Yadukrishnan SP

**Direction**

1. Is Film School Necessary? – Your opinions

They say, ’if the student is ready, the teacher will appear’. Film schools don’t guarantee that you will become a filmmaker for sure. If you want to be a filmmaker, you have to make films, that’s it. Take a camera, go out, shoot your story, edit it, show it to people and repeat. But if you want to be the master of what you are doing by learning every aspects of film and if you approach film as both art and science, then why not film schools?

As Swami Vivekananda said, education is the manifestation of perfection that is already within us. If there is a filmmaker in you, the education in film schools will help you to shape and refine your skills. But I won’t say film schools are necessary, as Kurosova or Satyajith ray never went to any film schools, I would say it is useful.

2. Indian Cinema before and after 90s

**The hero**  
*From mooch to macho*  
From a bulky mustached Raj Kapoor in the 40s to a six-pack flaunting, butt-baring John Abraham now, the Bollywood hero has had quite a makeover. The 50s was the era of method-acting with the likes of Dilip Kumar, while in the 60s, Rajesh Khanna and Dev Anand epitomised romance on screen. After Khanna’s guru kurtas and fluffy hairtop, Amitabh Bachchan brought the angry young man into the picture in the 70s and 80s with Zanjeer, Deewar and Agneepath, also bringing to the fore, bell bottoms and side burns. The 90s was the time of the lover boys Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan and Salman Khan dancing in exotic foreign locales. Now, the Bollywood hero is not restricted by genre or style and fits into every mould. He is a looker, chocolatey, experimental and total paisa vasool, read Ranbir Kapoor and Imran Khan.

**The heroine**  
  
*From feeble to fabulous*  
  
In the early decades, the heroine in Indian cinema had only one objective in life, that of being a sati-savitri, who never looked beyond her family and husband. The kitchen was her cocoon, and she epitomised all things good. Through the 1940s, 50s and 60s, heroines such as Mala Sinha, Meena Kumari, Madhubala, Nanda and Asha Parekh ruled these roles. It was only in the 80s and 90s that she evolved as a strong character (Rekha in Khoon Bhari Mang, 1988), (Meenakshi Sheshadri in Damini, 1993). While in the early 2000s, she was still the demure girl, she managed to live her life on her terms like Rani Mukerji in Kabhie Alvida Naa Kehna. And the heroine today is the sexy, uber cool woman who cares for little more than her own life. Way to go girl!

**The villain**  
*From scary to suave*  
From the usual lot of wicked village zamindars, smugglers, murderers, rapists, dacoits and terrorists, the larger-than-life Bollywood villains have become rare in new age cinema. Thus the traditional villain, Loin, Shakal, Mogambo, Dr Dang and Badman, has died a natural death. The wigged, cigar-smoking avatars played by the likes of Pran, Prem Chopra, Amrish Puri, have made way for smart and sometimes more-adorable-than-the-hero kind of villains. Exhibit A- Saif Ali Khan (Omkara) and Shah Rukh Khan (Don). No lines are drawn now and black characters have became grey with lead actors playing antagonists in films, almost replacing the dedicated villains. This marked the end of ever reverberating iconic one liners like “Kitne aadmi the?” and “Saara sheher mujhe Loin ke naam se jaanta hain.”

**The maa***Rona-dhona to supercool*  
From the God fearing and homely mum to a party freak, mothers in Bollywood have come a long way since 1930s. While Nargis in Mother India (1957) played a mother who went through hardships and struggled to bring up her offsprings, Nirupa Roy in the 70s became synonymous with white saris and a melancholic look. Then came Reema Lagoo, with her bindi and sindoor, an ideal middle class Indian mother in Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak (1988) and Maine Pyar Kiya (1989), who tried to be a friend to her son. But now, mothers are the uber cool women who are ready to accept even same-sex couples, case in point, Kirron Kher in Dostana (2008). And now there are mom who drink and dance at weddings, ala Dolly Walia in Vicky Donor (2012).

**The item girl**  
  
*Taboo to must-haves*  
  
The dancing girl evolved from the Cabaret seductress, the free-spirited banjaran, the sensuous courtesan to dancing temptresses in half-saris. In the 40s and 50s, Cuckoo Moray, hotted up the screen with her innocent charm. The 50s saw Vyjayanthimala woo the audience in songs such as Chad Gayo Papi Bichua in Madhumati (1958) in ghagra cholis, and junk silver jewellery. Helen ruled the 60s and 70s, emerging in a bold avatar with dramatic ensembles. The 80s saw the trend of heroines appear in item numbers with Zeenat Aman in Qurbani (1980). Madhuri Dixit’s Choli Ke Peeche Kya Hai became the ultimate tease in the 90s. The item girls of 2000s are sexy, not afraid to show skin and love to play hard to get, be it Malaika Arora Khan in a mid-riff baring choli dancing atop a train or Katrina in Sheila Ki Jawani.   
  
