an alien appearance. Eventually, the room around her begins to literally disintegrate, as pieces of the walls and ceiling begin to fall around her. These images recur throughout the Mirror, and help progress the theme of memory. The film has also been described as being influenced by Modernist literature, as well as by the literature of the great Russian novelists of the nineteenth century. Its structure, as well as its use of first-person narration, creates a sense of stream of consciousness. This Modernist technique allows Tarkovsky to engage with the individual's

mind, in an introspective approach not uncommon in the work of Dostoevsky.

However, he intersperses the film with archival footage from the various time periods he covers, which adds a layer of objectivity to the subjective stream of consciousness his other scenes convey. These documentary-esque images reflect the external, socially-aware point of view of Tolstoy's work.95 An additional literary influence on his film is the work of his father, the poet Arseny Tarkovsky, who provides the voice for adult Alexei and wrote many of the poems that his character narrates.

While producing *The Mirror*, Tarkovsky grew increasingly frustrated with the Soviet film establishment for what he saw as their attempts to impede upon his filmmaking process. In a diary post from March 2, 1975, he posited numerous questions, including "why did Yermash [the head of Goskino] not let Mirror go to Cannes, despite Bessy's request and the decision of the special committee … why am I not told about invitations from foreign firms to make films … why is Mirror not being distributed?" Goskino's refusal to release The Mirror to the Cannes Film Festival infuriated Tarkovsky. Of Filipp Yermash, Tarkovsky said, "a coward and a creep! Of course, if it were given the prize, Mirror could bring in foreign currency—but that is of no interest to Yermash. All he cares about is having his arse in a comfortable chair, and to hell with the interests of the nation!" *The Mirror* had been receiving near unanimous critical praise, and he viewed the Cannes debacle as an affront to his filmmaking acumen.

Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* (1974) is a film about identity and the importance of memory for both the individual and the social collective. However, partly because of its unorthodox

technique and style, the film can also legitimately be more broadly construed as a film about human life. It seeks to accomplish what Tarkovsky (1986) sees as the ultimate goal of any work of art: “to prepare a person for death” (p. 43). The film is an exploration of life as it is coloured by the ultimate threat to life. In other words, it can be seen that Mirror is a meditation on the experiences and varieties of anxiety. Just as the speech therapist at the beginning of the film shows the stuttering teenager how to speak and express himself despite his apparent disability, Mirror shows us how we live, even in spite of the awareness that we may cease to live at any moment.

As Tarkovsky’s (1999) writings make clear, the concept behind *The Mirror* was to create a stream-of-consciousness film or, more specifically, to make a film that would represent the “inner life”—the memories, passing thoughts, dreams, and fantasies—of a protagonist who would not appear on screen. As the project developed from this initial concept, partly to demonstrate the film’s social worth to Soviet censors, the plan for the film evolved into an attempt to cinematically capture the importance of historical context in forming the psychology of the individual (Tarkovsky, 1999). Indeed, in the first organized proposal for the film, Tarkovsky (1999) claimed that he intended to build a film around an interview with his mother, or possibly any Soviet mother. Although this documentary component was not ultimately pursued, the spirit of the finished film remains true to this plan to create a work almost as much of anthropology as of fiction. Tarkovsky and co-writer Alexander Misharin wanted to make a film about what it meant to be a mother and a son at a certain time and place in history (20th-century Soviet Russia); in short, their intention was to make a film about the lives of individuals and the collective life of their society. To

accomplish this goal, Tarkovsky ultimately found it necessary to dispense with many of the conventions of traditional narrative cinema.

One result of these unique (and ambitious) goals is that *The Mirror* appears to be a somewhat fragmented and relatively "unstructured" work. On this reading of the film's structure, the editing process can be seen as having contributed to its final feel: Tarkovsky (1986) reports having reedited the film in completely different sequences dozens of times before settling on the final cut. It could be argued that *The Mirror's* lack of clear (or at least traditional) narrative structure is its chief aesthetic merit, or at least what makes it a unique work in the annals of cinema. Tarkovsky's (1986) own appreciation of ambiguity and subtlety of meaning in art might prompt us to see *The Mirror* as the film that came closest to his ultimate vision of what cinema should be: an immersive but somewhat disorienting experience, during which the viewer is compelled to find her own meaning and cohesion among the scattered images. However, Mirror is in fact a coherent film that develops according to a clear and deliberate (albeit non-traditional) structural pattern. What is required for this particular structure to emerge from the film's apparently disjointed series of sequences is to interpret Mirror as containing more emotional than strictly semantic meaning.

The Mirror's structure can be analyzed as a progressive series of cinematic meditations on different types of anxiety provoking experiences and on the strength, individuals find to cope with anxiety. This analysis requires reading elements into the film that probably were not explicitly intended by Tarkovsky, as well as downplaying the obvious importance of many themes already mentioned (such as personal identity and memory). It is hoped

that this act of selective interpretation is in the spirit of Tarkovsky's vision of the creative process as an act of mutual creation and meaning-making on the part of artist and audience. At the same time, this analysis should demonstrate how the superficially unstructured Mirror, on closer inspection, actually offers a "spontaneously structured" account of some of our more complex and vital emotional experiences.

Experiences of Anxiety in *The Mirror*

The present reading of the film divides *The Mirror* into four main parts. Each of the first three parts of the film examines a different aspect of anxiety as discussed by Tillich. The fourth part does not dwell on anxiety but rather adopts a somewhat more hopeful tone, illustrating the sources of what Tillich calls the "courage to be": the mental and spiritual capacity to continue living, despite an awareness of the possibility of nonbeing and the ubiquity of existential threats.

In the first part of *The Mirror*, the narrator's mother is approached by a stranger who is intended to be at first mistaken for the mother's absent husband (an interpretation encouraged by the opening comments from the narrator about watching the road for his father). In reality, however, the traveling figure is only a wayward doctor who has "taken everything" in a suitcase but "forgotten the key." The mother expresses doubt and skepticism about the intentions of this man, who, having revealed himself to be something other than what he appeared to be at first (her husband), continues to exude an aura of hidden intent, as if he is not to be trusted. In a passing remark, the mother compares him to a character from Chekhov's short story "Ward No. 6," a doctor who is driven to insanity.

For his own part, the doctor seems to care little about the mother's suspicions of him. Instead, he is preoccupied by an existential soliloquy, into which he is literally propelled with the collapse of a fence on which he and the mother are sitting. This symbolic fall sends the doctor into a state of intense reflection, which ultimately leads him to express his doubts about the meaning of human behaviour. In his monologue, the doctor compares humans, who are always "rushing around and speaking in platitudes," to plants, which appear steadfast and content. According to the doctor, the problem with humans is that we "doubt" and make too much "haste." After his monologue, the doctor quickly departs, abandoning his original plan to obtain a means of opening the enigmatic suitcase. As he walks back the way he came, Tarkovsky captures in a long shot an unexpected burst of powerful wind flooding the landscape. The image seems to hallow the doctor's visit with a strange significance, and highlights the isolation of the doctor as a lone figure in a stretching country landscape, as well as the distance between the doctor and the mother.

This initial sequence captures the anxiety of emptiness on two levels. Within the narrative of the film, doubt about the doctor's identity and intentions is escalated by his monologue into a general state of doubt about the meaning of human activity. With little expository preparation, the viewer is suddenly asked in the opening minutes of the film to question the general nature of social existence, and told furthermore that, as a human, she "doesn't trust [her] inner nature." This brings us to the second level on which the sequence attempts to capture the essence of this type of anxiety. It is not only the case that the characters in the scene (the doctor in particular) express a strong sense of doubt and potential anxiety; in addition, the audience members

viewing the scene cannot help but feel a vague sense of unease and disorientation.

The scene is strange and presented with almost no narrative background: in medias res, the viewer struggles to discover who these characters are, their relation to and intentions toward each other, and the significance of the doctor's reflective remarks, as well as the remarkable, transitory gust of wind that coincides with his departure. Tarkovsky heightens the ambiguity of the scene by repeating the shot of the wind blowing immediately after it is first shown, a very unusual cinematic technique.

