**FMC132
MEDIA, CULTURE AND FILMS**

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NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

FMC132: Media, Culture and Films is a course for students offering B.Sc. Film Production Programme in the National Open University of Nigeria. The course consists of three Modules and a couple of Study Units. The material has been developed to suit undergraduate students taking Film Production programme in the department of Mass Communication in the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).

This course will explore the intersections that exist between film, media, and culture through a specific focus on the intersections between cinema and the broader social, scientific, and political concerns of global environmental change. By combining readings in the field with a range of Hollywood and transnational film texts we will discuss how films work to create textual space that both masks and unmasks real world environmental issues. Through screenings, readings, lectures, discussions, group presentations, and written assignments, you will learn how to analyse the cultural, historical, industrial, and aesthetic dimensions of film and media.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

This course will explore the intersections that exist between film, media, and culture through a specific focus on the intersections between cinema and the broader social, scientific, and political concerns of global environmental change.

COURSE AIM

The purpose of this course is to investigate the connections between film, media, and culture. You will learn how to analyse the cultural, historical, industrial, and aesthetic dimensions of film and media through screenings, readings, lectures, discussions, group presentations, and written assignments.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- analyse films as an aesthetic medium, technological industry, and cultural form using theoretical, critical, and historical concepts.
- recognise and analyse the relationships between the film industry, popular film texts, and the cultural contexts in which these film texts are placed, including local, national, and transnational contexts, with a focus on environmental issues.

- conduct research, obtain information, and synthesise it from primary and secondary sources, then apply it to the interpretation of cinema and media texts.
- build and present creative arguments supported by evidence from different sources.
- discuss what they learned from class readings and movie watching.

WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

To successfully complete this course, read the study units, listen to the audios and videos, do all assessments, open the links and read, participate in discussion forums, read the recommended books and other materials provided, prepare your portfolios, and participate in either face to face facilitation in your centre or the online facilitation.

Each study unit has introduction, objectives, the main content, conclusion, summary and References/Further Readings/Web Resources. The introduction will tell you the expectations in the study unit. Read and note the objectives. The objectives tell you what you should be able to do at the completion of each study unit. So, you can evaluate your learning at the end of each unit to ensure you have achieved the Intended Learning Outcomes.

To meet the Intended Learning Outcomes, knowledge is presented in texts, video and links arranged into modules and units. Click on the links as may be directed but where you are reading the text off line, you will have to copy and paste the link address into a browser. You can download the audios and videos to view off line. You can also print or download the texts and save in your computer or external drive. The conclusion gives you the theme of the knowledge you are taking away from the unit.

There are two main forms of assessments – the formative and the summative. The formative assessments will help you monitor your learning. This is presented as in-text questions, discussion forums and Self-Assessment Exercises.

The summative assessments would be used by the university to evaluate your academic performance. This will be given as Computer Based Test (CBT) which serves as continuous assessment and final examinations. A minimum of three computer-based tests will be given with only one final examination at the end of the semester. You are required to take all the computer-based tests and the final examination.

COURSE MATERIALS

The major components of the course are as listed below.
•   Course Guide
•   Study Units
•   Textbooks and References
•   Assignment File
•   Presentation Schedule

COURSE COMPETENCIES

To make the best of this course, you must have a general idea about media and films. The basic knowledge of these media will help you to better appreciate the connection between media, films and culture. It is also imperative to have the basic understanding of film making as well as media practice.

STUDY UNITS

The course is broken into three modules, with three units in each of the module as shown below:

Module 1   Overview of Media

Unit 1   Media
Unit 2   Overview of Culture
Unit 3   Film

Module 2   Media and Culture

Unit 1   The Relationship between Media Culture and Film
Unit 2   Film Theory
Unit 3   Film Theory Continued

Module 3   Understanding Film Analysis

Unit 1   Film Criticism
Unit 2   How Films are Used to Mask and Unmask Reality
Unit 3   African Films

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS/WEB RESOURCES

"What is media? definition and meaning". BusinessDictionary.com.

Canagarajah, Suresh (2010). "Internationalizing Knowledge Construction and Dissemination". *The Modern Language Journal*. 94 (4): 661–664. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2010.01105.x.

Christen, K. (2012). "Does information really want to be free?". *International Journal of Communication*.

Cory Janssen. "What is Communication Media? - Definition from Techopedia". Techopedia.com.

Livingstone, Sonia M.; Lievrouw, Leah A. (2009). New Media: A Critical Introduction. Taylor & Francis. pp. 52–53. ISBN 9780415431606.

Lule, Jack (2012). Rowman & Littlefield. pp. 33–34.

McLuhan, M. (2012). Game Mechanics: Advanced Game Design. US: *New Riders*. p. 147.

Popkin, Dewald (2004). Journalism, Newspaper and Newssheets. Europe 1450-1789: Encyclopedia of the Early Modern World.

Willinsky, Frank (2005). The Access Principle: The Case for Open Access to Research and Scholarship.

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The presentation schedule gives you the important dates for the completion of your computer-based tests, participation in forum discussions and participation at facilitation. Remember, you are to submit all your assignments at the appropriate time. You should guide against delays and plagiarisms in your work. Plagiarism is a criminal offence in academics and is highly penalised.

ASSESSMENT

There are two main forms of assessments in this course that will be scored: the Continuous Assessments and the final examination. The continuous assessment shall be in three-folds. There will be two Computer Based Assessments. The computer-based assessments will be given in accordance to university academic calendar. The timing must

be strictly adhered to. The Computer Based Assessments shall be scored a maximum of 10% each, therefore, the maximum score for continuous assessment shall be 30% which shall form part of the final grade. The final examination will be maximum of two hours and it takes 70 percent of the total course grade. The examination will consist of 70 multiple choice questions that reflect cognitive reasoning.

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THE COURSE

To get the most in this course, you need to have a personal laptop and internet facility. This will give you adequate opportunity to learn anywhere you are in the world. Use the study unit's objectives to guide your self-study in the course. At the end of every unit, examine yourself with the objectives and see if you have achieved what you need to achieve.

Carefully work through each unit and make your notes. Join the online real time facilitation as scheduled. Where you missed the scheduled online real time facilitation, go through the recorded facilitation session at your own free time. Each real time facilitation session will be video recorded and posted on the platform.

In addition to the real time facilitation, watch the video and audio recorded summary in each unit. The video/audio summaries are directed to salient part in each unit. You can assess the audio and videos by clicking on the links in the text or through the course page. Work through all self-assessment exercises. Finally, obey the rules in the class.

ONLINE FACILITATION

You will receive online facilitation. The facilitation is learner centred. The mode of facilitation shall be asynchronous and synchronous. For the asynchronous facilitation, your facilitator will:

- Present the theme for the week;
- Direct and summarise forum discussions;
- Coordinate activities in the platform;
- Score and grade activities when need be;
- Upload scores into the university recommended platform;
- Support you to learn. In this regard personal mails may be sent;
- Send you videos and audio lectures; and podcast.

For the synchronous:
- There will be eight hours of online real time contact in the course. This will be through video conferencing in the Learning

Management System. The eight hours shall be of one-hour contact for eight times.

* At the end of each one-hour video conferencing, the video will be uploaded for viewing at your pace.
* The facilitator will concentrate on main themes that you must learn in the course.
* The facilitator is to present the online real time video facilitation time table at the beginning of the course.
* The facilitator will take you through the course guide in the first lecture at the start date of facilitation

Do not hesitate to contact your facilitator. Contact your facilitator if you:
* do not understand any part of the study units or the assignment.
* have difficulty with the self-assessment exercises
* have a question or problem with an assignment or with your tutor's comments on an assignment. Also, use the contact provided for technical support.

Read all the comments and notes of your facilitator especially on your assignments; participate in the forums and discussions. This gives you opportunity to socialise with others in the programme. You can raise any problem encountered during your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course facilitation, prepare a list of questions before the discussion session. You will learn a lot from participating actively in the discussions.

Finally, respond to the questionnaire. This will help the university to know your areas of challenges and how to improve on them for the review of the course materials and lectures.

**MAIN
COURSE**

CONTENTS

MODULE 1 OVERVIEW OF MEDIA

Unit 1   Media
Unit 2   Overview of Culture
Unit 3   Film

Unit 1   Media

Unit Structure

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1.1   Introduction

This unit gives an exposé of the media, its types and uses, such as the educational, informational and psychological uses of the media in the society.

1.2   Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

• define the media
• list media types and their uses
• classify the roles of the different media types.

1.3   The Media

The media is the term used to refer to communication channels for the dissemination of information, entertainment, education, films, news and so on. The physical representation of the media includes newspaper, magazine, radio, television, telephone, billboard, cinema, internet, blog. It indicates the various avenues through which we communicate in the society. That is, all the means of communication, everything ranging from a telephone call to the evening news on television can be called media.

Figure 1.1: Communication Channels

1.3.1 Types of media

Media can be broken down into two main categories: broadcast and print. The Internet has also emerged as a major player, through which a rapidly-growing number of people globally get their news, movies, etc. online.

The Print Media includes all types of publications, including newspapers, journals, magazines, books and reports. It is the oldest type, and despite suffering since the emergence of the Internet, it is still used by a major proportion of the population.

The Broadcast Media refers to radio and television, which emerged at the beginning and middle of the 20th century respectively. A large number of people still tune in for news from TV and radio broadcasts. Quite a number also visit cinemas or film houses although, it has been

predicted that online sources will soon take over from the broadcast medium.

The Internet, (websites, Facebook, you tube, Skype, email and blogs) are gradually becoming popular source of communication, as people now seek news, entertainment and educational materials online.

1.3.2 Origin of the Term Media

The art of writing and paper are earliest forms of communication methods which made long-distance exchange of information possible through mail, especially in the Persian Empire (Chapar, Khaneh and Angarium) and Roman Empire.

According to Howard Rheingold, drawings and writings are earliest forms of human communication. Examples of such are the Lascaux cave drawings and early writing, which he described as early forms of media (Brian, 2002).

Another view of media history begins with the Chauvet Cave paintings and continues with smoke signals, path markers, and sculpture as additional ways to transport human communication beyond the short range of voice.

Marshall McLuhan, a Canadian communications theorist, used the term media in its current sense to refer to communication channels, stating in Counterblast (1954): "The media are not toys, and they should not be in the hands of executives from Mother Goose and Peter Pan. Because they are art forms, they can only be entrusted to young artists." Since Mcluhan's coinage of the word, it had become widely accepted in all over the world.

Self-Assessment Exercises 1

> 1.   State the three media types and give two examples of each one.
> 2.   …………… coined the present usage of 'media' in ……..

1.4   Roles of the Media

The media are used to share knowledge around the world. It provides information on global politics or the economy, for example, consumers have benefited from newspapers, broadcast media and the internet from their services as media outlets in terms of sales and advertisement.

The internet is a means of establishing a fair and equitable system of knowledge: because it is available to anybody, anyone can read and review any information on it. Schools now recommend internet and other media to their students for information and research. Media bridges the gap between politics, culture, economic life, and society. Modern technology has the ability to remove cultural gender, and national divides. The internet as a media tool is a sustainable way to overcome the gap between developed and developing countries.

Media also prevents the domination of a weak country by a stronger one, addressing the issue of unbalanced relations between countries, by preventing the major powers from imposing their own ideas on developing countries. Instead, media outlets re-establish balance, for instance by enhancing publication of newspapers, academic journals from developing countries. Thus, giving the developing countries a system that provides access to knowledge and protection of the people's customs and culture. Indeed, in some traditional societies, some genders cannot have access to a certain type of knowledge therefore respecting these customs limit the scope of dissemination but still allow the diffusion of knowledge. Consequently, media is a modern form of communication, aiming at spreading knowledge within the whole world, regardless of any form of discrimination.

