# UNIT 7: SCRIPTWRITING

## UNIT STRUCTURE


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7.5 Process of Writing A Screenplay

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## 7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- define the ideas of script, screenplay and screenwriting
- identify different types of script and compare between the formats
- trace the process of scriptwriting
- create your own script.

## 7.2 INTRODUCTION

Writing a screenplay requires a serious amount of time and dedication. In order to develop a good screenplay, completing a first draft of the script is only the beginning or the tip of the iceberg. After several modifications of the script, you will have to submit your script to studios and producers, and have someone like it enough to risk a substantial amount of money to buy it, unless, you're planning to finance and produce it yourself. In this unit, you will learn how to analyse and put into practice the basics of screenwriting. Remember that many don't even invest time to learn developing a good screenplay; they just try and write one. However, with evolution of cinema, there are a few steps a screenwriter can follow when

developing and writing a screenplay. However, finally, it's up to the story, and the screenwriter.

## 7.3 SCREENPLAY AND SCREENWRITING

Scripts are neither written for cinema nor TV viewers. Viewers want to watch a film, not read text. Scripts are written for a filmmaker, or, and a production house whose job it is to read the story and financially invest in the script to turn into a cinema or even television programme. Therefore, the process of production of the script is what the viewer watches and the script is commonly known as the 'the blueprint for a film'.

The script or when written for the medium of film- a screenplay- is a technical document that act as a template to make a film and this screenplay will pass through many hands: from the script reader or producer who first reads it, to the team of executives who will fund it, to the director who will make it, to the cinematographer who will film it, to the sound engineer, to the set and costume designer, and to the actors who will inhabit the characters.

Hence, any producer will essentially will want a concise and correctly formatted screenplay. After all, if your screenplay does not deliver the desired messaging with utmost clarity and precision, then it will be discarded. Screenwriters must understand that producers receive numerous scripts and they must ensure that their script stands out in every possible manner. Who knows how many compelling stories have been rejected because the screenwriter failed to get the basic right: that a script must look like a script!

In screenwriting the length of the script should equal the length of the finished film - so mostly one page of script equals one minute of screen time. Commonly, a contemporary feature-length film will be of 100 to 120 pages long. A standard hour of television (60 minutes) will be approximately 60 pages long.

A script should have the following features:

- **Description:** While writing a script, the screenwriter will write the visual directions or actions. The description of these visual

cues will include information about the scenes, locations, characters, their actions, and the proceedings of the story.

- **Slug:** A slug is a line within a screenplay written in all uppercase letters to draw attention to specific information on Time and Place of occurrence.
- **Dialogues:** Majority of films today have dialogues that are spoken by the characters in the story. The screenwriter will have to script their words.
- **Scenes:** A screenplay is further broken down into scenes which show the action taking place at a specific time and in a specific location. Every time one of those elements changes - time or location - it becomes a new scene. Scenes can vary from a couple of lines to two or three pages.
- **Set page numbers, margins, font type and size:** Screenplays have always been written in font type and size: Courier 12 pt. The font needing to be Courier 12 pt relates to the timing formula that is applied to scripts. When they invented the screenplay over 100 years ago, writers only had manual typewriters to write with. The 'one page equals one minute' rule only works if we make our screenplays look like they come out of a typewriter. It may be tempting to use some beautiful italic serif font on your computer, but if you do, the sizing and time calculation will be all out. That said, the timing formula is an average one. Dialogue tends to run faster (two pages per minute or so) while action can be much, much slower. The top and bottom of every page should have a 1-inch margin The left margin should be 1½ inches and the right margin should be 1 inch. These margins result in roughly 55 lines per page.

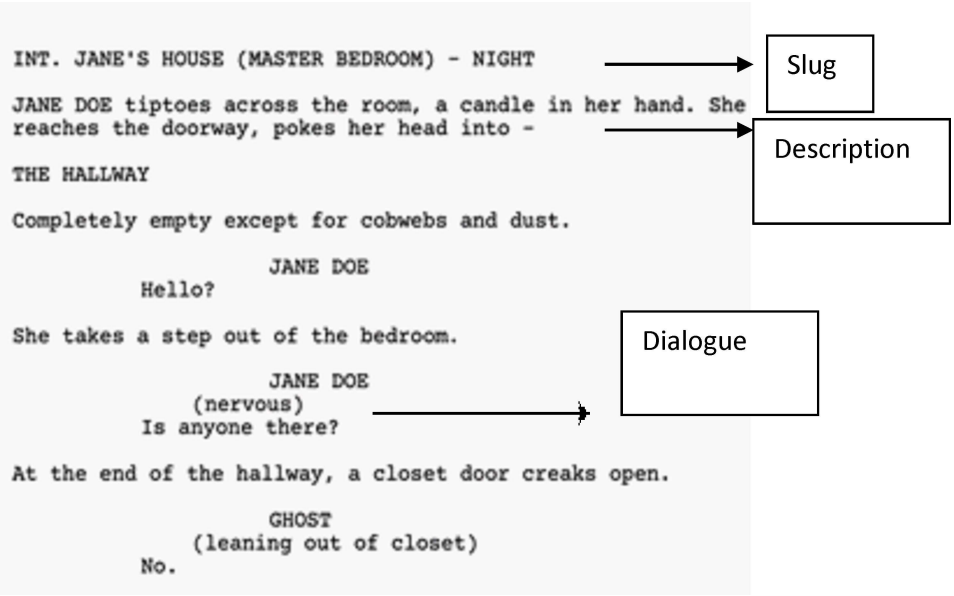



**Figure 1: Example of a Screenplay**

**Source:**

https://www.google.com/search?q=Screenplay+example&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwjYzpr3wZf_AhVNALcAHcn1B_EQ2



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.1:** What is a screenplay?

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**Q.2:** What is a slug?

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## 7.4 TYPES OF SCRIPT

For any kind of fictional film-making be it short or feature-length films two different types of scripts are used: **spec scripts, and shooting**

**scripts**.

Each has different content and formatting elements due to the demand of the script in pre- production, production, and post-production stage.

**Spec script:** Spec scripts are specifically written with the script-readers in mind. The scriptwriters as mentioned in the previous section include producers, filmmakers, actors, etc. Spec scripts are written so that it will be chosen, purchased, and produced into a film. It is more of the screenwriter's pitch to the producers and filmmakers or any potential investor willing to invest in their film. However, spec scripts don't contain any technical information about the screenplay should be filmed or edited.

**Shooting script:** Once a spec script has been approved for an actual production of the film, a new script is created as a practical reference for the production crew known as the shooting script. Along with dialogues and the beginning till the end of the film, a shooting script will contain every minute detail and information about how and where scenes will be filmed, along with credit sequences, scene numbers, and other elements that is not mentioned in a spec script.

From elements and writing point of view there are two types of scripts: **Single Column script** and **Double Column Script**. In Single Colum script all the visual and dialogue narration as well as suggestions are written in one column. There is no or much reference of audio elements like Background score or sound effect in it. In Double Column Script, both Audio and Visual elements find a place in the script. It is divided into two parts or columns.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.3:** Define Shooting Script.

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**Q.4:** What are the major elements of Double Column Script?

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## 7.5 PROCESS OF WRITING A SCRIPT

**Write Your Logline**

A logline is a one-sentence summary of your story, and they're primarily used as a marketing tool or the USP (Unique Selling Point). When a film production studio asks the screenwriter to give them their best pitch, the screenwriter will first mention the logline. Loglines also act as a helpful guide for the screenwriter to focus writing on the most important aspects of their story. Primarily, loglines will help a screenwriter to keep his story on track.

The logline will contain information about what main character, the antagonist (if there is any), and the objective of the film.

**Writing the treatment of the film**

The treatment is like the first sketch of a film where there are generally two- to five-page summaries that break the story into three acts - the beginning, the middle, and the end.

The three main elements of a treatment are: **Title of the Film, Logline, and Synopsis.**

Treatments may include some of the dialogue and description, but the main focus is on synopsising the story. Filmmakers and producers review a treatment and have a good idea of whether the script is worth investing and producing.

A good synopsis will include:

- Set out the main character and locations in your story.
- Include the problems and challenges the main character faces and how they will overcome them.
- Tell the whole of your story clearly from start to finish.
- Include only what will be seen or heard on screen
- Write in active verbs and present tense

**Write The Script!**

Story is the single most important thing in the screenplays. When a script makes it into production, dialogue is the first thing that gets changed.

On set, a filmmaker or an actor can improvise and change the scenes and dialogues as well. Entire scenes can be dropped, either while shooting or in the editing process. Locations can change. Characters are removed or changed to accommodate the cast. Everything is changeable in film production, but the basic story remains the same.

Most feature films are up to 120 pages, and have around forty scenes. These scenes also follow the fundamental three act formula, with twenty-five percent given to acts one and three, and fifty percent taking up act two.

The screenwriter's job is to map out the setting, characters, and major events of each scene and write down the dialogues, unless a separate dialogue writer is hired. The screenwriter's idea should have a meaning and should revolve around some central theme.

The main story of your film will concern your main character portrayed in a dramatic struggle. Early in the film, there will be an initial, small event that creates some desire or goal in your main character. Then there will be at least two bigger or smaller events that challenge this desire. The final, and largest event, brings the struggle for that desire to a satisfying end.

Notably, screenwriters will rewrite and modify their draft scripts several times.



**ACTIVITY 7.1**

1. Choose a film - perhaps one of your favourites or something you have seen recently or something from your personal collection. Check online to see if the screenplay is available, but don't read it yet. First watch the film and choose a scene you particularly like. Then write a version of the scene with description and dialogue. Use the correct script format. Now download the screenplay from one of the online databases and compare what you have written with what was actually in the script.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.5:** What is a Logline?

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**Q.6:** Briefly mention the requirements of a good synopsis.

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## 7.6 LET US SUM UP

- A screenwriter writes content for visual mediums. They write screenplays for feature films, short films, television, commercials, and video games. They create the dialogue, the characters and the storyline of a script.
- The process of developing a script for the screen is known as screenwriting.
- The developed script for the screen is called a screenplay. A screenplay will have a title, description, characters, scenes, and dialogues.
- There are two types of scripts: Spec script and Shooting Script.
- The process of writing a script includes: Having a log line, treatment, and synopsis as well.
- The main difference between writing for fiction and non-fiction or documentaries is extensive research is required and the script will keep evolving until the final cut of the film is ready.



## 7.7 FURTHER READING

1. Field, S. (2005). Screenplay: The foundations of screenwriting. New York, NY: Delta Trade Paperbacks.
2. Seger, L. (1994). Making a good script great (2nd ed.). Hollywood, CA: Samuel French Trade.

3. Snyder, B. (2005). Save the cat!: The last book on screenwriting you'll ever need. Los Angeles, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.



## 7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans. to Q. No. 1:** A screenplay is a technical document that act as a template to make a film and this screenplay will pass through many hands: from the script reader or producer who first reads it, to the team of executives who will fund it, to the director who will make it, to the cinematographer who will film it, to the sound engineer, to the set and costume designer, and to the actors who will inhabit the characters. It is the blueprint of a film.

**Ans. to Q. No. 2:** A slug is a line within a screenplay written in all uppercase letters to draw attention to specific information on Time and Place of occurrence.

**Ans. to Q. No. 3:** Shooting Script is the script prepared for actual production of the film, once a spec script gets approved. It is a practical reference for the production crew. Along with dialogues and the beginning till the end of the film, a shooting script will contain every minute detail and information about how and where scenes will be filmed, along with credit sequences, scene numbers, and other elements that is not mentioned in a spec script.

**Ans. to Q. No. 4:** Double column script will have both visual and audio elements.

**Ans. to Q. No. 5:** A logline is a one-sentence summary of a story. It is primarily used as a marketing tool or the USP (Unique Selling Point). When a film production studio asks the screenwriter to give them their best pitch, the screenwriter will first mention the logline. Loglines also act as a helpful guide for the screenwriter to focus writing on the most important aspects of their story. Primarily, loglines helps a screenwriter to keep his story on track.

**Ans. to Q. No. 6:** A good synopsis requires the main character and locations of the story. It includes the problems and challenges the main character faces and how they will overcome them. It provides a summary of the whole story; but includes only what will be seen or heard on screen. It is written in active verbs and present tense



## 7.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A) Short Questions (Answer each Question in about 50 words)**

**Q. 1:** Define spec.

**Q. 2:** What is double column script?

**B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)**

**Q. 1:** Develop your own idea for a script. It can be an idea for a feature film, for an hour of television, for a longer television series or for a short film, or documentary.