The tone of emptiness anxiety established by this scene carries through the following series of shots of the narrator's childhood country home, accompanied as they are by a spoken poem (by Arseni Tarkovsky) about a youthful romance, which seemed at first to imbue all mundane objects with intense meaning but was nevertheless followed by "Fate . . . like a madman brandishing a razor." In the next, transitional sequence, the threat of mortality makes an initial, subtle appearance in the film in the form of a burning home next door to the narrator's house, in which, as an unidentified character shouts, someone may be "burning to death." This brief appearance of the threat of mortality on screen heralds the concretization of the initial tone of emptiness anxiety in the film into a concrete object of fear, specifically the fear of meaninglessness.

The doctor's state of emptiness is elevated to the threat of meaninglessness in the first black-and-white dream sequence that follows the fire scene. After the fire, we are presented with a hauntingly beautiful black-and white image of the wilderness. This shot is followed by a sequence in which we first see the narrator's father, who steps away from the camera to reveal the

mother washing her hair in a basin. In an uncanny image, her hair hangs long and wet in front of her face, so that she is unrecognizable. Suddenly, the old country house begins to collapse from within, rain and pieces of masonry falling slowly to the ground. In this surreal dreamscape, the audience is left completely disoriented; the anxiety of emptiness in the scene with the traveller has become the concrete threat of a meaningless, chaotic world in which even one's own mother appears as a terrifying apparition. At the conclusion of the scene, the first prominent shot of a mirror in the film displays a reflection of the young mother transfigured into an old woman (played by Tarkovsky's own mother Maria). Mortality is seen to lurk behind the threat of meaninglessness.

We are temporarily relieved from the disorientation of this sequence by a return to the current reality of the narrator's life. In a phone call with his mother, the narrator mentions the long-past fire and his father's departure from the family home. His mother, in turn, informs him that Liza—a co-worker from her days as an employee at a printing press—has passed away. The introduction by the mother of Liza's character signals the beginning of the second part of *The Mirror*.

After the phone conversation scene, the second major part of the film begins with a black-and-white image of the mother as a young woman rushing to her old place of work (a large printshop). Her disconcerted expression and frantic movements make it clear that the mother is distraught about something. Through snippets of dialogue exchanged with co-workers (and sometimes drowned out by the drone of printing machines in the background, which reinforces the confusion of the scene), it becomes evident that the mother is afraid she has made an error in the editing and censoring of a recently printed publication.

The mother is seized by the anxiety of guilt— she is afraid that she may have committed a grave mistake. After rushing through several rooms of the printing house, the mother obtains a copy of the publication in question and proceeds away from her superiors and co-workers down a long hall. She is followed by Liza, whom the audience knows to be recently deceased in the present time of the film's emerging temporal narrative. In this second part of the film, Liza—resurrected in memory—is the symbol of mortality that will mark the transition from the scene's initial uncertain state of guilt anxiety to its concretization in the form of the mother's condemnation.

Specifically, after reaching another room at the end of the hall the mother sits down to read the publication and check for any sign of an irredeemable error on her part. Finding none, she begins to laugh and cry with relief. It appears that her guilt-related anxiety was groundless. However, no sooner does she begin to take comfort in this outcome than Liza begins to speak hostilely toward her. Unsure of her meaning at first, the mother asks Liza repeatedly to explain until the latter finally erupts in an unexpected tirade of condemnation of her behaviour. She accuses the mother of being selfish, of being insincere, and of driving her husband away from her. The mother's guilt anxiety is given concrete form as she is harshly (and, from the viewer's perspective, seemingly without warrant) condemned by (mortal) Liza. The uncertain air of possible condemnation that followed the mother as tracking shots showed her frantic movements through the printing house is rendered tangible and released through Liza's attack. After her condemnation of the mother, Liza's symbolic connection to the ultimate threat of mortality is reinforced when she strangely quotes the opening line of

Dante's Inferno: "Passing life's halfway mark, I lost my way in a dark wood."

Total nonbeing lends power to the anxiety of guilt just as it does to that of emptiness. Having explored the anxieties of emptiness and guilt in the first two parts of the film, Tarkovsky turns almost immediately to an extended treatment of the most fundamental category of anxiety identified by Tillich: the anxiety of fate (or temporal–historical contingency) and death. We are momentarily confused as the actress who has been playing the mother now adopts the role of Natalia (the narrator's ex-wife) in the "present time" of the narrative. But no sooner have we become accustomed to this blatant expectancy violation than we are launched into a sequence, unprecedented by what has occurred in the film so far, during which its content "opens up" into a wide socio historical dimension. In its first two parts, Mirror is a very personal film, and it's only allusions to the broader world beyond the inner lives of its primary players remain within the national borders of Russia (characters quoting Chekhov and Dostoyevsky, for example). Its third part begins, however, with the sudden appearance of a string of Spanish characters who are apparently visiting the narrator but whose presence remains otherwise unexplained.

The Spanish men and women are dramatic characters who speak a foreign tongue and engage in flamboyant demonstrations of alternate cultural practices. Their preliminary incarnation of the cultural "Other" gives way to a mesmerizing sequence of edited historical footage, depicting bullfighting and what appear to be areas of Spain during the Spanish Civil War. Here, Tarkovsky abandons all pretence of conventional narrative to immerse the viewer in the experience of fate anxiety. Images of worlds other than our own and the chaos inflicted by international conflict

combine to generate a sense of unease about the major role played by accidents of history in shaping our lives. The sudden depth of the sense of time manifest in the film's content imparts a feeling of historical insignificance in the viewer, and images of children who are presumably now old remind her that time is fleeting and whole cultural eras doomed to vanish, leaving perhaps little more than traces of their existence on celluloid.

This first montage of stock footage in the film is followed by one of its strangest sequences, one which further forces the viewer to contemplate the anxiety of fate. Back in "present time," the narrator's son Ignat is gripped by a sense of déjà vu—a cognitive experience of the arbitrariness and repetitive nature of circumstance and time. He is then asked by a bizarre older woman to read aloud a letter from Pushkin, in which the author struggles to come to grips with the overwhelming forces of history and embrace his cultural heritage. At the conclusion of the letter, Pushkin explicitly states that he would not trade his time and place for any other. It is the very contemplation of such an (im)possibility, according to Tillich, which generates the anxiety of fate.

At this point, the vague anxiety of fate that has been building in the film is set on a path toward emotional concretization in the form of a third symbolic appearance of mortality. The episode with Ignat is interrupted, first by the "accidental" arrival of the old woman (who can be understood to stand for the death of the mother) and then by a phone call from his father. In the course of the phone call, a story about love during wartime for a girl with chapped lips turns into a short episode about an (actually false) near-death experience, during which children training to be soldiers see their drill instructor throw himself onto what in the end is a dummy grenade. This confrontation with the

possibility of personal death heralds the transition from the emotional tone of fate anxiety to its concretization in the form of death itself.

An image of the smiling red-haired girl with blood on her lips is followed by more stock footage, this time depicting a troop of soldiers attempting to ford a large river. Arseni Tarkovsky reads a poem about fear of death and the pursuit of immortality, which ends with the metaphor of life pulling us all forward like threads. At the poem's conclusion, Tarkovsky presents the darkest footage in the film: disturbing images of tanks, gunfire, rockets, desperate people crying in trenches, and eventually a series of nuclear explosions. The anxiety of fate, which has accumulated since the sudden expansion of the film's historical awareness, is now rendered concrete as the viewer stares at the ultimate fear-object: the collective death of humanity.