Media, through communications psychology has helped to connect diverse people from far and near geographical locations.

It has also helped in the aspect of on-line or Internet businesses and other activities that have an on-line version by providing business information and advertisements.

1.5   Effect of the Media

The media's, intent to affect human behaviour is initiated through communication and the intended behaviour is couched in psychology. Therefore, understanding media and communications psychology is fundamental in understanding the social and individual effects of media.

The media and human behaviour are inextricably linked. The media has always had a significant impact on human life, resulting in a shift in people's lifestyles. People can obtain knowledge in a broader sense and can get or collect world information via the media.

The media can provide ideas, inspiration to do specific things, and motivate people to take action based on what they see. Media has an impact on everyone who has access to it. Artists and designers are the

ones who govern the media, which in turn controls the society. Human behaviour, lifestyle, moral views, and consequences can all be influenced by media, either positively or negatively.

1.5.1 Positive Roles of the Media

It provides a wealth of scientific and sociological growth through numerous outlets such as television, radio, newspapers, and even the internet. People attain the best results by using these methods. Basically, living skills, intellectual competence, reflection, and even personal pondering are all aided by media. All of these personal growth opportunities are critical to creating the beauty of our lives.

People in the rural communities depend on the radio for information, which helps in shaping their mind-sets, politically and culturally.

1.5.2 Negative Effects of the Media

It has led to reduction in face-to-face interaction as people now prefer to relate on the social media and this has brought about a reduction in individual development and a lot of unsociable activities among teens and children.

A lot of false displays of personal wealth has led a lot of youths into committing abominable acts like stealing, kidnapping in order to get rich at all cost.

The saying goes that, good news is no news and it is typically boring and a lot of airing of bad films does not make for a psychologically balanced society.

Incidences of cyber bully by unknown assailants are rampant on the social media and a lot of youths find themselves being initiated into witchcraft and occultic practices through the social media and films.

Self-Assessment Exercises 2

> 1. State at least five roles of the media.
> 2. What are the positive effects of the media?
> 3. State two of the negative roles of the media.

1.6   Summary

Media is the communication channel through which information, news, education and entertainment are passed to a diverse set of audience. The media types ranges from the internet (Facebook, YouTube, blogs, twitter, email, Skype), the print media (newspapers, magazines, books, mail) and the broadcast media (television, radio, cinema).

The media perform a number of roles in the society. It informs, it educates, entertains, and projects cultural values and act as a link between nations.

The roles performed by the media psychologically tries to couch human behaviour and such its effect can either be positive or negative. It is positive when it brings about knowledge, information and growth. However, its role becomes negative when it brings on undesirable anti-social behaviour.

1.7   References/Further Readings/Web Resources

"What is media? Definition and meaning". BusinessDictionary.com.

Canagarajah, S. (2010). "Internationalizing Knowledge Construction and Dissemination". *The Modern Language Journal*. 94 (4): 661–664. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2010.01105.x.

Christen, K. (2012). "Does information really want to be free?". *International Journal of Communication*.

Cory Janssen. "What is Communication Media? - Definition from Techopedia". Techopedia.com.

Livingstone, S. M. & Lievrouw, L. A. (2009). *New Media: A Critical Introduction*. Taylor & Francis. pp. 52–53. ISBN 9780415431606.

Lule, Jack (2012). Rowman & Littlefield. pp. 33–34.

McLuhan, M. (2012). *Game Mechanics: Advanced Game Design*. US: New Riders. p. 147.

Popkin, D. (2004). *Journalism, Newspaper and Newssheets*. Europe: 1450-1789: Encyclopedia of the Early Modern World.

Willinsky, Frank (2005). The Access Principle: The Case for Open Access to Research and Scholarship.

1.8   Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

Self-Assessment Exercises 1
a.   The media informs, gives update on news about situations.
b.   It advertises goods and services.
c.   It acts as a link between cultures.
d.   It serves as a means through which nations can express its own culture, thus preventing the domination of the weak nations by the super powers.
e.   It acts as a link between cultures and societies.
f.   It is used as a platform for business transactions.

Self-Assessment Exercises 2
a.   It makes room for growth.
b.   It also helps in shaping the human mind through the information it provides.

Unit 2   **Overview of Culture**

Unit Structure

2.1   Introduction

In unit one, you learnt that the media is a tool for projecting and also uniting cultures. In this unit, you will be introduced to culture, types of culture and the elements of culture.

2.2   Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

•   define culture
•   list the elements of culture
•   explain the significance of language in culture
•   differentiate between an ideal and the real culture
•   distinguish between material and non-material culture.

2.3   Culture Defined

Culture is an umbrella term that refers to the social behaviour and conventions that are shared in human societies. It is the set of practices, traditions, and values of a civilization or community, such as an ethnic group or nation. It can be described as the summation of the people's knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, abilities, and habits, music,

dancing, rituals, and religion, as well as technologies such as tools use, cooking, shelter, and clothing.

Culture is a body of information that has been accumulated over time. In this way, multiculturalism promotes peaceful coexistence and mutual respect among people of many cultures who share the same planet.

Culture is also sometimes used to define distinctive practices within a subgroup of a society, such as a subculture. Cultural relativism is an ideology and analytical approach in cultural anthropology that holds that civilizations cannot easily be objectively rated or evaluated since any evaluation must be located inside a given culture's value system.

2.3.1 Mass Culture

Culture sophistication has also been used to separate civilizations from less sophisticated societies in the past. Class-based divisions between a high culture of the social elite and a low culture, popular culture, or folk culture of the lower classes, distinguished by access to cultural capital, are also seen in such hierarchical perspectives on culture. The mass manufactured and mass mediated forms of consumer culture that arose in the twentieth century are referred to as mass culture.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

Culture is ……………………………………………………….

2.4   Types of Culture

Material and non-material culture, as well as ideal and real culture, are the four dimensions or forms of culture. Material culture is concerned with man-made artefacts. Material culture produces structures, furniture, films and books. Non-material culture is concerned with abstract concepts such as emotions, attitudes, ideas, and beliefs that we experience but cannot observe. Non-material culture includes things like peace, war, cooperation, marriage, and lectures. A book is made of material culture, but its words are not. Man is a material being, but his speech is not. Although radio is made of stuff, the sound it produces is not. It implies that material culture includes a non-material component as well.

2.4.1 Real Culture

Our social lives show true culture. We act on culture in our social lives in a real way, and the part that people adopt in their social lives is also real. Because a portion of it remains unpractised, the entire is never real. Our true culture is determined by how much emphasis we place on our belief. That is, the aspect of our belief that we practice is our real culture.

2.4.2 Ideal Culture

The ideal culture is one that is given to the public as a model or the expected. It is the society's objective. However, it will never be totally realized because some aspects remain unpractised, although, it is explained in textbooks, lectures, and instruction by teachers. Real culture is the component of ideal culture that is practiced in social life. Therefore, both the real and ideal civilizations can be described as being intertwined and at the same time distinct from each other.

2.4.3 Material Culture

Material culture includes man-made artefacts such as furniture, automobiles, buildings, dams, bridges, and highways, as well as physical matter that has been altered and used by man. It is intimately linked to external, mechanical, and practical objects. It contains technical and material equipment such as locomotives, printing presses, radios, banking institutions, legislatures, and insurance policies, among others.

2.4.4 Non-Material Culture

Culture in its broadest definition, refers to both material and non-material culture. However, when the term non material is employed, in its common sense, it refers to something that is not material. It is a collection of nonphysical concepts such as values, beliefs, symbols, organisations, and institutions. Nonmaterial culture encompasses the words a group of people use, the languages such people speak, the beliefs they upheld, the values they cherish, and all the rituals they participate in.

Self-Assessment Exercises 2

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1.   Distinguish between material and non-material culture.

2.   Differentiate between real and ideal culture.

2.5   Cultural Elements

i.   A cultural norm codifies acceptable behaviour in the society, that serves as a guideline for behaviour, attire, language, and manner in a scenario and it acts as a template for social expectations.

ii.   Culture must have a pattern or a symbolic form of expression, whether intended or not. In everyday speech, culture refers to the symbolic markers that ethnic groups employ to separate themselves visibly from one another, such as body alteration, clothes, or jewellery.

        These are works of art, and works of literature that represent something else. Symbols will always elicit a variety of responses and behaviours. Symbols are nonverbal communication tools, some of which can be physical items. Within a cultural framework, shared symbols constantly allow for social interactions. Their physical nature belongs to the material culture but their underlying meaning is the non-material aspect of culture.

iii.   The most important aspect of any civilization is its language. Language is also the sole cultural component that distinguishes one civilization from another. For example, in English, a "book" is an object that we write on, yet in French, "livre" denotes the same thing.

        Communication is essential to culture. Culture cannot survive or continue without communication. A common language facilitates communication within a culture, and everyone understands the meanings of different words. In any culture, language is as important as gestures, flags, and symbols for communication.
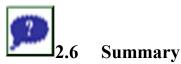
        In culture, language can be spoken or written, and while spoken language evolved into written language, written language is more image-based than spoken language. Individuals outside of a certain culture find it easier to learn another culture's language through pictures and words. The interpretation given to other

people's cultures is influenced by their languages. As an illustration, a group of people with certain accents may be viewed as violent because of the way they speak, even if they are not physically confrontational.

The use of diverse terms of the same meaning in different languages sometimes caused certain difficulties. In one culture, a businessman may be interpreted as a trader in another. In one culture, a car park may refer to a parking lot in another it may be referred to as garage.

iv. Culture is not inborn but learned over time, either consciously or subconsciously. Culture is a key term that encompasses a wide range of phenomena that are passed down through social learning in human communities. Cultures across societies are diverse and are acquired over time by humans through the learning processes of enculturation and socialization.

v. Culture is not individualistic, but collectively shared with others. The learning process involves interaction and sharing as learning takes place. A monoculture in a social group carries hazards, because a single species can die off in the face of environmental change due to lack of functional responses. For example, in military culture, bravery is regarded as a typical individual conduct that is personal to a person, while duty, honour, and social group loyalty are regarded as virtues or functional responses that are shared. Similar characteristics in a social group can be observed in the practice of religion.

vi. Culture is dynamic, a lot of cultures evolve over the years and as cultures interrelate, changes take place.

Self-Assessment Exercises 3

> 1. State and discuss the elements of culture.
> 2. Explain the significance of language in culture.

2.6   Summary

Culture is an umbrella term that refers to the social behaviour and conventions that are shared in human societies. It is the set of practices, traditions, and values of a civilisation or community, such as an ethnic group or nation.

It can be described as the summation of the people's knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, abilities, and habits, music, dancing, rituals, and religion, as well as technologies such as tools use, cooking, shelter, and clothing.

Material and non-material culture, as well as ideal and real culture, are the four dimensions or forms of culture. Material culture is concerned with man-made artefacts such as furniture, films and books. Non-material culture is concerned with abstract concepts such as emotions, attitudes, ideas, and beliefs that we experience but cannot observe.

The elements of culture are norms, symbols, language, it is learnt, its dynamic and shared.

2.7   Reference/Further Reading/Web Resource

McQuail, D. (2008). McQuail's Mass Communication Theory., London: Sage Publication 1.9

2.8   Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

Culture is an umbrella term that refers to the social behaviour and conventions that are shared in human societies. It can be described as the summation of the people's knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, abilities, and habits, music, dancing, rituals, and religion, as well as technologies such as tools use, cooking, shelter, and clothing.

