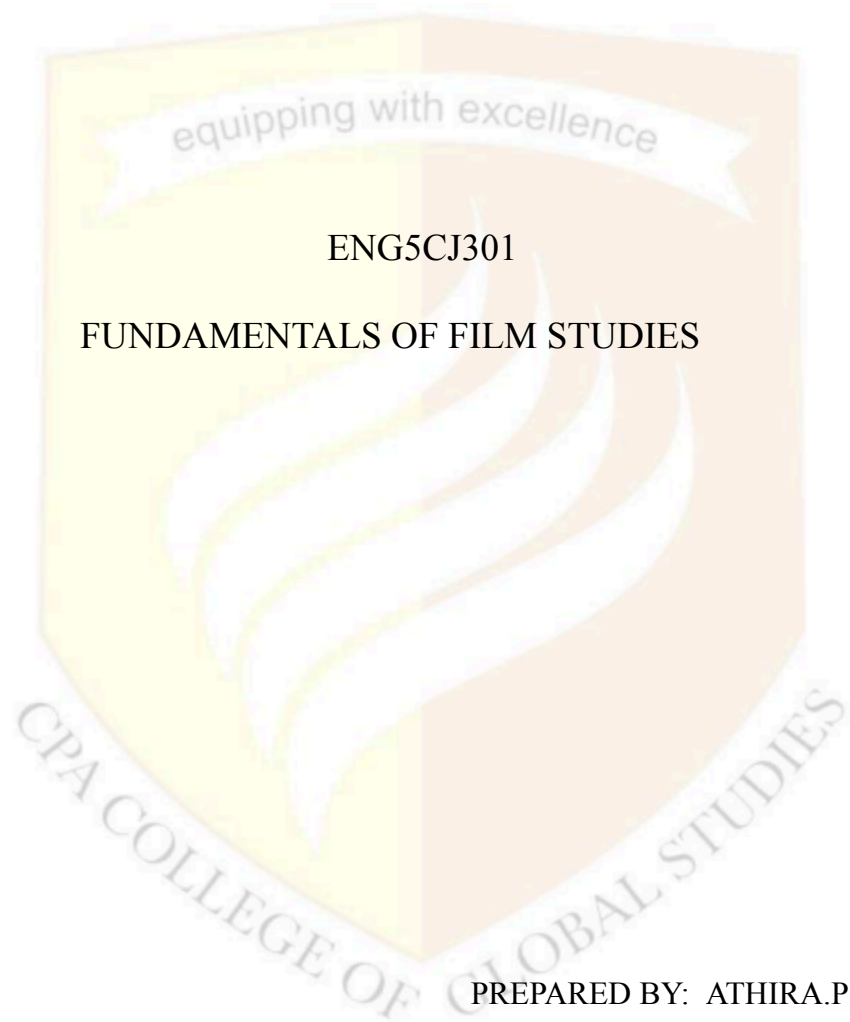




ENG5CJ301

FUNDAMENTALS OF FILM STUDIES

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CALICUT UNIVERSITY
FOUR-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME (CUFYUGP)
BA ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE HONOURS
MAJOR
FUNDAMENTALS OF FILM STUDIES

1. Course Details

Course Code	ENG5CJ301
Course Title	FUNDAMENTALS OF FILM STUDIES
Type of Course	MAJOR
Semester	V
Academic Level	300–399
Credits	4
Lecture per Week	4
Tutorial per Week	—
Practical per Week	—
Total Hours	60

Pre-requisites: The learner should have a basic aptitude for film and familiarity of the world of Cinema.

Course Summary: This course introduces films, films cultures and different theories on films.

2. Course Outcomes (CO)

CO	Course Outcome	Cognitive Level	Knowledge Category / Evaluation Tools
CO1	Understand the History of cinema, Film classics, Eras and the Doyens of Cinema.	R	Factual (F); Exams / Quiz
CO2	Recognise the technical aspects of cinema. Identify film genres and trace their evolution.	U	Conceptual (C); Practical Assignment / Observation of Practical Skills
CO3	Understand film theory and apply it while reading films. To understand the nuances of representation (gender, class, caste, race etc.,).	Ap	Conceptual (C); Assignments (Film reviews)
CO4	Classify films and categorize film genres.	An	Procedural (P); Exams / Assignments
CO5	Inculcate research aptitude in films. To develop research papers/ theses applying the knowledge gained from the understanding of technical and theoretical aspects of cinema.	E / C	Procedural (P); Seminar Presentation / Group Tutorial Work / Viva Voce

CO6	Analyse the intersectionalities between films and literary narratives.	An	Procedural (P); Assignments
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Cognitive levels: R – Remember; U – Understand; Ap – Apply; An – Analyse; E – Evaluate; C – Create.

Knowledge categories: F – Factual Knowledge; C – Conceptual Knowledge; P – Procedural Knowledge; M – Metacognitive Knowledge.

3. Detailed Syllabus

Total instructional hours: 60. Four fixed modules carry 48 hours; Module V is Open Ended and carries 12 hours. The external evaluation is for 70 marks.

Module	Unit	Content	Hours / Marks
I – Introduction to Film Studies	1	Evolution of Cinema: Beginning, The Silent Era, The Talkies, Color Film, New Age, Digital, OTT. Suggested viewing: Films of Lumiere brothers, The Kid, The Jazz Singer. (No questions to be asked from suggested viewing.)	3
I – Introduction to Film Studies	2	Film Making: Key Terms – Shots (close up, medium shot, long shot); Camera Angle (Straight on Angle Shots, High Angle Shots, Low Angle shots, Shot-Reverse Shot); Focus (shallow focus, deep focus); Editing: chronological editing, Continuity Editing, Cross cutting, Montage. Suggested Viewing: Battleship Potemkin, Breathless, A Trip to the Moon, Tokyo Story. (No questions to be asked from suggested viewing.)	6
I – Introduction to Film Studies	3	Film Genres: Major genres – Documentary, Feature Films, Short Films, Melodrama, Musical, Horror, Western, Fantasy, Animation, Film noir, Historical, Science fiction, Road movies, Digital films etc. Suggested Viewing: India Untouched: Stories of a People Apart (2007), La La Land (2016), Pan's Labyrinth (2006), The Good, The Bad and the Ugly (1966), Coco (2017),	3

