

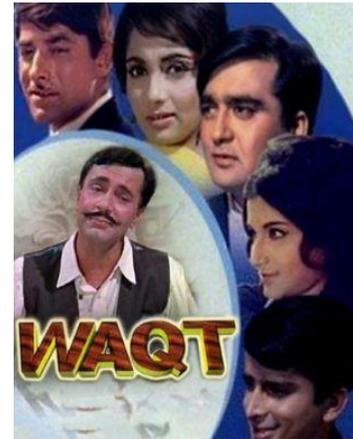
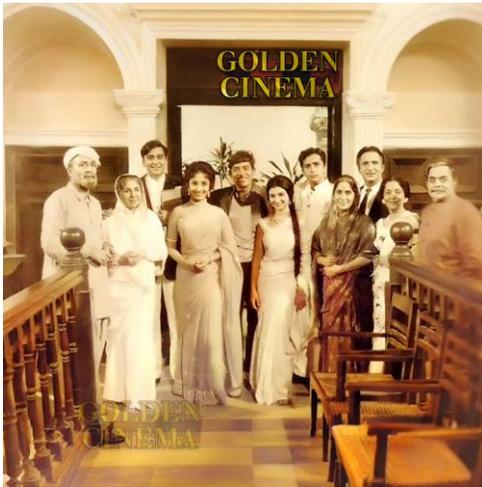
HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
Anwasha Maity, PhD.

## ***TIME / WAQT*** (1965)

Yash Chopra

Hindi language

*film link:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNrNPnoT298&t=2505s>



### OVERVIEW

**Director** Yash Chopra (1932-2012) was one of the most iconic and influential Indian film-makers who worked in the Bollywood film industry based in Mumbai. Chopra initially worked with his elder brother, B.R. Chopra, making hits such as *Dhool Ka Phool* (*Flowers of the Dust*, 1959) and *Waqt* (*Time*, 1965). In 1973, he launched his own production company, Yash Raj Films, which went on to become one of Bollywood's most influential production houses, with over 80 films to date. Chopra is considered a "King-maker" of Bollywood cinema, having introduced and nurtured the two biggest stars of the industry, Amitabh Bacchhan and Shah Rukh Khan. His most impactful films include romances such as *Kabhi Kabhie* (*Sometimes*, 1976), *Silsila* (*The Affair*, 1981), *Chandni* (*Moonlight*, 1989) and *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (*The Brave-Hearted Wins the Bride*, 1995) and action-packed thrillers such as *Deewaar* (*Wall*, 1975) and *Darr* (*Fear*, 1993). Chopra's work is also memorable for featuring visually stunning imagery shot in diverse and exotic locales, such as Switzerland and Kashmir. He is the only filmmaker to have won the Indian National Film Award for best popular film five times—four times as director and once as producer. He also received a number of Filmfare Awards (given by *Filmfare* magazine), including 12 nominations and 4 wins for best director and 15 nominations and 4 wins for best film. The government of India honoured him with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for lifetime achievement in cinema in 2001, and in 2005 he received one of India's highest civilian honours, the Padma Bhushan.

**Film** *Waqt* is a Bollywood masala film directed by Yash Chopra, produced by B. R. Chopra and written by Akhtar Mirza and Akhtar-Ul-Iman. The plot of the film re-introduced the "lost and found" formula to Hindi cinema, originally featured in the Ashok Kumar & Mumtaz film *Kismet* (1943). The film pioneered the ensemble cast in Hindi films, featuring superstars such as Sunil Dutt (Ravi), Raaj Kumar (Raja) and Shashi Kapoor (Vijay) and beloved heroines such as Sadhana Shivdasani (Meena), Sharmila Tagore (Renu). Balraj Sahni (Kedarnath), Achala Sachdev (Laxmi), Rehman (Chinnoy) and Madan Puri (Balbir) complete the strong, actor-driven cast. *Waqt* seamlessly blends drama, romance, suspense, and emotion,

making it an unforgettable cinematic experience. The music of the film also became immensely popular and contributed to the overall success of the movie. The soundtrack is not only remembered for its catchy and melodious tunes but also for Sahir Ludhianvi's profound and meaningful lyrics, which reflect the film's underlying themes of time, destiny, love, and life.

*Background* With its gripping screenplay, iconic dialogues, soulful music and Yash Chopra's masterful direction, *Waqt* became a trendsetter for family sagas in Bollywood. *Waqt* was both a critical and commercial success, earning several prestigious awards at the 13th Filmfare Awards: Best Director – Yash Chopra; Best Supporting Actor – Raaj Kumar; Best Story – Akhtar Mirza; Best Dialogue – Akhtar ul Iman and Best Cinematography (Color) – Dharam Chopra. The film was later remade in Telugu as *Bhale Abbayilu* (1969) and in Malayalam as *Kolilakkam* (1981).