Self-Assessment Exercises 2

1.   Material culture is concerned with man-made artifacts. Material culture produces structures, furniture, films and books. Non-material culture is concerned with abstract concepts such as emotions, attitudes, ideas, and beliefs that we experience but cannot observe. Non-material culture includes things like peace, war, cooperation, marriage, and lectures. A book is made of material culture, but its words are not. Man is a material being, but his speech is not. Although radio is made of stuff, the sound it produces is not. It implies that material culture includes non-material component as well.

2.   The ideal culture is the model or the expected behaviour, what humans practice, this is the real culture.

Self-Assessment Exercises 3

1   The elements of culture are: language, norms, symbols, dynamism, it is learned and it is collectively shared.

2.   Language is the vehicle through which culture is transmitted. In culture, language can be spoken or written, and while spoken language evolved into written language, written language is more image-based than spoken language. Individuals outside of a certain culture find it easier to learn another culture's language through pictures and words. The way other people's cultures are interpreted and influenced by their language. People with certain accents are viewed as violent because of the way they speak, even if they are not physically confrontational. The use of diverse terms of the same meaning in different languages has also caused certain difficulties. In one culture, a businessman may be interpreted as a trader in another. In one culture, a car park may refer to a parking lot in another. Culture cannot survive without language because it is the instrument for learning and linking of cultures.

Unit 3   Film

Unit Structure

3.1   Introduction

In unit two you learnt about culture and technology and films being a product of material culture. This unit talks about the definition of films, its historical development from vitascope to cinematography, nickelodeon, feature, silent film, the end of silent film and the emergence of Hollywood.

3.2   Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain what film is
- identify key points in the development of the motion picture industry
- list key developments of the motion picture industry and technology
- discuss influential films in the movie history.

3.3   Film History

A film is a virtual work of art that is used to imitate life experiences. It communicates thought, beliefs, experiences, feelings, beauty, or atmosphere through the use of moving images with sound, and at times, other sensory stimulations (Andrew, 2013). The word "cinema", short for cinematography, is often used to refer to filmmaking and the film industry, and to the art form that is the end result of it.

The Film industry originated in the early 19th century as a result of technological innovations that started with the invention of photography, which was when the notion of film making started. Since then, the industry has witnessed extraordinary transformations, some driven by the artistic visions of individual participants, some by commercial necessity, and still others by accident. The history of the cinema is complex, and involved many contributors. Thus, for every important innovator and movement listed here, others have been left out.

Self-Assessment Exercises 1

1.   A film is …………………………………………………..
2.   ……………. prompted the development of the film industry.

3.3.1 The Development of Motion Picture Technology of the Late 19th Century

While the experience of watching movies on smartphones may seem like a sudden departure from the communal nature of film viewing as we think of it today, in some ways the small-format, single-viewer display is a return to film's early roots. In 1891, the inventor Thomas Edison, together with William Dickson, a young laboratory assistant, came out with what they called the kinetoscope, a device that would become the predecessor to the motion picture projector. The kinetoscope was a cabinet with a window through which individual viewers could experience the illusion of a moving image (Gale Virtual Reference Library). The images viewers could see in the kinetoscope captured events and performances that had been staged at Edison's film studio in East Orange, New Jersey. The images produced on kinetoscope film were circus performances, dancing women, cockfights, boxing matches, and even a tooth extraction by a dentist (Robinson, 1994).

Figure 3.1:   A Kinetoscope
https://open.lib.umn.edu/app/uploads/sites/8.2.0.jpg

As the kinetoscope gained popularity, the Edison Company began installing the machines in hotel lobbies, amusement parks, and penny arcades (kinetoscope parlors) where customers could pay around 25 cents for admission to watch, was opened around the country. However, when friends and collaborators suggested that Edison find a way to project his kinetoscope images for audience viewing, he refused, because he could not see it as a profitable venture (Encyclopedia Britannica).

However, others took advantage of his short vision and lack of patent for it to create variations of the kinetoscope and distributed it all over Europe. However, the invention of two brothers, Auguste and Louis Lumière was the most successful. In 1895, the brothers patented the cinématographe (from which the cinema was coined), a lightweight film projector that also functioned as a camera and printer. Unlike the Edison kinetograph, the cinématographe was lightweight enough for easy outdoor filming, and over the years the brothers used the camera to take well over 1,000 short films, most of which depicted scenes from everyday life.

In December 1895, in the basement lounge of the Grand Café, Rue des Capucines in Paris, the Lumières held the world's first ever commercial film screening, a sequence of about 10 short scenes, including the brother's first film, Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory, a segment lasting less than a minute and depicting workers leaving the family's photographic instrument factory at the end of the day.

Figure 3.2:   A Scene
Workers leaving the Lumiere Factory: One of the first films viewed by an audience.
https://open.lib.umn.edu/app/uploads/sites/8.2.0.jpg

Although Louis Lumière claimed that the cinema was "an invention without a future (Menand, 2005), the demand for motion pictures grew so rapidly that, soon representatives of the Lumière company were traveling throughout Europe and the world, showing half-hour screenings of the company's films. While cinema initially competed with other popular forms of entertainment such as circuses, vaudeville acts, theatre troupes, magic shows, it eventually replaced these various entertainments as the main commercial attraction (Menand, 2005). Thereafter, competing film companies started offering moving-picture acts in music halls and vaudeville theatres across Great Britain. In the United States, the Edison Company purchased the rights to an improved projector that they called the Vitascope, and they held their first film screening in April 1896 at Koster and Bial's Music Hall in Herald Square, New York City.

By the close of the 19th century, as public excitement over the moving picture's novelty gradually wore off, filmmakers began experimenting with film's possibilities as a medium in itself. Technical innovations allowed filmmakers like Parisian cinema owner Georges Melies to experiment with special effects that produced seemingly magical transformations on screen: "trick film," which producers in England and the United States began to imitate. He was also the one to transform cinema into the narrative medium it is today, because filmmakers were producing single-shot films of a minute or less duration before. Melies began joining these short films together to create stories. His 30-scene 'Trip to the Moon' in 1902 (a film based on a Jules Verne novel, was highly popular then). However, Melies never developed his technique beyond treating the narrative film as a staged theatrical performance; his camera, representing the vantage point of an audience

facing a stage, never moved during the filming of a scene. In 1912, Melies released his last commercially successful production, The Conquest of the Pole, and from then on, he lost audiences to filmmakers who were experimenting with more sophisticated techniques (Encyclopedia of Communication and Information).

Self-Assessment Exercises 2

1. Kinetoscope is replicated in today's…………………….. ………
2. Auguste and Louis Lumiere patented the ………………. in 1895.
3. The cinema was coined

3.3.2 The Nickelodeon Boom (1904–1908)

Edwin Porter's 12-minute film, 'The Great Train Robbery' in 1903, was a total departure from Melies production style. He introduced editing, rear projections, camera pans as well as diagonally composed shots that produced a continuity of action. 'The Great Train Robbery' film established cinema as something that could be real. Its success laid the foundation for the development of the film industry, as investors, started seeing the great moneymaking potentials in film production, and they started building the first set of theatres called the nickelodeons because of their 5-cent admission charge. Those early motion picture theatres, were often housed in converted storefronts, were really popular among the working class of the time, who couldn't afford live theater. Between 1904 and 1908, around 9,000 nickelodeons appeared in the United States. It was the nickelodeon's popularity that established film as a mass entertainment medium (Dictionary of American History).

Self-Assessment Exercises 3

1. The Nickelodeon boom started in…………………………………
2. Nickelodeon was a coinage for………………………….………
3. The film industry became a mass entertainment medium

3.4   The Motion Picture Industry Emerges

As the demand for motion pictures grew, production companies were created to meet it. At the peak of nickelodeon popularity in 1910 (Britannica Online), there were 20 or so major motion picture companies in the United States. However, heated disputes often broke out among these companies over patent rights and industry control,

leading even the most powerful among them to fear fragmentation that would loosen their hold on the market (Fielding, 1967). Due to these concerns, the ten leading companies—including Edison, Biograph, Vitagraph, and others formed the Motion Picture Patents Company (MPPC) in 1908. The MPPC's goal was to standardize the industry and shut out competition through monopolistic control. Under the Trust's licensing system, only certain licensed companies could participate in the exchange, distribution, and production of films at different levels of the industry. The strategy later backfired, because, the excluded, independent distributors organised opposition to the Trust.

3.4.1 The Rise of the Feature

The introduction of multiple reel film in 1909 led to the production of feature films of about three hours as against single reel film that was producing just 16 minutes of films before. The method gains much acceptance in the United States in 1912 with Louis Mercanton's highly successful *Queen Elizabeth*, a three-and-a-half-reel feature film that starred the French actress, Sarah Bernhardt. The popularity of long duration films meant more entertainment for the audience and more money to film producers because the audience preferred it to the single reel films and were more willing to pay extra for their tickets. Also, the middle class was happy with it because they saw no difference between it and life theatre performance.

3.4.2 Silent Film's Demise

In 1925, Warner Bros. was just a small Hollywood studio looking for opportunities to expand. When representatives from Western Electric offered to sell the studio the rights to a new technology, they called Vitaphone, a sound-on-disc system that had failed to capture the interest of any of the industry giants, Warner Bros executives took a chance, predicting that the novelty of talking films might be a way to make a quick, short-term profit. Little did they know that their gamble would not only establish them as a major Hollywood stakeholder but also change the industry forever.

The pairing of sound with motion pictures was nothing new in itself. Edison, after all, had commissioned the kinetoscope to create a visual accompaniment to the phonograph, and many early theatres had orchestra pits to provide musical accompaniment to their films. Even the smaller picture houses with lower budgets almost always had an organ or piano. When Warner Bros. purchased Vitaphone technology, it planned to use it to provide pre-recorded orchestral accompaniment for its films, thereby increasing their marketability to the smaller theatres that didn't have their own orchestra pits (Gochenour, 2000).

Warner launched the new system in 1926 with the release of *Don Juan*, a costume drama accompanied by a recording of the *New York Philharmonic Orchestra* and the public responded positively to it. Thus, the film industry was able to win back the audiences it was losing to radio.
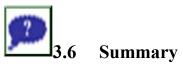
3.5   Hollywood

As movie going increased in popularity among the middle class, and as feature films began keeping audiences in their seats for longer periods of time, exhibitors found a need to create more comfortable and richly decorated theatre spaces to attract their audiences. These "dream palaces," so called because of their often-lavish embellishments of marble, brass, gilding, and cut glass, not only came to replace the nickelodeon theatre, but also created the demand that would lead to the Hollywood studio system. Some producers realized that the growing demand for new work could only be met if the films were produced on a regular, year-round system. However, this was impractical with the current system that often relied on outdoor filming and was predominately based in Chicago and New York whose weather conditions prevented outdoor filming for a significant portion of the year. Different companies attempted filming in warmer locations such as Florida, Texas, and Cuba, but the place where producers eventually found the most success was a small, industrial suburb of Los Angeles called Hollywood.

Hollywood proved to be an ideal location for a number of reasons. Not only was the climate temperate and sunny year-round, but land was plentiful and cheap, and the location allowed close access to a number of diverse topographies: mountains, lakes, desert, coasts, and forests. By 1915, more than 60 percent of U.S. film production was centered in Hollywood.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

> Hollywood was considered suitable for film production because
>
> a ……………………………………………………………………..
> b …………………………………………………………………………
> c ……………………………………………………………………..

3.6 Summary

This unit traced the development of the film industry from the nineteenth century development of Thomas Edison through the development of the kinetoscope. It shows how the later invention of the Lumiere brothers of the Nickelodeon further opened the eyes of investors to the film industry. The need to shoot films and watch indoors brought about the discovery of a Hollywood. Thereafter, the film industry grew over the years from silent to talking films in the 20th century.