**Q. 2:** Elaborate the process of developing a script, and mention the steps required to do so.

**Q. 3:** What are the essential features a script should have?

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# UNIT 8: FILM GENRES AND SEMIOTICS

## UNIT STRUCTURE


8.1 Learning Objectives
8.2 Introduction
8.3 Film Noir
8.4 Social Melodrama
8.5 Romantic
8.6 Horror
8.7 Comedy
8.8 Animation
8.9 Epic
8.10 Let Us Sum Up
8.11 Further Readings
8.12 Answers to Check Your Progress
8.13 Model Questions


## 8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- define different genres of films
- distinguish the subgenres
- evaluate the evolution of these genres
- define the characteristics of different genres

## 8.2 INTRODUCTION

A Genre is a particular type of literature, painting, music, film, or other art form which people consider as a category because of their distinguish characteristics. Narrative films are usually classified based on genre, like comedy, horror, or even as their sub-genres. Film genres are usually determined by the subject, setting or plot of the story. Each genre has its own iconography, including characteristic props, settings, costumes, and character types as visual signifiers and soundtrack as well as dialogue as musical and verbal signifiers.

## 8.3 FILM NOIR

According to The Film Encyclopaedia, Film Noir is a term coined by French critics to describe a type of film that is characterized by its dark, somber tone and cynical pessimistic mood. It literally means 'black film' and refers to Films of the 40's and 50's that portrayed the world of dark, slick city streets, crime and corruption post to World War II depression. In these films, the local crimes depicted are affected by the global phenomena of depression, war, economic and cultural modernization, migration and politics, connecting to rootlessness, a wandering desire, and an unsettled uncanny and foreign home-life across the world, portraying the traumatic, catastrophic, or irrational aspects of modernity.

The adaptation of James M. Cain's American novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934) is representative of Noir genre in America. Originally, written as a thriller during the Great Depression, it has been widely circulated the world over, translated into different languages and has many cinematic adaptations. In Europe, it first appeared in France as the film *Le Dernier Tournant*/ *The Final Turn*, (1939), then in Italy as *Ossessione* / *Obsession (*1943). In Hollywood, it was made by Tay Garnett (1946) and then appeared in Norway as *Dødeneret Kjertegn* / *Death Is a Caress* (1949). It was remade in Hollywood again as *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1981).

The genre of noir created international networks of affinity and influence. It did not recreate or respond to an American culture, rather most post-World War II American noirs are influenced by Italian neo-realism and French poetic realism. Film noir is a style of film-making that is largely dependent on light for its effects. **Post War Realism** affected every country involved in WW-II. On-location shooting suited America's mood and desire for more harsh honesty during this period. **The German Expatriates** left Germany to escape Nazi control, for example John Alton, Fritz Lang, Otto Preminger, Billy Wilder, Robert Siodmak etc played with Expressionist lighting – chiaroscuro and this has influence on Noir films. Post War realities of crime in the streets, political corruption and Psychotic actions are often

showcased in Noir Films. Noir Films are often characterised by two female characters- virtuous, honest love interest of the Protagonist and an evil antagonist. Low-key lighting with shadows and highest contrast are significant visual characters of Film Noir. Deep Focus Camera work can be seen in these films. In Noir films, no character has firm moral base. Right and wrong become relative with constantly shifting moral values. Some of the **important films from this genre are,** The Maltese Falcon, T-Men, The Big Sleep, The Big Combo, Double Indemnity, Touch of Evil, The Postman Always Rings, Twice Out of the Past, In a Lonely Place, Sunset Boulevard, The Naked City etc.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.1:** Write briefly about the characteristics of Noir Films.

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**Q.2:** Mention the names of few noted Noir Films.

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## 8.4 SOCIAL MELODRAMA

In Hollywood, earlier the term 'melodrama' or 'melodramatic' referred to crime, guns, violence, action, suspense, tension; heroines in trouble; villains, who would move around acting apparently harmless but upsetting the hero by escaping justice, keeping the suspense and thrill alive till the end. These films like *The Locket, Cornered* and *Shockproof, Farewell, My Lovely* and Crossfire were referred to as 'melodrama' in their publicity and reviews. They are at times characterized as noirs, often suggesting a common definition for both the genres.

The term, originated from a combination of the Greek *melos* meaning "melody" or "song" and the French word *drame* meaning "drama." Melodramas were originally theatrical stage plays combining music and dialogue. They were especially popular during the Victorian Era. Since then, Melodramas in television, film, and theatre have steered away from music and focused on sensationalized, highly emotional stories.

According to Irwin Blacker, 'If the plot is all action and little emotion, it is melodrama' (1986). Thus, the formal definition of melodrama attributes it to be 'a lineage, a provenance, an aesthetic, an institutional and critical status, a generic—or sub-generic—field of application, and a putatively gender-specific appeal or address to woman' to the definition of melodrama in cinema. Social melodramas are often distinctively distinguishable based on their style, form, rhythm, colour, camera movements and mise-en-scene used to elaborate on the themes, emotions and issues specific to the genre itself.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.3:** Mention the distinguish characters of social melodramas.

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## 8.5 ROMANTIC

This is one of the most popular genres, based on romantic love stories, often tracing the journey of the protagonists since the beginning of their romance. It may revolve around their dating and courtship ultimately leading to marriage, with obstacles on the way, like discrimination, physical illness, financial situations, families, psychological problems, day-to-day tensions, incompatibility or infidelity. It might deal with forbidden love, passionate love, unrequited romances, obsessive or destructive love, and

love at first sight. Often it acts as a form of fantasy, especially if all the obstacles are tackled with and the lovers can live "happily ever after". It includes the following sub-genres.

*Romantic melodrama,* a subgenre of Romantics*,* does not usually end in marriage. For example, *Memoirs of A Geisha*, *Casablanca* and *A Walk to Remember*. At times they are referred to as *Chick flick* due to the majority of female audiences. These include *The Notebook and Dirty Dancing.* Again *Romantic Comedies* are usually light-hearted, subscribing to the ideals of true love overcoming all obstacles. The humour is usually verbal in nature, situational and may be low-key. Examples include *Love Actually* and *When Harry Met Sally*.

*Romantic action comedies* are a blend of romance, action and comedy. For example, *This Means War, Knight and Day and The Bounty Hunter. Romantic thriller* combines elements of romance and thriller as seen in films like *Bodyguard, The Tourist and The Phantom of the Opera.*



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.4:** Fill in the blanks with appropriate words to complete the sentence

a) Often it acts as a form of fantasy, especially if all the obstacles are tackled with and the lovers can live…….

b) Romantic melodrama, a subgenre of……., does not usually end in marriage

## 8.6 HORROR

It is one of the earliest, popular genres of cinema. Its most important element of identification is horrible imageries like that of *Count Dracula* or *Frankenstein* by Boris Karloff. Such visual imagery is also seen in Japanese horror, often known as J-Horror, which usually includes "the pale-faced, long-haired, technologically resourceful ghost". Spanish horror cinema normally has an orphan seeking revenge. In Bollywood, one of the first films of this genre was the Ashok Kumar and Madhubala starrer *Mahal*, by

Kamal Amrohi(1949). Later *Bees Saal Baad,* by Hemant kumar, (1962), popularized the genre further. *Gumnaam* and *Bhoot Bangla*, also released in the1960s. Rajkumar Kohli's *Nagin* (1976) saw a blend of both the horror and fantasy genre in Bollywood for the first time.

In Bollywood, common elements of this genre are darkness, an evil spirit seeking revenge, and an old mansion. Recent successes have been *Ek Thi Daayan* and *Ragini MMS*. Some like *Golmaal Again, Stree* and *Bhediyan,* have combined the genre of horror along with comedy. Often seen as transgressive, its narratives threaten the general established order of things. Film-makers have to keep re-inventing their approach for a newer set of audiences.

'Horror' comes from the Latin word, '*horrere',* meaning 'to bristle with fear'. It seems to evolve from the 'bodily sensation of *horripilation'*, defining the moment of fear when "one's hair stands on its end"- thus making it a hair-raising experience. According to Rick Worland, a film historian, the term "horror movie" appeared in print for the first time in discussions related to *Dracula* and *Frankenstein,* released by Universal Studios in 1931. The production of horror films happened even before then, but these were often referred to as mysteries or gothic tales. Since then a variety of other films have come to be known as horror films and some of these include stalker movies, demonic horror, techno-horror, etc.

Often films of this genre may seem formulaic in nature, though no set rules and plots are specified but they seem to loosely share common traits. It might include Adventure, Fantasy, Horror thrillers, Horror comedy, Super naturals, Gothic and Zombies etc. as subgenres. Horror Films are often characterised by their use of light and sound.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.5:** Mention a few Indian Horror films.

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## 8.7 COMEDY

One of the oldest genres of film, Comedies evaluative paradigms, compatible with liberal ideas of human values have been a subject of critical debate for long. It has been approached either aesthetically, or as a mode of self-expression, or studied for its cultural worth. Studying this genre today, has to consider psychoanalysis, cultural studies, ethnicity, semiotics, structuralism, post-structuralism, sexual politics, gender, feminism etc.

It includes a number of forms and sites, and sub-genres too like slapstick, satire, parody, animation, cartoons, features, shorts, jokes, and quite intricately woven narratives. Some specific conventions that define it are parodies that blend well with other genres and happy endings while representing everyday life situations. It is seen to have been deeply influenced by narrative theory, philosophy, psychology and anthropology. Studying comedy enables us to easily identify the comic elements like funny moments, gags, jokes, etc and their narrative or non-narrative contexts. This distinction itself provides ample comprehension in evaluating the criteria that helps define comedy as a genre and its link to film history.

Horton (1991) says that, 'comedies are interlocking sequences of jokes and gags that place narrative in the foreground', which implies that it does lean towards non-comic genres like romance, fantasy, etc, in its narrative technique.

Distinct characteristics of this genre are a form of a verbal or visual punch-line, a moment of shock or surprise; logic- may be an absurd one that ends up combining the plausible and implausible in some unequal measure. Implausibility might be the more dominant trait. This helps us view actions, events, what has been spoken as comic and not necessarily as poetic or tragic. Jerry Palmer has referred to this phenomenon as 'comic insulation'.

The various comic units, while being designed to encourage laughter, can help in focusing on theories, ideas, and debates revolving around the very notion of what humour and laughter can imply. This is seen in the works of Steve Martin, Jim Carrey, Mack Sennett, Jerry Lewis, Woody Allen, Laurel and Hardy, Charlie Chaplin, and many others.

Comic units like gags, jokes, and slapstick humour have been derived from other forms of entertainment in the past like vaudeville, circus, comic strip, burlesque and later by the forms that begun appearing on radio, television and night-clubs. It has enabled performers to use the form to question narrative values and conventions, subvert these conventions or to even question socio-cultural scenarios. History of film shows that comedy has largely been male-centred, and often derived by stereotyping class and ethnicities.

Romantic comedy saw its revival in Hollywood during the mid-1980s with films like *Blind Date,* (1987). It also includes 'nervous romances' made by Woody Allen and sex comedies like *Pillow Talk* (1959).

For Bollywood, comedy has been a popular genre. The latest was *Total Dhamaal (2019).* In 2017 comedies were among the five of the highest grossing films. Franchises like the *Masti* and *Golmaal* have also been very successful. Other successful films are *Hindi medium, Khosla ka Ghosla, and Badhai Ho etc.*

In Indian Cinema, film-makers play around with language enhancing the comic dialogues to the extent of being 'silly'. It also works blended with other genres like horror, as in *Stree, Bhool Bhulaiyaa*, which are inspired by Southern-Indian films like the *Kanchana* series. There are also dark comedies like *Newton* and *Andhadhun.*

60s, 70s and 80s of Twentieth century witnessed the performances of Johny Walker, TunTun and Mehmood etc. in Hindi Cinema, followed by actors like Johny Lever in the 90s. Comedies have in fact proven successful even in the past, for example, the multi-starrer film *Padosan* (1968) and films like Hrishikesh Mukherjee's *Gol Maal (*1979), with Amol Palekar in its lead- one of the finest examples of middle-of-road cinema /middle cinema, addressing and portrayal of the middle class sensibilities.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.6:** Fill in the blanks with appropriate words to complete the sentences:

a) Studying comedy enables us to easily identify the comic elements like funny moments, ……, jokes, etc and their narrative or ……contexts.

b) Distinct characteristics of this genre are a form of a verbal or visual……., a moment of shock or surprise; a logic- may be an absurd one, that ends up combining the plausible and implausible in some unequal measure.

c) It includes a number of forms and sites, and ……..too like slapstick, satire, parody, animation, cartoons, features, shorts, jokes, and quite intricately woven narratives.

## 8.8 ANIMATION

Animation is the illusion of movement created by an inanimate object, which according to Peter Mark Roget, is created by 'persistence of vision'- a concept that allows humans on seeing an image, to be able to retain it by means of an after-image, creating the appearance of movement and continuity.

Earlier technologies had flipbooks in the 16th century, followed by the *phenakistoscope,* the *kinematoscope,* and the *zoetrope,* in the 19th century, finally leading to the development of cartoon films. J. Stuart Blackton, created a short film, *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces (*1906), with a series of blackboard drawings using crude stop-motion. This was followed by the filming of thousands of drawings with incremental movements, a technique used by Winsor McCayin'S *Little Nemo* (1911).