## CHARACTERS

<i>Lala Kedarnath</i>	A rich businessman
Laxmi	Kedarnath's wife
Raja/Raju	Kedarnath's oldest son
Ravi/Babloo	Kedarnath's middle son
Vijay	Kedarnath's youngest son
Meena	Ravi's sweetheart
Renu	Vijay's sweetheart
Chinnoy	Raja's adoptive father and criminal boss
Balbir Singh	Chinnoy's unsavoury henchman

## SYNOPSIS

Lala Kedarnath, blessed with a booming business and three sons, suddenly loses everything in an earthquake and is separated from his family which scatters. The oldest son, Raju, is initially taken in by an orphanage but escapes from mistreatment and is picked up from the streets and raised by criminal boss Chinnoy as a master thief. Babloo, the middle son, is picked up by a rich family who renames him Ravi and they eventually have another daughter Renu, who grow up as siblings. Laxmi takes the infant Vijay and works as a maid and seamstress to raise him. Kedarnath gets jailed for killing the orphanage master. Time passes and the kids all grow up.

Raja falls in love with Meena, a judge's daughter and tries to impress her by returning her diamond necklace that he himself had stolen. But his romantic overtures are foiled as Ravi and Meena are already in a relationship. Frustrated, he tries to murder Ravi in his sleep but sees an old picture instead, thus recognizing his long-lost brother. Vijay, who, despite his BA degree, has been reduced to working as Chinnoy's chauffeur, refuses to continue his relationship with Renu, who insists that he meet with her open-minded brother Ravi. Ravi however, insults Vijay and tells him to "stay in his place". Renu, enraged, tells Ravi to reflect in his own unknown origins before slandering others. Elsewhere, Meena's mother objects to her engagement with Ravi as he was adopted from the streets. Hurt and angry, Ravi leaves home.

Raja learns about Ravi's problem and plans to reveal the truth at Chinnoy's party where he is tasked to steal a diamond necklace. Unfortunately, Balbir arrives, drunk, and harasses Meena. Raja comes to her rescue and beats Balbir up, threatening to kill him. Vijay is called away as Laxmi is suddenly sick and she receives a stomach cancer diagnosis. Chinnoy, already angry with Raja about not stealing the diamond necklace at the party, confronts Balbir about his behaviour and slaps him. Balbir pulls out his knife and they wrestle. Chinnoy manages to kill Balbir. Vijay returns and sees Chinnoy dump Balbir's body in Raja's room. Chinnoy promises to pay for Laxmi's expensive cancer surgery if Vijay keeps his mouth shut.

Raja returns and is surprised by a dead body in his closet and is soon arrested by the police. Ravi, though inexperienced, agrees to represent him in court. After examining many witnesses, Raja's fate seems dire. But Ravi recognizes Vijay's false testimony and has it thrown out of court, then uses a subterfuge to make Chinnoy confess to being the murderer. Laxmi and Kedarnath, arriving there, recognize each other and the whole family is soon reunited. So all ends well.

## SCENES

**Opening scene** A rising entrepreneur Lala Kedarnath Prasanta arrives at a celebratory occasion at his new store. He is very proud of the luck in his stars, compounded by the luck from his three sons of different ages coincidentally having the same birth date. A puja is performed and a new signboard “Lala Kedarnath and Sons” is raised up. Later at night, Kedarnath attends a gala with his pals and sings the now iconic song, “O meri zohrajabeen” (“Oh my bewitching beauty”) to his wife, Laxmi.



**Meeting an astrologer** Some others arrive to congratulate him and bring a famous astrologer. Kedarnath says he doesn't believe in astrology, but acquires to get a palm reading. He says one's luck is in one's might, not in the lines of his palm. He has big dreams for his sons, but the astrologer warns him that time can ruin the best laid plans.

**An earthquake** At night, while Laxmi puts the kids to bed and Kedarnath excitedly tells her that he will build her a bungalow and buy them nice cars, there is a terrifying earthquake. Houses topple like cards and fires spread everywhere as people scatter or are struck down. Kedarnath, on regaining consciousness, can't find his wife or children.



**Driven apart** The oldest son, Raju, is taken with a truckload to children to an orphanage. Laxmi, carrying the infant Vijay, reaches a refugee camp, where a man tells her that Kedarnath is probably dead. The middle son, Ravi, is taken in by a rich couple while he was wandering the streets. At the orphanage, Raju, is gets into an argument with the manager over the poor food and is beaten up and punished.