Glossary

Sensory: Relating to sensation/perceived by the senses
Film projector: An opto-mechanical device for displaying motion picture film on a screen.

Parisian: A native or inhabitant of Paris.
Real of film: A cylindrical around which cinema film is wound for showing on a projector.
Feature film: A narrative film of full length

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3.8   Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

Self-Assessment Exercises 1
1.   A film is a work of art that is virtual, used to imitate life experiences that communicate thought, belief, experience, feelings, beauty, or atmosphere through the use of moving images with sound, and at times, other sensory stimulations
2.   Photography.

Self-Assessment Exercises 2
1.   Smartphone
2.   Cinematographe
3.   Cinematograph

Self-Assessment Exercises 3
1.   1904-1908
2.   Nickelodeon was a coinage for the 5 cent admission charge to watch the early motion pictures.
3.   The film industry became a mass entertainment medium because of Nickelodeon's popularity.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4
a.   The climate temperate and sunny year-round.
b.   Land was plentiful and cheap.
c.   The location allowed close access to a number of diverse topographies such as mountains, lakes, desert, coasts, and forests.

MODULE 2   MEDIA AND CULTURE

Unit 1   The Relationship between Media Culture and Film
Unit 2   Film Theory
Unit 3   Film Theory Continued

Unit 1   The Relationship Between Media Culture and Film

Unit Structure

1.1   Introduction

In the three preceding units, culture, media and films were discussed extensively. In this unit, you will learn about the relationship between the culture, the media and film.

1.2   Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

•   explain how movies reflect cultural attitudes, trends and events
•   discuss how movies influence culture over time
•   evaluate the role of the media in relation to culture and film.

1.3   Culture in Films

As stated earlier, culture is the summation of the way of life and the total make up of a society; films are projection of the culture of its producers or creators. Films are used to show the different stages in the evolvement of a society while the media is used to project the societal culture to the audience or viewers. That is, the language, norms, ideals

and other features prevalent in films are actually the culture of the society where the film emanated from. This the reason why it is usually difficult for someone that is not residing in a state to create a story or film about that targeted society and it will give a true picture of the community. While American films obviously affect the mass society that consumes them, they are also an intrinsic part of that culture, a product of it, and hence a reflection of current concerns, attitudes, and beliefs. When considering the relationship between film and culture, it's crucial to remember that, while particular ideals may be dominant in a given era, the situation may change later due to more understanding of the fact. American culture is not only as diverse as the people who make it up, but it also changes through time. The conservatism that dominated the social arenas of the time was reflected in mainstream films created in the late 1940s and early 1950s, for example. By the 1960s, however, a reactionary youth culture had emerged in opposition to the prevailing institutions, and these anti-establishment viewpoints were showcased in films as against the former view point.

Hollywood films not only reflect certain widely held ideas and beliefs about what it means to be an American, but they also depict current trends, issues, and events, functioning as historical records of the times in which they were made, promoting a blend of both the old and new age. That is, it tends to reflect back to the ancient times and also try to position itself in the present time.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

Discuss the relationship between culture, film and the media.

1.3.1 The Place of American Films in Its History

American films tell the story of how the nation came into existence. *The birth of a nation* was a film that told the history of the American nation. It sequentially tabled the cultural issues in the country such as massive war scenes, indicating how the nation came to be. The film also acted out every issue that generated cultural conflict such as racism, conservatism. It blew into the open the popular belief of the era that intelligence was race related, professing to relate race to inborn attributes like IQ and other abilities. The film also showed the political situation as elitist and conservative with the tendency to base socio-economic difference on natural human differences such race or colour.

The fury exhibited by many organisations in response to the film, on the other hand, showed the multi-cultural nature of the country and that everybody is entitled and free to have a contrary opinion.

The audience were livid with rage and even caused riots while watching it, as a result of the blame placed on the blacks in the south for war destruction and the racially conservative content of the film.

In spite of the protests, *The Birth of a Nation* was still the most successful film of its time. The Library of Congress designated the film as one of the "culturally, historically, or artistically significant films" in American history in 1992.

The film also initiated editing styles like close-ups, jump cuts, and parallel editing, all of which contributed to the film's creative value.

Figure 1.1:   A Scene

The Birth of a Nation expressed racial tensions of the early 20th century.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

Identify the key cultural issues as outlined in the film, 'The Birth of a Nation'.

a ……………………………………………………………………..
b ……………………………………………………………………
c ……………………………………………………………………

1.3.2   The State Adoption of Films

Another thing about American history is that its films also reflect the state of the nation. For example, after the first World War, American films showed its non-partisanship until Pearl Harbour was bombed. The United States immediately implored the film industry to join in the war efforts as soon as the nation set foot into the war by setting up the governmental Bureau of Motion Picture Affairs in Los Angeles.

Officials from the Bureau acted as advisors on the development of war films, which the studios helped with. Thus, patriotic films were made to build up feelings of pride and confidence in being an American, as well as to clearly indicate that America and its allies were forces for good.

The early World War II films were most times evidently propaganda, with the intention of changing American opinions rather than reflecting the true American feelings about the war. For instance, Frank Capra's *Why We Fight* films, the first of which was shown in 1942, were created for the United States Army and eventually presented to the general public; they conveyed a military message through narrative (Koppes & Black, 1987). However, as the war progressed, filmmakers began to forsake patriotic motifs in favor of a more serious portrayal of American attitudes, as shown by films like Alfred Hitchcock's *Lifeboat.*

The Youth Culture in Films
The youth culture represents the liberalization of audience perception and expectation in films. Right from the late 1960s, films began to reflect youth's liberal attitudes toward hitherto taboo themes like sexuality and drugs. Sam Peckinpah's 1969 Western *'The Wild Bunch',* like *'Bonnie and Clyde',* is an early example of artistic violence in film. *Easy Rider* in 1969, which featured drugs, sex, and violence, was probably successful because of the acceptance it received from the youths who were broad minded. This explains why *'Midnight Cowboy',* one of the first Hollywood films to be given an X rating (for its sexual content), won three Academy Awards and Best Picture (Belton). All these films show that, what was considered as aberration at the start of the century, became acceptable over time.

Figure 1.2: A display of the rising Youth Culture
Wikimedia Common

1.4   The New War Films

The new war films, unlike the patriotic content of the WWII revealed the resentment of the people towards America's war against Vietnam. It condemned American government ideology and it showed the devastating effect of the war on its survivors. Films like *Dr Strangelove (1964), M*A*S*H (1970), The Deer Hunter (1978),* and *Apocalypse Now* (1979) present the military establishment in a negative light and showed clear-cut distinctions from previous war films, where it was believed that they were in the situation together. These films, as well as the dozens of others made in the 1970s and 1980s (for example, Oliver Stone's *Platoon* (1986) and *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989) and Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) reflect the sense of defeat and lack of closure Americans felt after the Vietnam War, as well as the emotional and psychological scars it left on the nation's psyche (Dirks, 2010; Anderegg, 1991).

After the Vietnam war in the 80s, many films were produced to show the concern of the cold war between America and Russia. Those films especially dealt on issue of the possibility of nuclear war, a major political concern of the time. So, the film of that era reflect the fear in the nation as shown in the acceptance of horror films like *'Halloween'* and *'Friday the 13th',* which featured a mysterious and un-killable monster, and the popularity of the fantastic in films like E.T., Raiders of the Lost Ark, and Star Wars, which offer imaginative escapes (Wood, 1986).

Self-Assessment Exercises 3

1.   Discuss what American films represent.
2.   Describe the youth culture.
3.   Differentiate between the content of the new war films and WWII films.

1.5   The Effect of Films on Culture

Movies contribute to shape and consolidate cultural beliefs, just as they reflect the anxieties, beliefs, and values of the societies that generate them. In certain cases, such as with fashion trends or figures of speech, the influence is not much. *Torn T-shirts* and *leg warmers,* for example, became the 1980s fashion staples after the release of *Flashdance* in 1983. (Pemberton-Sikes, 2006). However, the impact might be significant at times, leading to social or political reform or the formation of ideologies.

1.5.1 Films and the Rise of Mass Culture

American society underwent a period of rapid industrialisation from the 1890s to around 1920. As people moved to the urban areas, there arose the need to house population explosion in the cities. Films and other forms of media (films and radio) emerged, with messages about tastes, desires, customs, speech, and behaviour from urban areas to rural. The media of that era removed regional differences and promoted cultural unity. So the audience copied the speech, dress, and behaviour of their common heroes in films. Magazines such as the Motion Picture Magazine published by Vitagraph in 1911, helped to maintain the audience' continued interest in their films and the fans' favourite stars or actors' private life (Doyle, 2008).

1.5.2 The American Myth in Film

In mass society, American identity is based on certain popularly held beliefs, or myths, about shared experiences, and these American myths are frequently communicated or reinforced through films. Individualism (the exaltation of the common man or woman as a hero or reformer) is one example of a popular American fable that extends back to the works of Thomas Jefferson and other founding fathers. The legend of the individual grew increasingly alluring with the emergence of mass culture because it gave people a sense of autonomy and individuality in the face of an increasingly homogenized civilization. The *lone cowboy*, a semi-nomadic traveler, makes his way through a lawless, and often hazardous, frontier in *the Western*, a cinema genre popular from the silent era through the 1960s. *High Noon*, from 1952, is an example. Westerns accounted for approximately a quarter of all films made from 1926 to 1967. Individuals prevail in other films, such as Frank Capra's 1946 film, *It's a Wonderful Life*, by standing up against injustice, reaffirming the concept that one person can make a difference in the world (Belton). Hero figures like Indiana Jones, Luke Skywalker (Star Wars), and Neo (The Matrix) have continued to highlight individualism in more recent films.

1.5.3 Social Issues in Films

A Film has great ability to affect public opinion, as D. W. Griffith discovered nearly a century ago. Filmmakers have been making films that address societal themes, sometimes quietly, sometimes blatantly, since Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* aroused huge public reactions in 1915. More recently, films such as *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), which is about the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and *The Kite Runner* (2007), which is set in war-torn Afghanistan, have captivated audiences by portraying stories that increase social consciousness about global events. A handful of socially focused documentary films have also had a big impact on cultural views and have resulted in considerable change.

Documentaries, particularly those with an activist bent, drew more attention in the 2000s than ever before. Films such as *Super-Size Me* (2004), which documents the effects of excessive fast-food consumption and criticizes the fast-food industry for profiting from unhealthy eating habits, and Food, (2009). McDonald's removed the supersize option from its menu within six weeks following the debut of *Super-Size Me*, and has offered a variety of healthy meal options in its restaurants since 2004 and similar improvements have been made by other fast-food restaurants (Sood, 2004).

Other documentaries, such as those directed by Michael Moore, aim to shift societal views and inspire change. Moore's films have a liberal perspective on a variety of social and political issues, including health care, globalization, and gun control. *Bowling for Columbine,* for example, was released in 2002 and was a critical analysis of American gun culture in the aftermath of the 1999 Columbine High School massacres. While some critics have accused Moore of making propaganda under the guise of a documentary due to his films' strong biases, but his films have been well received by viewers, with four of his movies placing among the top grossing documentaries of all time. The documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), which condemned the second Bush administration's involvement in the Iraq War and earned $119 million at the box office, became the most successful documentary of all time (Dirks, 2006).

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

Discuss the effects of films on culture.

1.6   Summary

Movies, being products of mass culture, reflect cultural attitudes, trends, and worries: D. W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation,* which depicted the US Civil War and its aftermath from a racial perspective, reflected racist sentiments of the time.

