

UNIT 5

FILM APPRECIATION

Introduction

- ✓ Film is an entertaining art form in all over the world
- ✓ It has changed its characters, location, format delivery or distribution pattern, exhibition and production.
- ✓ No precise originating time, place or person.

The Illusion of film

- A picture is the most general and powerful medium to convey and idea or experience
- Eg: We take photos of places we visit and show others to share our experience of that place

Persistence of Vision:

- A film is consisted of several joined images placed in a serial order
- When the human eye perceives these individual pictures in rapid succession, they blend together into a moving picture. This **quality of human eye is called persistence of vision.**
- Usual optimal rate is twenty four pictures/frames per second

Eadweard Muybridge

- An Anglo-American Photographer.
- He introduced “**series photography**”
- He was hired by Leland Stanford to prove that a horse lifts all four hooves off the ground when it gallops.
- He demonstrated zoopraxiscope in 1879
- **Zoopraxiscope** was a kind of ‘**magic lantern**’: which projected coloured, hand drawn images that were based on the photographs and placed along the outer rim of a circular glass disk.

Lumiere Brothers

- **Auguste Lumiere and Luuis Lumiere**
- They were interested in Edison’s kinetograph and kinetoscope.
- **Lumiere Brothers invented the Cinematographe:** a Compact device as **camera and projector**
- Cinematographe: patent on 13th February, 1895.
 - : lighter than kinetoscope.
 - : can shoot greater range of subjects and locations.
 - : unlike the kinetoscope, it was used for exhibition to a large audience
- First film: **Workers leaving the Lumiere Factory**
- First Screening: at Grand Café in Paris on December 28, 1895.
- Famous film: The Arrival of a Train at the station in La Ciotat.

David W. Griffith

- David Wark Griffith is generally recognized as the **inventor of film montage.**
- He discovered editing technique called **cross-cut or parallel-cut.**
- Cross-cut or parallel-cut means that two places vastly separate in space or time could be brought together in the audience's mind.
- His film The Birth of a Nation (1915) depicts the history of the American Civil War.
- The prints of Griffith's film were smuggled to Russia during the communist revolution.

- **V.I. Lenin described cinema as a mass agitator** and advised the artists in the revolutionary movement to produce films to propagate communist ideology among the proletariat.

Charlie Chaplin

- Charles Spencer Chaplin is one of the **prominent film personalities in the silent era**.
- He **merged humour with life**.
- His films became popular due to their **wit and charm**.
- The main characteristics of Chaplin's films **are the combination of comedy and social tragedy**, combined with a clear **political engagement and an increasing tendency towards pathos and sentimentality**.
- He himself acted in several roles in these films.
- His films played as an important **platform for social criticism**.
- Some of his important films are ***The Tramp (1915)*, *The Kid (1921)*, *The Gold Rush (1925)*, *The Circus (1928)*, *Modern Times (1936)* and *The Great Dictator (1940)***.

❖ The grammar of cinema

- A sentence or paragraph written in any language could be read and understood, if you know the alphabets of the language, the meaning of the words and the grammar.
- Though the visual don't have alphabets like a language there are many elements in the composition of visuals which make them intelligible to the viewers.
- ✓ In order to **appreciate film** as a distinctive art form, one **has to understand the visual language**.
- ✓ The language of film involves a **meaningful understanding of different shots, camera movements and angles**.
- ✓ Though there are arguments that film has no grammar, some postulates are used to identify the structure of visual language.
- To put it simply a **film can be dissected into the frame, the shot, the scene and the sequence**.
- The **frame is every individual image of a film**. It is **like a letter**.
- The **shot is the basic unit of a film**. It is a single view by the camera of some person or action. Its duration varies from less than a second to many seconds. One shot takes meaning from the shots that precedes or follows it. It is **similar to a sentence**.
- **The scene is a series of related shots taken in the same location** during the same time period. It is **similar to a paragraph**.
 - The **transitions between scenes are described as film punctuations**.
- The **sequence is a series of scenes** having a common bond. It tells a major part of a story. It is **similar to a chapter**.
- The **film consists of a series of sequences** that reveals a complete story. It can be **compared to a novel**.