		Rosemary's Baby (1968), Motorcycle Diaries (2004). (No questions to be asked from suggested viewing.)	
I – Introduction to Film Studies	4	A brief introduction to Film Theories: Montage Theory, Auteur theory, Apparatus Theory, Male Gaze, Film Semiotics. Suggested Viewing: Strike (1925), Gone with the Wind (1939), Bicycle Theives (1948), The 400 Blows (1959), Rashomon (1950), Pather Panchali (1955), The Hour of the Furnaces (1968). (No questions to be asked from suggested viewing.)	6
I – Introduction to Film Studies	5	Introducing Master Film Makers: Charlie Chaplin, Alfred Hitchcock, Andrei Tarkowsky, Akira Kurosawa, Ingmar Bergman, Abbas Kiarostami, Agnes Varda, Satyajit Ray, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Ousmane Sembene.	4
II – Perspectives: Essays & Interview	6	Engendering Popular Cinema in Malayalam – V C Harris.	3
II – Perspectives: Essays & Interview	7	“Low Budget Films” by Mrinal Sen from Views on Cinema by Mrinal Sen (Pub. Ishan, pages 10–15).	3
II – Perspectives: Essays & Interview	8	Interview Christopher Nolan: The full interview – Newsnight.	2
III – World Cinema	9	Capernaum (2018) – Nadine Labiki.	3
III – World Cinema	10	I, Daniel Blake (2016) – Ken Loach.	3
III – World Cinema	11	Cinema Paradiso (1988) – Giuseppe Tornatore.	3
IV – Indian Cinema	12	Fandry (2014) – Nagraj Manjule.	3
IV – Indian Cinema	13	Adaminte Vaariyellu (1983) – K G George.	3
IV – Indian Cinema	14	Masaan (2015) – Neeraj Ghaywan.	3
V – Open Ended Module	—	Open-ended module with a variable number of units. See suggested activities below.	12

4. Suggested Viewing

World Cinema: Schindler's List (1993); Sacrifice (1986); Psycho (1960); Citizen Kane (1941); Mandabi (1968); Babel (2006); Run Lola Run (1998); Offside (2006); The Monk and the Gun (2023); Dheepan (2015); Fahrenheit 9/11 (2004).

Indian Cinema: Meghe Dhaka Tara (1960); Chomana Dudi (1975); Court (2014); Sholay (1975); Anbe Sivam (2003); Village Rockstars (2017); Haider (2014); Piravi (1989); Kanchana Sita (1978); Swayamvaram (1972); Avasavyuham (2022).

Note: No questions will be asked from the suggested viewing.

5. Suggested Activities

1. Assignments: Identifying the technical aspects of cinema. The teacher can provide materials from suggested viewings for analysis.
2. Seminar Presentations: The learner should contextualize cinema and discern the power relations in play in cinema and society. The learner should identify the distinct features of filmmaking in prescribed movies.
3. Making a short film of maximum 5 minutes by a group of approximately 5 learners. Decide upon a concept and research the concept. Do shooting and editing based on the research work.

6. Assessment and Examination Pattern

- Internal Assessment: 30 marks (Open-ended Module – 10 marks; Four fixed modules – 20 marks).
- External Evaluation / End Semester Examination: 70 marks.
- The final examination covers the 14 fixed units from Modules I–IV; the Open-ended Module is internally evaluated.

7. Suggested Reading

4. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" – Laura Mulvey.
5. What is Cinema? – Andre Bazin.
6. Monaco, James, et al. 2000. How to Read a Film: The Art, Technology, Language, History, and Theory of Film and Media. New York: Oxford University Press.
7. Barsam, Richard Meran, and Dave Monahan. 2012. Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film. W W Norton & Company Incorporated.

1.Introduction to Film Studies –

Meaning of Film Studies:

- Film Studies is the academic study of cinema as an art form, cultural product, and medium of communication.

Beginning of Cinema:

- Cinema developed from earlier technologies and visual entertainment.
- The Lumière brothers are important pioneers in the early history of cinema.
- Their films helped establish cinema as a public form of entertainment.

Silent Era:

- Early films were largely silent.
- There was no synchronized spoken dialogue.
- Meaning was communicated through:
 - Acting
 - Facial expressions
 - Gestures
 - Visual images
 - Intertitles
- Charlie Chaplin became one of the most important figures of the silent era.

Talkies:

- The introduction of synchronized sound transformed cinema.
- Films began to include:
 - Spoken dialogue
 - Songs
 - Synchronized sound effects
- The Jazz Singer is an important film associated with the transition to sound cinema.

Colour Film:

- The development of colour technology changed the visual possibilities of cinema.
- Colour could be used to create:
 - Mood
 - Atmosphere
 - Symbolism
 - Realism
 - Visual beauty

New Age and Digital Cinema:

- Technological developments transformed filmmaking.
- Digital cameras and computer technology made filmmaking more accessible.
- Digital technology influenced:
 - Production
 - Editing
 - Visual effects
 - Distribution
 - Exhibition

OTT:

- OTT (Over-the-Top) platforms distribute films and other audiovisual content through the internet.
- Viewers can watch content without depending entirely on traditional theatres or television.
- OTT has changed the way films are produced, distributed and consumed.

2.Film Making: Key Terms –

Shots:

A shot is a continuous piece of film recorded by the camera from the moment it starts recording until it stop

Close-up (CU):

- Shows a character/object very closely.
- Usually focuses on the face or an important object.
- Highlights emotions and details.
- Commonly used to show:
 - Fear
 - Anger
 - Sadness
 - Surprise
- Creates intimacy between the viewer and the character.

Medium Shot (MS):

- Usually shows a character from around the waist/chest upward.
- Gives a balance between the character and the surrounding space.
- Frequently used in conversations and dialogues.
- Allows us to observe both facial expressions and body language.

Long Shot (LS):

- Shows the character and a large portion of the surrounding environment.
- Establishes the location and setting.
- Can show the relationship between a character and their surroundings.
- Often useful for scenes involving movement or groups of people.

Camera Angles:

A camera angle refers to the position from which the camera photographs the subject.

Straight-on Angle:

- The camera is positioned approximately at the eye level of the subject.
- Creates a relatively natural and neutral view.
- Often gives the audience a feeling of observing the character normally.

High Angle:

- The camera is positioned above the subject.
- Look downward at the character.
- Can make a character appear:
 - Weak
 - Vulnerable
 - Small
 - Powerless
- Meaning depends on the context of the scene.

Low Angle:

- The camera is positioned below the subject.
- Look upward at the character.
- Can make a character appear:
 - Powerful
 - Important
 - Dominant
 - Threatening

Shot-Reverse-Shot:

- A common editing technique used mainly in conversations.
- Shows one character looking or speaking in one direction.
- Cuts to the other character responding from the opposite direction.
- Creates the impression that the characters are facing each other.
- Frequently works together with continuity editing.