Then new animators started using newspaper comic, or cartoon, strip as the sources to refer to. Similarly, new animated characters were translated into comic strips. *Cel Animation* was developed in 1914, enabling studios and individual animators to create moving drawings quickly without having to reproduce every single movement. It was further developed with the Fleischer brothers' early motion-capture device, the rotoscope, and later with Walt Disney's Multiplane camera which helped the animator create a depth of field on a flat film background. Sound synchronization was the

next development, but some like Pat Sullivan, who created *Felix the Cat,* did not like the technology.

Hollywood animation prospered in the 1930s and 40s and new studios around the world emerged. After World War II, these studios continued under new government regimes. World War II saw Europe and Asia, use animation for propaganda and information films with Government funding, especially in Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union. Later there was a decrease in such support. Introduction of Television, led to a decline in animation cinema audiences resulting in the closure of several animation studios. Disney studios faced industrial unrest with many of their finest talents leaving and Studios like Warner Brothers and MGM closed their animation divisions by the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The animation industry worldwide has been largely dominated by Walt Disney Studio, since its production of the first sound-synchronized animated cartoon, *Steamboat Willie (*1928). Its *Mickey Mouse* sound films and Disney's *Silly Symphonies* series used popular music as a narrative device. This was followed by Warner Brothers' *Looney Tunes* and *Merrie Melodies*. Disney then moved into features with *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves (*1937), followed by Fleischer brothers, *Gulliver's Travels (*1939). 1930s and 1940s produced stars of animation like Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse, Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Tom and Jerry, making their creators Chuck Jones, Tex Avery, Harman Ising, Hanna-Barbera, and Walt Disney famous. Disney was also gaining popularity globally. This phase has often been referred to as the Golden Age of Animation.

Disney has remained internationally successful, by adapting to new technologies and monetising their brand name, through merchandise, theme parks, television productions, and recently by re-releasing its back catalogue on DVD. It also acts as a distributor, and has tied up with Pixar studio.

Disney created a (largely Western) view that animation is meant for children only. However, in the past, trick films and lightning sketches were usually performed for an adult vaudeville audience. Later many animators catered to adult audiences including studios like Warner Brothers and MGM.

The World War II years, witnessed studios using this genre to produce propaganda films for troops, focusing on the adult males.

Disney feature animation slowed production, in the 1960s and 1970s.Walt Disney died in 1966, and the studio experienced a decrease in releases. This changed in 1968 with George Dunning's *Yellow Submarine*, based on the music of the pop group, the Beatles, meant for young adult audiences.

Ralph Bakshi produced *Fritz the Cat (1972),* the first X-rated animated feature, based on Robert Crumb's counterculture comic. He followed it with other adult features.

In the 1970s, animators started experimenting with computer technology to generate images. For example, filmmaker George Lucas' purpose-built studio for the creation of visual effects for his live-action science fiction epic *Star Wars* in 1977. His new company, Industrial Light and Magic (ILM), landed up further developing the technology leading to fully computer-generated animation being used.

Disney too ventured into computer technology, releasing the science fiction movie *Tron*, (1982), that was a blend of CGI (computer-generated imagery) and live action. It was the first feature to use fully computer-generated effects. Later a Disney alumnus, John Lasseter, one of the founders of the new digital animation studio Pixar (1984), started creating fully digitally animated shorts with *The Adventures of André and Wally Bee (*1985).

In the 1980s, Disney Studio continued capitalizing on its legacy, the *House of Mouse.* In 1989, feature animation and Disney Studio produced *The Little Mermaid* and *The Lion King (*1994), which at the time was the highest grossing animated feature. Success of feature animation, in the West, was redefined with Pixar releasing its first feature, the fully computer-generated *Toy Story*, with a sequel in 1999, catering to adults and children. Pixar soon dominated the animation genre catering to an adult or family audience with film's like DreamWorks' *Shrek* (2001) and its sequels.

Animation started becoming increasingly popular, with an increase in animated segments in live-action films too. Soon the Oscars introduced

a newAcademy Award for Animated Feature in 2001, and *Shrek* was the first to be awarded. It marked the recognition of international films in Hollywood, with the second award being bagged by the Japanese director, Hayao Miyazaki, for *Spirited Away* (2002).

In Asia, the devastation caused by war, saw a decline in the animation genre, but the mid-1950s saw are surgence, particularly in Japan, where developments in animation started increasing. In countries like South Korea, the increase in production made them the biggest producers of animation. In Japan, in 1988 the animation genre received an international acclaim with the science fiction feature *Akira*, introducing 'anime' to international audiences. The popularity of anime has grown since then making it the most influential form of animations and making Japan one of the leading producers of animation in the world. In other parts of the world, like in India, the growth of animation was slower. Today as a result of Globalization, the genre of animation has discovered new audiences with the diverse animation styles and techniques, improving the market further for transnational viewing.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.7:** Mention few predecessors of modern animation technologies.

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**Q.8:** Fill in the blanks with appropriate words to complete the sentences:

a) In Japan, in 1988 the animation genre received an international acclaim with the science fiction feature Akira, introducing ……to international audiences.

b) In the 1970s, animators started experimenting with computer technology to generate……..

## 8.9 EPIC

The epic genre has been a subject of critical analysis. In the past it appeared to be a link to an imagined community of a nation, while now its

context has changed. It explores ideas emerging from cultural, film studies and historiography. Over the years, it has acted as the international apparatus of a global narrative, not restricted by ethnicity or a nation. It has crossed geographical boundaries, to bring ideas influenced by regional inflections, affecting the development of international cinema culture. Examples are Italian spectacle films *Quo Vadis?* (1912) and *Cabiria* (1914),American films like the *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916), the African epic *Winning a Continent* (1916) and the collectivist Soviet films *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and *October* (1928).'

Its characteristic features, include the use of spectacle, immersive quality, tactility, monumentality, eroticism and sensuality, providing a sensory aspect, making it contemporary in nature.

Today epic films have a multinational cast and crew, its production and distribution is at an international scale, it can be digitally reproduced and has an ability to create global internet discussion groups. All of this has influenced its narrative forms, subject matter and production circumstances. Examples of such films include *Gladiator* (2000) and *300* (2007) that focus on community and affiliation. These films are also termed as post-national projects.

Some scholars refer five forms of Epic: **the spectacle**; **the relationship between the centre and the periphery; the epic of national emergence; the family melodrama or family saga as a mode of epic expression**; and **the depiction of the male body in epic films.**

**Spectacle** is seen as the signature trait of this genre, including a flamboyant mise-en-scene, monumental sets, an expansive visual style, and a mass chorography.

The **relationship between the centre and the periphery** can be seen by bringing together a global talent community in its production and an international audience in its exhibition and reception. It is more pronounced in its generation of revenue from an overseas audience from different global markets. Examples are *Troy* and *The Passion of the Christ*.

The most familiar form is the **epic of national emergence**. Seen as a distinct form of collective expression, it consists of motifs that form national

identity, like sacred sites, hallowed landscapes, an ancestral homeland and legendary heroes. The narrative employed makes one feel that a known, national story is being told, and the narrator speaks on behalf of all.

Examples of **family melodram or family saga as a mode of epic expression**, can be witnessed in films like Bernardo Bertolucci's*1900* (1976), Zhang Yimou's *to Live* (1994), and Marco Tullio Giordana's, *The Best of Youth* (2003). This subgenre is not necessarily set in an ancient past with a conflict of historical collectivities. It is instead defined by generational conflict and fraternal struggle depicting another face of the world. It includes *The Cloud-Capped Star,* (1960) by Ritwik Ghatak, *The Beginning and the End* (1993), by Arturo Ripstein and Paul Thomas Anderson's *There Will Be Blood* (2007).These films usually blend mythic and historical elements, within the family saga. They are melodramas that articulate the story of the nation through the familial lens.

The *depiction of the male body* in epic films has been a subject of scrutiny by scholars and critics. The approaches they have resorted to include psychoanalysis, the emphasis of domination and subordination, fetishism and masochism. Other contexts include the definition of masculinity during earlier times, artistic conventions of male display, and the emotional cross-currents and tension that exists between duty and passionate feeling, often displayed in male gestural codes. One of the most common ways in which this is achieved is by displaying the male body in emphatic scenes of virtuoso athletic performance, evoking a range of historical, cultural and artistic traditions. This genre often tends to depict an eroticized violence.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.9:** Mention the five forms of epics according to scholars.

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## 8.10 LET US SUM UP

- Film Noir, literally refers to 'black film', is a style of filmmaking evolved in Post World War II Europe and America
- Social melodramas are emotionally charged and can be identified from their style, form, rhythm, colour, camera movements and mise-en-scene.
- Romantic is one of the most popular genres, based on romantic love stories, often tracing the journey of the protagonists since the beginning of their romance.
- Horrors are characterised by its creation of horrible imagery. It evokes the sense of fear in the audience.
- Comedy is one of the oldest genres of film evoking humour amongst the spectators.
- Animation is the illusion of movement created by an inanimate object, based on the principle of persistence of Vision.
- Epic has always been a subject of critical analysis. It explores ideas emerging from cultural, film studies and historiography.



## 8.11 FURTHER READING

1. Costanzo, W. V (2014) *World Cinema Through Global Genres UK: John Wiley & Sons*, Incorporated
2. Dobson, N. (2010) *The A-Z of Animation and Cartoons. UK: The Scarecrow Press*, Inc
3. Neale, S. (200) *Genre and Hollywood*, London: Routledge



## 8.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans. to Q. No. 1:** Film noir style of film-making is largely dependent on light for its effects. **Post War Realism** affected every country

involved in WW-II. Hence, on-location shooting suited even America's mood and desire for more harsh honesty during this period. **The German Expatriates** left Germany to escape Nazi control, played with Expressionist lighting – chiaroscuro and this has influence on Noir films. Post War realities of crime in the streets, political corruption and Psychotic actions are often showcased in Noir Films. Noir Films are often characterised by two female characters- virtuous, honest love interest of the Protagonist and an evil antagonist. Low-key lighting with shadows and highest contrast are significant visual characters of Film Noir. Deep Focus Camera work can be seen in these films. In Noir films, no character has firm moral base. Right and wrong become relative with constantly shifting moral values.

**Ans. to Q. No. 2:** Few noted noir **films are:** The Maltese Falcon, T-Men, The Big Sleep, The Big Combo, Double Indemnity, Touch of Evil, The Postman Always Rings, Twice Out of the Past, In a Lonely Place, Sunset Boulevard, The Naked City etc.

**Ans. to Q. No. 3:** Social melodramas are often distinctively distinguishable based on their style, form, rhythm, colour, camera movements and mise-en-scene used to elaborate on the themes, emotions and issues specific to the genre itself. They focuse on sensationalized, highly emotional stories.

**Ans. to Q. No. 4:** a) "happily ever after" b) Romantics

**Ans. to Q. No. 5:** In Bollywood, one of the first films of this genre was the Ashok Kumar and Madhubala starrer *Mahal*, by Kamal Amrohi(1949). Later *Bees Saal Baad,* by Hemant kumar, (1962), popularized the genre further. *Gumnaam* and *Bhoot Bangla*, also released in the1960s. Rajkumar Kohli's *Nagin* (1976), saw a blend of both the horror and fantasy genre in Bollywood for the first time.

**Ans. to Q. No. 6:** a) gags b) non-narrative c) punch-line d) sub-genres

**Ans. to Q. No. 7:** Few predecessors of modern day animation technologies are, flipbooks in the 16th century, followed by the

*phenakistoscope,* the *kinematoscope,* and the *zoetrope,* in the 19th century.

**Ans. to Q. No. 8:** a) 'anime' b) images

**Ans. to Q. No. 9:** Some scholars refer five forms of Epic: the spectacle*;* the relationship between the centre and the periphery; the epic of national emergence;the family melodramaor family saga as a mode of epic expression*;* and the depiction of the male body in epic films**.**



## 8.13 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)**

**Q. 1:** Briefly mention about the genre of comedy in Bollywood?

**Q. 2:** Write what you know about social melodrama as a genre.

**Q. 3:** What are some of the subgenres of romantic films?

**B. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)**

**Q. 1:** How would you describe film noir and what are the distinct modes of internationalism that have influencedit?

**Q. 2:** Describe the role played by Disney Studios in the world of Animation films.

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# UNIT 9: FILM CULTURE

## UNIT STRUCTURE


9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Crossover Films

9.4 Documentary Film-making

9.5 Film and Cultural Identity

9.6 Film Audiences

9.7 Let us Sum Up

9.8 Further Reading

9.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.10 Model Questions


## 9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- comprehend the concept of Film Culture.
- define Crossover Films and the process of Documentary
- analyse the interconnection between Film and Cultural identity.
- examine audience's role in determining film cultures.