Thus, the first three parts of *The Mirror* can be seen as meditations on each type of anxiety identified by Tillich. In each part, an initial state of objectless unease, corresponding to a particular species of anxiety experienced by the protagonists, and confusion on the part of the viewer, is concretized (after the appearance of a symbol of death) through the presentation of a clear fear object, a justification for and means of interpreting the building state of anxiety. The doctor's feeling of emptiness anxiety is concretized, after the fire, in the threat of meaninglessness implied by the dream of the uncanny mother. The mother's anxiety about her possible guilt is concretized in her condemnation by Liza, whom the audience knows to be deceased. And a growing sense of fate anxiety, attached to images of foreign cultures and historical footage of times of upheaval, is concretized after an anecdotal near-death experience in symbols of collective mortality.

CONCLUSION

As Tillich observes, all anxiety strives to find an object, a concrete symbol of nonbeing against which being can assert itself and reaffirm its courage. Thus, the speech therapist in the prologue of Mirror focuses the stutterer's tension and anxiety into his hands and fingers—a concrete object—and when he confronts this focalized anxiety, he is released from vocal paralysis and free to speak. Similarly, as noted by Synessios (2001), Tarkovsky's original intention in making Mirror was to come to terms with troubling dreams and emotional demons that haunted him from his personal and cultural past. In various ways, Mirror concretizes, in an object of aesthetic contemplation, the diffuse anxiety we feel in connection with life's instability and meaninglessness, with the guilt that burdens our memories, and with our fear of the future and our death. By immersing ourselves in this highly experiential film, we encounter our anxieties in a concentrated form and, if we are fortunate, feel our absolute faith renewed, and experience the release (however temporary) of the stutterer.

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MODULE IV

CASE STUDIES OF CONTEMPORARY CLASSICS

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST (1975)

Directed by Milos Forman

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest was the second English language film for Czech-born filmmaker Milos Forman, who would go on to win two Oscars (one for this movie and one for Amadeus), and was the picture that catapulted him onto the A-list for directors. The negative aspects of mental health care challenged by *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* are largely no longer in place today (electroconvulsive therapy is rarely used, frontal lobotomies are not performed), but the film's other themes are germane. On the surface, the movie is about the struggle of wills between patient R.P. McMurphy (Jack Nicholson) and Nurse Ratched (Louise Fletcher). Beneath the surface, it is about the attempts of an autocratic force to squash the individual.

Jail is a frequent residence for McMurphy, whose latest conviction is for statutory rape. Rather than spending time behind bars, he decides it might be easier to serve his time in a psychiatric hospital, so he "plays mad." The plan works, but McMurphy soon discovers that life is not so great in an asylum. The rules are looser, but some of the privileges he associated with prison - like being able to watch the World Series on TV - do not apply. Undaunted, McMurphy begins to make himself

the most popular man in the ward, appealing to types as diverse as the diminutive, talkative Martini (Danny DeVito) and the tall deaf-mute American Indian, who is known as "The Chief" (Will Sampson). There to thwart McMurphy at every turn is Nurse Ratched, whose methods of treatment are so banned by rules and regulations that she cannot see that she is sometimes doing more harm than good.

The most evident conflict throughout *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is that between Ratched and McMurphy. They are natural antagonists. She is a strait-laced, by the book individual and he is a free spirit and rule breaker who pushes the envelope at every opportunity. (The reason he is in prison is evidence of that - having sex with a 15-year-old.) For much of the film, they probe one another, each winning minor scuffles. As the narrative accelerates toward its conclusion, McMurphy risks all in a final gambit. When he loses, we know it is over for him. For all that she is the film's villain, Ratched is not inherently malevolent. She is cool and unemotional, but she believes what she is doing is for the betterment of the patients. She is one of those individuals who does bad things while thinking she is doing good. That makes her more complex and interesting than a character who represents evil incarnate.

On a less concrete level, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is about an issue that was prominent in the 1970s (and has re-asserted itself with some force in the 2000s): the struggle of the individual against the establishment. This is a standard theme for movies and literature; what is different here is that the establishment wins. After McMurphy, representing the fly in the ointment, wins an occasional engagement, he is ruthlessly crushed. Ratched is victorious, as she must be in a tale like this. Like Terry Gilliam's Brazil, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is

a cautionary allegory of what happens when too much power is ceded to the government. In the Watergate atmosphere of the Nixon administration, this theme resonated forcefully. 30 years later, with many traits of Nixon's presidency replicated in the George W. Bush administration, this aspect of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (unlike that of the state of mental health care) has relevance.

The film's single sequence that arguably does not work is one that some consider their favourite. In it, McMurphy escapes and takes a group of the mental patients on a fishing trip. Forman was initially against including this and had to be "talked into it" by producers Michael Douglas and Saul Zaentz. It has a whimsical, fairy tale-like quality that carries the scent of emotional dishonesty. Here, the ward patients are viewed not as individuals but as "cute" caricatures. The feel-good nature of the "vacation" marginalizes them as human beings. There is so much truth to be found in the rest of the production that this portion of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* feels forced and artificial.

The film's ending is unsurprisingly its strongest aspect. McMurphy's fate, presented in such an uncompromising manner, is like a punch to the gut, and the last true act of friendship shown to him by Chief brings a tear to the eye. The final scene is meant to be cathartic, but it does not seem that way. Although it is accurate to say that freedom has been attained by both Chief and McMurphy (albeit in different ways), it's hard to see the conclusion as anything but a cloud with a silver lining. For a film that is inspiring and upbeat for most of its running length, this change in tone leaves the viewer disoriented.

As portrayed by Jack Nicholson, McMurphy is one of cinema's iconic characters, so it may come as a surprise to learn that Nicholson was not the filmmakers' first choice. He was number three on the list, and was only offered the part after it was turned down by Gene Hackman and Marlon Brando. In 1975, Nicholson's star was on the rise. He had already been nominated for four Oscars and critics were atwitter about his work in Roman Polanski's Chinatown. For the actor, McMurphy would be the role that provided the final boost into superstardom. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* led to Nicholson's initial Best Actor win, the first of three (to-date). It's a top-flight performance, with the performer bringing out the humour and pathos in McMurphy's situation and showing that a sane man, when trapped in a ward full of insane compatriots, might easily go a little crazy.

In bringing Nurse Ratched to life, Louise Fletcher elected not to take the over-the-top approach of developing the character into a harridan. Instead, she portrayed McMurphy's adversary as an inflexible woman who believed in what she was doing. Self-righteousness, not sadism, is her flaw. This interpretation earned Fletcher an Oscar as well, although her post-*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* career didnot follow the same trajectory as Nicholson's. This would be her only nomination. Future movies included Firestarter and Flowers in the Attic.

Other notable participants include Danny DeVito, Vincent Schiavelli, and Christopher Lloyd, none of whom were name actors at the time they made the movie. This was the first part for Brad Dourif, who was nominated for an Oscar, but did not win. The pivotal role of Chief was played by Will Sampson, a Native American with no previous acting experience. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* began a 12-year career for the big man

that ended with his death in 1987. He was picked out of obscurity by the filmmakers because he was the only American Indian they discovered who matched the description of Chief as a giant of a man.

Ken Kesey, who wrote the book upon which the 1963 Broadway play and the subsequent movie were based, was displeased with the screenplay credited to Bo Goldman and Lawrence Hauben (Milos Forman also had a hand in writing it). He felt it detoured too far from what he had written, and refused to participate in publicizing the finished product. Nevertheless, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* became one of the most celebrated movies of the 1970s, winning the "Big Five" Academy Awards (Actor, Actress, Director, Picture, and Screenplay) and being nominated for an additional four. Although the picture has not aged as well as some of its contemporaries, its themes remain germane, the story has lost none of its punch, and the performances retain their freshness. Viewed 30 years after its release, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* remains a very good motion picture, although one that perhaps just misses the pinnacle of greatness where its reputation suggests it resides.