Focus:

Focus refers to the clarity or sharpness of objects within the frame.

Shallow Focus:

- Only a small part of the image is sharply focused.
- The background or foreground may appear blurred.
- Directs the viewer's attention toward a particular character/object.
- Often used for:
 - Portraits
 - Emotional moments
 - Important objects

Deep Focus:

- Foreground, middle ground and background can remain simultaneously sharp.
- Allows the viewer to notice several elements within the frame.
- Can give greater importance to the relationship between characters and their surroundings.

Editing:

Editing is the process of selecting, arranging and joining shots to create a meaningful sequence.

- Editing controls:
 - Time
 - Space
 - Rhythm
 - Narrative
 - Meaning
- It connects individual shots into a complete cinematic experience.

Chronological Editing:

- Events are presented in the order in which they happen.
- Beginning → middle → end.
- Easy for the audience to follow.

Continuity Editing:

Attempts to create a smooth and continuous flow between shots.

Maintains consistency of: Time, Space, Action, Character, position

Makes cuts less noticeable to the audience.

Cross-cutting:

- Alternates between two or more scenes or actions.
- Usually suggests that the events are happening simultaneously or are connected.
- Creates:
 - Suspense
 - Tension
 - Comparison
 - Dramatic effect

3.Film Theories

Montage Theory

- Montage means the editing together of different shots to create a particular meaning or effect.
- The meaning of a scene can come from the relationship between two or more shots.
- The audience actively connects the images and creates meaning.

Soviet Montage:

- Developed mainly in Soviet cinema during the 1920s.
- Important theorists and filmmakers:
 - Sergei Eisenstein
 - Lev Kuleshov
 - Vsevolod Pudovkin
- Eisenstein considered editing a powerful way of producing intellectual and emotional effects

Auteur Theory:

- The French word auteur means author.
- Auteur Theory considers the director as the principal creative author of a film.
- A director's personal style and artistic vision can be identified across different films.

Apparatus Theory:

- Apparatus Theory examines how the technical and viewing conditions of cinema influence the spectator.
- It asks how cinema's apparatus positions the viewer.

Cinema Apparatus:

The apparatus can include:

- Camera
- Film technology
- Projector
- Screen
- Theatre
- Darkened viewing space
- Position of the spectator

Male Gaze:

- Male Gaze refers to the way women may be represented from a male/masculine viewing perspective in cinema.
- The concept is associated with feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey.

Laura Mulvey

- Introduced the concept in her influential essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (1975).

Objectification

- Women may be treated as:
 - Objects of beauty
 - Objects of desire
 - Passive figures
- Their appearance may receive more attention than their agency or narrative role.

Film Semiotics:

- Semiotics is the study of signs and meaning.
- Film Semiotics studies how films communicate through signs.

4.Film Genres

Film genre means a category of films that share recognizable themes, stories, characters, settings, visual styles, and narrative conventions.

Major genres

1. Action
 - Physical conflict, fights, chases and spectacular events.
 - Usually has a hero facing an antagonist or threat.
 - Example: *Die Hard*
2. Comedy

- Intended to produce laughter and amusement.
- Uses humour, satire, irony, misunderstanding and comic situations.
- Example: *The Great Dictator*
- 3. Drama
 - Concentrates on human emotions, relationships and social conflicts.
 - Character development is particularly important.
- 4. Horror
 - Designed to produce fear, shock and anxiety.
 - Common elements include supernatural beings, monsters, death, darkness and suspense.
- 5. Thriller
 - Based on suspense, danger and uncertainty.
 - The audience is kept waiting to discover what will happen next.
 - Psychological thriller is an important subgenre.
- 6. Romance
 - Centres on love and romantic relationships.
 - Conflict often arises from separation, social barriers or misunderstanding.
- 7. Science Fiction
 - Deals with science, technology and imagined futures or worlds.
 - Common subjects include robots, AI, space travel, time travel and dystopia.
- 8. Fantasy
 - Uses magic, mythology, imaginary worlds and supernatural elements.
 - Often involves a struggle between good and evil.
- 9. Crime/Gangster
 - Deals with criminals, police, gangs, violence, law and the underworld.
 - Themes include power, loyalty, betrayal and morality.
- 10. Western
 - Traditionally associated with the American frontier.
 - Cowboys, outlaws, gunslingers and conflicts between law and lawlessness are common.
- 11. Musical
 - Songs, music and dance become important parts of the narrative.
 - Musical performances can advance the story or express characters' emotions.

5.Introducing Master Film Makers

Charlie Chaplin:

- Nationality: British
- One of the greatest figures of silent cinema.
- Famous for his character “The Tramp.”
- Combined comedy with social criticism.
- Used mime, gestures and physical comedy.
- Most of his early films were silent and black-and-white.
- Explored themes of poverty, inequality, industrialisation and human suffering.

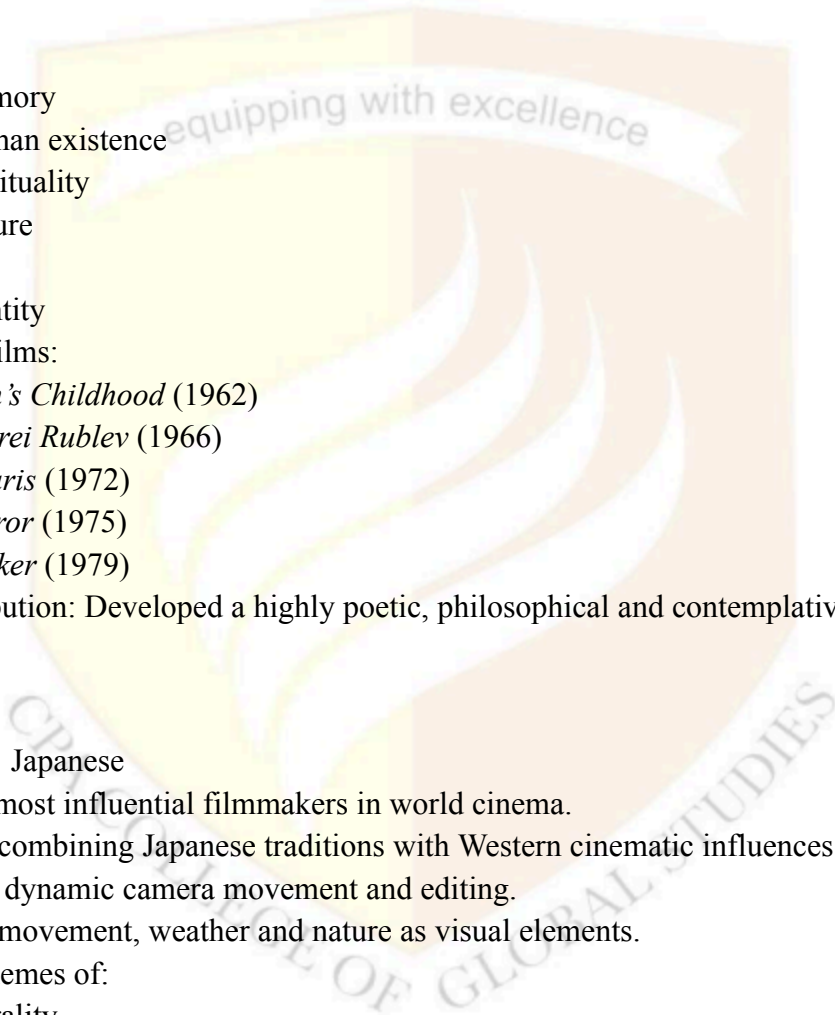
- Used humour to comment on serious social issues.
- Important films:
 - *The Kid* (1921)
 - *The Gold Rush* (1925)
 - *City Lights* (1931)
 - *Modern Times* (1936)
 - *The Great Dictator* (1940)
- Key contribution: Made comedy an important medium for social and political commentary.