## 9.2 INTRODUCTION

Films have always served as an element of social and cultural transformations affecting society, with retro films serving as 'historical amnesia', representing the 'new' in its mechanical production at the beginning of the 20th century and as an element of spectacle and immediacy in the 21st century. While it served the purpose of commercializing social relations in the beginning, it later emerged to redefine the idea of space and time, of bringing another world close enough onto the screens for its audiences, shifting the local into a global context or circuit. While the historical significance of identity and culture may be less mobile in nature, the diverse experiences of change in a global context and in film cultures around the world seems to merge within a universal fluidity of filmic time and space.

Film texts might represent postmodern societies and lifestyles, they may even offer us the view of another world altogether, but our approach to film as culture has a more note to it. Film cultures are associated with audiences, contextually, to social hierarchy as well as distinction and scrutiny of our own behaviour. As a practice, it is embedded in social hierarchy and distinction, as it is experienced in its spatial and psychological contexts.

Film as culture or film cultures itself, are also represented in their distribution, exhibition, marketing and the official competition it undergoes. For example, irrespective of what the film's text might be, when it travels to a festival circuit, its socio-economic meaning transforms altogether. Within the festival circuit, it is limited to the view of industry professionals and is subjected to judgement and competition. Festivals in Europe are specifically held in selected cities that by themselves signify creativity and in this post-industrial era define culture as the new economy. Films within these festivals compete with one another for attention in such global arenas. Films that premiere in these spaces reflect the specific distinctions of these spaces and are associated with the status of the city and the cultural prestige it signifies. Classificatory awards are presented prior to the film's general release usually based on expert opinion, and if awarded, it is mentioned extensively in the marketing and advertising material of the film concerned. Such factors related to a film's exhibition and distribution play a significant role in our perception of the film itself.

Besides, whether conceived as the film itself or its related versions that appear in merchandise like clothes or toys; its distinct soundtrack; its narrative being reproduced in games; products and applications created as a spinoff of the film itself adds value to the film as culture produced through these innumerable marketing efforts and in the associated journalism that occurs through its reviews, promotion and features. The film culture then starts permeating into our own cultures as we start associating or dissociating ourselves with films and their related products based on our ideas of 'us' and 'them'. Classifications of an 'action-adventure', 'riveting, pure cinema', 'guaranteed to thrill', 'packed with testosterone' - are what define 'our' language or our perception of it. This apparently 'neutral' act of choosing a film to watch is thus not as neutral as you may presume it to be. It either resonates with what we presume our culture to be or what it really is.

This whole process of circulation plays a significant role in our spatial practices of viewing films. The methods of film circulation may not be set in stone, but different film cultures are definitely being delivered to different locations that have different symbolic statuses associated with them. For example, multiplexes are associated with the culture of shopping, making films a part of the commodity culture. It is defined by a fabricated space within a commercialized setup, socially separated in structure, becoming a time capsule that defines the difference in urban life. On the other hand, the art-house is a separate space altogether. It seems to usher in a cinematic experience replete with the historically dense fabric of the space in which it is viewed. The art gallery places the film in the midst of the history of art practice, surrounded by other artworks, with which it ends up sharing an inter-textual reference. On OTT (Over-The-Top) platforms like Netflix, Amazon prime, etc, it is beginning to take on a whole new virtual culture altogether. Interestingly our taste in films reflects our relationship to these different spatial sites. We may not exclusively view films in any one of these sites alone, but our patterns of consumption reflect our social relationships with the space concerned and become a part of our familiar routines.

Tracing the connections between space and filmic texts, helps us identify intermediary networks of conversation that help us understand the role that film plays in its connections to social sub-groups and images of nationhood. Film cultures and studies have enumerated a number of ways: like analysis of popular film, or film as social practice. But very often, it is seen as merely peripheral in nature as is evident in textbooks, conferences or study curriculums. Usually it exists in an analysis that spans through film history, aesthetics, semiotics, and more recently audience research. But, many scholars claim that these parameters are not enough in studying film cultures.

## 9.3 CROSSOVER FILMS

In India, crossover films started gaining a massive popularity especially with a growing number of Indian immigrants in various countries. It also surfaced with a demand in films that were depicted as closer to

reality, with an ability to stimulate the audience into thinking and identifying themselves with it.

While crossover films worked for a substantial number of Indians living abroad, it had an equally compelling impact on people in India many of whom had connections with people living abroad.

Crossover films started off as a means to address the reality of a new generation of Indian immigrants, their friends and relatives. Consisting of multi-lingual films, it was different from commercial cinema. Its popularity in India increased with new set of niche audiences who wished to dabble with a more intellectual form of entertainment, tired of spoofs and slapstick comedy, welcoming instead comedy based on real life scenarios. They were not looking towards films as a medium of escape but more as an articulation and expression of reality; doing away with fantasies and concentrating instead on real life problems, joys and lifestyles. It worked well with the multilingual format as that helped to express the Indian reality better than in a single language. Their emergence to popularity was seen with movies like *Hyderabad Blues, Mr And Mrs Iyer, Bend It Like Beckham , Monsoon Wedding*, *Bhaji on the Beach* etc., that appealed to the cosmopolitan Indian audience.

After this first spate of crossover films, the need to address more universal themes was also felt, moving from an urban metro perspective to a more global perspective, thus crossing over and addressing themes and structures of a universal pattern. Crossover films are characterized by a strong theme, an effective screenplay, a strong narrative and a strong storyline, displaying a universal reality with a compelling potential for success in an international market.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.1:** Define Crossover films and its association with culture.

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## 9.4 DOCUMENTARY FILM MAKING

Documentaries are often studied as non-fiction cinema and revolve around debates on whether it is art or a historical record. They are seen as a rhetorical form, loosely centred around being meant to be for or against something. The word 'documentary', first appeared when John Grierson, coined the terminology to refer as a historical record. He used it in his description of Robert Flaherty's film, *Moana* as a historical or ethnographic film. This was in 1926, in a review that appeared in the *New York Sun*on. He is referred to as the founder of the British 'Documentary Film Movement'. Later he described his own work as 'the creative treatment of actuality'. This statement was considered as one of the best ways to describe the essence of non-fiction films, though he considered it an insufficient description of such films. According to him, the term documentary was a 'clumsy description', suggesting that it imposed artificial limits on the theoretical potential of films to be able to deal with or represent reality. It was in 1973, that *Richard Barsam*, a film scholar proposed the term 'non-fiction', not to replace the term 'documentary' but rather to include it in a larger and more flexible concept, enabling the recognition of the many different approaches of such films. He did say that not all non-fiction films are essentially documentary films.

In the history of cinema, many filmmakers have used more than just the most 'conventional' tactics of documentary film-making, like filmic mimesis i.e. recording 'real life' which is shot as being live in front of the 'candid' camera or being recalled as testimony. Many do not even adopt the observational, 'fly-on-the wall' camerawork, studio or location-based 'talking heads', etc. The key tenet adhered to, however, is to express the basic truths that exist. A more contemporary example in studying documentary film making is *United 93* by *Paul Greengrass* (2006) and *Davis Guggenheim's An Inconvenient Truth* (2006). Both are non-fiction films. However the former is a reconstructed version as recreated based on research into actual events that occurred on September 11, 2001, portraying it as accurately as possible to maintain dramatic coherence; the latter however is an attempt to build a

case for climate-change controlled by communicating a number of statistics that propitiates the argument of it. Both are non-fiction in nature, and are engaged with the act of truth-telling. But Guggenheim's film, based on the passionate and real belief of rhetorician Al Gore, is considered a documentary film, while *United 93*, though imitating convincingly the characteristics of non-fiction, especially in its hand-held, 1960s 'cinéma-vérité' style of filmmaking, is seen more as a hybrid form of film making- a 'documentary drama', or a 'docudrama', made from historical research.

In India, since the inception of cinema, documentaries have always been an integral part of our film culture. Although, not associated to common audience, in a mass screening anymore, certain documentaries were part of mass cinema viewing in movie theatres. For example, the newsreels, used to screen before movie screening in theatres. Newsreels are a form of short documentary, containing news stories and matter of topical interest. S.Sukhdev's *Nine Months to Freedom* gained popularity among common mass during Bangladesh' War of Freedom. In the last decade, a parallel documentary movement is going on in India, representing as a culture on film circuits globally.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.2:** Who coined the term documentary? How did he define documentary?

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**Q.3:** What is a newsreel?

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## 9.5 FILM AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Films are cultural and ideological projection, reflecting political issues and processes, taking place within a region, country or worldwide. It is a cross-cultural flow and exchange of ideas, images, symbols, and stereotypes

are directly related to the processes of interpretation and cultural reproduction. Films are often a reflection of some historical-political processes like colonialism, liberalism, socialism, and major religions. Nationalism and imperialism are also a key point of reference. These all significantly represent identity or its representation and are an influence of it.

Besides cultural identity, it does very often have political leanings towards the left or the right in its representations of identity itself and does reflect the corporate dominance of globalization in its production, distribution and reception. All these lead to defining and redefining identities of audiences as represented, or in its attempt to influence that identity. Interestingly, it is through cinema for example, that the rise of religious nationalism that occurred in the Balkan region after the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia was seen to be similar to the phenomenon that occurred in other post-communist countries.

Film and cultural identity can also be seen in the distribution of wealth that forms a culture of rich elite around the globe. It is observed as something that has very little context to their own cultures and society but as something that is more in common with others of their own class around the world. It is similar to the shared struggle experienced by different communities and the poor around the world. Thus studying cultural representations and cinematic depictions of the notions of identity, religiousness, or otherness in cinema that one finds around the world does provide for a good foundation for critical reconstructions of locality and globalism.

Religion and its relationship to national and social identities, has also been more evident as a context in cinema. The nation and religion are embedded in cultural myths that are beginning to have a deeper relevance in the global setting. Research in the field of cinematic depictions of identity, religion, and myths reveal their cultural perceptions and are integral parts of the cultural ideologies and the narratives that they produce in film-making. The links that exist between religion, identity, and cultural myths, and how their interconnection with dominant ideologies, are reflected in popular cinematic representations and in the cross-cultural understandings and interpretations of films from different regions of the world.

Cinema is a constructed world of symbols, rituals, and myths. It is through them that ideological realities are being continuously reproduced and reconfirmed. Films embody the ideological concepts of the cultures in the context of which it is produced, distributed and received. Ideology here implies, the ruling set of ideas that dominate society, involving one's mental framework, and range from imagery to language to what is supposed to be the thoughts and systems of representation. While studying cinema and its connection to cultural identity, one has to consider what ideology implies. It is supposed to consist of cultural elements, thus transforming cinema to a complex ideological machine that is at times defined by ideology in its make, distribution and exhibition and at times influences it in its reception.

Films have portrayed a wide variety of racial, ethnic, gender and cultural stereotypes. Often minority groups appear in disparaging roles or do not appear at all, relying on the old notion of appealing to a majority at the cost of inflicting the minority more 'insignificant' set of people. This is true whether in Hollywood blockbusters, American sitcoms, or closer home on Indian television and cinema. The cycle of negative stereotyping has been in existence for long, though positive developments are becoming more visible, particularly in independent films that are being produced by a number of film-makers with a more critical perspective on films and cultural identity.

A better comprehension of global and local ideological and political processes can take place, when one observes the cinematic representations of interconnected issues like that of gender, race, religion, economy and nationalism. This is particularly true also in the context of transnational cinema that is overtime being redefined. Scholars have argued that the term 'transnational', has often been used in the context of Diaspora and its 'multiple identifications'. It is in such cinema, for instance where 'multi-locality' serves to re-strengthen and re-create bonds that go beyond geographical boundaries.

In terms of film and cultural identity, films are considered transnational in a number of ways, from its very production to distribution. The reason being, trans-nationalism suggests a flow of ideas taking place cross-

culturally. The reinterpretations that one finds of the ideas and narratives made by diverse audiences across the world, for example land up providing cinematic narratives a trans-national dimension.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.4:** How films are associated with identity? Define.

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## 9.6 FILM AUDIENCES

The choices that film audiences' experience are often influenced by class, ethnicity and differences between different countries. Usually our approach to films or what we bring to it is a result of the individual histories that we ourselves are subjected to; histories that are a reflection of our social setups and our reference groups like that of family, work and education. Thus, our tastes in films are situated within this larger paradigm of said dispositions, making us at ease socially to certain film texts and their said locations, while rejecting others.

However, we cannot also rule out the fact that audiences are also influenced by the imaginary constructions of films as 'cult' 'trash' etc., But this luring of audiences towards a certain kind of films is not just a result of individual preferences; it is also determined by the packaging it undergoes in terms of how it is circulated, the various networks and domains that it moves through while being produced and presented, along with the aesthetic elements involved. These help to achieve a certain status, which is then promoted to the target group audiences accordingly.