During World War II, films represented patriotic and pro-war emotions. With the advent of an anti-establishment youth culture in the 1960s and 1970s, movies took more liberal attitudes on sexuality and violence, as well as a cynicism toward established societal structures. Films depicted a more ambivalent view toward war following the collapse of the Vietnam War.

The MPAA rating system, which was established in 1968, provided filmmakers more leeway in terms of the topics they could depict on screen. Movies have an impact on people.

Glossary

IQ: Intelligent Quotient
Elitist: One who believes in rule by a group of superior intellectual status.
Conservative: Opposed to change.
Racial: Related to genetically distinguished people.
Allies: The alliance of nations that fought the Axis in World War II
Propaganda: Information that is spread for the purpose of promoting a cause.

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1.8   Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

Self-Assessment Exercise 1
Films show the different stages in the evolvement of a society while the media is used to project the societal culture to the audience or viewers.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2
a. War. b. Racism. c. Conservatism.

Self-Assessment Exercises 3
1.   American films narrate the different stages in the history of the nation.

2.   The youth culture represents the liberalization of audience perception and   expectation in films. Films started displaying a liberal attitude to sex, violence and other conducts that the society frowned at. For example, *Easy Rider* in 1969, was a success despite its featuring of drugs, sex, and violence because of the great acceptance it received from the youths.

3.   The WWII films were mainly propaganda designed to develop a feeling of pride in Americans and also encourage the youths to enlist for service. But the new war films express deep resentment against war and they showcased the damaging effects of the war on the citizen. For example, Oliver Stone's *Platoon* (1986) and *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989) and Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) reflect the sense of defeat and lack of closure Americans felt after the war.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4
The media of that era removed regional differences and promoted cultural unity. So, the audience copied the speech, dress, and behaviour of their common heroes in films, thus homogenizing the American culture.

American films also promote the myth of individualism, it showcases a lone figure fighting and conquering evil, e.g. *Indiana Jones film and other lone cow boy films.*

Films can effect a change in public opinion, so, making films that address societal themes, sometimes quietly, sometimes blatantly usually bring about the desired effect. *The Birth of a Nation* aroused huge public reactions in 1915 and a lot of reforms were made.

Culture sophistication has also been used to separate civilizations

from less sophisticated societies in the past. Class-based divisions between a high culture of the social elite and a low culture, popular culture, or folk culture of the lower classes, distinguished by access to cultural capital, are also seen in such hierarchical perspectives on culture. The mass manufactured and mass mediated forms of consumer culture that arose in the twentieth century are referred to as mass culture. Culture is frequently utilized politically as a tool of the elites to influence the proletariat and produce a false consciousness. According to some philosophical schools, such as Marxism and critical theory, in the field of cultural studies, such viewpoints are frequent. The theoretical approach of cultural materialism in the Social Sciences asserts that human symbolic culture emerges from the material conditions of human life, as humans construct the conditions for physical survival, and that culture's foundation is found in developed biological tendencies.

Unit 2   Film Theory

Unit Structure

2.1   Introduction

In unit one, you studied the effect of media and culture on films. Film theory discusses steps taken in scholarship to understand the nature of film. In this unit, you will study the film theory: definition, history and three other film theories, The Apparatus, Auteur and Cognitive film theories.

2.2   Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

•   define the film theory
•   discuss what makes up the film theory
•   explain the three film theories in this unit.

2.3   Film Theory

Film theory is a set of scholarly approaches within the academic discipline of film or cinema studies that began in the 1920s which queries the formal essential attributes of motion pictures (Elsaesser & Hagener, 2010) and has since evolved to provide conceptual frameworks for understanding film's relationship to reality, other arts, individual viewers, and society at large.   Though these three fields overlap, cinema theory is not to be mistaken with general film criticism or film history.

2.3.1 Film Theory History

In 1896, French philosopher Henri Bergson published *Matter and Memory*, which foretold the development of film theory during the early twentieth century. The necessity for new methods of thinking about

movement was described by Bergson as '*the movement-image*' and '*the time-image.*' In his 1906 essay *L'illusion cinématographique (in L'évolution créatrice*; English: The *cinematic illusion*), he dismisses film as an illustration of what he had in mind. Nonetheless, the philosopher Gilles Deleuze adopted Bergson's notions as the core of his film philosophy in Cinéma I and Cinema II (1983–1985), integrating them with Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics.

Early film theory originated during the silent film era, and it was primarily focused with defining the medium's essential features. Ricciotto Canudo was an early Italian film theorist who labeled cinema '*the Sixth Art,*' later renamed to '*the Seventh Art,*' since he saw it as '*plastic art in motion.*' Louis Delluc, Jean Epstein, Sergei Eisenstein, Lev Kuleshov, and Dziga Vertov, as well as film philosophers Rudolf Arnheim, Bela Balazs and Siegfried Kracauer, influenced film theory greatly. These theorists underlined the differences between film and reality, as well as how it could be considered a legitimate art form. André Bazin, a French film critic and theorist, argued against this approach to film, he opined, that film mechanically duplicate reality rather than being distinct from it.

In the 1960s and 1970s, scholars such as Christian Metz introduced concepts from established disciplines such as psychoanalysis, gender studies, anthropology, literary theory, semiotics, and linguistics into film theory (Sarris, 1962,1963). Film theory, on the other hand, did not gain much attraction in American universities until the late 1980s or early 1990s, when it displaced the dominant humanistic, auteur theory, which had dominated film studies and had been focused on the practical aspects of film writing, production, editing, and criticism.

Since the 1970s, American researcher David Bordwell has spoken out against a number of significant innovations in film theory. He refers to film studies based on the principles of Ferdinand de Saussure, Jacques Lacan, Louis Althusser, and Roland Barthes as "SLAB theory." Bordwell, on the other hand, advocates for "neoformalism" (a revival of formalist film theory).

The digital revolution in imaging technology influenced film theory in a variety of ways during the 1990s. Theorists including Mary Ann Doane, Philip Rosen, and Laura Mulvey, who were influenced by psychoanalysis, have refocused on celluloid film's ability to capture an indexical image of a moment in time. Slavojiek presented new features of 'the gaze' widely employed in current film analysis, following the Lacanian notion of 'the Real' from a psychoanalytical perspective.

The Matrixial theory of artist and psychiatrist Bracha L. Ettinger changed feminist cinema studies from the 1990s. She defined a feminine gaze and highlighted its differences from the phallic gaze, as well as its relationship to feminine and maternal specificities.

While deconstructing the structure of the subject itself, the matrixial gaze affords the female the position of a subject, not an object, of the gaze, and offers border-time, border-space, and a chance for compassion and witnessing. The connections between aesthetics, ethics, and trauma are articulated in Ettinger's ideas.

Writers Tom Gunning, Miriam Hansen, and Yuri Tsivian have also revisited the history of early film screenings, practices, and spectatorship patterns.

Clive Meyer argues that the experience of watching a film at home or in an art gallery is different from watching it in a cinema, and that film theorists should re-engage the specificity of philosophical concepts for cinema as a medium distinct from others.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

Define film theory.

2.4   Apparatus Theory

Apparatus theory arose partly from Marxist film theory, semiotics, and psychoanalysis in the 1970s. It claims that film is ideological by nature because its representational mechanics are ideological and because films are made to depict reality with the aid of the camera and editing. The spectator's key position inside the composition's perspective is also ideological. In its most basic form, the film apparatus aims to present realistic sights and sounds to the eyes and ears. The technology, on the other hand, obscures how that reality is pieced together frame by frame (Ponsford,2014).

The meaning of a film, the mechanics of the actual process and production of making the film, have an impact on the audience composition and understanding. The Apparatus theory states that the central position of the audience, the recreated reality and the ideological effects of the film impacts the viewer.

The notion is that most audiences are passive and unable to distinguish between the worlds of cinema and film and reality. That is, the audience is compared to a dreamer who tend to develop a strong emotional

attachment to the characters on film, thus becoming vulnerable to ideological positions of the producer. It compares the idleness and passivity of the two occupations, to being in a darkened room and having someone else dictate your moves. It goes on to say that because moviegoers are not disturbed by outside light or noise, they are able to experience the film as if it were real and they are experiencing the events themselves, because of the nature of a movie theatre.

Films, according to apparatus theory, maintains the dominant culture's ideology within the viewer. Ideology is a natural component of films; it is not forced on it and it impacts the way audiences think.

Self-Assessment Exercises 2

> 1. Explain the apparatus theory.
> 2. Describe the audience' state in the apparatus theory.

2.5   Auteur Theory

Auteur François Truffaut founded 'auteur theory' in the 1940s, arguing that the director, not the screenwriter, is the ultimate author of a film. This is because directors are in charge of all visual and auditory aspects of their films. Some modern auteur theorists argue that directors must have a specific level of experience before they can be considered auteurs.

The film director is thought to be an artist with a specific style, whose filmmaking control is so unique and personal that he or she is compared to the film's author (Santa 2002). Auteurism began as an unidentified value in late 1940s French film *criticism*, with its roots in the critical approaches of Andre Bazin and Alexandre Astruc, while American critic Andrew Sarris (1962) coined the term Auteur theory (Caughie, 2013).

Right from 1970, it became a standard practice in Hollywood for studios to give directors unrestricted creative control over their films, although auteur has been attacked for not being creative since it relies on the inventiveness of others, such as cinematographers.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

> What is the opinion of the auteur theorists?

2.6   Cognitive Theory

Cognitivism is a naturalistic discipline since it explores notions that it believes are ultimately based on empirical facts. It is centred on the importance of the arts as sources of discovery, creativity, and expansion of knowledge in the broadest sense. It is a study that uses scientific research to investigate art, and it is especially effective in literary and film studies, where it's known as cognitive literary theory and cognitive film theory, respectively. It discusses how to evoke emotional responses from the audience, as well as audience comprehension and aesthetic preferences. Cognitivism is a naturalistic discipline that delves into notions that it believes are ultimately based on empirical data (Stamm, 2000).

Self-Assessment Exercise 4

What is cognitive theory?

2.7   Summary

Film theory is a set of scholarly approaches within the academic discipline of film or cinema studies that queries the formal essential attributes of motion pictures (Elsaesser & Hagener, 2010) and has since evolved to provide conceptual frameworks for understanding film's relationship to reality, other arts, individual viewers, and society at large.

Types: Apparatus, Auteur and Cognitivism
Apparatus theory claims that, films are made to depict reality with the aid of the camera and editing.

Auteur theory states that the director is the ultimate author of a film. Cognitivism is a study that uses scientific research to investigate art, and it is especially effective in literary and film studies, where it's known as cognitive literary theory and cognitive film theory, respectively.

Glossary
Aesthetic: Tasteful/ Appropriate
Conceptual Framework: A written or virtual representation of an expected relationship between variables.

2.8   References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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2.9 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

Self-Assessment Exercise 1
Film theory is a set of scholarly approaches within the academic discipline of film which queries the formal essential attributes of motion pictures and provides conceptual frameworks for understanding film's relationship to reality, other arts, individual viewers, and society at large.

Self-Assessment Exercises 2
1.   Apparatus theory claims that film is ideological by nature because   its representational mechanics are ideological and because films   are made to depict reality with the aid of the camera and editing.

2.   The audience in the apparatus theory is likened to a dreamer who   tend to develop a strong emotional attachment to the characters in   films, thus becoming vulnerable to ideological positions of the   producer.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3
The film director is thought to be an artist with a specific style, whose filmmaking control is so unique and personal that he or she is compared to the film's author because the directors are in charge of all visuals and auditory aspects of the film.