Alfred Hitchcock:

- Nationality: British-American
- Known as the “Master of Suspense.”
- One of the most influential filmmakers in cinema.
- Specialised in thrillers and psychological films.
- Focused on fear, suspense, guilt, obsession and voyeurism.
- Carefully controlled the audience’s emotions and expectations.
- Famous for innovative use of:
 - Camera angles
 - Editing
 - Sound
 - Lighting
 - Point-of-view shots
- Developed the concept of “the MacGuffin” – an object or goal that drives the plot.
- Important films:
 - *Rear Window* (1954)
 - *Vertigo* (1958)
 - *North by Northwest* (1959)
 - *Psycho* (1960)
 - *The Birds* (1963)
- Key contribution: Development of cinematic suspense and psychological thriller techniques.

Andrei Tarkovsky:

- Nationality: Russian/Soviet
- One of the most important filmmakers of world cinema.
- Known for slow-paced, philosophical and poetic cinema.
- Cinema focuses strongly on time, memory, dreams and spirituality.
- Used long takes and carefully composed images.
- Famous for his concept of “sculpting in time.”
- His films often blur the boundaries between dream and reality.
- Explored themes such as:
 - Faith

- 
- Memory
 - Human existence
 - Spirituality
 - Nature
 - War
 - Identity
 - Important films:
 - *Ivan's Childhood* (1962)
 - *Andrei Rublev* (1966)
 - *Solaris* (1972)
 - *Mirror* (1975)
 - *Stalker* (1979)
 - Key contribution: Developed a highly poetic, philosophical and contemplative form of cinema.

Akira Kurosawa:

- Nationality: Japanese
- One of the most influential filmmakers in world cinema.
- Known for combining Japanese traditions with Western cinematic influences.
- Famous for dynamic camera movement and editing.
- Often used movement, weather and nature as visual elements.
- Explored themes of:
 - Morality
 - Justice
 - Human nature
 - Honour
 - Violence
 - Conflict
- Frequently portrayed samurai and warriors.
- Influenced many filmmakers around the world.
- Important films:
 - *Rashomon* (1950)
 - *Ikiru* (1952)
 - *Seven Samurai* (1954)
 - *Throne of Blood* (1957)
 - *Ran* (1985)
- Key contribution: Brought Japanese cinema to a major position in international cinema.

Satyajit Ray:

- Nationality: Indian
- One of India's greatest filmmakers.
- Major figure in Indian parallel/art cinema.

- Strongly influenced by realism and humanism.
- Focused on ordinary people's lives and experiences.
- Known for:
 - Naturalistic acting
 - Realistic settings
 - Subtle storytelling
 - Detailed characterisation
 - Simple but powerful visual style
- Explored:
 - Poverty
 - Family
 - Childhood
 - Social change
 - Human relationships
 - Indian society
- Important films:
 - *Pather Panchali* (1955)
 - *Aparajito* (1956)
 - *Apur Sansar* (1959)
 - *Charulata* (1964)
 - *Jalsaghar* (1958)
- Key contribution: Established Indian cinema as an important part of world art cinema.

Adoor Gopalakrishnan:

- Nationality: Indian; Malayalam filmmaker
- One of the leading figures of Malayalam parallel cinema.
- Known for realistic and serious filmmaking.
- His films often explore individuals, society and changing Kerala.
- Uses:
 - Slow and careful pacing
 - Realistic settings
 - Naturalistic performances
 - Symbolism
 - Minimalist storytelling
- Explores themes of:
 - Social change
 - Family
 - Tradition
 - Individual freedom
 - Human relationships
- Important films:
 - *Swayamvaram* (1972)

- *Kodiyettam* (1977)
- *Elippathayam* (1981)
- *Mukhamukham* (1984)
- *Mathilukal* (1990)
- Key contribution: Played a major role in developing Malayalam art/parallel cinema.

Agnès Varda:

- Nationality: French-Belgian
- Important figure of French New Wave and feminist cinema.
- Often associated with the Left Bank of French cinema.
- Worked as a director, photographer and visual artist.
- Combined fiction and documentary techniques.
- Focused on:
 - Women
 - Gender
 - Identity
 - Everyday life
 - Social inequality
 - Marginalised people
- Known for an experimental and personal style.
- Important films:
 - *La Pointe Courte* (1955)
 - *Cléo from 5 to 7* (1962)
 - *Vagabond* (1985)
 - *The Gleaners and I* (2000)
- Key contribution: Expanded the possibilities of feminist, personal and documentary filmmaking.

Ousmane Sembène:

- Nationality: Senegalese
- Often called the “Father of African Cinema.”
- One of the pioneers of African filmmaking.
- Used cinema as a means of social and political criticism.
- His films challenged:
 - Colonialism
 - Racism
 - Social inequality
 - Religious hypocrisy
 - Gender oppression
- Focused on the lives and struggles of ordinary African people.
- His cinema reflects postcolonial African society.
- Important films:

- *Black Girl (La Noire de..., 1966)*
- *Xala (1975)*
- *Ceddo (1977)*
- *Moolaadé (2004)*
- Key contribution: Used cinema to give voice to African experiences, culture and postcolonial realities.