❖ Important names and dates (outside focus area)

- ✓ In 1927 the first sound film ***The Jazz Singer*** was screened in America
- ✓ Films are classified into feature films, documentary films, short fiction films, ad films and educational films.
- ✓ **John Grierson** who coined the word 'documentary' finds it as 'the creative interpretation of reality'
- ✓ In 1922 when **Robert Flaherty**, an English man, made first documentary ***Nanook of the North*** on the life of an Eskimo family.

- ✓ **Hiralal Sen** is credited with directing the **first short film *Dancing Scenes from the Flower of Persia*** in 1898
 - ✓ The **first full length Indian feature film, *Raja Harishchandra*** was produced and directed by **Dada Saheb Phalke**.
 - ✓ The **first Indian sound film *Alam Ara***, directed by **Ardeshir Irani** was screened at Majestic cinema in Mumbai on 14 March 1931.
 - ✓ In 1937, ***Kisan Kanya***, a Hindi feature film became **the first indigenously made colour film**.
 - ✓ **The Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA)**, produced *Mother India* and *Pyaasa*, among India's most recognizable cinematic productions.
 - ✓ The period from the late **1940s to the 1960s** is regarded as the **'Golden Age' of Indian cinema** by many film historians.
 - ✓ It was **Satyajit Ray**, who earned a reputation for Indian cinema in the international film scenario.
 - ✓ **Pather Panchali (1954)**, the first part of the **Apu Trilogy (1955-1959)** by Satyajit Ray, marked his entry in Indian cinema.
 - ✓ The **first Malayalam film *Vigathakumaran*** (The Lost Child-1928) was produced by a dentist **J.C. Daniel**
 - ✓ **Balan (1938)** by a Tamil director **S. Nottani**. It was the **first sound film in Malayalam**.
 - ✓ **Ramu Kariat's *Chemmeen* (1965)** was a **marvelous success in the history** of Malayalam cinema.
 - ✓ **P.N. Menon's *Olavum Theeravum* (1970)** heralded an **era of parallel/art cinema** in Malayalam.
- **International Film Festival of India (IFFI)**: From 2004 onwards the permanent **venue of IFFI is Goa**.
 - **International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK)**: The permanent **venue of IFFK is Thiruvananthapuram** and the festival is conducted in **every December by the Kerala State Chalachitra Academy**.
 - **The Celluloid Man P K Nair** is an Indian film archivist, the founder director of the **National Film Archive of India (NFAI) in 1964**.
 - **Mise-en-scène** refers to **what is put before the camera or everything that happens within the frame**, including the frame itself.
 - The elements that comprise **mise-en-scène** are: ***setting, props, costume, lighting, acting, cinematography, editing, sound, characters and narrative***.

Unit 5

FILM APPRECIATION

(Important Questions)

Answer for one mark.

1. Who introduced the concept of 'series photography'?
2. Who invented zoopraxiscope?
3. Which is the first film in the history and who produced it?
4. Who is credited with film montage?
5.described cinema as a mass agitator.
6. The transitions between scenes are described as
7. Name the first sound film.
8. Who coined the word documentary?
9. Which is the first documentary and who made it?
10. Which is the first feature film in India and who is the director?
11. Which is the first sound film in India?
12. Expand IPTA.
13. is regarded as the 'Golden Age' of Indian cinema by many film historians.
14. Who is the director of Apu Trilogy?
15. The first Malayalam film was produced by
16.the first sound film in Malayalam
17. Expand IFFI and IFFK
18. Which are the permanent venue of IFFI and IFFK?
19. Who is known as the Celluloid Man?

Answer for four marks

20. Explain the concept of persistence of Vision?
21. Write on the significance of cinematographe in the history of cinema.
22. Give three examples of Charlie Chaplin's films.
23. Why is Charles Spencer Chaplin is considered as the most prominent personality in the silent era?
24. "In order to appreciate film as a distinctive art form, one has to understand the visual language".
Explain grammar of cinema.
25. Explain the concept of Mise-en-scène.
26. Comment on the contributions of D W Griffith in the history of film.
27. Write on the contributions of Lumiere Brothers.
28. Comment on Eadweard Muybridge's inventions.