Self-Assessment Exercise 4
Cognitive theory states that scientific research should be used to investigate art, and it is especially effective in literary and film studies, where it is known as cognitive literary theory and cognitive film theory, respectively.

Unit 3   Film Theory Continued

Unit Structure

3.1   Introduction

This unit is a continuation of the film theory. In this unit, you will learn about the feminist film theory, feminist psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic feminism as well as the genre film theory.

3.2   Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- define the genre film theory
- discuss the feminist film theory
- explain the feminist psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic feminism.

3.3   Feminist Film Theory

The expansion of feminism into theoretical, literary, or philosophical discourse is known as feminist film theory. Its goal is to understand the nature of gender. It investigates women's and men's social roles, experiences, interests, chores, and feminist politics (Brabeck and Brown, 1997).

Gender inequality, discrimination, objectification, oppression, patriarchy, stereotyping, art history, contemporary art, and aesthetics are all common topics in feminist theory (Polock,2001).

Feminist film theory is a subset of feminist theory and activism. It is believed that because men make the majority of films, actresses are frequently forced into traditional female roles that harm them. Two important feminist film theorists are Laura Mulvey and Bracha Ettinger.

The Bechdel Test is used by modern feminist film scholars to judge if a film adequately reflects women. This test looks for scenes in movies

where at least two women are chatting about something other than a man. Feminist film theorists seek to inspire more female-positive films from filmmakers.

3.3.1 Psychoanalysis and Feminism Oedipus Complex

Feminist psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic feminism are based on Freud and his psychoanalytic theories, but they also provide an important critique of them. It asserts that gender is not biological but rather based on an individual's psycho-sexual development, but also that sexual differentiation and gender are two distinct concepts. Gender inequality, according to psychoanalytical feminists, stems from early childhood experiences that lead males to feel they are masculine and women to believe they are feminine. Furthermore, it is said that gender leads to a male-dominated social system, which influences individual psycho-sexual development. Some have proposed coeducation as a strategy to prevent the gender-specific architecture of society.

Self-Assessment Exercises 1

1.   Discuss the feminist film theory.
2.   Explain the feminist psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic feminism.

3.4   Genre Film Theory

Genre Film Theory involves grouping of films into classes of the same subject or attributes, narrative technique, character cast, film techniques and so on. Genre may be grouped according to period, country and director. Genre may also be based on story content, literature, performance, budget based, racial identity, artistic status and so on. The essence of genre grouping of films is to provide a structure by which they can be evaluated in relation to each other and to the genre as a whole. The genre may be based on war, romance, religion, science etc.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

Define the genre film theory.

3.5   Summary

The goal of feminism is to understand the nature of gender. It investigates women's and men's social roles, experiences, interests, chores, and feminist politics. Feminist film theory is a subset of feminist

theory. Feminism believes that, because men make the majority of films, actresses are frequently forced into traditional female roles that harm them.

Feminist psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic feminism are based on Freud and his psychoanalytic theories, asserts that gender is not biological but rather based on an individual's psycho-sexual development, but also that sexual differentiation and gender are two distinct concepts. Gender inequality, according to psychoanalytical feminists, stems from early childhood experiences that lead males to feel they are masculine and women to believe they are feminine.

Genre Film Theory involves grouping of films into classes of the same subject or attributes, narrative technique, character cast, film techniques and so on. Genre may be grouped according to period, country, director and so on. Genre may also be based on story content, literature, performance, budget based, racial identity, artistic status and so on. The genre may also be based on war, romance, religion, science etc.

Glossary
Gender inequality, discrimination, objectification, oppression, patriarchy, stereotyping:
Giving one gender priority over the other.

3.6   References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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3.7   Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

Self-Assessment Exercises 1
1.   The expansion of feminism into theoretical, literary, or philosophical discourse is known as feminist film theory. Its goal is to understand the nature of gender. It investigates women's and men's social roles, experiences, interests, chores, and feminist politics.

2.   Feminist psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic feminism are based on Freud and his psychoanalytic theories, but they also provide an important critique of them. According to the psychoanalytical theory, feminists, stems from early childhood experiences that lead males to feel they are masculine and women to believe they are feminine. It asserts that gender is not biological but rather based on an individual's psycho-sexual development.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2
Genre Film Theory groups films into classes of the same subjects or attributes, narrative technique, character cast, film techniques and so on.

MODULE 3   UNDERSTANDING FILM ANALYSIS

Unit 1   Film Criticism
Unit 2   How Films are Used to Mask and Unmask Reality
Unit 3   African Films

Unit 1   Film Criticism

Unit Structure

1.1   Introduction
1.2   Intended Learning Outcomes
1.3   Film Criticism
          1.3.1   The Effect of Film Review
1.4   The Difference between Film Criticism and Film Reviews
1.5   How to Analyse Films
          1.5.1   The Procedure for Writing Film Analysis
          1.5.2   The Steps for Film Critiquing
          1.5.3   Format/Template for Writing a Critical Analysis of a Film
1.6   Summary
1.7   References/Further Readings/Web Resources
1.8   Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

1.1   Introduction

In the two preceding units, you learnt about the different film theories. In this unit, you will learn the difference between film criticism and film review, their effects, as well as the procedure and practical steps in film analysis.

1.2   Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

•   define film criticism
•   differentiate between film analysis and film review
•   evaluate the effect of film analysis and review
•   sketch film analysis procedure.

1.3   Film Criticism

Film criticism is the study and appraisal of motion pictures. While the terms 'review' and 'criticism' are frequently interchanged, there are some distinctions. The study, analysis, and appraisal of a film and its place in cinema history is known as film criticism. Film critique

typically includes an interpretation of the film's meaning, an analysis of its structure and style, a rating of its merit in comparison to other films, and an assessment of its anticipated impact on viewers. The critical examination of a film is frequently informed by film theory (feminist, postmodernist, etc.). Criticism might focus on a single film, a set of films in the same genre, or a director's or actor's body of work.

1.3.1 The Effect of Film Review

Critics have a big influence on how people react to movies and how many people show up to see them, especially in certain genres. The overall evaluation of a film by a critic however has little impact on mass-market action, horror, or comedy films, a film's storyline synopsis and description, as well as the director's and screenwriters' evaluations.

The influence of a reviewer on a film's box office performance is debatable. According to some observers, movie marketing in the 2000s is so aggressive, well-coordinated, and well-funded that critics can't stop a poorly written or filmed blockbuster from being a box office triumph. However, the disastrous failure of several extensively advertised films that received negative reviews, as well as the surprise success of critically acclaimed independent films, show that extreme critical reactions can have a significant impact. Positive film reviews, according to some observers, have been demonstrated to raise interest in lesser-known films. On the other hand, there have been some films in which the studios are so unsure that they refuse to offer reviewers an advance screening in order to avoid widespread negative feedback.

The influence of a reviewer on a film's box office performance is debatable. Some critics argue that movie marketing in the 2000s is at an all-time high. However, this frequently backfires because critics are aware of the strategy and warn the public that the picture may not be worth watching, resulting in the films performing poorly.

Self-Assessment Exercises I

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1. Define film criticism.
2. Discuss the effects of film analysis and film review.

1.4   The Difference between Film Criticism and Film Reviews

In general, academic film criticism by film scholars and journalistic film criticism that appears regularly in newspapers and other media can be divided into two types. Film critics who work for newspapers are frequently referred to as film reviewers. Journalists working for

broadcast media, newspapers and magazines review new film releases, usually only seeing a film once and only have a day or two to express their opinions. Film critics that take a more academic approach to films, analyse how films and filming techniques function, and what influence they have on audiences, by publishing in film journals and authoring books about films using film theory or film studies approaches. Rather than have their reviews printed in newspapers or broadcast on television, their essays appear in scholarly journals or high-end periodicals. They are also frequently employed as professors or teachers at schools or universities.

While the terms 'review' and 'criticism' are frequently interchanged, there are some distinctions. The study, analysis, and appraisal of a film and its place in cinema history is known as *film criticism.* Film critique typically includes an interpretation of the film's meaning, an analysis of its structure and style, a rating of its merit in comparison to other films, and an assessment of its anticipated impact on viewers. The critical examination of a film is frequently informed by film theory (feminist, postmodernist, etc.). Criticism might focus on a single film, a set of films in the same genre, or a director's or actor's body of work.

Film criticism includes both analysis and judgment which might be written years after a film has been produced and it is usually longer and more sophisticated than a movie review. A film review recounts a film's critical reaction at the time of its theatrical or DVD release. It is more consumer-oriented, with a focus on recommendations rather than analysis.

Online databases, newspapers, and general interest magazines may have reviews of feature films or mainstream films (New York Times, Village Voice, Cineaste,).

More scholarly or academic publications may provide in-depth critique and analysis of some feature films or mainstream films, foreign films, independent films, documentaries, and so on (e.g. Film Quarterly, Cinema Journal, Film International).

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

> State the difference between film analysis and film review.

1.5   How to Analyse Films

If you enjoy watching films, the analysis will definitely interest you into learning how to write a critical critique of one. A subjective type of

writing in which the author evaluates or critiques the work of another person is known as critical analysis. A film, an essay, a book, a painting, or any other creative work can be reviewed or appraised. The purpose of producing a critical analysis is to help the reader better understand the work. In addition, the analysis seeks to determine the effectiveness of the effort. It important to distinguish between a film review and a critical study of a film. Unlike a movie review, critical analysis requires active participation.

1.5.1 The Procedure for Writing Film Analysis

When writing a critical analysis of a film, keep in mind that this is a subjective piece of writing because it should represent your assessment or opinion of the film. Simply said, analysis entails dismantling and understanding the components. As a result, two primary components of your analysis should be depicted: studying and critiquing.

1.5.2 The Steps for Film Critiquing

Step 1: Watch the film
At this step, you watch the film severally to get its gist. This is very important because it enables you to understand different aspects of the film which is crucial in writing a good critical analysis paper. To watch the film critically implies that you must watch it severally and take notes while watching it. If you are watching the film using a DVD player or a computer, rewind and pause to understand crucial parts of the movie.

Step 2: Engage with the film critically
At this step, start engaging critically with the film that you want to analyse. This is very important because it will enable you to come up with a strong critical analysis essay. Identify and focus on a single concept or theme that dominates the film. For instance, you can focus on how the film was photographed, how a sequence in the film relates to a broader cinematic concept, how the film relates to a specific historical event dramatically without compromising facts. You can also focus on the use of various devices such as dramatic irony and overlapping dialogue.

Step 3: Outline your critical analysis
Writing an outline of a critical analysis will enable you to present your critical analysis in a more organised manner. Writing an outline entail determining the information that you intend to include in the analysis, where to place it in the critical analysis paper or essay and how to place the information. In this step, determine the number of chapters to have in your analysis. Create rough headings for different chapters. Outlining

a critical analysis is simply planning how to write a critical analysis of a film and this makes the actual writing easier.

Step 4: Introduce the film
In this step, you start the actual writing by introducing the film that you are analysing critically and the major participants in it. Among the participants that you can introduce at this stage include the film director and the actors. You can also include names of other technicians in the film especially if you will focus on that particular aspect of the film in your analysis. For instance, if you will be writing about shadows in a film, introduce the cinematographer. If you will be writing about the importance of the included background information in creating the emotional tone, introduce the composer of the movie.

Step 5: Write the movie story overview or summary
In this step, provide an overview of the film story in a brief manner. However, avoid writing a synopsis of the movie instead of an analysis. Reveal twists in the plot or how the film ends if this is related to the analysis directly.