**The comedian**  
*Funny face to frontman*  
The comedian in the 40s, was the fat man with funny facial expressions, whose mere presence made audiences laugh. In the 1950s, the lean Johnny Walker broke that trend and managed to win hearts with his slapstick humour. Kishore Kumar, essentially a singer, redefined comedy by using his songs like Meri Pyari Bindu (Padosan 1968) as elements of fun in films. But it was Mehmood, with his fringed hair and impeccable dialogue delivery who became the king of comedy in the 1970s. The next big thing in comedy was Johnny Lever, who left audiences in splits with his body language and dialogues in films like Raja Hindustani (1996) and Dulhe Raja (1998). Now, it’s the heroes — Akshay Kumar (Hera Pheri), Ajay Devgn (Golmaal) who are doubling as comedians.

**The friend**  
*Sidekick to the right-hand man*  
The side kick or hero’s best friend, every Bollywood film has had one. The role could be that of a fun buddy who provides comic relief to the film or that one jigari dost who stays with the hero through thick and thin (in other words, fights for the hero and often dies in the end). From the days of Mukri and Mehmood, who played the hero’s good friend in the 1950s and 60s to the current time where actors like Arshad Warsi and Sharman Joshi play as powerful characters as the hero himself, this portrayal has had a sea change. Mehmood in Humjoli (1970), for instance, played a sidekick who brought the house down with his antics, but Arshad Warsi in the Munnabhai series (2003/06) played the ideal Robin to Sanjay Dutt’s Batman, and got some of the best lines in the films.

**The romance**

*Touch-me-not to pre-marital sex*

Romance in Bollywood turned from bold to coy and back to racy and bold. The silent film, ‘A Throw of Dice’ (1929) saw actor Seeta Devi kiss actor Charu Roy. Post-independence, in the 1940s, romance became conservative. The Cinematograph Act in 1952, called kissing on screen indecent and romance became associated with clasping hand and staring into each other’s eyes. Kissing was shown with two flowers coming together or honey bees sucking nectar from flowers. 1970s was Raj Kapoor’s era that brought a passion back to romance with movies such as Bobby (1973), Satyam Shivam Sundaram (1978). It was the 90s that romance took a pure and sweet form the two blockbuster hits Hum Aapke Hain Kaun (1994) Dilwale Duhaniya Le Jayenge (1995). Now, in the 2000s, pre-marital sex shown in films like Salaam Namaste (2005) and Rockstar (2011), is considered cool.

**The music***Melodies to racy tracks*  
The 1930 and 40s, were defined by nasal renditions by the likes of KL Saigal (Jab Dil Hi Tooth Gaya, Shahjahan, 1946) and Noorjehan. The 50s were all about soul-soothing melodies. Songs like it Pyaar Huya Ekraar Huya (Shree 420 1952) or Jaane Woh Kaise Log The (Pyaasa 1957) became epics. However, it was R D Burman, who single-handedly changed the course of Bollywood film music, and introduced westernised tunes in songs in the 60s. While 70s remained the decade of a mix of soft and fast numbers, the 80s turned Bollywood music on its head, as Bappi Lahiri brought in disco music. Disco Dancer (1982) marked the beginning of a range of high-on-noise, low-on-lyrics songs. The 1990s churned out several hugely forgettable numbers, except for musical hits like 1942 a Love Story (1994), Saajan (1991). The 2000s have been the decade of experimenting - thus Sonu Nigam and Yo Yo Honey Singh both find place in the same film.

**The dialogues**  
*Melodrama to quirky*  
Power-packed dialogues get the maximum seetis from the audience, and why not. A film is often remembered for its iconic dialogues. Kaun kambakth bardasht karne ke liye peeta hai, from Devdas that’s a favourite even with the ‘daarubaaz’ of today. However, dialogues like Kitne aadmi the, and “*Kuttey main tera khoon pi jaunga*” from Sholay, “Pushpa, I hate tears” from Amar Prem and “Mere paas maa hai” from Deewar; have gone on to become epic. In the 1990s, heroes impressed their lady love with dialogues. Thus came, “I love you Kkk... Kiran” (Darr), “Bade bade shehron mein aisi chhoti chhoti baatein hoti rehti hain.” (DDLJ 1995). In 2000, quirky dialogues such as, Main apni favourite hoon (Jab We Met), Picture Abhi Baki Hai Dost (Om Shanti Om) are the big hits among film buffs.