**Days Pass** Kedarnath returns to the ruins of his neighbourhood and sees the shattered remains of his signboard, Laxmi walks around despondently with the infant and manages to find a job, Raju cleans the orphanage floors and Ravi plays happily with a new toy train, while the title song “Waqt Se Din Aur Raat” (“Time makes day and night/ Everyone is a slave to time/ Time rules over all”) plays in the background. Kedarnath coincidentally goes to the orphanage to look for his sons and relates his woes. But Raju has run away. Kedarnath strangles the manager to death and is jailed.

**Raju meets Meena** Raju, running across the city, grows up. The police chase him to a palatial bungalow, where they meet the homeowner Raju himself, who has quickly changed into his upper-class attire of a smoking jacket. Elsewhere, Meena, a rich girl, celebrates her birthday. Raju had previously stolen her necklace; now he returns it to her on the ruse that the thief dropped the necklace. He now calls himself Raja Chinnoy.



**Ravi celebrates his birthday** Meena's father phones Ravi's adoptive father to arrange some kind of apprenticeship for him. Ravi's adoptive sister Renu has a party while Ravi enjoys some time fishing. He runs back home to the party and livens up the atmosphere. His mother says he has brightened up their lives since he came.

**Laxmi and Vijay** Elsewhere, Vijay, the youngest son, tells his mother, Laxmi, not to celebrate his birthday since it makes her sad. Laxmi laments that they had everything once but Vijay says he was unlucky so they lost it all, but even then she worked very hard to raise him and give him an education. At the jail, Kedarnath distributes sweets to the inmates on occasion of his sons' birthday, which was also the day he lost everything.

**Raja begins to court Meena** Meena, happy to know that Ravi will be visiting the next day; sings another famous song, "Kaun aya ke nigahon mein chamak jaag uthi" ("For whose arrival do my eyes sparkle"), just when Raja steps inside. He compliments her beauty and voice and begins his courtship.



**Raja meets his boss** Raja then visits his boss Chinnoy, who's relaxing by the pool. Chinnoy had picked him up from the street and raised him as a thief. Chinnoy warns him to stay in line or the consequences would be dire. Raja shrugs it off.

**Ravi arrives at Delhi** Meena waits at the airport where Raja ambushes her with flowers, which the fast-talking Ravi assumes are for him. Ravi strikes up some conversation with Raju as well, returning the flowers again to him. Meena and Ravi drive away, leaving Raja in the dust.



**Renu and Vijay's romantic song** Elsewhere, Renu follows Vijay with her car and forces him to ride with her the college, where they both attend a class on romantic Urdu poetry (*shayari*). They all go on a trip/picnic on a river float. There is much singing and dancing where Renu and Vijay's romance begins budding.

**Raja's advances are foiled** He proposes that they have a tea date. But Ravi drags her away to his boat in his usual exuberant style before Raja arrives and he leaves, disappointed. Ravi and Meena sing a romantic song in a lush garden.



**Renu teaches Vijay to drive** Vijay almost runs over a balloon seller on his first attempt! That merges into a long sequence where he drives Renu around and they enjoy each other's company.

**Raja tries to impress Meena** Raja and Ravi have a (friendly) car race outside the city. They race past villages, trains rolling by and up picturesque, winding mountain roads. The race gets heated with Ravi lagging behind but he wins and they congratulate each other. Meena arrives to meet them.

**Laxmi falls sick** Meanwhile, Laxmi is sick and a doctor advises Vijay to take her to Bombay for treatment. Vijay tells Renu that they must part as his first duty is towards Laxmi's treatment. Renu offers to help but he rejects it.

**Kedarnath is released** Kedarnath is released from prison and wonders how he will find his children. The jailer assures him that it will be all right. He laments that he would never recognize his sons now and fortune is laughing at him.



**Kedarnath's determination** Kedarnath lands up at an old friend's house, who tells him that Laxmi is alive and in Delhi. Kedarnath rushes to Delhi but misses her as she has gone to Bombay but not left an address. Kedarnath decides to go to Bombay.

**Missed connections** At a similar time Vijay and Laxmi arrive, as do Meena and her family whom Ravi receives; Raja and one of Chinnoy's lackeys are also there at the railway station where Raja bumps into Laxmi but doesn't recognize his mother. Vijay and Laxmi see a doctor, who advises rest. As they are walking on the street, they go past Kedarnath without meeting. Vijay lands up at Chinnoy's office and is hired as a



chauffeur. Chinnoy tells his goon that he knows of Raja's whereabouts. Meanwhile, Meena and Ravi arrive at Renu's home. Meena and Renu are good friends. Meena asks about her lover, and they chat about Vijay; Renu doesn't know where he is in Bombay.