Perspectives: Essays and Interviews :

6. V. C. Harris –

“Engendering Popular Cinema in Malayalam”

- V. C. Harris examines the representation of women and gender relations in popular Malayalam cinema.
- The essay is included in *Women in Malayalam Cinema: Naturalising Gender Hierarchies*, edited by Meena T. Pillai.
- Harris argues that popular Malayalam cinema often reproduces patriarchal ideas even when the films appear modern or progressive.
- The central concern is the position of women within a predominantly male cinematic world.
- Men are frequently presented as:
 - Protectors
 - Disciplinarians
 - Decision-makers
 - Powerful heroes
- Women are often expected to be:
 - Obedient
 - Chaste
 - Faithful
 - Caring wives and mothers
 - Accepting of male authority
- Harris particularly examines how cinema “shows women their place” within family and society.

Example: Vakkalathu Narayanankutty

- Harris uses T. K. Rajeev Kumar’s *Vakkalathu Narayanankutty (2000)* as an important example.
- The male protagonist, played by Jayaram, beats his younger sister because she does not conform to traditional expectations about women’s dress and behaviour.
- Later, he explains the violence as an expression of love and concern.
- The sister accepts his behaviour.
- Harris uses this example to expose the idea that a man has the moral right to discipline women in his family.

Neelakkuyil

- *Neelakkuyil* (1954), directed by P. Bhaskaran and Ramu Kariat, is discussed in relation to caste and gender.
- Neeli, a Dalit woman, becomes pregnant after an encounter with a schoolteacher.
- She is abandoned and ultimately dies.
- Harris points out that the film's treatment of her suffering does not fully address sexual violence and gender oppression.
- The woman's individual experience is absorbed into a larger narrative of social reform, caste and modernity.

Chemmeen

- *Chemmeen* is another important example.
- Karuthamma, belonging to the Araya fishing community, is trapped by ideas of chastity and fidelity.
- The community's safety and the fisherman's success are traditionally connected to the woman's sexual fidelity.
- Karuthamma's sexuality is therefore controlled by social and cultural beliefs.
- Her tragedy becomes a representation of the wider conflict between desire, social morality and patriarchal control.

The "Ideal Woman"

- Harris observes a recurring image of the woman who suffers silently and gracefully.
- Female suffering can be presented as:
 - Virtuous
 - Natural
 - Dignified
 - Necessary
- This makes women's suffering appear acceptable rather than oppressive.
- The woman's body becomes a site on which ideas of chastity, beauty and femininity are imposed.

Women in 1990s–2000s Popular Cinema

- Popular Malayalam cinema increasingly produced macho male heroes.
- Films often presented men as superhuman, powerful and invincible.
- Women might appear as:
 - Police officers
 - Lawyers
 - Journalists
 - Administrators

- However, Harris argues that their professional power is often undermined by their eventual return to traditional feminine roles.
- Even a strong female character may ultimately:
 - Submit to the male hero
 - Fall in love with him
 - Become domesticated
 - Accept the traditional role of wife/mother

Manju Warriar

- Harris discusses the emergence of actresses such as Manju Warriar.
- Her screen presence represented a shift from the older image of the shy and passive heroine.
- She brought:
 - Openness
 - Dynamism
 - Strong screen presence
 - Acting ability
- However, Harris questions whether this represents a genuine transformation in gender relations.
- He suggests that some changes may be connected to changing film conventions, music and popular culture, rather than a fundamental change in gender ideology.

Female Beauty

- Harris connects cinematic representations of female beauty with the history of colonial modernity.
- Popular cinema often constructs a particular ideal of female appearance and complexion.
- Examples such as Neeli in *Neelakkuyil* and Karuthamma in *Chemmeen* show tensions between the characters' social identities and their cinematic representations.

Film Music

- Harris also considers the importance of film music.
- Film music helped create a common popular cultural space.
- It brought together influences from different musical traditions.
- It contributed to the democratisation of popular culture.
- At the same time, songs could reproduce conventional ideas about love, femininity, marriage and motherhood.

7. "Low-Budget Films" – Mrinal Sen

Beginning of the Low-Budget Movement

- Sen begins by referring to his 1969 Hindi film *Bhuvan Shome*.
- The film was financed by the Film Finance Corporation (FFC).

- He identifies *Bhuvan Shome* as a low-budget film.
- The FFC subsequently encouraged the production of more low-budget films.
- The emphasis was not simply on how much money a film could earn.
- Low-budget cinema offered an alternative to expensive commercial filmmaking.

Characteristics of Low-Budget Films

According to Sen, these films generally avoided:

- Big stars
- Glamour
- Expensive production
- Song-and-dance spectacles
- Romantic intrigue
- Murder and horror formulas
- Conventional commercial entertainment

Instead, they concentrated on new subjects and alternative methods of filmmaking.

Criticism of Commercial Cinema

- Film production is an expensive business.
- Making, exhibiting and distributing films requires a large industrial organisation.
- This creates an Establishment within the film industry.
- The Establishment is controlled largely by powerful economic interests.
- Its basic principle is similar to “money begets money.”
- Large investments are expected to produce larger profits.
- Therefore, commercial cinema tends to favour safe and marketable formulas.

The Rules of the Establishment

Sen argues that the commercial film industry establishes rules regarding:

- What stories should be told
- How screenplays should be written
- How the camera should be used
- How sound should be used
- How editing should be done
- How music should function
- What audiences are expected to like
- The Establishment discourages filmmakers from going off the beaten track.
- Sen sees this as a restriction on creative freedom.

Pather Panchali as an Example

- Sen refers to Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali* (1955) as an important challenge to the Establishment.
- Ray demonstrated that filmmaking was not the monopoly of a particular group.
- The film was made without the conventional glamour and commercial formula.
- It encouraged a new approach to Indian filmmaking.
- For Sen, the importance of *Pather Panchali* was both:
 - Aesthetic
 - Ethical
- It encouraged filmmakers to challenge established conventions.

“Pather Panchali-type” Films

Sen explains what people came to understand by a *Pather Panchali*-type production:

- No big stars
- No glamour
- Often uses non-professional actors
- Low production budget
- Filming mainly outside studios
- Use of real locations
- Combination of fiction and actuality
- Young and enthusiastic filmmakers
- A strong collective spirit among the film crew
- Less concern for luxury and special treatment during production.

Influence of New Wave Cinema

- Sen connects these characteristics with the French New Wave.
- New Wave filmmakers challenged traditional methods of filmmaking.
- They preferred:
 - Location shooting
 - Young filmmakers
 - New techniques
 - Less dependence on studio systems
 - Greater experimentation

Problems Faced by Low-Budget Cinema

- One major problem was uncertain box-office collection.
- Financial uncertainty discouraged producers and traders.
- Filmmakers gradually became:
 - More cautious
 - Less courageous
 - More concerned about commercial success

- The original experimental spirit began to weaken.