3. Write an analysis between Soviet Parallel Cinema and Indian Parallel Cinema

Parallel cinema - is cinema, which is made outside the system of corporative or state film production, financed by film directors or sponsors. Such cinema is often called "independent". The idea of such cinematography was born in the 20's, and is connected with French and German "avant-garde" authors. In 1929 the 1st international congress of parallel cinema was held in Switzerland, in which such famous cinematographers as Sergey Eisenstein, Bela Balazs, George Vilgelm Pabst, Hans Richter, Walter Ruttmann and Leon Moussinac took part.

In the 60's, with the advent of 16mm film, parallel cinema became a worldwide phenomenon. The most famous groups of independent cinematographers worked in New York, San Francisco, Zagreb and other cities.

In the USSR, a country with absolute state monopoly over film production and distribution, parallel cinema did not exist as a single movement right up until the 80's, although a few producers created films, which were clearly not amateur productions.

Now a bit of history. Parallel cinema as a system owes its appearance to the activities of three people: Igor Aleinikov, Yevgeny Yufit and Boris Yukhananov. Up until 1987, their auditorium was limited to artists, men of letters, musicians who were developing in "underground" culture. Often, the "underground" *was* parallel cinema. Such a social status conditioned aesthetics. As practically the only (apart from emigration) alternative to the ideologized official culture, the underground gradually became the national culture, and therefore was not a synonym in any way for the word "avant-garde". Like any true culture, the underground existed on the advantages of cultural traditions, on the realization of the "teacher-student" relationship. In connection with changes taking place in society; artists, musicians, and poets came out from the underground. Directors of parallel cinema were left in isolation. As you know, cinema is not just a creative activity, but also production; it is not enough to enjoy creative freedom, you need the means to make it happen. Under state monopoly of film production, independent authors cannot raise the necessary means, and thus cannot enjoy creative freedom. All that was left was to disappear or establish a new status. They chose the latter, and a certain kind of cine-political activity began. The leading lights of parallel cinema made the only possible correct decision - they decided to create a myth. For the last two years, the myth of parallel cinema has been born. I emphasize; parallel cinema exists on the level of being a *social myth.*Be that as it may, it has acquired an audience, more films are being made, and the number of producer-authors is growing. The myth is gradually becoming more and more believable, and becoming a law. Mythology has a huge social effect.

Of course finance and technology are, as before, minimal. Creating an independent studio is out of the question: the biggest problems are synchronic sound and the quality of the film stock.

The opinion is heard and read in the mass media that if cinema is going to be parallel, then it should remain parallel. Some people don't understand why parallel cinema people are on television, have their articles printed in official magazines, receive official recognition. Maybe it's because people don't get it, that parallel cinema isn't underground any more. We explain our "behaviour" simply. We cooperate with the media because we are offered the opportunity to do so, and because it gives us a chance to make contact. Contact - is the way to reach an audience. As far as official recognition goes - this is up to each author-producer. Here, the concept of the "independent producer" is confused with the concept of the "independent cinema business". Just because an independent producer decides to work in official cinema, independent cinema doesn't disappear, just as official cinema doesn't disappear when an official director starts working independently. Parallel cinema hasn't divided cinema, it has broadened it.

The birth of parallel cinema can be fixed in time in 1987, when the cine journal 'CINEFANTOM' appeared as typed carbon copies, paid for by its authors. The journal was noteworthy because its editorial staff were mostly parallel cinema authors, who, together with critics published original texts. The editorial staff considers that practice and criticism should exist together for mutual benefit, that criticism is a form of creative activity, with the same status as practice.

Other tasks the journal sets itself are to expose insufficiencies in Soviet cinema in the light of world cinema. The journal doesn't confine itself to a specific theme within parallel cinema, it willingly turns over its pages to critics analyzing traditional cinematography made in more often than not, unconventional methods. Original material is published dedicated to the creative works of Fasbinder, Shtraub. Sokurov, German and Tarkovsky. Specially close attention is paid to Video Art, including experimental home video, video art, video installations, and video acts. The journal strives towards its texts being not only informational and academic, but also complete in the sense of their artistic form. The journal is a platform for the development of new styles, genres and structures.

Now a little on the directors who are involved in parallel cinema in the USSR. I am writing only about representatives in Leningrad and Moscow, as I know their work well.