Step 6: Write the analysis
Start writing the analysis section with the film at hand. If possible, have the movie in the DVD player and the television close to you. To write a solid critical analysis of a film, avoid relying on your memory. This is because, it is difficult to memorize all the events, cinematic techniques and dialogues after watching the film. Therefore, make sure that you have easy access to the film while writing your critical analysis.

Step 7: Make sure that you are familiar with filmmaking technical jargons
While writing your critical analysis, make sure that you can differentiate a dissolve from a cut. Familiarizing yourself with such terms will enable you to write about the subjective work of a camera if the analysis entails a film shot part from the viewpoint of a character. Using filmmaking words properly will make your critical analysis essay and more authoritative.

How to write a critical analysis essay of a film in a conventional essay format
You should know the format of a critical analysis essay to compose a good critical analysis of a film.

1.5.3 Format/Template for Writing a Critical Analysis of a Film

The Introduction

In the introduction section, introduce the key players in the movies. These can include the producer; the director and the cinematographer among others depending on the angle that you intend to take in your analysis. You can also include the main idea or theme of the movie as well as the thesis statement of your essay or paper.

Summary
In the summary or film overview section, you outline the major theme or idea of the film. This involves what, who, where, when, how and why. You can also discuss the style, structure or view point.

Analysis
In this section, you tell readers what you liked and what you did not like about the film. Provide an explanation for your ideas by citing specific examples from the film. Additionally, identify the goal of the film and whether it accomplished it. Your analysis should focus on determining whether the film is understandable, focused, interesting, properly concluded, authentic, clear and meeting its purpose, among others. Include several paragraphs in the analysis section with each paragraph giving a specific idea and supporting it with evidence from the film.

Conclusion
In the conclusion section, end your critical analysis by restating the thesis statement that you stated in the introduction. However, use new words. Also summarize the main ideas that you discussed in the analysis section using stronger and new words. End the conclusion with an effective call to action.

Remember that a critical analysis is a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of a work of another person. This entails determining whether the work is done well, how and where it is done as well as whether it is done poorly, where and how. Therefore, watch the film carefully and severally to familiarize yourself with its different aspects before you start writing your critical analysis paper or essay.

In addition, you can also:

Consult research findings from secondary sources before you start writing the analysis

Before you write your critical analysis of a film, check on some research findings from other sources. Find out analysis by other people and reviews about the film that you are about to analyse. Consider the issues that others have raised about the film before you start writing your analysis.

Select the theme or idea that dominates the movie and other analysis

This could be the theme that you agree with, find relevant or disagree with. It could be a controversial theme that some people are uncomfortable with on the basis of their beliefs. Find out whether it is worth majoring in while analysing the film critically.

Consider the questions that you are required to investigate

While giving the assignment, your teacher or lecturer may have given you a question or prompt. This prompt may require you to investigate a particular idea. Consider your feelings towards that issue or idea and why you may support the feelings that you hold about the issue. If what you have written is interesting, then you can use it as or in forming your preliminary thesis. If it does not impress you, continue analysing the film until you come up with a good preliminary thesis. This is a very important tip on how to write a critical analysis of a film because it guides you in creating a thesis that you can use as the controlling idea of your critical analysis paper or essay.

Use a sample of a critical analysis of a film

Using a good critical analysis of a film sample makes mastering the steps of writing a critical analysis essay or paper easier. Therefore, look for a well-written sample analysis of a film and use it in writing your own analysis.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

Sketch the procedure in film analysis.

1.6   Summary

Film criticism is the study and appraisal of motion pictures. Critics have a big influence on how people react to movies and how many people show up to see them, but not in its market value. Film critics that take a more academic approach to films, analyse how films and filming techniques function, and what influence they have on audiences, by publishing in film journals and authoring books about films using film theory or film studies approaches. But journalist review is a projection of the journalists' opinion after watching the film once.

Glossary

Review: A judgement or discussion of the quality of something.
Criticism: The analysis and judge of the merits and faults of a literary or artistic work.

1.7　References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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1.8   Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

Self-Assessment Exercises 1

1.   Film criticism is the study and appraisal of motion pictures.
2.   The overall evaluation of a film by a critic however has little impact on mass-market action, horror, or comedy films, a film's storyline synopsis and description, as well as the director's and screenwriters' evaluations.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

In general, academic film criticism is a critical subjective analysis of a film that is academic in approach, expressing opinion on films and filming techniques function, and what influence they have on audiences, while journalistic review is the expression of opinion on the film by journalists, after watching the film passively.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3

Step 1. Watch the film
Step 2: Engage with the film critically
Step 3: Outline your critical analysis
Step 4: Introduce the film
Step 5: Write the movie story overview or summary
Step 6: Write the analysis
Step 7: Make sure that you are familiar with filmmaking technical jargons: Use a sample   of a critical analysis of a film

Unit 2   How Films are Used to Mask and Unmask Reality

Unit Structure

2.1   Introduction

The media have consistently reflected and promoted cultural mores and values from its inception as a vital element of American culture in the 1950s. In recent years, it has held up a mirror to societies, with participants discussing even the most intimate issues and taboo matters.

2.2   Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

*   identify ways in which American culture is reflected on television
*   identify the effect of television on the development of American culture.

2.3   Culture and Media

The media have consistently reflected and promoted cultural mores and values from its inception as a vital element of American culture in the 1950s. In recent years, it has held up a mirror to societies, with participants discussing even the most intimate issues and taboo matters. In the 1960s, escapist dramas purposefully ignored problematic issues and glossed over life's harsher truths in favour of an idealised picture, to the audience. However, there is a reciprocal relationship between social attitudes and the media. Media operators have frequently demonstrated their power to influence viewers, either overtly through slanted political commentary or subtly by portraying controversial relationships (such as single parenthood, same-sex marriages, or interracial couplings) as socially acceptable. Every broadcast exemplifies the interdependent relationship of the media and culture.

2.3.1 Television's Cultural Influences

Most television entertainment shows in the 1950s neglected current events and political topics. Instead, the three main networks (ABC, NBC, and CBS) created prime-time programming geared for a broad family audience. The domestic comedy was the most popular of these series, as it was a general family comedy with character-based humour and was frequently set in the house. Popular 1950s shows like *Leave It to Beaver, The Donna Reed Show,* and *The Adventures* of Ozzie and Harriet were all seminal examples. Domestic comedies highlighted the conservative ideas of an idealized American existence by portraying a standardized depiction of the White middle-class suburban family. The series primarily starred White middle-class families with typical nuclear roles (mother at home, father at work), and they claimed that most family issues could be resolved in a 30-minute time window, with each episode ending with a strong moral lesson.

Many families in the 1950s were typical nuclear families, despite the fact that, these shows depicted an idealised vision of American family life. Following the widespread poverty, political uncertainty and physical separation of the war years, many Americans wanted to settle down, start a family, and enjoy the serenity and security that family life seemed to provide. The typical nuclear family thrived throughout the thriving post-war era, a moment of hope and prosperity. However, the families and lifestyles depicted in domestic comedies did not, by any stretch of the imagination, represent the entire American experience. '*The June Cleaver or Donna Stone homemaker position* was not available to the more than 40% of black women with small children who worked outside the home,' writes historian Stephanie Coontz. By the mid-1950s, approximately 60% of the US population had been classified as middle class, but 25% of all households and more than 50% of two-parent Black families were destitute. Migrant workers experienced horrible deprivations, and racial conflicts were common. None of this was mirrored in the world of home comedies, *where Father Knows Best's,* the Hispanic gardener was named Frank Smith (Coontz, 1992).

Figure 2.1: Domestic Comedy Scene

In the 1950s, most home comedies depicted an idealized depiction of family life while ignoring social and political issues.
The Cleavers by Dennis S. Hurd is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial

Figure 2.2: Comedy Scene

As a result of the intense pressure of the 60s, popular sitcom comedy such as *I Dream of Jennie* became a more needed escape from the situation of things around.

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

Discuss with examples how films are being used to mask reality.

2.4   The Use of Films to Unmask Reality

The United States was however rudely shaken out of its escapism through the horror scenes of the assassination of President JF Kennedy and the eventual assassination of the President's killer by Jack Rudy, a night club owner. At that time, the nation woke up from its make believe ideal of social life and the believe that no evil exists in the real world. About this period, the nation was also treated to vivid terrible scenes from the nation's first televised war on television. With five camera crews on duty in the Saigon bureau, news crews captured vivid details of the war in progress. Although graphic images were rarely shown on network TV, several instances of violence reached the screen, including a CBS report in 1965 that showed Marines lighting the thatched roofs of the village of Cam Ne with Zippo lighters and an NBC news report in 1968 that aired a shot of South Vietnamese General Nguyen Ngoc Loan executing a captive on a Saigon Street. Further images, of children being

burned and scarred by napalm and prisoners being tortured, fuelled the anti-war sentiments of many Americans, in addition to the devastation caused by the American President's death and the Vietnam War.

Diverse families reflected changing attitudes toward formerly controversial issues such as single parenthood and divorce were then being televised. For instance, 'Maude' featured a middle-aged feminist living with her fourth husband and divorced daughter. Other 1970s sitcoms took the same approach, including '*All in the Family*' and '*The Mary Tyler Moore Show*'.

Figure 2.3: "Maude" Scene

The popularity of controversial shows like *Maude* reflected the changing cultural and social values of the 1970s.

2.5   Politics and the Film Industry

Apart from the change in family values on sitcoms and other prime-time shows, there was a political rebirth in films. Films and comedy shows developed a political awareness in the 1970s that reflected audiences' growing appetite for social and political commentary. Sketch comedy show Saturday Night Live (SNL) premiered on NBC in 1975

and has remained on air ever since. It features a different celebrity guest host every week and relatively unknown comedy regulars, the show parodies contemporary popular culture and politics, lambasting presidential candidates and pop stars alike. Earlier NBC sketch comedy show *Laugh-In,* which ran from 1968 to 1973, also featured politically charged material, though it lacked the satirical bite of later series such as SNL. By the end of the decade, television broadcasting reflected a far more politically conscious and socially aware viewing audience.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

> Choose a particular film and discuss the ways it is being used to unmask reality.

2.6   Summary

Television has been reflecting changing cultural values since it first gained popularity after World War II. During the 1950s, most programs ignored current events and political issues in favour of family-friendly domestic comedies, which featured White suburban middle-class families. Extreme stress during the 1960s, caused by political events such as the 'Vietnam War' and the 'Cuban Missile Crisis', led people to turn to escapist television offered by fantasy sitcoms. These provided a sharp dichotomy with the hard-news shows of the era. Social consciousness during the 1970s prompted television producers to reflect changing social attitudes regarding single parenthood, women's roles, and divorce, and sitcom families began to reflect the increasing number of non-nuclear families in the society. The increasing popularity of cable TV in the 1980s led to an explosion of news and entertainment channels, some of which raised concerns about the levels of violence on television. During the 1990s and 2000s, TV networks became more specialized, catering to niche markets in order to meet the needs of an increasingly fragmented audience.

Television reflects cultural values, and it also influences culture. One example of this is the polarization of cable TV news, which is no longer centrist but caters to individual political tastes. Critics argue that this influences cable news viewers'

Glossary
Mask: Mask is an object worn on the face to protect, disguise, etc.
Reality: The state or situation as they are.

2.7   References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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2.8   Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

Self-Assessment Exercise 1

Most television entertainment shows in the 1950s neglected current events and political topics. The domestic comedy was the most popular of these series, as it was a general family comedy with character-based humour and was frequently set in the house. Popular 1950s shows like *Leave It to Beaver, The Donna Reed Show,* and *The Adventures* of Ozzie and Harriet were all examples of the trend. Domestic comedies highlighted the conservative ideas of an idealized American existence by portraying a standardized depiction of the White middle-class suburban family. The series primarily starred White middle-class families with typical nuclear roles (mother at home, father at work), and they claimed that most family issues could be resolved in a 30-minute time window, with each episode ending with a strong moral lesson.