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ELIPPATHAYAM (RAT TRAP) 1981

Directed by Adoor Gopalakrishnan

Elippathayam (Rat Trap) is Adoor Gopalakrishnan's third feature, his first in colour, and the film that established him as one of India's foremost independent directors. His first two, *Swayamvaram* (1972) and *Kodiyettam* (1977), were both melodramas, in which he worked with a specific, relatively unchanging style, that is, with a few characters, an episodic narrative, and a style of quite literally shooting close to his central characters. He tries a larger expanse here, with a circular, slow pattern of shooting: typically, through close-ups, tracking cutaways onto the different characters of his plot, thereby creating a series of narrative bridges from person to person, space to space. The spaces are patches of light and dark, and the soundtrack often consists of isolated units of realist effects and long silences. The result is a numbing, obsessive style, which is the only way his drama—which actually features something as abstract as a decaying feudal system—can focus on specific characters, and from them onto a loaded, obvious, repeatedly mentioned, metaphoric image of the rat caught in a trap.

Crucial to the understanding of the film is the fact that Unni comes from Kerala's Nair community: the community that, together with the Namboodiris (Brahmins) formed the land-owning class of the state. Historically a military caste, later moving towards administrative service with the formation of a modern state in Travancore (now Southern Kerala), the Nairs

are most distinctive for their matrilineal family structure" so loosely arranged as to raise doubts as to whether 'marriage' existed at all" (Nossiter, 1982). It was, as Nossiter shows, the end of a long era: "the ending of the warrior role, the abolition of agrestic slavery, the growth of a money economy, and the impact of Western education that combined to undermine the relevance of Nair traditions. The young men of the tarawad (joint family) were condemned to idleness; the management of the estates was more difficult; the expenses of customary practices more burdensome; and the competition of rival communities, notably the Syrian Christians and Ezhavas, more challenging."

Most of these issues are directly illustrated by Gopalakrishnan's plotting: Unni's undefined marital status, his effort to keep Rajamma under his control when the three sisters—notably the eldest, Janamma— have clear rights to the family property, the thief Meenakshi's barely concealed effort to seduce the vacillating hero, Janamma's son Ravikuttan smoking idly behind the barn. In this, to some extent, the film adheres to an established literary genre pioneered by the noted novelist M. T. Vasudevan Nair, featuring the Nair community's decline in several existentialist stories (some of which he later adapted to film).

The film, however, differs from that established genre in significant ways: particularly in consonance with Gopalakrishnan's controversial next movie, *Mukha Mukham* (1984). The Nair community, it is known, were among the strongest supporters of Congress, Congress socialist, and Communist parties during the turbulent 1940s that effectively saw Travancore catapult directly from a regressive, authoritarian feudal state into one ruled by a communist agenda.

Gopalakrishnan, it is arguable, attempts in both these films, *Elippathayam* and *Mukha Mukham*, to create something like a backdated social reform for a people who saw no measured historical transition into modernity. It is as though he critiques feudalism in his state, but from a perspective that sees Kerala's emergence into modernity as a process that it had no means to comprehend. It is as though he now wishes to provide his people with that perspective through using his cinema, his slow visuals and soundtrack, so that the tragedy of Unni could itself be bracketed through a metaphor, for defining—but also evacuating—that tragic, existential, history of non-comprehension.

STORYLINE

The head of a decaying joint family, Unni lives with his two younger sisters in his village ancestral home. Janamma, his assertive elder sister, is away, married and a mother of grown-up children. She fights for her share of crops and property. Rajamma, the second sister, is docile and self-effacing and is virtually enslaved by her brother's childlike dependence on her. In her late thirties, she remains unmarried, mute, a victim of her brother's insensitiveness and outdated values. She toils and is expected to have no personal urges. But the youngest, Sridevi, is defiant and practical. Exposed to the world outside, she is neither relenting nor submissive.

Unni is, in fact, the last link in the line of a feudal joint family which has for long lived on the fruit of others' labour. The languor and leisure thus afforded has rendered them lethargic and insensitive. The land-holdings are today divided and the deeply entrenched matrilineal joint family has crumbled. Yet some of the jaded values of the old order have survived. As an

inheritor of this legacy, Unni is caught between the two — the decadent past and the inhospitable present. He cannot face any inconvenient situation — even when confronted with everyday problems, he evades them and withdraws like a rat into a dark hole.

Haunted by a sense of guilt and isolation, he slowly slips into paranoia. Primarily, it is the story of Unni who represents some of the worst traits of a parasitic privileged class. He is extremely egocentric and at the same time nurses a sense of guilt. As is often the case with such self-centred creatures who are weak willed, with generations of ease and plenty behind them, Unni suffers from a schizophrenic nervousness and indecision. He is incapable of dealing with the demands of a Changing world.

Gopalakrishnan's melodrama hinges around the paranoiac central character of Unni. Utterly dependent for the running of his home, and for his personal needs on his unmarried sister Rajamma, Unni demonstrates his pathological insecurities with, for example, a horror of getting mud on his spotless clothing, of cows entering his ancestral yard, and through his utter inability to intervene into—or even address—the growing difficulties posed to his family by a decaying feudal system.

His elder sister arrives asking for a division of the family property; his coconut grove is invaded by thieves; his youngest sister Sridevi elopes with a flashy youth working in the Middle East. Eventually, when Rajamma collapses under the strain, Unni withdraws, literally like a rat into a hole.

The motif of the rat trap is written large into the film. It begins with a whimpering Unni, calling for assistance when a rat enters

his room, and replicates the early chase for the rat with the villagers chasing Unni himself in the film's end.

STRUCTURE

In *Elippathayam*, Gopalakrishnan's first film in colour, the landscape is established with even more painstaking detail, and the surface naturalism of the film is precision-honed with words, sound and images, all put together in a perfect blend. The haunting naalkettu architecture of the buildings; the dramatic possibility of the swift alteration in lighting as the clouds roll in and clear up; the mask-like face of the main actor, Karaman; and the advantage of having a strong social theme-all these would have made a good film anyway.

But Gopalakrishnan lends a unique complexity to these ingredients as he invests them with a ballad-like quality. At one level, his Kerala becomes as indistinguishable on celluloid as Ray's Bengal in *Pather Panchali* or the American Wild West in John Ford's classics. Gopalakrishnan is the only contemporary Indian film-maker who has been able to use the language of the cinema to precisely depict the immediate scene as well as extract its universal message.

Furthermore, *Elippathayam* starts off with a rat trap, and the whole film goes on to become a metaphor of the rat trap. Unni, the scion of a landed feudal family, has a personality problem which prevents him from facing any situation which involves taking a stand. Even for his little personal comforts he is miserably dependent on his younger sister, Rajamma, the workhorse of the household and the family's inarticulate conscience.

At the beginning, Unni screams in his bed and Rajamma and Sridevi, the youngest sister, scurry into his room. Is that a rat? In the morning, they clean and oil a rat trap and lay it in the house. A rat accepts the bait and is trapped. The rat is carried off to the pond and is drowned. As the youngest sister carries the trap across the garden path, the long tracking shot is accompanied on the sound track by some resonant jhankar on the tanpura, which is punctuated by a caterwauling clash of bells attached to the hilt of a rhythmically lashing warrior sword. It becomes the signature theme of trapping as the film unreels itself.

Though Unni lives off his family's land, it is just enough to keep the pot boiling. Trouble begins when Janamma, the eldest sister, stakes her claim to a share of the property. Unni withdraws from the fight, but will not part with a share of the harvest. His only defence mechanism is to fall back on his unmarried sisters. But Sridevi is already determined to leave; when Unni intercepts Sridevi's love letters, all he can do is to stare vacantly at them. Before their meaning sinks into him Sridevi has eloped with her lover.

Again, the local references of the film become timeless, and Unni's phallic inertia becomes the shattering symbol of the passivity of a decadent feudalism. This point is brought home towards the end where faceless midnight-callers break into his room and lift him off his bed to carry him to the pond and dump him there-to the same caterwauling music of the rat trap. The contrast to Unni's inertia, like a counterpoint in a piece of music, is provided by an array of dramatic ploys: the aggressive greed of Janamma and her son. the Kafkaesque summons that come from the court but cannot be delivered, the shriek of incoming jets, and Kerala's most conspicuous symbol of modernity -the Gulf crowd. In the climactic sequence, all these join up like the

wire mesh on the rat trap, and enclose Unni. Only Rajamma, the unmarried second sister, tries to draw Unni out of the trap with compassion. When she fails, her only protest is to fall sick. And then the household chores lie unattended, and she has to be carried away on a stretcher, to the unfailing accompaniment of the film's theme music.