Return to Commercial Methods

- Budgets began to increase.
- Studios became more important again.
- Sets replaced real locations.
- The use of actuality decreased.
- The combination of documentary and fiction became less common.
- Filmmakers began trying to create a compromise between art and commerce.
- Sen strongly questions this compromise.

Sen Rejects the Compromise Formula

- Sen does not believe that combining commercial glamour with artistic cinema is a successful long-term solution.
- He argues that filmmakers who try to remain between the two systems may eventually move towards the Establishment.
- For Sen, genuine alternative cinema requires courage and non-conformism.

Role of the Film Finance Corporation

- Sen praises the FFC for financially supporting low-budget films.
- Such films could be:
 - Made quickly
 - Made without stars
 - Made without glamour
 - Shot on location
 - Based on subjects rarely attempted by commercial cinema
- Sen sees this as an important development towards a “New Cinema.”

New Cinema

Sen describes the emerging New Cinema as:

- Fresh
- Unconventional
- Dissenting
- Iconoclastic
- Experimental
- Non-commercial in its approach
- Willing to challenge established conventions

Problems with the Audience

- The majority of audiences prefer cheap and familiar entertainment.
- They are attracted to:
 - Stars
 - Glamour
 - Spectacle
 - Entertainment
 - Conventional narratives
- Therefore, low-budget experimental films initially attract only a small minority of discriminating spectators.

Exhibition Problem

- Low-budget films also face difficulties in exhibition.
- Major exhibitors control much of the distribution/exhibition system.
- High rental charges create difficulties for alternative filmmakers.
- This makes it difficult for low-budget films to reach wider audiences.

Sen's Solution

- Sen accepts that mainstream audiences may initially reject low-budget films.
- He suggests building a strong audience among minority/discriminating spectators.
- These spectators can gradually become a larger audience.
- Continuous screenings can help audiences become familiar with alternative cinema.
- Sen believes low-budget cinema can eventually become commercially viable.

Regional Languages

- Sen observes that many low-budget films were being made in Hindi, particularly in Bombay.
- He explains that regional-language low-budget films faced additional commercial difficulties.
- He gives his own example:
 - If *Bhuvan Shome* had been made in Bengali, he felt it might not have recovered its cost.
- This shows the connection between language, audience size and commercial viability.

Final Idea

- Sen strongly believes that filmmaking should not be an expensive activity controlled by powerful industrial groups.
- Cinema should be liberated from the monopoly of the Establishment.
- Low-budget filmmaking provides a way to:
 - Reduce production costs
 - Encourage new filmmakers
 - Experiment with form
 - Explore unconventional subjects
 - Challenge commercial conventions

8. Christopher Nolan – Newsnight

Interview

- Interviewer: Stephen Smith, BBC *Newsnight*.
- Context: BFI London Film Festival, 2015.
- The interview focuses on Nolan's ideas about cinema and filmmaking.
- Nolan discusses what makes film different from other forms of storytelling.
- He emphasises the importance of the cinematic experience.
- He is interested in the relationship between:
 - Director
 - Film
 - Audience
 - Cinema screen

Nolan's approach to filmmaking

- Nolan sees the director as a central creative force.
- His films often combine:
 - Complex narratives
 - Visual spectacle
 - Psychological themes
 - Large-scale filmmaking
- He is interested in making films that demand active participation from the audience.
- He does not always explain everything directly.
- Ambiguity is an important part of his filmmaking.

Time and narrative

- Time is one of Nolan's most important recurring concerns.
- He frequently experiments with:
 - Non-linear narratives
 - Multiple timelines
 - Flashbacks
 - Parallel narratives
 - Subjective experiences of time
- Examples include:
 - *Memento*
 - *Inception*
 - *Interstellar*
 - *Dunkirk*
- His films often make the audience reconstruct the story.

Film vs. digital

- Nolan is a strong supporter of photochemical film.
- He values the physical qualities of film and the experience it provides.
- He has repeatedly argued for preserving film projection and film stock.
- His preference is connected to his belief in the cinema as a collective experience.

Special effects

- Nolan prefers to achieve as much as possible physically and practically rather than relying entirely on computer-generated imagery.
- He wants the audience to feel that the events have physical reality.
- Practical effects can make actors' performances and the environment feel more tangible.
- His approach does not mean he avoids digital effects; rather, he combines practical effects with VFX when necessary. His later interviews similarly emphasise putting as much physical reality as possible in front of the camera.

Audience

- Nolan gives great importance to the audience's emotional experience.
- He believes cinema should create a powerful experience rather than simply communicate information.
- He is interested in allowing viewers to interpret and experience a film for themselves.

Nolan as an auteur

His films have recognizable recurring characteristics:

- Complex storytelling
- Time manipulation
- Memory
- Identity
- Moral choices
- Large-scale practical filmmaking
- Ambiguous endings

These recurring features make Nolan useful for studying auteur theory.

9. Capernaum

Director: Nadine Labaki Year: 2018 Country: Lebanon Language: Arabic Genre: Drama
Director: Nadine Labaki The film was produced in the context of Lebanon's social and economic problems. The title Capernaum refers to an ancient biblical town and suggests a place associated with chaos and suffering.

Story

- The central character is Zain, a young boy living in extreme poverty.
- Zain's family struggles to survive.
- He is forced to work instead of receiving a normal education.
- His parents arrange the marriage of his younger sister Sahar while she is still a child.
- Zain becomes angry and leaves home.
- He eventually meets Rahill, an Ethiopian migrant worker.
- Rahill has a young son named Yonas.
- When Rahill is arrested, Zain is left responsible for Yonas.
- Zain struggles to care for the baby despite having almost no resources.
- The film follows his attempts to survive and protect Yonas.
- Eventually, Zain takes the extraordinary step of suing his parents for bringing him into a life of poverty and suffering.

Major Themes

- Childhood and innocence
- Poverty
- Child labour
- Child marriage
- Migration
- Statelessness
- Family and parental responsibility
- Social inequality
- Human dignity
- Survival

10.I, Daniel Blake

- Director: Ken Loach Year: 2016 Country: United Kingdom Language: English Genre Social drama Style: Social realism Screenwriter: Paul Laverty Won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 2016.