**Raja's plans** Raja is trying hard to romance Meena but they are interrupted by Meena's father and Renu. The girls head over to play a game of badminton, while Raja and Meena's father (Mr. Mittal) play pool. Raja tells him that he can't marry the girl he loves without his help. Before he can clarify or propose anything, Chinnoy arrives and subtly warns off Raja. Meena, Raja, Chinnoy and Mr. Mittal remain behind while Renu leaves in Chinnoy's car.



**Renu meets Vijay again** Coincidentally, Vijay is the driver! Renu asks him why he hadn't contacted her. Vijay says there is too much difference between them now; they are master and servant and cannot be friends. Renu rejects his proposition and jumps into the front passenger seat from the back. She wants to rekindle their relationship but he rejects her again, even though both of them confess to loving each other. Vijay says that he cannot possibly provide her with the comforts she's used to and cannot bring her to Chinnoy's servants quarters where he lives.

**Ravi and Meena's love deepens** Ravi sings Meena a dreamy song on a late-night phone call, with dream/ memory sequences of romancing in a flower garden and on snowy valleys, walking away hugging each other with blowing clouds enveloping them and (in real life) falling asleep on the call.



**Raja and Chinnoy have an altercation** Raja and Chinnoy chat by the poolside about Meena; Chinnoy warns him that if his real identity outs then he will be in trouble. Chinnoy wants Raja to steal some diamonds for him but Raja says that he wants to quit being Chinnoy's resident thief and lackey.



**Meena and Ravi enjoy each other's company** Meena and Ravi enjoy swimming in the beach and at the pool. Raja comes to find Meena but is frustrated by seeing them enjoying each other's company. He overhears a romantic conversation between them in the shower stalls where Ravi proposes that they get married.



**A setback and recognition** Raja's frustration grows and upon returning home, takes a gun and shoots out some decorative, hanging glass balloons in his living room. Chinnoy comes to chide Raja about Meena's engagement with Ravi and tells him to return to his senses. Instead, Raja goes to murder Ravi in his sleep, but sees a framed childhood photo and recognizes his brother.



**Raja and Ravi reconcile** At Meena's engagement party, Meena plays the piano and sings a romantic song while Ravi and Raja look on. Raja asks Meena for his prize (from when he returned her necklace) and asks that she take the best care of Ravi. Raja tells them that he had a nightmare where he was trying to murder Ravi but then Ravi morphed into a child who called him his older brother. The two men hug.



**Renu tries to make plans with Vijay** At the party, Renu notices Vijay leaving with the other staff. Later, they chat outside where Renu says they should get married. Vijay says her family won't accept a chauffeur as their son-in-law. Renu tries to get Ravi on her side but Ravi chews out Vijay for overstepping his bounds: "He who sits in the front seat is the driver and he who sits at the back is the *maalik* (owner/boss).



Ravi in



**crisis** Renu chastises Ravi for his behaviour and reminds him that his own birth identity, too, is shrouded in mystery as her parents picked him up from the streets as a child. Ravi is hurt. Suddenly, Meena's mother also refuses the marriage match because Ravi is adopted. Ravi, overhearing them while leaving, says that he wants to make his own identity, but cannot say anything to Meena. Walking aimlessly by the riverbank, Ravi meets an old man (Kedarnath) but they don't recognize each other. Meena walks away without finishing dinner and Raja consoles her, promising that he will take care of the problem.

**Raja and Chinnoy strike a deal** Raja comes to Chinnoy and tells him that Ravi is his own brother. In order to help Ravi regain his father's name/identity, he would be Chinnoy's lifelong lackey if he doesn't reveal his criminal identity. Chinnoy agrees wholeheartedly.



**Chinnoy's party** Chinnoy hosts a party where he plans to have Raja steal some diamonds from Rani Sahiba, which she wears in a necklace. Meena and Renu arrive with their families. Seeing Ravi and Meena together, Raja feels very happy and wants to reveal all, but Chinnoy asks him to do his "job" first. A hired singer sings the famous song, "Aage bhi jaane na tu" ("You don't know what comes ahead"). Raja dances romantically with Rani Sahiba while Meena and Ravi exchange reassurances. Renu and Vijay miss each other as Vijay has to rush home as his mother is very sick and Chinnoy lets him borrow the car to take her to the doctor. Chinnoy's henchman, drunk, harasses Meena. Raja comes to her rescue and beats up the man, in the furore missing the opportunity to steal the diamonds. Ravi thanks him profusely.

