

FUSION OF KNOWLEDGE

MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES IN RESEARCH

VOLUME- 4

CHIEF EDITORS

**Lakshmi Namratha Vempaty
Dr. Vijay Raja**

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

**Dr. Rupam Mukherjee
Shriya K**

CO-EDITORS

**Dr. Maddela Prasanthi
Dr. K. Vinaya Laxmi**

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FUSION OF KNOWLEDGE: MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES IN RESEARCH, VOLUME- 4

*Edited by: Lakshmi Namratha Vempaty, Dr. Vijay Raja, Dr. Rupam Mukherjee, Shriya K,
Dr. Maddela Prasanthi, Dr. K. Vinaya Laxmi*

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History of Film and its Relation with Literature

Guided by

Ms. Pooja R. Nichole

Assistant Professor (Contract Basis),
Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari North
Maharashtra University,
Jalgaon, Maharashtra.

Email: poojanichole@gmail.com.

June 2021.

Dr. Indira Patil

Associate Professor
JDMVP's Arts, Commerce and
Science College, Jalgaon, Maharashtra
Email: prof.dr.indirapatil@gmail.com

Introduction

Literature and film both are the tools for the change of society. Literature as we know, is a very old and authentic medium about society. From Chaucer's days till today, many generations have experienced a lot of change in it. But it has always educated society. At that time, drama was the medium to propagate literature through audio-visual medium. We know that drama has been backbone of literature. It can be seen that 'Time' and 'Situation' are the two major elements that cannot be held. They are constantly moving. What drama was to early generation is film now. About both concepts, we can say that,

'Literature is a still film,

Film a moving Literature'.

The main source behind 'Literature' and 'Film' is culture. Things which are related to culture, that depict the features of culture or oppose some practices of culture at sometimes are shown through these mediums. What we do while reading a piece of literature or watching a film? We explore a lot about the themes by visual (literature) or audio-video (film) medium.

Key Words- Literature, Film, Culture, History

History of Film and its Relation with Literature

Film and Literature are inter-related. The best in literature can be easily rejuvenated through the medium of film. On the other side, some of the best films can also be cherished through the medium of literature. Literature is immortal but film propagate it for generations.

We can find a lot of examples of literature turned into films. From the various versions of 'Devdas' (novel with the same name written by Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay) to the very new '3 Idiots' (novel with the name 'Five Point Someone' by Chetan Bhagat).

Some of the best films having ravishing story can be turned into literature too. So that some research can be done on the same. We can consider some examples like 'Kahani'

(directed by Sujoy Ghosh), 'Mardaani' (directed by Pradeep Sarkar) and 'Stree' (directed by Amar Kaushik).

At first, we will explore the history of film. The history of film begins in March 22, 1895. Firstly, we can find a private screening of short film by Lumiere Brothers. It is followed by a more public screening in December in the same year, known for documentary realism. Lumiere brothers use cinema as a way to investigate reality and document history. They are followed by George Melies, another name, is known for fantasy-based films.

The title of the first real motion picture is 'Workers Leaving the Lumie`re Factory in Lyon (1895).

These films followed contemporary cultural tradition; fascination with spectacle, it marked impact of theatre and turned to literary materials for all kinds of subject matter.

Birth of film also have relation with 'Nickelodeon'. It was a multi-purpose theatre that was popular from about 1900 to 1914. It developed in 1905, impacting the first decade of 20th century. 'Nickelodeon' is having two words in it. 'Nickel' coin and the 'lodeon' is a Greek word for a roof over theatre. So these 'Nickelodeons' (Theatres) were established in America. A very significantly popular movie was 'The Great Train Robbery' which was released in 1903. This short film changed the way of entertainment forever. This film itself was based on a historical event that was a robbery on a train by gang of Butch Cassidy's. Considered as a first western film, this film is known for its technical and editing innovations. This was the period, when films became longer from 1 minute to 15 minutes of run. So for screening, the need of storytelling emerged. Between 1910 to 1920, Sam Goldwyn (MGM), Warner Brothers, Wiiliam Fox, such popular studios became famous. During 1920's, we find the era of 'Silent Films'. Firstly, there came some films of given characteristics:

1. Black and White.
2. No dialogue.
3. No sound recorded on film.
4. Use of inter titles.

Visual story telling was the tool in which film could communicate purely through visuals, physical comedy/slapstick. Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin are the famous examples of this time.

After the era of silent films, there got the emergence of classical film. From literature. D.W. Griffith's work after 1913 is credited for the birth of classical film from literature. Here when the relation of film with literature got interacted, we find some terms like 'Criticism of the film'. On the opposite side, there is 'criticism of the novel'. Both the terms aim to explore the essence of the film and provide conceptual frameworks for understanding of film's relationship with literature.

Bela Balzac is known as the pioneer in the sphere of film theory. Balzac laments the lack of critical appreciation of films as a major device to disservice to the 'mental health of the

2. कामगार चळवळ

3. भूदान चळवळ.

nations' as films have a much greater impact and influence on the minds of public than any art form. According to Balzac, film is only medium of art, where the commercialization of art has already started. If we see the opinion of Balzac, film emerges as a site that encapsulates the contradictions of the society and culture in a post-industrial and post-modern society.