Plot

- Daniel Blake is a middle-aged carpenter living in Newcastle, England.
- He suffers a serious heart condition and is advised by his doctor not to work.
- He applies for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).
- His claim is rejected after a complicated assessment process.
- Daniel is required to seek employment even though he is medically unable to work.
- He becomes trapped in a complicated welfare and benefits system.
- He meets Katie, a single mother who has been moved to Newcastle with her children.
- Katie struggles with:
 - Poverty

- Unemployment
- Housing problems
- Food insecurity
- Daniel and Katie develop a close friendship.
- Daniel helps Katie and her children whenever possible.
- Katie eventually visits a food bank because she cannot afford enough food.
- Daniel himself becomes increasingly desperate.
- He paints “I, Daniel Blake” on a wall to protest against the welfare system.
- He is eventually given an opportunity to appeal his benefits decision.
- Before the appeal, Daniel dies from a heart attack.
- Katie reads a statement at his funeral.
- His death represents the human cost of bureaucratic indifference and poverty.

Major Themes

- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Welfare-state bureaucracy
- Social inequality
- Human dignity
- Institutional violence
- Food insecurity
- Homelessness and housing problems
- Friendship and solidarity

11. Cinema Paradiso

- Title: *Cinema Paradiso* Original title: *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* Year: 1988 Director: Giuseppe Tornatore Country: Italy Language: Italian Genre: Drama / Coming-of-age / Romance
Screenplay: Giuseppe Tornatore Music: Ennio Morricone
- Main characters: Salvatore “Totò”, Alfredo, Elena

Plot

- The film begins with Salvatore, a successful film director living in Rome.
- He receives news that Alfredo, an old friend from his childhood, has died.
- The news makes Salvatore remember his childhood in a small Sicilian village.
- The story then moves back to his childhood.

Totò and the Cinema

- As a child, Salvatore is called Totò.
- He is fascinated by the village cinema called Cinema Paradiso.

- The cinema is the centre of social life in the village.
- People come there not only to watch films but also to:
 - meet others
 - laugh
 - gossip
 - escape from everyday problems
 - experience romance and fantasy.

Totò Meets Alfredo

- Alfredo is the cinema's projectionist.
- Totò becomes very interested in the projection room.
- He repeatedly visits Alfredo and learns how films are projected.
- At first, Alfredo considers Totò a nuisance.
- Gradually, however, they develop a father-son-like relationship.

The Projection Room

- Totò learns how to operate the projector.
- Alfredo teaches him about films and life.
- The projection room became an important place in Totò's childhood.
- Through cinema, Totò begins to discover:
 - imagination
 - love
 - human relationships
 - the outside world.

The Fire

- One of the most important events is a fire in the projection room.
- Alfredo is seriously injured and loses his eyesight.
- Because Alfredo can no longer operate the projector, Totò takes responsibility for the cinema.
- Totò becomes the new projectionist.

This marks an important stage in his development. Totò moves from being a child who watches cinema to someone who actively creates a relationship with cinema.

Totò's Teenage Years

- Totò grows older.
- He continues working at the cinema.
- He became increasingly interested in filmmaking.
- He also falls in love with Elena.

Elena

- Elena is the daughter of a wealthy banker.
- Their relationship faces social and family barriers.
- Totò and Elena fall deeply in love.
- Their romance becomes an important part of Totò's emotional development.

Alfredo's Advice

- Alfredo understands that Totò has a special talent.
- He encourages Totò to leave the village.
- Alfredo believes that Totò needs to experience the larger world.
- He tells him, in effect, that he should leave the village and build a new life.

This is a crucial moment. Alfredo as a father figure Alfredo is not Totò's biological father, but he becomes his: mentor, teacher, guide, father figure

Totò Leaves the Village

- Totò eventually leaves Sicily.
- He moves away to pursue his career.
- He became a successful filmmaker.
- He becomes Salvatore, a famous director.

However, he remains emotionally connected to his childhood.

Return to the Village

After Alfredo's death, Salvatore returns to his hometown.

- He sees the changes that have occurred.
- The old Cinema Paradiso is being demolished.
- The cinema that shaped his childhood is disappearing.

This represents the disappearance of an entire cinema culture.

Alfredo's Final Gift

Before his death, Alfredo leaves something for Salvatore. It is a collection of kissing scenes that had been cut from films. As a young boy, Totò had watched these films in the projection room. The scenes had originally been removed because of censorship. Alfredo has preserved them.

The famous ending

- Salvatore watches the compilation.
- One after another, the old kissing scenes appear.
- The sequence brings together:
 - his childhood
 - Alfredo
 - Cinema Paradiso
 - love
 - cinema
 - memory
 - loss.

Salvatore becomes deeply emotional. The ending suggests that cinema has preserved his memories even though the physical world of his childhood has disappeared.

12. Fandry

- Title: *Fandry* Year: 2013 Director: Nagraj Manjule Country: India Language: Marathi Genre: Social drama / Coming-of-age Central issues: Caste, poverty, discrimination, adolescent love and social inequality The word “Fandry” refers to a pig in the film’s local usage and becomes an important symbol of caste-based humiliation.

Plot

Jabya

- The protagonist is Jabya, a teenage boy from a poor Dalit family.
- He lives in a village in Maharashtra.
- His family belongs to a community traditionally forced to perform menial and stigmatized work.
- Jabya is ashamed of the work his family does.
- He wants to escape the identity imposed on him by caste.

Jabya’s Dream

- Jabya develops a crush on Shalu, a girl from a socially higher caste.
- He believes that if he becomes successful and changes his appearance, he may be accepted by her.
- He is particularly concerned about how other people see him.
- His love for Shalu therefore becomes connected with his desire for social mobility and dignity.

Jabya and Shalu

- Jabya secretly admires Shalu.

- He watches her from a distance.
- He dreams about talking to her and eventually expressing his love.
- However, there is a strong caste barrier between them.
- Jabya does not openly express his feelings because he knows that society does not treat them as equals.

The love story is not simply a teenage romance. It represents the social boundaries created by caste. Jabya loves Shalu → but caste determines who is considered worthy of love.

The Black Sparrow

- Jabya believes that catching a black sparrow will bring him good fortune.
- He searches for the bird with great hope.
- The black sparrow becomes connected to his dreams of:
 - love
 - good luck
 - a better life
 - social acceptance.

Symbolism

The sparrow represents Jabya's hopes and dreams. But these dreams repeatedly collide with the harsh reality of caste.

The Pig-Catching Episode

- Jabya's family is asked to help catch a pig.
- The task is considered dirty and degrading.
- Jabya desperately wants to avoid doing this work.
- He is worried that Shalu and the other villagers will see him doing it.
- His embarrassment shows how caste discrimination has become internalised.