The marketing of films is based on a study of film audiences. Audience research (quantitative and qualitative) is used to image and define audiences and their behavior towards various media they have an access to and they wish to experience, including films. It helps determine the shelf-life (as it is referred to in marketing terms) i.e. longevity of the life of a film in context with different audience markets. This include the defining of

potential markets for any film, based on social demographic, geographic and psychographic factors of the audience concerned and in identifying the various windows through which a film can be released overtime like DVDs, Satellite, OTT platforms and in its theatrical release. This information helps to produce a pattern of film consumption. Reception sites and the practices of cinema viewing are acknowledged as specific cultures, but it is also governed by social distinction in access of films.

Critics have of course mentioned that marketing research might simply be used for construction of knowledge about audiences, rather than the reporting of it, using its own system of classifications and priorities which might be reflective of how marketing executives frame their audiences. Thus some have even stated that film audience research data especially those that specifically rely on social demographic segmentation, which has very often in the past been the case, is thus unreliable in nature. Some of the audiences might claim visiting the cinema a couple of times to simply prove that they lead a lively, social and cultural life. So the problem with market research might be that the situation of the interview conducted and the narrative of the questionnaire might result in inaccurate data of the said audience's cinema going habits.

How do we then identify film audiences for a niche market as opposed to a homogeneous one? Both advertising/marketing of films and market research have experienced a new shift lately. While the advertising, designed is more emotive, design-oriented and is a result of market research that has taken into consideration the very fragmented nature of target group audiences, the advertising has thus shifted away from a utility based rational approach to the construction of an elaborate imaginary landscape that audiences are invited to be a part of. The reason behind this is marketing research's inclination towards relying not simply on demographic data alone but psychographic data too. This means a higher emphasis on classification of taste clusters based on what are perceived to be the personal attributes of the consumer rather than their occupation alone. So the definition of the audience is not simply determined by their vocational or economic conditions but also on their cultural environment. Thus film consumption patterns are now being linked with other more complex lifestyle patterns of the audience

concerned. These patterns may not necessarily be at a conscious level alone but people's tastes and choices are existent at a subconscious level too. Thus the survey conducted will include inquiries about the respondent's ownership or access to various technologies that determine their viewing patterns. For example the use of satellite/cable/dish TV, internet access, OTT platforms, radio or print media. Thus, this helps to focus on aspects of media consumption that goes beyond choice and taste in films alone. It highlights cross-media ownership, identifies the nature of home based consumption of media including films, which has been accelerated further by the digital media format and delivery that is possible these days, thus providing information on the nature of the range of markets that media content producers are catering to whether now or in the future. It also assists in providing data on the audience's lifestyle patterns, leisure activities, shopping and the information and cultural spheres that they are a part of or that they identify with. All of this data is then cross-referenced with the demographic features of the target group audience such as age, sex and socio-economic classification.

Genre, of course is one of the ways in which filmic taste in audience is identified. Usually a selection of specific box-office films is individually monitored to identify its consumption pattern. Narrative rather than genre or the media format is seen as the important feature of the film texts considered. Such findings do not necessarily represent the audience's thoughts about the film, the value judgements they make or their other engagements with the text concerned, however it does highlight consumption patterns related to time and space. The various sites of film-viewing- the theatre, television or OTT platforms, throws light on the consumer concerned.

Spatial practices add to the understanding of film cultures. Film is considered to be a commodity which represents a symbolic capital in its originality and novelty. Its acquisition is seen on its access at the time of release. This depends on the promotional culture that it becomes a part of, often seen as a 'media event' also considered pervasive in nature. The temporal nature of film, in marketing terminologies- its lifespan or shelf-life

depends on how it has been managed, adding or reversing its short life expectancy based on the promotional activities conducted. Its release is seen as the filmic moment that capitalizes on what can be considered the ephemeral nature of the content itself. And hence, first day-first show phenomenon that drives the film business and the audience's response to it.

Marketing of the film takes on a whole circuit of promotional materials including restricted screenings which helps in securing a professional audience for the film, whose review is paramount to the wider official film release. It acts as a preparation for the said event of release. These preview screenings have a restricted access, create a notion of insider knowledge, with the presence of celebrities besides the cast and crew of the film, blurring the fictional and factual signifiers of the film's text and the institutions of production involved. It also includes print, television and other online platform producers interviewing the cast and directors. Merchandising or promotional material too is part of this marketing circuit. It often permeates into other spheres of consumption like clothing, music, cosmetics and food combining promotion and sponsorship, besides posters and trailers which are the standard advertisements used. Thus filmic value is then often determined by the innovative practices of marketing in the public domain and the resulting interest shown by the film consumers that results in a shared social network of exchanges. This relationship between the public and private spheres that propel filmic value has been a subject of much debate and inquiry from a number of quarters.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.5:** Fill in the blanks with appropriate words to complete the sentences:

a) Usually our approach to films or what we bring to it is a result of the ……that we ourselves are subjected to; histories that are a reflection of our social setups and our reference groups like that of family, work and education.

b) Audience research (quantitative and qualitative) is used to image and define audiences and their behavior towards various ……..they have an access to and they wish to experience, including films.

c) This means a higher emphasis on classification of taste clusters based on what are perceived to be the ……of the consumer rather than their occupation alone.

……of course is one of the ways in which filmic taste in audience is identified.



## 9.7 LET US SUM UP

- Crossover films with a multi-lingual approach, worked for a substantial number of Indians living abroad, It had an equally compelling impact on people in India many of whom had connections with people living abroad.
- Documentary, term coined by John Grierson for historical or ethnographic representations comprise a film culture across the globe.
- Film is associated with cultural identity. It is a cultural and ideological projection, reflecting political issues and social ideologies, taking place within a region, country or worldwide.
- Audience has their set of personal history and peer inclination. However market research and skillful marketing help shaping the audience's perception and thus forming a film culture.



## 9.8 FURTHER READING

1. Harbord, J. (2002) *Film culturesLondon*: Sage Publications
2. Costanzo, W. V (2014) *World Cinema Through Global Genres UK: John Wiley & Sons*, Incorporated
3. Neale, S. (200) *Genre and Hollywood*, London: Routledge

## 9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans. to Q. No. 1:** Crossover films started off as a means to address the reality of a new generation of Indian immigrants, their friends and relatives. Consisting of multi-lingual films, it was different from commercial cinema. Its popularity in India increased with new set of niche audiences who wished to dabble with a more intellectual form of entertainment, tired of spoofs and slapstick comedy, welcoming instead comedy based on real life scenarios. They were not looking towards films as a medium of escape but more as an articulation and expression of reality; doing away with fantasies and concentrating instead on real life problems, joys and lifestyles. It worked well with the multilingual format as that helped to express the Indian reality better than in a single language. Their emergence to popularity was seen with movies like *Hyderabad Blues, Mr And Mrs Iyer, Bend It Like Beckham , Monsoon Wedding*, *Bhaji on the Beach* etc that appealed to the cosmopolitan Indian audience.

**Ans. to Q. No. 2:** John Grierson, coined the term documentary to refer as a historical record. He used it in his description of Robert Flaherty's film, *Moana* as a historical or ethnographic film. Later he described his own work as 'the creative treatment of actuality'.

**Ans. to Q. No. 3:** A Newsreel is a form of short-documentary, containing news stories and items of topical interest.

**Ans. to Q. No. 4:** Films are cultural and ideological projection, reflecting political issues and processes, taking place within a region, country or worldwide. It is a cross-cultural flow and exchange of ideas, images, symbols, and stereotypes are directly related to the processes of interpretation and cultural reproduction. Films are often a reflection of some historical-political processes like colonialism, liberalism, socialism, and major religions. Nationalism and imperialism are also a key point of reference. These all significantly

represent identity or its representation and are an influence of it. Beside, films also represent the ideologies of the maker.

**Ans. to Q. No. 5:** a) individual histories b) media c)personal attributes d) Genre,



## 9.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)**

**Q. 1:** Explain how 'different film cultures are being delivered to different locations that have different symbolic statuses associated with them'.

**Q. 2:** How does a film's text transform altogether when it reaches a festival circuit.

**Q. 3:** How is audience research used in studying film audiences?

**B. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)**

**Q. 1:** Briefly write what you know about films and cultural identity.

**Q. 2:** Who are the film audiences and what does marketing to them involve?

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# UNIT 10: CINEMA OF NORTH-EAST INDIA

## UNIT STRUCTURE


10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Beginning of Films in North-East

10.4 Problems of Film Making in North-East

10.5 Film Industry in Assam

10.6 State's Initiative to promote Regional Cinema

10.7 Let Us Sum Up

10.8 Further Reading

10.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.10 Model Questions


## 10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- evaluate the evolution of cinema in North-East.
- examine problems of Filmmaking in North-East.
- identify and define the problems and prospects of Film Industry in Assam.

## 10.2 INTRODUCTION

Cinema in North east India started in 1935 with the making of "Joymoti", the first Assamese film. Despite having a cinematic history of 88 years and having a good number of internationally acclaimed filmmakers like Prabhat Mukherjee, Bhupen Hazarika, Jahnu Barua, Aribam Syam Sharma, Jwngdao Bodosa, Gautam Bora, Pradip Kurbah, Manju Borah, Bhaskar Hazarika, Rima Das and others, Cinema from the Northeast has mostly remained on the margins of Indian cinema. One of the primary reasons behind is that the history of film in India's north-east, except a few passing references remains largely unwritten or written in vernacular languages. Exposure to watch the master pieces from the region is limited only to film

festival screenings. Even in the run of digital technologies most of the critically appreciated films from the region are yet to archive. In this unit, we will discuss about the evolution and challenges of Cinema in North -East.

## 10.3 BEGINNING OF FILM IN NORTH EAST INDIA

Home to different ethno-lingual communities with their own living dialects North-East has a large possibility to bloom as a paradise for indigenous, independent filmmaking. However, only Assamese and Manipuri filmmakers have largely dominated the scene for having a slightly respectable viewer base. Due to less number of viewers and viewing space with practically no way for theatrical release, although acting as a platform to showcase ethno-cultural aspirations, films made in languages like Kokborok or Monpa, spoken by small tribes hardly can hope to recover even the investment. But despite facing such financial disasters films have been made in these languages. There has been cinema in languages like Bodo, Karbi, Mishing, Khasi and even Sadri, the lingua franca of the tea garden labourers of Jharkhand and Sambalpur origin.

Jyotiprasad Agarwala, a doyen of Assamese culture, popularly known as Rupkonwar, produced and directed the first Assamese film *'Joymoti'* in 1935. This is the first Cinematic venture from the region. Among the states of North-East, Assam produces highest number of films per year. Next to Assam, in North-East India highest number of films have been produced in Manipur. Manipur is considered as one of the most culturally rich states of India. The state is well known for its folk dance forms and theatrical excellence. Though making of films in Manipur started only in 1972 but some temporary film showing houses were established in Manipur even before the Second World War. Kasturichand Jain and Ramkumar were the pioneer film exhibitors who ran show houses in Manipur in the pre-war period. It is very unfortunate that the same state has to witness the closure of movie theatres across the Imphal valley in mid 1990s after a ban on screening of Hindi Films in theatres, which has affected the economic viability of the movie-making business. The first ever Manipuri film, *Matamgi Manipur* (1972) was produced by Karam Monomohan and directed by

Debkumar Bose. It was released on 9th April, 1972 simultaneously in three cinema halls. This is a notable point that the first film itself won the President's Medal in the 20th National Film Festival. Since then film making in Manipur continues but in a slow pace. The first Manipuri colour film was made in 1984 named *Langlen Thadoi* directed by M.A. Singh. However, though produced less in number, Manipuri films continued to win awards in different national and international film festivals. One of the well known Manipuri filmmaker Aribam Syam Sharma's film named *Imagi Ningthem* won the prestigious Grand Prix in the Nantes International Film Festival in France in 1982. K. Ibohal Sharma, M. Nilamani, Thouyangba Thoungamba are some other famous filmmakers of Manipur.

In Meghalaya Prodip Kurbah with his films brought laurels to the region. While his filmic ventures *Onaatah* and *Iewduh* won the Best Film in Khasi Language at the National Film Awards, *Iewduh* has also received best Audiography award on the same platform. The first film in Khasi language was *Ka Synjuk Ri ki Laiphew Syiem* in 1981 by Hamlet Bareh Ngapkynta. *Manik Raitong* directed by Ardhendu Bhattacharya in the year 1984 was the first Khasi film in colour. The movie also represented the Indian Panorama at the Tokyo Film Festival. Apart from the Khasi films Chake was a film from the Jaintia hills of Meghalaya. Despite getting festival appreciation, number of films made in Meghalaya is very less in number due to the lack of viewing space.