I will begin with Leningrad - which is a kind of capital of parallel cinema. I will start by naming three names: Evgeny Ufit, Oleg Kotelnikov and Evgeny Kondratev. The way I see it, they occupy a common cultural platform. All three are products of the same Leningrad cultural underground, of artists and musicians. I think that Leningrad rock-culture, to be more precise; its punk members had a big influence on them. It was from there the paraphernalia of rock-concerts (idiotic make-up, scandalous costumes), the music itself, and the way the actors performed, derived from. These directors are active musicians, and in their way have an influence on their musical contemporaries. They are also painters. Kotelnikov is more famous as one of the leaders of the Leningrad 'New Wild'. The 'New Wave' and 'Free Form' movements are also close to them.

The earlier era of Indian cinema was dominated heavily by adaptations of epics like Ramayana, Mahabharata etc. However, post-1920s, there was an arrival of the kind of cinema that began to challenge norms. Savkari Pash (1925), for example, was a silent film by Baburao Painter that revolved around a poor farmer and his woes. Raithu Bidda (1939) by Gudavalli Ramabrahmam criticised zamindars, the ones who had turned into tax collectors for the British government. The movie was subsequently banned by the colonizers.

From the late 1940s to1960s, India witnessed the emergence of parallel cinema on a larger scale, also referred to as the Golden Age of Indian Cinema. It was inspired by Italian Neorealism (a film movement that focused on the poor and working classes). Bengali cinema is credited with giving light to parallel cinema, with major directors like Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Tapan Sinha, Ritwik Ghatak etc holding the beacon. However, contrary to the popular opinion, Bengali cinema wasn’t the only one putting the idea forward. Adoor Gopalakrishnan (Malayalam cinema), Girish Kasaravalli (Kannada cinema), K.N.T. Sastry (Telugu cinema) etc also worked in a similar direction and hence can be called the pioneers of Indian parallel cinema.

In those days, movies were heavily inspired by Indian literature. Till date, they are extensively studied by scholars to make inferences about the demographics, socio-economical as well as political environment of that era. Because of their unique perspective, they are also referred to as art movies and were frequently funded by state governments to promote an authentic Indian art genre.

With the increasing cost of movie production in the 1990s, parallel cinema started witnessing a decline. As the industry became commercialised, it became risky to create art movies, since there was no assured return on them. Hence, Bollywood once again started reeling towards the mainstream cinema.

The late 1990s brought movies that showed the real life problems of Mumbai, a city away from the glamour it is often associated with. Satya (1998), considered among Ram Gopal Verma’s finest works, is one such film that talked about the Mumbai underworld. But since this movie and the likes of it were more or less commercial, they have never entirely been declared a part of parallel cinema. The 2000s witnessed movies that dared to ditch the societal appeal. My brother… Nikhil (2005) talked about AIDS, Sonchidi (2011) is among the very few sci-fi movies India has in its name.

The emergence of parallel cinema had one simple aim: to give movie-goers something more than meaningless entertainment. It won’t be too wrong to call it a “rebellious” branch of our otherwise conforming cinema. Mandi (1983), by Shyam Benegal is one such movie dealing with issues that the society talks about in dulled whispers, if at all. The story revolves around a brothel and its prostitutes, who ultimately fight for their place of residence, when under threat by politicians who are themselves frequent visitors. Not many people know this, but Gulzar, besides being an impeccable lyricist was also a film director. In 1982, he came out with Namkeen, a movie that uncovered oppression of women in rural India.

Cinema is a very powerful weapon that works both ways. While cinema influences people, people influence it right back. That is why, parallel cinema plays a very cruical role- mirroring our society, as well as affecting it. However, there are a few hurdles in the way. While art movies continue to make a presence at film festivals like Cannes, Venice, Berlin etc, and get praises from critics, they fail to reach the audience who needs them the most. Movies that talk about social stigma and plight do not make it to the big theatres and if they do, often stay confined to single screenings. The viewers there are largely privileged elites who already understand and support parallel cinema. But who will take it to the other segment of the society, the one that actually goes through whatever our art movies talk about?

4. As a future Filmmaker, tell what are the changes you wish to implement in Indian Cinema?

# Nowadays, Indian filmmakers would say, ‘we’re going to make a Hollywood level film, which will change the Indian film industry’. Truth is that they will end up making a movie that imitates a Hollywood movie with large budget. But that won’t move the Indian film industry forward. Recently BBC revealed list of 100 best foreign language films, in that only one Indian movie found a spot, which is Satyajith ray’s Pather Panchali. Shot in 1955 with limited equipment, technology and budget which still remains insurmountable. Still Indian film makers were not able to make a film of that level. Why? Because as an Indian filmmaker, we should tell the stories of India. If you can do that with this much vast variety of culture and geography, we can make the best movies in the world. We don’t have to look into Hollywood or other industries to get inspired. Look around, open your eyes, tell your story and make an Indian movie. As an aspiring filmmaker, I will always try to do that.