Walter Benjamin (1936) recognized the revolutionary potential of the film as an art form in his essay, "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction."

Bluestone famously asserted that the novel (or literature) and the film are 'overtly compatible, secretly hostile'.

Literature uses textual codes and depends on the conventional linguistic codes and cultural codes to create and narrate complex narratives. The films borrows and recreates these codes through visual codes (costume, decor, mise-en-scene and so on and the cinematic codes (montage, length of a shot, camera angles and movements) to animate their narration.

By the very restricted duration of the medium, the film cannot fully represent narratives that take place over a long period of time without special effects, conventions and techniques. In case of literature, there is not any restriction on length. Despite some of these issues, film has emerged as a narrative and visual art in its own right and it has influenced literary production even as it has borrowed from literary codes.

The another advantage of film is that it is useful to connect to the masses. It can create a lot of other opportunities to many people because it is not just about a story but it needs other things (costume department, music department, infrastructure, camera setting and now-a-days vfx too.)

If we see the history of film theory, 1916-mid 1930's is a formalist phase or classical phase known as 'Silent Period'. This is the very first phase of film theory. 1960's-1970's is the period where second phase got emerged rapidly. It challenged the way in which classical phase responds to art, nature, society, realty, class, gender, language.

It was followed by third phase in 1970's. Inspired from Linguistics, Lacan, Derrida, Strauss, Foucault, Freud's theories were applied on film analysis.

The fourth phase that emerged in 1980's is known as Eclectic (varied, diverse) period. History, Psychology, Linguistics are applied to understand films, approaches drew on Feminism, Cognitive Psychology etc.

Up to the end of 20th century, we can positively find documentary, advertisemental, educational, news, experimental, abstract, story as different categories of the films. We can see that literature is individualist-product of a single mind. But on contrary, film is a team effort and does not bear any individual signature- not even of the director who is a unifying factor.

Sergei Eisanstein in 'Dickens, Griffith and Film Theory' points out some commonalities of film with literature.

1. Popularity of film; image captivate peoples' minds with sensuous magic- melody, music and disruptive sounds; to reach the unreachable, to live vicariously.

2. Visual range, mobility of images, fluidity of short compositions.
3. Extra-ordinary observation and optical quality.
4. The characters of Dickens are rounded with means as plastic and slightly exaggerated as are the screen heroes of today.
5. Screen characters are engraved in the memory owing to their clear visible traits, villains are remembered by certain facial expressions, saturated in the slightly unnatural gleam thrown over them by the screen.

On the other hand, there are some chances of changes too. The novel when gets turned into a film, changes in some extent. Certain constraints which lie behind the making of a film for example- team effort, the constraint of money, time constraint, which compels filmmaker to do a lot of pruning in terms of depiction of a story. Films can be made again and again with the same theme but the novel cannot be re-written. Some story can have different interpretations. For example- Pride and Prejudice, Robin Hood, War and Peace, Devdas, Anna Karenina.

The way of interpretation also changes when we read a novel and on the other side, when we see that on the screen.

Literature can always make connection with situation. For example- When Trump won the presidential election, we can find a sudden boost in the sale of 1984 written by George Orwell because people might have observed certain similarities between the two.

Film and Literature both can develop 'Catharsis Effect'. Catharsis i.e., purgation of emotions (especially pity and fear). This is a term that got introduced by Aristotle as an effect of tragic drama on its audience.

Sometimes we find that films based on a piece of literature when appear on screen, help the sale of the copies more than the earlier sale. Some of the examples of novels and tie-in sales are as given:

1. When David Copperfield appeared on screen, many libraries ordered new copies.
2. The Good Earth boosted sales by 3000% for a week.
3. Wuthering Heights sold 7, 00,000 copies.
4. Pride and Prejudice sold over a million copies.
5. Moby Dick, War and Peace, 1984- Old examples.
6. Five Point Someone, Two States- New Examples.

Sometimes filmmaker take a lot of liberty and taking such liberties does not necessarily impair the quality.

For Example- Padmavat and Bajirao Mastani.

The medium of film has an definite urge over the novel in a portrayal of a non-verbal experience without taking a recourse to the words. Human face can show so many emotions that enhances the joy of any text by taking it on screen.

Pictorial representation of dreams and memories are challenging and many often be disappointing.

Perception of time also changes in both medium. A film is ready with all material and it is easy to spend two hours approximately for watching it. On the other side, a novel takes more time than a film.

Novel can afford a density, as the reader has lived with it longer. On the other side, film cannot.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have seen a splendid history of film and its relation with literature in detailed manner. It throws light on the emergence of theatre and the development of films by stages. Both film and literature have their impact in direct and indirect ways on audiences and both the forms are equally beneficial.

So some points are having similarities but as a counterpart both have some differences too. Every piece of art have its features and about 'Film' and 'Literature', we can only say that, though having some differences too; they are inter-related with each other.

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