Gopalakrishnan says the film is perfectly autobiographical and that Unni's passivity, which borders on infantile regression, is both symbolic and real. "Feudalism is so dead that it can't even feel it," says he with the hint of a smile. He gently acknowledges his indebtedness to Ray: after all, the classic train sequence in *Pather Panchali* is but a blatant precursor to the deafening jet noise in *Elippathayam*; Rajamma's illness has a strange resemblance to the muted death wish of Durga in the Ray masterpiece; the lyricism of the rain is the same in both films.

But, at the same time, he maintains that his film is not open-ended like Ray's, that he wished to make a "statement" at the end hinting at the only option left to Unni - that of being overthrown violently. Is the midnight raid natural? Does it follow from the script? "Maybe it doesn't." he argues, "but the whole film is guided by a thematic logic rather than a narrative logic. Maybe nothing really happened in the film, and the whole story is one of Unni's extended nightmares." This dream-like, almost surrealist quality of Gopalakrishnan's work sets him apart from most other contemporary film-makers who are trying to portray the social scene. It undoubtedly emanates from his moorings in Kerala's great dance form - Kathakali. Gopalakrishnan's uncle was a Kathakali master, and his native village, Adoor, after which he names himself, in the best style of the Kathakali artistes, has produced a long line of masters of the dance drama.

Says Gopalakrishnan: "In Kathakali, the actors merely illustrate a theme which is actually told in songs and narrative. The painted faces almost become masks that betray no emotion initially, but come to life slowly, gradually, as light focuses on them and the background voices and music say what has already happened. I find it very useful for films."

The characters in his films are really as inanimate and purely illustrative as the giant temples that are so frequent in them, the lush foliage, the grainy laterite soil and the rain that envelopes the landscape like a mosquito curtain. Also, like Kathakali, he uses the three primary colours-red, blue and green -on an almost chromatic scale to play on the three sisters. "Their combination produces white, the colour for Unni."

Gopalakrishnan's first love was the stage and he would have been a playwright and producer if he had not got into the Pune Film and Television Institute in 1963, "almost by accident". At Adoor, he was a tireless organiser of amateur theatre troupes. His first play, Green Room, a Pirandelloesque drama about the play-behind-the-play got a state award. "In fact," says he with his face creasing into a Kathakali smile, "I went to Pune thinking that screenplay writing would be somewhat similar to writing plays. I was proved wrong and I don't regret it."

Back in Kerala, Gopalakrishnan's search for a career in films was a disaster. He knocked at the doors of Kerala's movie moguls - Geo Pictures and Central Pictures of Kottayam - and drew a blank. A diploma from Pune in screenplay and direction was regarded as a sure emblem of untrustworthiness and the young aspirant faltered each time he was asked how to film a gaudy dance sequence or how to 'picturise' a lengthy song.

Like playwright Vijay Tendulkar, who is slowly going into film-scripting (Aakrosh) and may eventually emerge as a film-maker, or Girish Karnad. who has always been astride both the worlds, Gopalakrishnan too is torn between the two muses. After making *Swayamvaram*, he produced a Malayalam adaptation of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting For Godot* which is regarded as a landmark venture for the Kerala stage. Besides, the two major influences on his film craft are G. Shankara Pillar, director of the Trichur Drama School and an avant-garde playwright, and Narayana Panicker, the dramatist who has been assiduously trying to integrate folk themes with modern drama.

But, unlike Karnad, who has never quite lost touch with either of the two art forms, and is always capable of springing surprises on both fronts, Gopalakrishnan is immutably wedded to the tenth muse. He only uses his theatre experience to "handle" the human props, because "if you know how to make a man wave his hand at centre-stage you can also make your actor twitch his facial muscle in a close-up. The stage teaches you to command others". Apparently Gopalakrishnan, like all film-makers, enjoys the creative serenity and the power that comes in when the lights are on, the film-pack rolls, and a voice calls out crisply: "Action!"

In short, the film *Elippathayam* is about change, change that is painful but inevitable. The resistance to change is desperate when the victim is weak. Here, Unni senses dimly that to fight is futile and he seeks shelter under self-love. The story is so structured as to unfold in a series of departures — from a condition of entrapment to liberation. The first three are of the rats and the other three, different from one another, are of the human inmates of the old house. It can be seen that of the films that Adoor Gopalakrishnan has made till date *'Elippathayam'* is

considered to be closest to him. It is not only because the film, set in a remote village in Kerala, reflects faithfully his own economic and social background but also the characters portrayed are modelled after those he has known intimately.

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GUELWAAR (1993)

Directed by Ousmane Sembene

Guelwaar is a 1993 French-Senegalese drama film written and directed by Ousmane Sembène. The name is borrowed from the Server pre-colonial dynasty of Guelowar. Ousmane Sembene, the foremost African filmmaker, has made a film that tells a simple story and yet touches on some of the most difficult questions of our time. The film won The President of the Italian Senate's Gold Medal at the 49th Venice International Film Festival.

"Guelwaar" is the name of a man who is dead at the beginning of Sembene's film. He was, we gather, quite a guy - a district leader in Senegal who made a fiery speech against foreign aid.

He felt it turned those who accepted it into slaves. Soon after, he was found dead, and by the end of the film we more or less know why he died, although this is not a whodunit. It is, in fact, the story of his funeral. His family gathers: The older son flies' home from France; a daughter who works as a prostitute returns from Dakar, the capital; and the youngest son is still in the Village. Then there is a problem. His body disappears from the morgue.

Sembene uses this disappearance, and the search for the body, to tell us a story about modern Senegal, which is a former French colony on the West Coast of Africa, with a population of about 8 million. In the district where the story takes place, the majority of people are Islamic, but there is a sizable Roman Catholic minority, including Guelwaar's family. At first it is suspected that the body has been snatched by members of a fetishistic cult who might use it in their ceremonies, but there is a much more mundane explanation: Through a mix up at the morgue, Guelwaar has been confused with a dead Muslim, and has already been buried in the Islamic cemetery.

Sembene tells this story in a series of conversations which reveal, subtly and casually, how things work in modern Senegal. The Catholics and Muslims live side by side in relative harmony, but when a controversy arises there are always troublemakers who attempt to fan it up into sectarian hatred. As the Catholics march out to the cemetery to try to retrieve the body, they are met by a band of angry Muslims who intend to defend the graves of their ancestors from sacrilegiousness.

One of the few cool heads belongs to a district policeman, himself a Muslim, but fair-minded. He thinks it sensible that the misplaced body should be reburied in its rightful grave. He sets

up a meeting between the priest and the imam of the district, both reasonable men, although sometimes hot-headed. There are moments of hair-trigger tension, when the wrong word could set off a bloody fight which might spread far beyond this small local case. And when the situation is almost resolved, an officious government official arrives ("Park the Mercedes in the shade"), and tries to play to the crowd. The struggle over the body and its burial provides Sembene's main plot line. But curling around beneath it are many other matters.

One of the most interesting encounters in the film is between the priest and a prostitute (a friend of the sister from Dakar), who tells him she is proud to be helping a brother through medical school, and to not be a beggar. She has arrived in the village wearing a revealing costume. The priest listens silently, and then simply says, "Try to put on something more decent." He does not condemn her for her prostitution, and indeed the passionate message of Sembene's film is that anything is better than begging - or accepting aid.