*Sonam*, 2006 was the first film from the state of Arunachal Pradesh in Monpa language that was shot following neo-realist techniques and was appreciated highly by the film critics and in festivals. However, with only one cinema hall in Arunachal Pradesh, screenings for the local audience are hard to organise. Ten years down the line, in the year 2016, Wancho film *The Head Hunter* by Nilanjan Dutta also has to face similar situation in terms of local viewing experience. Kokborok language film *Mathia, Yarwng* or acclaimed Mizo film *Khawnlung Run*, all these vernacular language films from the region had to face the question of commercial or economic viability due to inadequate number of screen space and audience.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.1:** Name the first film venture from India's North-East.

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**Q.2:** Mention two films from Meghalaya to receive acclaim across film circuit.

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**Q.3:** What was the first film from Arunchal Pradesh shot in neo-realist technique?

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## 10.4 PROBLEMS OF FILM MAKING IN NORTH EAST

The issue of inadequate viewing experience serves as a primary reason behind limited exposure to the films made from North-East and thus affects the movie-making process in small tribal languages. Despite making a good number of acclaimed films, viewing experience to these master pieces from the region is limited only to film festival circuit. Most of the critically appreciated films from the region are yet to archive digitally. Many of them are lost in celluloid format. In Arunchal Pradesh, their first film *Sonam*, 2006 despite receiving critical appreciation by the film critics and in festivals, could not develop a film culture in the region. In 2016, Wancho film *The Head Hunter* by Nilanjan Dutta also has to face similar situation in terms of local viewing experience due to unavailability of mass movie viewing apparatus. Case is same for Kokborok language film *Mathia, Yarwng* or Mizo masterpice *Khawnlung Run*. All these vernacular language films from the region have to face the question of commercial or economic viability due to inadequate number of screen space and audience.

Filmmaking in the region had also to face many challenges like absence of a market and infrastructure, lack of funds and technical expertise etc. State's initiative to promote and uphold film culture is very minimal in this regard.

Ban by Militant groups also adds to the list of problems faced by North-Eastern Filmmakers. In Manipur and Assam, ban by militant groups on Hindi films, led to a closure of movie theatres and financial imbalance in the mid '90s and early 2000s. However, the young filmmakers of Manipur, has done the impossible task of converting their film industry into a digital one from the screening perspective to meet the financial challenge associated with the closure of movie theatres. Now the state produces around 60-70, extremely low budget digital feature films every year. This bunch of filmmakers also went on to file a petition in the Gauhati High Court and made the Information and Broadcasting Ministry to make digital films eligible for the national film awards and Indian Panorama. Thus, they opened the doors for all low-budget films made in not so heard of language to compete with others. Joyseng Dohutia's *Haanduk* in Moran language from Assam in 2016 is one such case of success.

Language diversity also makes the film market of North East commercially non-viable in terms of Box office successes. In the next unit, we will discuss this from Assamese perspective.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Q.4:** Fill in the blanks with appropriate words to complete the sentences.

a) In Arunchal Pradesh, their first film……, 2006 despite receiving critical appreciation by the film critics and in festivals, could not develop a ……in the region.

b) Filmmaking in the region also had to face many challenges like absence of a ……and infrastructure, lack of funds and technical expertise etc.

**Q.5:** Discuss in brief the challenge faced by filmmakers of North East with the ban on Hindi Cinema by the militancy eventually leading to the closure of Cinema Halls.

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## 10.5 FILM INDUSTRY IN ASSAM

Jyotiprasad Agarwala produced and directed the first Assamese film *'Joymoti'* in 1935. It was four years after the first Indian talkie *'Alam Ara'* made by Ardeshir Irani had released i.e. in 1931. Since *Joymoti* was a talkie there is no silent era in Assamese film history like many other film industries. *Joymoti* was based on the tragic patriotic story of Ahom princes Joymoti who had died to save her husband from the hands of the cruel king. It was a notable approach by Jyotiprasad not only because it is the first Assamese film but also because of the effort to portray historical content in a realistic way. In *Joymoti*, Jyotiprasad himself managed almost every aspect from script writing, cinematography, music composing to dubbing of all the characters (both male and female). Jyotiprasad made another film *Indramaloti* in 1939. After this, few other people came out to make films in Assamese language with historical subjects. For example: *Monomoti* by Rohini Kumar Barua in 1941, *Badan Barphukan* by Kamal Narayan Chowdhury in 1947.

Bishnu Prasad Rabha and Phani Sharma, two other great artists of Assamese soil and close associates of Jyotiprasad made the film *Siraj* in 1948 which was considered as the first commercially successful Assamese film. *Siraj* is a milestone in Assamese film history since it was based on Hindu-Muslim communal harmony and at that time India was terribly suffering from this sensitive issue.

Slowly the production of Assamese films started increasing. Assamese film industry took a little leap forward by the films like *Runumi* (1953), *Nimila Anka* (1955), *Era Bator Sur* (1956), *Smritir Parash* (1956), *Mak aru Morom* (1957), *Ronga* Police (1958), *Puberun* (1959), *Ito Situ*

*Bahuto* (1963), *Partidhwani* (1965), *Lotighoti* (1966), *Dr. Bezbarua* (1969), *Baruar Sansar* (1970), *Jog Biyog* (1971) in the black and white era. Some of the well known Assamese filmmakers like Lakshydhar Chowdhury, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, Nip Barua, Brajen Barua, Dwiban Baruah, and Abdul Mazid began their journey in this period by making few memorable and commercially successful films. Assamese films made a mark in the national scenario also with few national awards. *Puberun*, directed by Prabhat Mukherjee is the first Assamese film to get exhibited in the Berlin International Film Festival in 1960.

Assamese film entered the colour era in 1972 with *Bhaiti* directed by Kamal Narayan Chowdhury. In the next period Assamese film industry produced some well appreciated films of all time like *Banariya Phul* (1973), *Bristi* (1975), *Chameli Memsab* (1975), *Ganga Chilonir Pakhi* (1975), *Polashor Rong* (1976), *Sandhyarag* (1977), *Kallol* (1978), *Ajali Nobow* (1980), *Buwari* (1982), *Aparoopa* (1982), *Ghar Shanshar* (1982), *Kokadeuta Nati aru Hati* (1982) etc. During this period two filmmakers Dr. Bhabendra Nath Saikia and Jahnu Barua known for their artistic and realistic filmmaking all over India entered the industry. In this period Assamese films earned commercial success also. Buses loaded with people coming from remote areas to the theatres to watch films became a common scene in Assam.

Assamese film industry got the first female director in 1984 named Suprabha Devi who directed the film *Nayanmoni*. Assamese film industry crossed fifty years of existence and went ahead with ups and downs. Filmmaking in some of the dialects of Assam was also started. In 1987 *Halodhiya Charaye Baodhan Khai* directed by Jahnu Barua won the National Award for Best Film. This film was screened in different international film festivals and won awards also. Filmmakers like Shiva Prasad Thakur, Pulak Gogoi, Munin Barua, Mridul Gupta, Gautam Bora, Hemen Das, Sanjeev Hazarika, Chandra Mudoi, Bidyut Chakroborty, and Dr. Santwana Bordoloi made their mark in the Assamese film industry in the 80's and 90's. Some of the remarkable and popular films of this age are *Sendur* (1984), *Jiban Surabhi* (1984), *Sonmoina* (1984), *Agnisnan* (1985), *Mon Mandir* (1985), *Anthony Mur Naam* (1986), *Pita Putra* (1988), *Ajala Kakai* (1989), *Shewali*

(1989), *Kolahol* (1989), *Joonj* (1990), *Dristi* (1991), *Pahari Kanya* (1991), *Firingoti* (1991), *Prabhati Pokhir Gaan* (1992), *Sarathi* (1992), *Haladhar* (1993), *Aborton* (1993), *Meemansha* (1994), *Xagoroloi Bohudoor* (1995), *Itihas* (1996), *Rag Birag* (1996), *Deutar Biya* (1997), *Adarjya* (1997) etc.

Though throughout the years Assamese films were being produced it doesn't mean that the film industry of Assam is economically very rich. Many films which were well appreciated outside and even award winning films couldn't get commercial success. Like other film industries of India, including mainstream Mumbai based Hindi film industry; the home theatre culture had also affected Assamese film industry. VCRs and cassettes were being sold or rented in low cost. Hence number of viewers hitting movie theatre faced a downfall. At this situation in 1998, a film brought new hope to the industry with grand commercial success. It was *Joubone Amoni Kore* produced and directed by Ashok Kumar Bishaya. After the success of this film in the next few years the number of films produced in a year increased. In this period filmmakers like Jahnu Barua, Manju Bora, Sanjeev Hazarika, Sanjiv Sabhapandit contributed with some remarkable creations like *Pokhi* (2000), *Matsyagandha* (2000), *Anya Ek Jatra* (2001), *Konikar Ramdhenu* (2002), *Akashitorar Kothare* (2003), *Tora* (2004), *Juye Pura Son* (2004), *Laaz* (2004), *Jatinga Ityadi* (2006) etc. Munin Barua coming out of his popular entertainment based trend directed a film named *Dinabandhu* (2004) which was considered as one of finest art pieces of Assamese films of the last decade. It is also true that during this period audience of films with real life social issues or artistic approach were decreasing while some of the films which were mainly based on entertainment earned good commercial success. For example: *Maharathi* (1999), *Bukur Majot Jwole* (1999), *Hiya Diya Niya* (2000), *Dag* (2001), *Nayak* (2001), *Maghot Mamonir Biya* (2002), *Bidhata* (2003), *Suren Suror Putek* (2005) etc were considered as commercially successful.

But this commercial success didn't last for a long time. In the first decade of this millennium as well Assamese film industry has to fight with severe crisis to safeguard its existence. Many of the successful films of the earlier decade were following Hindi films, as a McDonaldised copy. They

were not rooted in Assamese culture or society. Therefore audience very soon started avoiding such films. Again, while discussing the Assamese film scenario from demographic point of view the first point to be noted is that Assamese films market is not well spread even in Assam. That's why it is always being said that Assamese films' market is small. Among all the districts of Assam there are some zones where Bengali or Hindi films are given more importance than Assamese films. Especially in the districts of Barak valley where Bengali speaking people are more than Assamese speaking people, have a comparatively less profitable market for Assamese films than that in the districts of Brahmaputra valley, as commonly said by a remarkable section of the industry. This situation was realized even by Jyotiprasad Agarwala. According to him, "The amount which has to be invested for making a film to provide entertainment to the people cannot be recovered from only six Assamese dominated districts of Assam." Though many things have been changed after Jyotiprasad but the situation is not much different as it can be. When we discuss about the distribution and market of Assamese film industry there is no strong film distribution network in Assam. In such a scenario, very soon number of films produced in a year started decreasing. Simultaneously militant group United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) banned the screening of Hindi films in the movie theatres. Many theatres are being shut down because of constant losses. As a result Assamese language films also have lost their viewing spaces. While films like *Aideu* (2007), *Mon Jai* (2008), *Aai Kot Nai* (2008), *Basundhara* (2010), *Jetuka Pator Dore* (2010) etc obtained critical appraisal for the contents and portrayal of real life issues in acceptable ways, *Jonda Iman Gunda* (2007) and *Jeeban Bator Logori* (2009) made some limited commercial success.

In the beginning of 2011 Assamese film industry got a new boost in the form of Munin Barua's film *Raamdhenu*. The film was considered as a real hit with packed up theatres for many weeks. It was followed by another film *Janmoni* directed by Rajesh Bhuyan which also earned average success. Introduction of UFO's (United Film Organization) satellite projection in theatres made it easier to release one film in different halls in

different places at a same time and it played a crucial role behind the commercial success of these two films. With films like Bandhon, Ekhan Nedekha Nadir Xipare, Dwaar, Rodor Sithi, Ahetuk, Kothanodi, Maj Rati Keteki etc., that are being appreciated in film festival circuits; Assamese cinema seems to rise again in the second decade of the millennium. Interestingly most of these films made a good business in movie theatres as well. Apart from the cheer ups in festival regulars, four of the highest grossing Assamese films have also been made in this decade.

While talking about the films of Assam, one has to keep in mind the films made and released in languages other than Assamese. Since the release of first Bodo film *Daina* in 1984 by Amar Hazarika it was noticed that in Bodo dominated areas of Assam, a huge crowd thronged in the make-shift mobile viewing places, whenever a film in their language gets screened. In fact this love for their language cinema had challenged Jwngdao Bodosa to make *Ala Yaron* in 1986, which was a big hit. Later on he went on to make many other critically acclaimed films. Digital technology also served as a boon for Bodo filmmakers with its cost-efficient character. One can see a huge rise in the number of films produced per year in Bodo language since 2010. In the year 2017 itself till date 23 Bodo films have been produced and got released. In the year 2015, Manju Borah made her first Bodo film *Dao Huduni Methai.* The film was premiered in *Montreal World Film Festival* and was well appreciated in many festival circuits.