Jabya does not simply suffer because other people discriminate against him. He has also been made to feel ashamed of his own social identity. This is an important concept: Internalised caste oppression. The victim begins to see the stigmatized identity through the eyes of the oppressive society.

Jabya's Humiliation

- Jabya tries to maintain his dignity.
- But the village constantly reminds him of his caste.
- People expect his family to perform particular kinds of labour.
- His personal dreams cannot easily escape these social expectations.

The film shows that caste is not only an idea.

It affects:

- occupation
- relationships
- education
- social status
- love
- self-image
- dignity.

The Climax

The film reaches its emotional peak when Jabya experiences public humiliation.

- His caste identity becomes impossible to hide.
- He is humiliated in front of the village community.
- His dreams of love and social acceptance collapse.
- The frustration that has accumulated throughout the film finally explodes.

Adaminte Variyellu

- Title: *Adaminte Variyellu* (ആദാമിന്റെ വാരിയെല്ലു) Year: 1983 Director: K. G. George Language: Malayalam Genre: Social drama / Feminist film Screenplay: K. G. George Central concern: Women's oppression within patriarchal society

Three women's lives

- The film brings together the stories of three women:
 - Alice
 - Vasanthi
 - Ammini
- They come from different social and economic backgrounds.
- Their lives appear different, but they share one fundamental problem: they live in a society dominated by men.

Alice's marriage

- Alice is trapped in an unhappy domestic life.
- Her marriage illustrates the unequal power relationship between husband and wife.
- Her individual desires and identity are suppressed.
- The family is presented not simply as a place of security but also as a possible site of oppression.

Vasanthi's situation

- Vasanthi represents a woman from the working class.
- Economic insecurity makes her especially vulnerable.
- Her story demonstrates that women experience oppression differently depending on their class position.

Ammini's life

- Ammini belongs to the economically and socially marginalised section of society.
- She faces exploitation and humiliation.
- Her experiences reveal how poverty intensifies women's vulnerability.

The Common Link

Although the three women are different, the film connects their experiences.

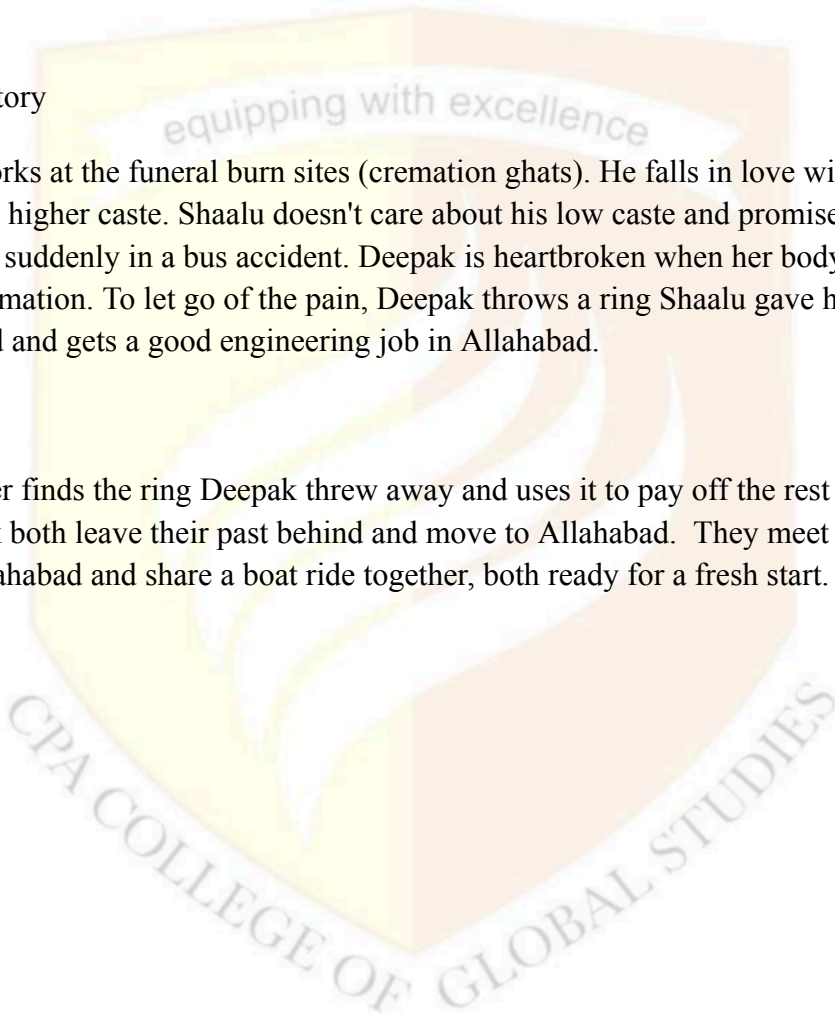
They are controlled by:

- patriarchy
- marriage
- male authority
- economic dependence
- social expectations
- sexual exploitation
- class inequality.

Therefore, the film presents women's oppression as a structural problem, rather than as the fault of one particular man.

Masaan

- Title: *Masaan* Year: 2015 Director: Neeraj Ghaywan Language: Hindi Country: India Genre: Social drama / Independent cinema Setting: Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh Major themes: Caste, grief, love, poverty, corruption, sexuality, social inequality and redemption
- Devi's Story
- Devi goes to a hotel room with her boyfriend, Piyush. Corrupt police officers raid the room and record them. Out of fear and shame, Piyush locks himself in the bathroom and kills himself. The police officer threatens to tell everyone unless Devi's father pays a huge bribe. Her father makes risky bets to raise the money, while Devi faces hate and gossip from neighbors. Devi gets a job in another city (Allahabad) to start a new life.

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- The logo of CPA College of Global Studies is a shield-shaped emblem. It features a stylized white flame or leaf-like shape in the center, set against a background of yellow and orange segments. A banner at the top of the shield reads "equipping with excellence". The bottom of the shield is bordered by the text "CPA COLLEGE OF GLOBAL STUDIES".
- Deepak's Story
 - Deepak works at the funeral burn sites (cremation ghats). He falls in love with Shaalu, a girl from a rich, higher caste. Shaalu doesn't care about his low caste and promises to be with him. Shaalu dies suddenly in a bus accident. Deepak is heartbroken when her body is brought to his ghat for cremation. To let go of the pain, Deepak throws a ring Shaalu gave him into the river. He studies hard and gets a good engineering job in Allahabad.
 - Ending
 - Devi's father finds the ring Deepak threw away and uses it to pay off the rest of the bribe. Devi and Deepak both leave their past behind and move to Allahabad. They meet as strangers at the river in Allahabad and share a boat ride together, both ready for a fresh start.