We learn that for long years the country fed and provided for itself. Now a drought has caused starvation. But even more fatally, Sembene suggests, the country's political bureaucracy has grown fat and distant, fed on corruption, enriched by stealing and reselling the aid shipments from the west. In a shocking scene late in the film, sacks of grain and rice (marked "Gift of the USA") are thrown on the road, and the people walk over them, in a homage to Guelwaar, who spoke against aid.

Guelwaar's words are: "Make a man dependent on your charity and you make him your slave." He argues that aid has destroyed the Senegalese economy and created a ruling class of thieves. And he shows how these facts have been obscured because

political demagogues have fanned Muslim-Catholic rivalries, so that the proletariat fights among itself instead of against its exploiters.

The film is astonishingly beautiful. The serene African landscape is a backdrop for the struggle over the cemetery, and the serene colours of the landscape frame the bright colours of the African costumes. We see something of the way the people live, and what their values are, and how their traditional ways interact with the new forms of government. And it is a joy to listen to the dialogue, in which intelligent people seriously discuss important matters; not one Hollywood film in a dozen allows its characters to seem so in control of what they think and say.

Sembene's message is thought-provoking. He does not blame the hunger and poverty of Senegal on buzz-words like colonialism or racism. He says they have come because self-respect has been worn away by 30 years of living off foreign aid. Like many stories that are set in a very specific time and place, this one has universal implications.

Ousmane Sembene is 71 years old. This is his seventh feature. Along the way he has also made many short subjects, founded a newspaper, and written a novel. I am happy to have seen two of his other films ("Black Girl" and "Xala"), and with "Guelwaar" he reminds me that movies can be an instrument of understanding, and need not always pander to what is cheapest and most superficial.

A closing sequence of Ousmane Sembene's 1992 masterpiece *Guelwaar* imagines a hopeful resolution of contemporary Senegal's neo-colonial conditions. Encoding the idea of history

as a strategy for a society's constant renewal and unending "becoming," that resolution is achieved, ironically enough, through the agency of a dead body. A plume of adobe-colored dust envelops a skullcap- clad imam and his aide as they shovel away earth concealing a corpse. The corpse had lived its life as a Christian community activist nicknamed Guelwaar or "the noble one," but in death it has mistakenly been consigned to a Muslim cemetery through the ineptitude of a repressive state. Represented by armed soldiers, that state now stands by, ostensibly to referee the imam's delivery of the dead Guelwaar to his Christian community waiting outside the Muslim burial ground. Yet the state's assumption of the peacekeeper role is obviated by the spirit of cordiality and common purpose that now appear to bind the formerly warring Muslims and Christians. At one point the imam exhorts his assistant to keep digging for the body of Guelwaar, for "this man lying here is just like you and me in God's sight," and offers his condolences to the bereaved, which they accept with grace, one of them praising the Muslim leader with the words "Biram, your behaviour honours all men." Biram responds, "When a vulture attacks your enemy's body, remember [the body] could be [yours] and chase [the vulture] off."

The identity of the "vulture" becomes clear in a subsequent scene in which children among the Christian procession bearing Guelwaar's body stop and attack a truck carrying food aid from international entities. When a priest invokes religion to stop them, describing the food as "sacred" and the youth's actions as "sin," the boys retort that they have no wish to live as "beggars," thereby decoupling the aid from notions of Christian morality and redefining it as a symbol of dependence and material deprivation. Moments later, the past, archived in the dead man's

body, wells up to assert its connection with the boys' perspective, and with Senegal's future: Guelwaar's widow turns the tables on the Christian leaders, accusing one—rather than the boys—of committing a sacrilege by betraying Guelwaar. The sequence cuts to a flashback of the activist while alive, thundering against foreign aid as the pathetic crutches of a people with "no voice and no dignity. . . . a family cannot be strong if it begs again and again."

The flashback repeats snippets of an earlier, longer, and seminal sequence—also rendered in flashback—that fleshes out the life and work of Guelwaar, who is already dead at the start of the film. This earlier sequence illuminates connections among the deceased protagonist's stance on foreign aid, his death, and the neocolonial state by crosscutting shots of the wildly cheering, ululating crowds that greeted Guelwaar as he rose to speak against foreign aid at a public event intended to thank the donors and domestic rulers; sacks of grain awaiting disbursement among local communities; and a worried politician who summons one of his thugs to ensure a permanent solution to Guelwaar's critical voice. That solution—Guelwaar's death—renders the dissident's body not only a floating signifier of key elements of Senegal's postcolonial history but ended possibilities.

Sembène crafted *Guelwaar* against the historical backdrop of economic stagnation, political repression, and religious-ethnic rivalries throughout much of the Francophone West African world. Decades after independence, African states had proved unequal to the task of fulfilling the promise of genuine sovereignty, democratic governance, and material prosperity. By the 1980s, even as public institutions such as schools, hospitals, and roadways frayed, African economies went into receivership,

subjugated by "structural adjustment" policies dictated by international lending agencies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and foreign states. In many countries the unpopularity of these foreign entities was matched only by a growing chasm between the state and civil society. The military became instruments of coercive civilian governments, which generated humanitarian crises to tap into the moral economies of Africa's former colonizers. In Senegal, a semblance of political liberalism yielded to the dictatorial policies of the Diouf oligarchy, which in 1988 perpetrated electoral fraud to stay in power. When students protested, the government retaliated by proclaiming an année blanche—the abrogation of a year's worth of the students' academic work. In short, African states had morphed into neocolonial dependencies, in which a culture of "immunity" and foreign patronage perpetuated corrupt autocrats' hold on power.

Sembène engaged this past and present to visualize a historical trajectory that offered the possibility of what cultural theorists like Judith Butler call "transcendental subjectivity." Sembène once likened an African filmmaker to the "griot," which he defined as a sort of public historian cum social critic: "a man of learning and common sense who is the historian, the raconteur, the living memory and the conscience of his people. The filmmaker must live within his society and say what goes wrong" with it.4 In this context, we argue that Sembène saw his society as a space imbued with plural or multiple modernities (defined as historical narratives that people adopt to understand and give meaning to the trajectories of their movement from past to present). The paradigm of plural modernities departs from binary models that see Africa as "traditional," Europe as "modern," and imperialism as "modernizing," and as such the

new paradigm contests colonialist cultural frameworks for representing Africa. Sembène, the griot filmmaker, as an active interpreter of history, used that discipline's narrative and mythological forms to imagine iconoclastic options that overcame the rigid, colonially derived frames dictating the reading of history. This made him a "mythoclast," one who used history and mythology in contrapuntal ways to visualize departures from the recorded past.

At the start of *Guelwaar*, Christians and Muslims represent conflicting modernities knit through imperialism and subsequent independence into a neocolonial state—a state all too willing to exploit religious differences to consolidate its own power. The mystery of Guelwaar's body, missing from the mortuary, sets the stage for enacting the communal rivalries that fracture Senegal's postcolonial citizenry. For when it transpires that Guelwaar's body was erroneously released to a Muslim family who, in accordance with Muslim traditions, have buried him quickly, the Christians resolve to retrieve the remains. At the same time, the Muslim community promises to use violence, if necessary, to protect its cemetery from desecration. Yet while these religious communities offer people disfranchised by their own government and its foreign patrons a sense of distinct identity, a sense of "place" and "home," Sembène exposes that sense of identity as illusory and inauthentic. In this context, the Christian body buried in a Muslim cemetery under Islamic rites becomes the central icon in the characters' search for signification in a place called Senegal. In the process, we are reminded that history has transformed both time and place into sites of dissonance and domination that objectify and enslave the people who inhabit them. Sembène further problematizes the question of signification by deconstructing the coherence of the

living characters' identities and, with them, the ostensible traditions associated with their respective modernities. Thus, we learn that the "noble one," while alive, was a philandering patriarch who had affairs with Muslim women; his son Bartelemy, self-exiled in Europe, belongs nowhere; his daughter Sophie has chosen the autonomy of working as a prostitute in Dakkar over the subservience associated with a respectable marriage, and funds her father's pilgrimage to Rome with money made through her trade. Another son, Aloys, is expected to establish mastery of the household despite his physical disability. Likewise, the Muslim characters in *Guelwaar* transgress the borders defined by their religion. For instance, a young woman in a polygamous Muslim marriage enjoys French fashion magazines and leaves her aged husband.