Manju Borah has also directed a Mishing language film *Koh-yad* in the year 2012, which also earned many critical acclaim across the globe. The first film in Mishing language, the second largest lingual demographic chunk from North-East, is *Migan*. However the cinema in Mishing language still has to go a long way in terms of production and production quality. Same is the case with Karbi language film. Gautam Bora's film Wosobipo (1991), was the first Karbi film. It explores the lives of tribal farmers in Karbi Anglong, and their alienation from a new market economy. Despite winning three prestigious awards at the National Film Awards and getting critically acclaimed, this film failed to set a trend. Karbi film industry is yet to mark a mark for itself except producing a few VCDs.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.6:** Name the first Assamese movie directed by a female director. Also mention the name of the director.

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**Q.7:** Which was the first Assamese film to exhibit in Berlin Film Festival?

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**Q.8:** Name the first Bodo film.

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## 10.6 STATE INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE REGIONAL CINEMA

Although state initiative to promote and uphold film culture is very minimal in the region, there are a few government organizations like Assam State Film Finance and Development Corporation, which provides financial assistance to filmmakers as well as theatre owners. It also organises film festivals, workshops in addition to the annual State Film Award. Occasionally it sends prominent filmmakers to film festivals across the globe to promote Assamese films. In 2010, the Corporation set up The Artist Welfare Fund to offer financial aid to ailing or handicapped artists of the state. It also started producing Assamese films since 2000. *Nisiddha Nadi* was their first production. However, it took a gap of 12 years to produce their second film. The Corporation also formulated the State Film Policy to ensure screening of films made in Assam.

In the state of Manipur, Manipur Film Development Council was set up in 1980 and it was converted into a Corporation in 1987 in order to support filmmaking in Manipur. It has been providing essential production equipments to the film producers since 1990. It also provides monetary funding in terms of loan and subsidy.

However, to establish a strong and indigenous film culture in the region, the state governments still have to travel a long way. State policy made by Assam Government, is yet to become a law. Ensuring film screening spaces to indigenous films, mobile cinema theatres run by Government and Rural Film Festivals should be initiated by the Government film organisations to establish a financially viable film culture in the region.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.9:** Write briefly about the initiatives taken by the Assam State Film (Finance and Development) Corporation.

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## 10.7 LET US SUM UP

- Cinema in North east India started in 1935 with the making of "Joymoti", the first Assamese film. Despite having a cinematic history of 88 years and having a good number of internationally acclaimed films, Cinema from North East is yet to establish a firm foothold in the world of films..
- Apart from Assamese, films from Manipur and Meghalaya have been shining in the film festival circuits. Films from Arunachal and Mizoram have also been received received well by critics and cinephiles; but due to the lack of film viewing spaces , it has yet to get mass attention.
- Cinema of North-East have been facing facing a wide array of challenges, including ban on Hindi cinema, leading to the closure of

theatres. However, independent filmmakers have been making their way with the advent of digital technologies.

- State finance Corporations in Assam and Manipur are working for the betterment of a film environment. However, state assistance is very minimal for filmmaking.



## 10.8 FURTHER READING

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3. Sharma, A. (2001). *Akhomiya Chalachitrra- Itihakhar Ruprekha*, Durgacharan Pujari Smritu Nyash



## 10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans. to Q. No. 1:** Jyotiprasad Agarwala, a doyen of Assamese culture and society, popularly known as Rupkonwar, produced and directed the first Assamese film *'Joymoti'* in 1935

**Ans. to Q. No. 2:** In Meghalaya Prodip Kurbah's filmic ventures *Onaatah* and *Iewduh* won the Best Film in Khasi Language in the National Film Award. Besides, Iewdad has also received best Audiography award on the same platform.

**Ans. to Q. No. 3:** In Arunachal Pradesh, Sonam is the first film to be shot with neo-realist techniques.

**Ans. to Q. No. 4:** a) Sonam, b) film culture c) market

**Ans. to Q. No. 5:** Ban by Militant groups also adds to the list of problems faced by North-Eastern Filmmakers. In Manipur and Assam, ban by militant groups on Hindi film, led to the closure of film theatres. replace 'that' with 'It' caused a financial imbalance in the mid '90s and early 2000s in Manipur and Assam respectively. The young

filmmakers of Manipur, had done the impossible task of converting their film industry into a digital one from the screening perspective to meet the financial challenge associated with the closure of movie theatres, following the ban. Now the state produces around 60-70, extremely low budget digital feature films every year. This bunch of filmmakers also went on to file a petition in the Gauhati High Court and made the Information and Broadcasting Ministry to make digital films eligible for the national film awards and Indian Panorama. Thus they opened the doors for all low-budget films made in not so heard of language to compete with others. Joyseng Dohutia's *Haanduk* in Moran language from Assam in 2016 is one such case of success.

**Ans. to Q. No. 6:** Assamese film industry got the first female director in 1984 with Suprabha Devi directing the film *Nayanmoni*.

**Ans. to Q. No. 7:** *Puberun*, directed by Prabhat Mukherjee is the first Assamese film to get exhibited at the Berlin International Film Festival in 1960.

**Ans. to Q. No. 8:** Amar Hazarika's *Daina* in 1984 is the first Bodo film.



## 10.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)**

**Q. 1:** Write a short note on Meghalya's Film endeavours.

**Q. 2:** Write briefly about the state finance to independent filmmakers in the state of Manipur.

**Q. 3:** "Young Filmmakers from Manipur has changed the idea of filmmaking technologically." Define.

**B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)**

**Q. 1:** Briefly discuss the evolution of filmmaking in North East.

**Q. 2:** Write a brief note on the Manipuri film industry.

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# UNIT 11: FILM APPRECIATION

## UNIT STRUCTURE


11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Film Criticism

11.4 Review Writing

11.5 Film Analysis: Textual and Contextual analysis of films

11.6 Let Us Sum Up

11.7 Further Reading

11.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.9 Model Questions


## 11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- recognise what film criticism is and how to review a film with constructive criticism
- explain the benefits of thinking critically about film.
- examine and compare films from a contextual and textual point of view.

## 11.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units, you have been introduced to different aspects and concepts related to films and their evolution. You have learnt how a film is made, and how it is promoted. In this unit you are going to learn about film criticism, that is, the analysis and evaluation of films, individually and collectively.

## 11.3 FILM CRITICISM

Imagine if you are never praised nor are your negativities ever pointed out. You would neither be encouraged nor will you be able to understand in what ways you can improve yourself. Similarly criticism is a

very important aspect of a film. It is the feedback from the audience and film experts about how well a film has been made or how badly it has performed in the theatres.

Film criticism can be divided into journalistic criticism and academic criticism.

**Journalistic criticism** refers to the type of reviews that appear in newspapers, and popular mass-media outlets like magazines and online media. Film critics who work for newspapers, magazines, broadcast media and online publications regularly as well as independent film bloggers review new releases every week. The way the critics review the films can have a significant business impact on people's choice of a film. Poor reviews can doom a film to box-office failure and financial loss.

Nowadays, the most popular sources of film reviews are those available in the online and social media. Some websites, such as Rotten Tomatoes, Metacritic and Rate The Film seek to improve the usefulness of film reviews by compiling them and assigning a score to each in order to gauge the general reception a film receives. There are also sites like Spill.com where they offer an innovative form of ratings such as "rent it" or "matinée" to tell the viewer whether to watch the film at home or enjoy it at the theatre, instead of assigning a numerical score. Platforms like Film Companion, allows some space for written and visual release reviews along with classes on production.



***Blogging:*** Blogging is the act of posting content on a blog (a Web log or online journal) or posting comments on someone else's blog.

**Blogging**

**Blogging** is the act of posting content on a **blog** (a Web log or online journal) or posting comments on someone else's blog.

There is also an increasing number of websites emerging that allow internet users to submit movie reviews and scores to allow a broad consensus review of a movie. Blogging is another emerging trend that has given birth to a new wave of amateur film critics who wish to put forward their opinions too. However blogs are mostly the accounts of personal experiences of the film and not considered to be criticism in its professional sense.

In recent times, the impact that reviews have on a film's box office performance have become a matter of concern and discussion. To start with, most people have now made it a point to wait for the first day of a film's release to not simply beat the crowd, but also to find out from the fresh reviews if the film is worth watching or not. This is also leading many modern filmmakers to resort to innovative advertising and clever promotional tricks, with which they expect to popularise the film among the viewers and cover up for any negative responses during the first few days of the release, so that they do not have to incur any major financial losses. In such cases, the opinions of established reviewers with legitimate criticism often remain unheard over the ruckus of popular support.

It can be observed that most of the discussion of film on popular media, in current time, is focused on the amount of box office business a film does, as if financial success were the only criterion needed to define artistic success. Occasionally, such platforms publish pieces beyond business reviews covering theoretical aspects of film. Therefore, arts criticism in general does not hold the same place it once held with the general public. However, trendy, weekly reviews consists only the fundamental of film criticism.

Film criticism, especially **academic criticism** includes plot analysis, discussion of performances- acting and other, visual and aural aesthetics of mise-en-scene, character analyses, and also the socio-political as well as cultural context of the film. Film criticism is the art of analyzing and evaluating a film. One can trace the origin of film criticism in a cohesive way to the writings of 'Cinema' during Italian Neo-Realism and 'Cohiers – du-Cinema' of French New Wave. During this period film theories evolved. Film critics also started deploying theories of painting as well as other artistic expressions in cinematic analysis. Gradually film writing evolved into a form of serious writing beyond the narration of a story and took the shape of an academic discourse.

**Academic criticism** of the film is the opinions of film scholars who are well informed of film theories and are regular publishers in academic journals. These scholars try to analyse why the film works, how it works, what it

means, and what effects it has on people. Instead of writing for popular media publications, their articles are published in scholarly journals that tend to be affiliated with university presses.



**ACTIVITY 11.1**

1. Take a recently released film and find out as many reviews about the film as possible from different sources. Try to understand if all the reviews are unanimous about the film's performance, as whether its box office business says the same thing too.

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**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.1:** What is journalistic criticism?

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**Q.2:** Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:

Spill.com offers an innovative form of ratings such as _____or _____ to tell the viewer whether to watch the film at home or enjoy it at the theatre, instead of assigning a numerical score.

## 11.4 REVIEW WRITING

The film review, as mentioned above, is a popular way for critics to assess a film's overall quality and determine whether or not they think the film is worth recommending. Film reviews differ from scholarly film articles because of the way in which they encompass personal reactions to evaluate a film, as well as objectively analyses the film's formal techniques and thematic content.

A movie review should be able to give enough details about the movie so that the reader can make an informed decision, without giving away any essentials such as the plot or any surprises.

A good review is one which analyzes the overall effectiveness of the plot, theme, acting, direction, special effects, musical effects, cinematography, and all other elements that went into creating the movie.

Now let us understand how we need to proceed in order to write an effective movie review.

Your review shall comprise of five components-

- An introduction
- Plot Summary
- Description
- Analysis
- Conclusion

Let us understand how to write a review by following these steps and writing the review of the children's film Chillar Party.

Introduction is a necessary formality that has to be incorporated when you write anything journalistic. The same goes for the film review. In the very beginning, you must provide a profile of the film that you are going to discuss about. You will need to include the name of the film, the date of release, its director, its music composer, the main cast, the basic setting (the time and place) and what genre the film belongs to (whether it is a romantic, comedy, adventure, thriller or drama etc.), or the target audience it is meant for. The introduction can be written either in a paragraph format or in bullet points. We have shown you both the ways below-

**The paragraph format-**

*After the success of the small budget children's movie Stanley Ka Dabba; Nitesh Tiwari and Vikash Bahl's Chillar Party, another small movie with little kids and a big message, hit the screens on the 8th of July 2011. The promos of the movie had successfully caught the attention of the viewers by dint of the brand name of Salman Khan Being Human*

*Productions and the item number Tai Tai Phish by Ranbir Singh at the end of the movie. However, in the movie, the real heroes were the eight school going kids of Chandan Nagar Society, who were better known in the colony as the Chillar party.*

**The bullet format-**

- *The Movie: Chillar Party*
- *The Audience: Made for children, meant for the adults*
- *The Directors: Nitesh Tiwari, Vikash Bahl*
- *The Producers: Ronnie Screwvala, Salman Khan*
- *The Music Director: Amit Trivedi*
- *The Cast: Irrfan Khan, Sanath Menon, Rohan Grover, Naman Jain, Aarav Khanna, Vishesh Tiwari, Chinmai Chandranshuh, Vedant Desai, Divji Handa, Shriya Sharma*
- *The Special appearance: Ranbir Kapoor in an item song*
- *The USP: The big gang of kids; the Chillar party!*

In the next section of the review, you generally write a short plot summary of the film without revealing much of the climax or the end. You should remember to keep this brief and avoid specific details that would spoil the viewing for others.