But, the families and lifestyles depicted in domestic comedies did not, by any stretch of the imagination, represent the entire American experience. The June Cleaver or Donna Stone homemaker position was not available to blackest women with small children who had to seek employment outside the home.

Migrant workers experienced horrible deprivations, and racial conflicts were common. But such social issues were mirrored in the world of home comedies, not even in *where Father Knows Best,* where the Hispanic gardener was named Frank instead of his native name.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

In Maude, an American sitcom created in the 70s, the real social issues in the society were projected as against what operated in the 1950s. The diverse families reflected changing attitudes toward formerly controversial issues such as single parenthood and divorce were then being televised. For instance, 'Maude' featured a middle-aged feminist living with her fourth husband and divorced daughter.

Unit 3   African Films

Unit Structure

3.1   Introduction

In this unit, the history of the African film industry development in the colonial era and its attendant lapses were discussed. The rise of African films, written and produced by Africans and the themes and success rate of some of the early films were also looked at.

3.2   Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

•   discuss African films and its development during the colonial era
•   do a critique of African films that are produced by non-Africans
•   analyse African themes
•   evaluate African films based on knowledge gained in this course.

3.3   African Film History

African films refer to the history of the production of films on the African continent, and the projection of the African culture, to as far back as the 20th century when film reel cinematic technology was in use. During the colonial era, African life was shown only by the work of white, colonial, Western filmmakers, who portrayed Africans negatively, as exotic 'others'. Although, there were more than fifty countries with audio-visual traditions, there was not a single cinema in Africa, then (Hayward, 2006). African films are grouped along historical and cultural differences based on regional divides.

The Egyptian and the Tunisian films were among the first recorded in Africa by Europeans. For Example, the Lumiere brothers, Auguste and Louis shot their films in Cairo, Tunis, Soussa, Alexandria and Hamman-Lif in the year 1896. The earliest African to produce African film was Albert Samama, Chickly. In 1905, he produced short documentaries in the Tunisian casino and he improved his prowess to produce '*The Girl from Cartage* in 1924 with his daughter Haydee (Tamzali Leeman, 2016). The golden age of the Egyptian film is in the 1940s,1950s and the 60s when it produced quite a number of comedies, musicals, and films such as '*The Will*' by Kamal Selim in 1939.

Film as a medium first arrived in Nigeria in the late 19th century, in the form of peep hole viewing experience. These were soon replaced in the early 20th century with improved motion picture exhibition devices. The first set of films screened from 12 to 22 August,1903 at the Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos. The earliest feature film made in Nigeria is 1926's *Palaver* produced by Geoffrey Barkas. It was also the first film to feature Nigerian actors in a speaking role. As of 1954, mobile cinema vans played to at least 3.5 million people in Nigeria, and films being produced by the Nigerian Film Unit were screened for free at the 44 available cinemas. The first film entirely copyrighted to the Nigerian Film unit is *Fincho in* 1957 by Sam Zebba; which is also the first Nigerian film to be shot in colour.

3.3.1 Colonial Period

Early African films by Europeans presented Africans as humans of a lesser class to the whites. For example, colonial era films presented Africa as exotic, submissive workers or as cannibals or savages, without history or culture. We have examples of their productions in films like '*Tarzan*', *the jungle epic* by Edgar Rice Burroughs, '*The African Queen*' in 1951, *adaptations*' '*King Solomon's Mines*', '*Kings of the Cannibal Island*', *Voodoo Vengeance.* Much early ethnographic cinema focused on highlighting the differences between indigenous people and the white civilized man, thus reinforcing the colonial propaganda. Africans were not allowed to write their own films in French-colonized African countries and so the film industry was not developed because Africans could not use it to express their political believes nor show case their culture with it. The trend continued until the 1950s when Albert Mongita the Congolese produced *'The Cinema Lesson'* in 1951, Mamadou Touré finished *Mouramani* (a folk story of a man and his son) in 1953 and Vieyra was also allowed to produce *Afrique Sur Seinein* 1953 in France.

3.3.2 Post Colonial

Figure 3.1: African Film Scene

The Ghana Broadcasting *Puppet Show* developed by Beatie Casely-Hayford in 1968

The first African film to win international recognition was Sembene Ousmane's film, *La Noire de* which is also known as *Black Girl.* It showed the despair of an African woman who had to work as a maid in France. It won the Prix Jean Vigo award in 1966. Sembene, an initial writer who turned to films for a wider audience reach is still considered the father of African films.

With the creation of the African film festival, Pan African Films and Television Festival FESPACO in Burkina Faso in 1969, African film created its own forum. FESPACO now takes place every two years in alternation with the Carthago film festival in Tunisia.

The Pan African Federation of Filmmakers (Federation Panafricaine des Cineastes,or FEPACI) was formed in 1969 to promote African film industries in terms of production, distribution and exhibition. From its inception, FEPACI was seen as a critical partner organisation to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union. FEPACI looks at the role of film in the politico-economic and cultural development of African states and the continent as a whole.

After Nigeria's independence in 1960, the cinema business rapidly expanded, with new cinema houses being established. As a result, Nigerian films in theatres increased from the late 1960s into the 1970s, especially productions from Western Nigeria, owing to former theatre

practitioners such as Hubert Ogunde and Moses Olaiya transitioning into the big screen. In 1972, the *Indigenisation Decree* was issued by Gen. Yakubu Gowon, which demands the transfer of ownership of about a total of 300 film theatres from their foreign owners to Nigerians, which resulted in more Nigerians playing active roles in the cinema and film. The oil boom of 1973 through 1978 also contributed immensely to the spontaneous boost of the cinema culture in Nigeria, as the increased purchasing power in Nigeria made a wide range of citizens to have disposable income to spend on cinema going and on home television sets. After several moderate performing films, *Papa Ajasco* (1984) by Wale Adenuga became the first blockbuster, grossing approximately ₦61,000 (approx. 2015 ₦21,552,673) in three days. A year later, *Mosebolatan* (1985) by Moses Olaiya also went ahead to gross ₦107,000 in five days.

Nigerian Films experienced a large growth in the <u>1990s</u> with the increasing availability of home video cameras in Nigeria, that accelerate the growth of the Nigerian film industry and made her a leader in the West African English Language film. In 2013 alone, Nollywood rolled out one thousand, eight hundred and forty-four (1844) films (Bright, 2015).

The last movie theatre in Kinshasha, Democratic Republic of the Congo, shut down in 2004. Many of the former theatres were converted to churches. In 2009 the UN refugee agency screened *Breaking the Silence in South Kivu and Katanga Province.* The film deals with rape in the Congolese civil wars. In neighboring Brazzavile, Republic of the Congo, a 200-seat cinema, MTS Movies House, opened in 2016, and in April 2018, construction began on another new film theatre.

A first African Film Summit took place in South Africa in 2006. It was followed by FEPACI 9th Congress. The African Movie Academy Awards were launched in 2004, marking the growth of local film industries like that of Nigeria as well as the development and spread of the film industry culture in sub-Saharan Africa.

But there are still countries that cannot still freely express themselves and their lack of freedom of speech has greatly hampered the growth of film industry in their region. The situation is especially grievous in Equatorial Guinea due to dictatorship, the feature film 'The Writer From A Country Without Bookstores' is the first film to be produced in the country.

3.4   African Themes

African film industry, like other regions of the world, covers an array of topic, such as the colonial and post-colonial era: modern issues and universal problems. The film makers were particularly strident in their rejection of the former colonial master's method of using conditional aids, economic imperialism, globalisation and cultural imperialism to indirectly control development in African countries.

Some African filmmakers, for example Ousmane Sembene and Tunde Kelani try to give African history back to African people by remembering the resistance to European and Islamic domination.

The African filmmaker is often compared to the traditional story tellers whose task is to express and reflect African languages, communal experiences and oral literature often occur in their films.

Migration and relations between African and European countries is a common theme among many African films. Abderrahmane Sissako's film *Waiting for Happiness* portrays a Mauritanian city struggling against foreign influences through the journey of a migrant coming home from Europe. Migration is also an important theme in Mahamat Saleh Haroun's film *Une Saison en France,* which shows the journey of a family from the Central African Republic seeking asylum in France. Haroun is a Chadian diaspora in France, and uses the film to explore aspects of this diaspora experience.

African culture is presented as valuable favourite theme as it is often used to present the spiritual and medical benefits of African deity, *Ifa.* Tunde Kelani's *Thunderbolt/Magun* Ifa is presented as a method for treating ailments that defy orthodox medicine as against the use of Pentecostalism.

The good in orthodox medicine is also showcased in *Ayonimofe,* where the traditional method of healing the mentally ill with cane is frowned at. The film advocates the conventional method of treating the mentally ill. In the film, the protagonist was able to live a normal life, manage a company and even bore children, after she received a proper medical attention.

Gender is also a favourite theme in African films. The films often teach that women should be accorded the respect due to them. For example, in Bambo Adebajo and Yemi Remi, *Lagidigba, Ilu Birin*, the women moved out to form their own settlement in protest of the inhuman treatment being meted on them by the male dominated culture of their town. Tunde Kelani's *The Narrow Path* also seeks great valuation for women in African society.

The theme of *witchcraft* is an over flogged theme in most African films. Hubert Ogunde's *Aiye and Jaiyesinmi,* witchcraft is portrayed as evil and that good will always triumph over evil.

Afro futurism is a growing genre, encompassing Africans both on the continent and in the diaspora who tell science or speculative fiction stories involving Africa and African people. Neil Blomkamp's *District 9* is a well-known example, portraying an alien invasion of South Africa. Wanuri Kahiu's short film *Pumzi* portrays the futuristic fictional Maitu community in Africa, thirty-five years after World War III.

The socio-political situation of the African region is often presented in films as in Tunde Kelani's *Saworoide* where the king and the chiefs represent the ruling class who are not ready to serve the people but are all out to fleece every benefit out of the state to satisfy their greed. Antar Laniyan's *Akobi Gomina* directly addressed the insensitivity of the ruling class and their determination to perpetuate their rule. Governor Idowu was bent on going for a second term in office, despite the personal tragedy of his son's death and his first son being in a psychiatric hospital until he was defeated by a woman at the pole.

Directors including Haroun and Kahiu have expressed concerns about the lack of cinema infrastructure and appreciation in various African countries. However, organisations such as the Changamoto arts fund are providing more resources and opportunities to African filmmakers.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Do a critical analysis of two African films.

3.5   Summary

African films refer to the history of the production of films on the African continent, and the projection of the African culture, to as far back as the 20th century when film reel cinematic technology was in use. During the colonial era, African life was shown only by the work of white, colonial, Western filmmakers, who portrayed Africans negatively, as exotic 'others'.

After Nigeria's independence in 1960, the cinema business rapidly expanded, with new cinema houses being established. As a result, Nigerian films in theatres increased in the late 1960s into the 1970s, especially productions from Western Nigeria, owing to former theatre practitioners such as Hubert Ogunde and Moses Olaiya transitioning into the big screen. In 1972, the *Indigenisation Decree* was issued by Gen. Yakubu Gowon, which demands the transfer

of ownership of about a total of 300 film theatres from their foreign owners to Nigerians, which resulted in more Nigerians playing active roles in the cinema and film.

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3.7 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercise(s)

This section is a practical session. You are expected to watch African films of your choice apart from the ones stated in this work and do a critical analysis of two of them.