In a decade convulsed by deadly ethnoreligious rivalries both in and outside Africa, Sembène inscribes on Guelwaar's dead body a path out of divisive essentialisms of all sorts. The odyssey of that body transforms it from a signifier of religious rivalries into a symbol of Senegalese popular sovereignty. First the imam speaks of the common humanity of men from different communities and warns against the common foe of predatory "vultures." Then the children in the Christian pallbearing procession become standard-bearers of Guelwaar's vision of Senegalese self-determination by rejecting the foreign aid that helps sustain neocolonial dictators. By the film's end, the body has evolved into a harbinger of new beginnings expressed in a unified vox populi. Moreover, these new beginnings turn recent recorded history on its head, for in real life the students who protested election fraud in the 1980s were suppressed, but in Guelwaar the youth desecrate the donated grain with impunity, as disapproving adults and authority figures watch helplessly.

Sembène appeared to urge those in his audience to abandon their roles as passive consumers and voiceless victims of an irrevocable history. In the griot filmmaker's hands, the recent past became the raw materials for fashioning a vision of subaltern mastery over history by achieving a transcendental sense of identity. Sembène's engagement with history and historicism was not new. It dated back to earlier phases of his filmmaking career and involved working pre-twentieth- century events into narratives of a usable past.

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SPRING, SUMMER, FALL, WINTER, …. AND SPRING (2003)

Directed by Kim-ki-duk

Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter… and Spring is a South Korean movie directed by Ki-duk Kim and starring Yeong-su Oh, Young-min Kim, Jong-ho Kim, Jae-kyung Seo, and Yeo-jin Ha. Released in 2003, the movie follows the life of a Buddhist monk, taking place in a monastery in the middle of a forest. We follow him as he grows up while the story divides the moments of his life using the seasons.

As the name of the film suggests, *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter… and Spring* is divided into five parts and, according to these seasons, we follow the novice Buddhist – played by Jae-kyeong Seo (boy), Young-min Kim (young adult), and Ki-duk Kim himself (adult) – while he grows up in this monastery floating on a lake.

A man for all seasons

The Bodhisattva of Compassion,

When he meditated deeply,

Saw the emptiness of all five skandhas

And sundered the bonds that caused him suffering.

—**The Heart Sutra**

In a world obsessed with finding significance and validation through being somebody, *Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter … and Spring* tells the story of a solitary monk who has found meaning through forsaking the secular realm and diving deep into the very depths of his own soul. And yet, despite his secluded existence, the outside world inevitably comes calling, reminding us that detachment can only ever truly be a state of mind and disposition of heart.

Written and directed by Korean auteur, Kim Ki-duk's exquisitely beautiful masterpiece filmed at Jusan Pond in North Gyeongsang Province in South Korea portrays the subsequent relationship between a Buddhist renunciate and his young protégé, characters whose names are never relayed. However, despite the film's absence of any specific temporal referencing,

Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter … and Spring is a deeply sophisticated meditation on the vagaries of the human condition reflected within the passing seasons of nature.

Here then,

Form is no other than emptiness,

Emptiness no other than form.

Form is only emptiness,

Emptiness only form.

—**The Heart Sutra**

The film explores themes associated with the transience of life set against a backdrop of the natural landscape, the stunning alpine topography forms an integral element to this elegiac drama, with each of the five titular segments representing a stage in a man's life and the associated lessons he must learn.

Despite the minimal use of dialogue, through the use of Buddhist iconography and Aesopian symbols, we become acutely aware of the inherent message of the ancient nondual teachings embodied in the doctrine of the Three Universal Truths—Annica (impermanence), dukka (suffering) and anatta (no self)—as they unfold throughout the movie, with the principles of the Four Noble Truths—the causes and cessation of suffering—forming the didactical framework through which the plot evolves.

Moreover, in a film steeped in visual imagery, the lake itself functions as a metaphor for universal mind, its silent waters the

very embodiment of the enlightenment state, with the floating hermitage representative perhaps of the fragile self, drifting silently atop its omnipresent depths.

Similarly, the monastery's humble rowboat is symbolic of the individual's journey on the spiritual path. Beautifully painted with images of Guan Yin (the bodhisattva of compassion and mercy) as she extends a hand that holds the lotus-born child, Maitreya, the future Buddha, it is the Yana or vehicle by which the young monk is transported to his spiritual destiny, across the ocean of samsara to the mountain shore of liberation and release.

Feeling, thought and choice,

Consciousness itself,

Are the same as this.

All things are by nature void

They are not born or destroyed

Nor are they stained or pure

Nor do they wax or wane.

—**The Heart Sutra**

And thus, it is springtime. In the manner of a dramatized Eastern fable, the film commences with two wooden carved doors of a "gateless gate" creaking open to reveal a mysterious monastery drifting upon the serene surface of a pond, whose sole occupants are an old monk (Oh Young-Soo) and his child disciple (Kim Jong-Ho). Life is quiet and simple and like any young boy, the master's student enjoys playing with his puppy and collecting

herbs until one day, he is consumed by the capricious cruelties of childhood.

After tying pebbles to a fish, a frog and a snake, the young monk later awakens to find that he himself is fettered by a large smooth stone tied to his back. It is the first harsh lesson to be learnt, not through angry chastisement but by redemptive endeavour: the old monk calmly instructs the young boy to release the creatures from their suffering, vowing that if any of the animals die, "You will carry the stone in your heart for the rest of your life."

Indeed, the first Noble Truth—the nature of suffering—is a grave precept to take on board at such an early age, made all the more poignant by the weeping of the boy when he discovers that although the frog has managed to survive, both the fish and snake have perished, signalling a portentous omen of that which is yet to come.

So, in emptiness, no form,

No feeling, thought or choice,

Nor is there consciousness.

No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;

No colour, sound, smell, taste, touch,

Or what the mind takes hold of,

Nor even act of sensing.

—**The Heart Sutra**

The wooden gates open once again, this time on the season of summer. The young novice is now a teenager (Seo Jae-Kyung), moderately adept at keeping the Buddhist rituals of the temple in place. Soon, however, the tranquillity of the hermetic abode is disturbed by the arrival of a young woman, afflicted with an unspecified malady. The master allows her to stay in order to restore her physical and mental strength, noting calmly, "When she finds peace in her soul, her body will return to health."

Needless to say, the young woman awakens sexual desire in the student, with their playful flirtations culminating in passionate lovemaking amidst shoreside rocks and the hull of the master's rowboat. Upon discovering their secret tryst, the old monk is, however, unmoved and simply observes, "Lust leads to desire for possession, and possession leads to murder," once again foreshadowing later events. He then dispatches the young woman, now healed, back to her mother. The student is devastated and, forsaking his monastery home, follows after her leaving his eremitic life behind.

The lush and arcadian environment where nature is in its fullest bloom has seeped deep into the soul of the student, stimulating the innate need for consummation and lust. Indeed, the master acknowledges the inevitability of his protégé's actions by stating wrily it is only natural for him to succumb; without the full realization of the Buddha's teachings, the cause of our pain and anguish, as the second Noble Truth wisely informs us, is unfettered craving and desire.

No ignorance or end of it,

Nor all that comes of ignorance;

No withering, no death,

No end of them.

—**The Heart Sutra**

The wooden threshold now reveals the arrival of autumn. The old monk has considerably aged and yet his modest life is as it always was. Returning from a trip to replenish food supplies, by chance, the master notices devastating news about his former student reported in the local newspaper. Anticipating his imminent arrival, the pupil returns, now a thirty-year-old fugitive (Kim Youg-min), on the run from a violent crime he has recently committed.