*With a very interesting style of narration, the movie opens with a unique introduction of the kids, who have been given different nicknames like Jhangia, Silencer, Aflatoon, Shaolin, Encyclopaedia etc. and each of whom has a different story to tell. Each one has a characteristic which makes them endearing, funny, and downright adorable. The kids, as a group, are strongly knit together and they live in a world of their own. When a homeless kid named Fatka enters the society as a domestic help along with his dog Bhidu, the kids try to get rid of him considering him and his dog as a threat to their reign in the society. But after an initial friction, the kids accept Fatka as a member of their group and become inseparable friends. The real story starts with the entry of the local politician Bhide (played by*

*Shashank Shinde), who during his visit to the Chandan Nagar society get entangled in a riff with Fatka and his dog, and orders all stray dogs in the city to be done away with, including Bhidu. The kids stand up to save Fatka and Bhidu and start their own revolution against the society and the politician.*

Notice that here we have not mentioned anything about 'how' the children stand up together to save *Fatka* or anything about whether they are successful at the end.

Now in the next section, you must provide some more description of the film. While the plot summary will give the reader a general sense of what the film is about, this description will further include a few more aspects of the film. You can discuss the message that the film delivers.

*One of the best traits of the movie, apart from the entertaining style of storytelling is its simplicity and the message that is conveyed, with the innocence of the children kept very much intact. The issue, as small as that of a stray dog losing its only shelter has been used wisely to convey yet another bigger message; i.e about the right of the children to actually stand up to something, and about the power they possess in the process of bringing changes to the society. The movie also portrays effectively the realities of life like how child labours are employed and how they are treated.*

Now you must start giving a deeper analysis of the film. This will include highlighting the positives and the negatives of the film from the technical point of view of the film's production.

*The entire movie is narrated from the children's point of view, but it deals very strongly with the issues related to the adults in the society. The performances of all the kids, though being their debuts, stand at a very high level and are more than enough to keep the audience glued to the screen without losing a wee bit of their interest. They are amazingly natural and confident. Special mention must be made of Naman Jain, who played Jhangia,- the kid who hated wearing his underwear, was the life of the movie. He had some of the best lines and the funniest scenes to his credit.*

*Each character had a specific role to play, and each of them was created by Vikash Bahl and Nitesh Tiwari with a purpose in mind. Not a single scene in the movie was unnecessary and the flow of the script was very smooth.*

*Like every other movie, Chillar Party had certain loopholes as well. In the second half of the movie, the narrative changes its original track and becomes a little contrived. Moreover, the issue that is taken up is not something that everyone alike can identify with and depends on each person's own perception. The music was quite average and other than Tai Tai Phish and Chatte Batte, the other songs could not gain much popularity. Also, the placing of Tai Tai Phish along with the end credits instead of somewhere in the middle or beginning of the movie is like a waste of the song, since most people leave the hall once the end credits appear.*

Finally you must round up the review with a brief conclusion, which will include your overall reaction to the film as well as your opinion on the quality of the film. Also include your recommendations for potential viewers. Make sure to remind the reader of why the film is or is not worth seeing.

*Over all, the movie is very fresh in every aspect. The idea of a Chaddi march as a device of revolution is a very original idea. With fresh concepts, new faces and unique style, Chillar Party emerges as a film that can inspire many more such children's movies with meaningful messages. Full of fun, comedy, entertainment, emotions and love, Chillar Party is indeed a must watch for all. After all, we all do need a change, don't we?*

By following the above described format, you can write out a proper and balanced review of a film. However, there are no hard and fast rules when it comes to the style of writing a review. Keeping these few points intact, you can always add in any new element or write the review in your own style. The purpose that must be served is that the review must be useful to the audience to help them decide whether or not they must watch a particular movie or not.



**ACTIVITY 11.2**

1. Watch a recently released movie and write its review.

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**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.3:** Name the components that a properly balanced review should have.

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**Q.4:** Fill in the blank with appropriate word to complete the sentence. The positives and the negatives of the film should be discussed in the _____ part of the review.

**Q.5:** What should be kept in mind while writing the plot summary in a review?

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## 11.5 FILM ANALYSIS: TEXTUAL AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF FILMS

Film analysis is a significant aspect of Film criticism. Film analysis is not the same as reviewing a film. It is usually done by academicians and scholars. Film analysis is the process in which a film is analyzed in terms of mise-en-scène, cinematography, sound, editing and other technical as well as theoretical aspects of film production and reception. One way of analyzing films is by the shot-by-shot analysis, though that is typically used only for small clips or scenes. Film analysis is closely connected to film theory.



***Cinematography:*** Cinematography is the art or technique of movie photography, including both the shooting and development of the film

Different authors recognize various types of approaches of film analysis: (1) Textual and contextual film analysis (structural approach), (2) topic based analysis (narrative approach), (3) picture and sound approach (iconic analysis), (4) psychoanalytical approach and (5) shot by shot approach. However, in this unit we shall discuss only about Contextual and Textual Analysis.

**CONTEXTUAL AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

Textual analysis (or, close reading) is a crucial building block of film analysis. Textual analysis of film requires observing and questioning all the elements that create meaning within the piece, such as acting, directing, lighting, ***cinematography***, ***mise-en-scene***, etc. Besides noticing the individual elements that create a film's meaning, textual analysis also involves understanding how the film fits into the larger context of its social, historical, cultural and political environment. So, textual analysis also requires researching a film's genre, audience as well as its historical, institutional, and socio-cultural significance. This is called contextual analysis. It's only in combining both that we can create a thorough understanding of the film.



***Mise-en-scene:*** Mise en scene is anything in the screen. For example setting, props. Basically anything you can see within the frame.

In Textual analysis, you focus on the material itself. On the other hand, Contextual analysis is when you have an awareness of the society, politics and culture of which the material was produced - the society the creator came from. Texts can be seen as products of their environment, and when you evaluate a text within its context your understanding of the material and its creator deepens.

Let us now see, what are the steps we need to follow, when we think of doing a textual analysis of a film. We need to understand what we are looking for in each element

- The first step of a textual analysis is to choose what film or TV show you are analysing.
- You then need to decide what element you are going to analyse. You could analyse all elements but do not try and do them all at once as you will be looking for too much.

- After planning what film you are analysing and what you are looking for, you are ready to start analysing, watch through the chosen text first without making any notes so you can familiarise yourself with the text.
- After you have watched it once, watch it again and start making notes. You will need to watch it more than once whilst making notes as you cannot be expected to pick up everything relevant on the first time.
- When you think you have analysed the text enough, watch it through once more without taking notes just to see if you have missed anything which might be important.

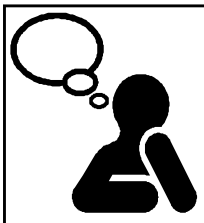
While analysing a film, some questions should get answered. These questions can be led from different aspects and contexts:

- Genre and audience specificity
- Historical and institutional factors
- Socio-cultural context
- Narrative
- Film language and its representation

With taking note of all or few of these aspects, in case of a specific analysis, you will be able to easily write out your textual and contextual analysis of the film.

Films are made to be seen and heard, to appeal to our visual and aural senses. Like any art form, however, films are also meant to be felt and understood, to appeal to our emotions and minds. One of the best ways to determine whether a film has succeeded in any or all of these goals is to analyze the elements that make up the whole work.

To write an analysis of a film, you must study the film carefully. Your critical analysis should be derived from your personal encounter with the film, not from published criticism. You must watch a film several times if you are going to perform a critical analysis of any depth. It is not enough to like or dislike the movie; you must determine why it succeeds or fails in reaching out and encompassing the viewer.



**ACTIVITY 11.3**

1. Watch your favourite movie from an analytical point of view and keep taking notes while watching. Elaborate and prepare an in depth analysis of the same.

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**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.6:** What do you mean by textual and contextual analysis of film?

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**Q.7:** What is Mise-en-scene?

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## 11.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have been introduced to the concept of film criticism and appreciation. You have learnt about the different forms of criticism, how to write reviews, and how to analyse a film. Let us once again go through some of the important points that we discussed.

- Film criticism can be divided into journalistic criticism and academic criticism. **Journalistic criticism** is the type of reviews that appear in newspapers, and popular mass-media outlets like magazines and online media. **Academic criticism** on the other hand is the opinions of film scholars who are well informed of film theories and are regular publishers in academic journals.

- Nowadays, reviews play an important role in the box office success of a film. People prefer to decide whether or not to watch a film after reading reviews about the film.
- A movie review gives enough details about the movie so that the reader can make an informed decision, without giving away any essentials such as the plot or any surprises. A good and a balanced review is one which analyzes the overall effectiveness of the plot, theme, acting, direction, special effects, musical effects, cinematography, and all other elements that went into creating the movie.
- Textual and contextual analysis of film requires observing and questioning all the elements that create meaning within the piece, such as acting, directing, lighting, cinematography, mise en scene, etc. Besides noticing the individual elements that create a film's meaning, textual analysis also involves understanding how the film fits into the larger context of its social, historical, cultural and political environment.



## 11.7 FURTHER READING

1. Introduction to Film Criticism: Major Critical Approaches to Narrative Film -*Tim Bywater, Thomas Sobchack* (Longman Publishing Group, 1989)
2. Agee on Film: Criticism and Comment on the Movies- *James Agee, Martin Scorsese* (Modern Library, 2000)



## 11.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans. to Q. No. 1:** Journalistic criticism is the type of reviews that appear in newspapers, and popular mass-media outlets like magazines and online media. Film critics who work for newspapers, magazines,

broadcast media and online publications regularly as well as film bloggers review new releases every week. Nowadays, instead of watching the first day first show, most people decide to go watch a film only after reading reviews about how the film is, lest their money on tickets go down the drains. The way the critics review the films can have an important impact on whether people decide to see a film or not. Poor reviews can doom a film to box-office failure and financial loss.

**Ans. to Q. No. 2:** Rent it and Matinee.

**Ans. to Q. No. 3:** A review should comprise of five components-

- An introduction
- Plot Summary
- Description
- Analysis
- Conclusion

**Ans. to Q. No. 4:** Analysis.

**Ans. to Q. No. 5:** While writing the plot summary of the film, one must take care to write it without revealing the climax or the end. You should also remember to keep this brief and avoid specific details that would spoil the viewing for others.

**Ans. to Q. No. 6:** Textual analysis (or, close reading) is a crucial building block of film analysis. Textual analysis of film requires observing and questioning all the elements that create meaning within the piece, such as acting, directing, lighting, cinematography, mise en scene, etc. Besides noticing the individual elements that create a film's meaning, textual analysis also involves understanding how the film fits into the larger context of its social, historical, cultural and political environment. So, textual analysis also requires researching a film's genre, audience as well as its historical, institutional, and socio-cultural significance. This is called contextual analysis. It's only in combining both that we can create a thorough understanding of the film.

**Ans. to Q. No. 7:** Mise en scene is basically anything you can see within the frame. For example setting, props.



## 11.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)**

**Q. 1:** What is journalistic criticism?

**Q. 2:** What is academic criticism?

**B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)**

**Q. 1:** How are reviews emerging as an important factor of determining a film's box office success?

**Q. 2:** How should one write a proper, balanced film review?

**Q. 3:** What do you mean by textual and contextual analysis of films?

*** ***** ***



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Name of the Paper: .....
Course Code: .....

**Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA)**
**Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University**
**City Office: Housefed Complex, Guwahati-781006**

*Learner's Feedback on Course*

**Dear Learner,**

Regarding the course as mentioned above, we would like to know your opinions and comments so as to improve the quality of self learning materials in future. Please respond to the following statements by ticking the number you feel most reflect your opinion. After completion of the additional comments, please detach the page and send/mail the same to us at the address given below.

**The Director, Centre for Internal Quality Assurance, KKHandiqui State Open University**
**Housefed Complex, Dispur, Guwahati-781006**
**(E-mail id: ciqa@kkhsou.in)**

1) Approximately how many hours did you spend for studying the units in the course? ☐☐☐

2) Please give your opinions (by ✓ mark) to the following items based on your reading of the block:

| Sl. No. | Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I) | The SLMs of the course fulfil the learning objectives set out in the beginning of each unit | | | | | |
| II) | The units of the SLM could satisfy my academic needs and expectations | | | | | |
| III) | The Unit writers have excellent knowledge about the course contents | | | | | |
| IV) | Language and contents of the units were presented at a level which I could readily understand | | | | | |
| V) | Ample opportunity for participation in the activities provided in the units | | | | | |
| VI) | Used enough Illustrations (Diagrams, tables etc.) for conceptual clarity | | | | | |
| VII) | Quality of content is engaging, relevant, and up-to-date | | | | | |
| VIII) | The self check questions are very helpful | | | | | |
| IX) | The Possible/model questions and the answers to check my progress have benefited me a lot | | | | | |

**Additional Comments:** *(Please feel free to provide your open comments)*

1) Which aspects of the SLM, according to you, worked well?
   .....
   .....

2) What sort of changes/improvements do you feel KKHSOU could implement to improve the overall quality of the SLM?
   .....
   .....

***Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.***