In an act of penance, the student attempts suicide but his master beats him brutally before writing out the Heart Sutra (*Prajnaparamitahrdaya* or The Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom) on the monastery deck, using his cat's tail as a calligraphy brush. When he finishes, he commands the young monk: "Carve out all of these characters and while you are carving, anger will be cut out of your heart." As the disciple's rage dissipates through the painstaking transcription, two policemen arrive to arrest the young monk and carry him away to his fate.

Once again, the old monk is left alone to reflect upon the purpose of life. His duty towards his former student is now completed for he understands that even the pursuit of wisdom itself is rooted in emptiness. He builds a funeral pyre in the rowboat and, covering his ears, eyes, nose and mouth with paper in the manner of the traditional Buddhist death ritual, is engulfed

by flames as the boat drifts slowly across the lake, the scene closing with a snake slithering along the hermitage deck.

Nor is there pain, or cause of pain,

Or cease in pain, or noble path

To lead from pain;

Not even wisdom to attain!

Attainment too is emptiness.

—**The Heart Sutra**

The creaking of the wooden doors now reveals winter has descended upon the secluded monastery, long since abandoned and frozen in ice. Once again, the student returns (as the director himself, Kim Ki-duk), this time on parole as a mature man in middle age. Coming to the realization that his beloved teacher has left the temporal world, he excavates his master's charred remains from the icy corpse of the rowboat, placing them on the altar, and then embarks upon a new life of prayer, meditation and qigong.

The monk's spiritual journey is finally coming to an end as the last two of the Buddha's Noble Truths are now realized through penance and disciplined adherence to the steps of the Eightfold Path. And thus, in a pilgrimage of atonement for the accumulation of all the suffering in his heart, both unwittingly and wittingly enacted, the monk takes out a statue of Guan Yin, then attaches a millstone to his body with a rope and drags it to the top of a mountain, whereupon he sits in meditation, looking

down on his floating hermitage and reflecting upon the unending cycles of human existence.

It is not before long that a veiled woman appears, bearing an infant, whom she entrusts in the care of the monk. Slipping away in the dead of night, the young mother slips on the frozen pond's surface and falls down a hole, only to be discovered the following morning trapped lifeless under the ice.

So know that the Bodhisattva

Holding to nothing whatever,

But dwelling in Prajna wisdom,

Is freed of delusive hindrance,

Rid of the fear bred by it,

And reaches clearest Nirvana.

—**The Heart Sutra**

The wooden threshold opens one final time on a beautiful spring day. The infant is now a young boy and the former student is now master to his new charge. The student is seen tormenting a turtle, harking back to the capriciousness of his predecessor at the beginning of the tale and the egoic seed of attachment and destruction impregnated within in all beings, preparing us yet again for the cycle of life to start anew …

Thus, the circle of life repeats itself again—nature rejuvenates herself every four seasons, man reincarnates himself through the lifespan of every man and yet everything remains exactly as it was, is, and shall forever be. As the film fades into emptiness,

for several moments afterwards we feel the ambient sounds of the natural world—the tinkling of the wind chime, birdsong, the lapping of water against the rowboat—continuing to resonate deep within us, instilling reverence for the sacredness of nature and sublimity of the empty void.

Exquisitely scored and shot with each frame exuding the composition of a painting, *Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter… and Spring* transmits a transcendental beauty all of its own, elevating the soul with its elegant and timeless aesthetic from innocence, through love and evil, to enlightenment and finally rebirth, subtlely and silently observed by the impassive gaze of a bodhisattva.

All Buddhas of past and present,

Buddhas of future time,

Using this Prajna wisdom,

Come to full and perfect vision.

Hear then the great dharani,

The radiant peerless mantra,

The Prajnaparamita

Whose words allay all pain;

Hear and believe its truth!

Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate

Bodhi Svaha

Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate

Bodhi Svaha

Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate

Bodhi Svaha

—The Heart Sutra

Major reasons why "Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter… and Spring" is a masterpiece are:

The landscapes

The monastery in the middle of a lake that is in the middle of a forest makes it more of a universal story, as we're in the middle of nature. The circles and the seasons that are so important to the story influences the film even more, as we are dealing with the forces that do not only affect the weather and nature itself, but ourselves as well as these seasons keep changing.

The apprentice must become his own master

In the end of "Summer", the young monk, despite the recommendations of his master ("lust leads to desire for possession and possession leads to murder"), runs away from the monastery to pursue the girl he fell in love with. The apprentice comes back in the "Fall" after murdering his wife.

The old monk anticipates the novice's return and when he finds his apprentice in the middle of a suicidal rite, he beats the young monk and says he cannot leave this world this easily. Later, two detectives take him from the monastery and the old monk,

knowing his story is coming to an end, builds a pyre and his life is taken by the flames.

In the "Winter", the apprentice that is now an adult comes back to the monastery that was left with nobody in it. He makes a Buddha statue with ice, starts to exercise in the ice, and gets ready to take his master's place.

The story closes when a woman leaves a baby that becomes this once-young monk's apprentice. When he is able to go through all of the seasons, he is ready to take his master's place and spread his knowledge to a new prodigy, having finally gotten control over his life.

Every frame is a painting

This is one of the most visually stunning movies made in this century. You are able to stop this movie at any frame and the shots, the lighting, the colour, and everything else you can see on the scene is – at least – nearly perfect. The symbols used in the movie are full of references to Eastern culture and to Buddhism, and the monastery floating in the middle of the lake, surrounded and protected by the forest, is such a perfect place to make this story and those characters come to life while producing amazing imagery.

The cinematography by Dong-Hyeon Baek shows an amazing use of natural light, and respects the natural colours as well as the place of their characters in the middle of such amazing landscapes. We can basically say that any still of this film could be framed and put up on a wall.

Its masterful direction

Known for movies like *"Pieta"* (2012) and *"3-Iron"* (2004), Ki-duk Kim is one of the most prolific directors of the last generation of South Korean filmmakers. Considered by most to be his masterpiece, *"Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter… and Spring"* is one of the most amazing directorial achievements of the 21st century.

If you pay attention to the complex mise-en-scene of the movie, you might notice that the story works visually, and the dialogue, although necessary to the story, is not as crucial as its imagery. This visual approach is something we see less and less in most contemporary filmmaking. Kim tells everything visually and it's his great directing that allows his actors to deliver great performances in this film.

All the scenes are meaningful and contribute to the storyline, which does not have any dull moments. His control of the narrative, allied with its visual perfection, makes his work one of the most amazing achievements in film we have seen in the last decades.

The seasons are the main character of the movie

When relating the seasons to the supposed main character of the film – the young monk – we can associate these transformations in nature to the arc of this character.

In "Spring" he learns to respect the living force of nature; in "Summer" he discovers love and its dangers: in "Fall" he has to take responsibility for the evil he has done, as everything seems to be falling apart; and in "Winter" – the most difficult of the

seasons – he has to overcome all the obstacles of body and mind to take the place his master left behind.

This arc could be related to Joseph Campbell's heroic journey, as many film aficionados love to cite, but most of all, these are forces of nature that obviously influence our life cycles, no matter what we do, until we become our own masters and are able to understand and deal with the situations that we have to face as far as our time comes.

The circles

Even though "*Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter… and Spring*" is full of references to Buddhism, this is, most of all, a movie about the cycle of life. As said before every lesson from the respect of nature, to the blossom of love, to the hard obstacles faced and overcome by the monk to take his master's place, are all a metaphor for our condition as human beings.

We have to learn to respect and understand the place around us, the dangers of our feelings, and the discipline to control our bodies and minds for the situations we have to face. And after all of that, we need to somehow pass this knowledge forward.

This film is a claim for the viewer, no matter their religion or the place they are from, to look inside and relate to all of those seasons. But the most special part is that there might always be a way to correct things and start over, and to start better as the new cycle begins.

"*Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter… and Spring*" is definitely a masterpiece with so many approaches in a variety of themes that makes it so unique philosophically and visually, and therefore should be seen and never forgotten by any film fan.

Reference:

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