**Chinnoy murders his henchman** The doctor says that Laxmi has stomach cancer and Vijay should arrange for surgery soon. Chinnoy yells at his henchman and slaps him. He pulls out his knife and tries to stab Chinnoy!! They wrestle with the knife. After some gut-wrenching suspense, Chinnoy gets the upper hand. He drags the henchman's dead body out to Raja's rooms just as Vijay returns with the car and catches him red-handed. In exchange for money for Laxmi's surgery, Chinnoy tells him to keep his mouth shut.



**Raja is jailed** Raja returns and walks over the blood trail without noticing it, then is surprised by the body in the closet. But Chinnoy has locked the door from outside and called the police. Raja escapes from a window but is apprehended by the chasing police when Kedarnath stops him from running away. Meena comes to visit Raja in jail and tells her that he wants Ravi to represent him in court. At the courthouse, other lawyers lament Ravi's inexperience and Raja's back luck.

**At the court** The prosecutor examines some witnesses from the party including Rani Sahiba to prove that Raja wanted to kill the henchman Maqdool. They all apparently heard Raja say different things, like “cut your throat” or “cut you up to pieces”. Ravi doesn’t cross-examine them, but asks Rani Sahiba why her version of Raja’s words is different than the other witnesses: “drink your blood”.



**Meena’s testimony** Meena is then called as a witness. She tells the court that Raja returned her diamond necklace and the prosecutor accuses them of being romantically involved. Then the prosecutor accuses her of being responsible for Raja’s death threat to Balbir Singh, as a majority of these cases hinge on love. Ravi objects but is overruled. Ravi also doesn’t cross-examine her. The other lawyers gossip about them. Later, Meena is anxious that her testimony will harm Raja but Ravi can’t reassure her.



**Chinnoy and Kedarnath at court** At the court, Chinnoy testifies that he has known Raja for a long time but lies that Raja was trying to put the corpse into the wardrobe. Ravi asks to examine Chinnoy at a later time. Kedarnath also appears as a witness; he says that had he not stopped Raja, Raja would have been run over. Ravi doesn’t cross-examine him.

**Vijay’s testimony** Then Vijay is brought in as a chief witness. He lies that he saw Raja dragging the body. Ravi asks him why he’s working as a driver despite being educated. Vijay is offended but says it’s all for his mother and her cancer treatment.



**A crucial flashback** Meena speaks to Laxmi at her home and tries to convince her that Raja is innocent. Vijay returns and gives Laxmi the money Chinnoy gave him. Laxmi tells him that if he’s trying to kill someone else to save her life then she’s better off dead. She catches Vijay in the lie.

**The case moves in Raja’s favor** Vijay remembers his conversation with Laxmi as Ravi accuses him of lying as he couldn’t have seen the face of the person dragging the corpse. Ravi badgers and intimidates Vijay and Vijay caves and lets the truth out that Chinnoy paid him. The prosecutor says that Vijay’s testimony is unreliable. Ravi agrees to throw Vijay’s testimony out of court and asks for a short break as he drags in a bloody jute sack. He demonstrates that there couldn’t have been bloody footprints if the body was dragged. Raja actually walked in on the blood later, without noticing it as the area was not lit.

**Chinnoy’s lie is caught** Ravi calls Chinnoy to the stand and catches his lie about wearing the same clothes from the party rather than his night clothes. He then asks Chinnoy to demonstrate the position he saw Raja in while supposedly putting the corpse into the wardrobe. Chinnoy, enraged, pulls open the wardrobe, just to have a fake body fall on him! (Ravi had brought the wardrobe in earlier). Ravi demonstrates that Raja was grabbing the body as it fell on him, not putting it inside. Ravi tells the court to note three crucial points

- 1) that Raja wasn’t aware that he walked on the blood trail
- 2) that Raja didn’t know that there was a body in the wardrobe and
- 3) that Raja didn’t know that the door would be locked from the outside before he escaped from the window.

**Fake evidence cracks the case** A man hands Ravi a box, after which Ravi starts yelling that Chinnoy is the murderer based on some new evidence that has come to light— the murder weapon with Chinnoy’s name on it. Chinnoy angrily retorts that it was Balbir Singh’s knife, thus giving up the lie that he knew about the murder weapon. Ravi keeps yelling at him and Chinnoy grabs him and tries to stab him with a knife hidden in his walking cane. Chinnoy is arrested. Ravi acknowledges his subterfuge with a fake knife and begs the court’s pardon as it was the only way to reveal the truth. The judge calls for investigation into Chinnoy and releases Raja.





**Reunion** Kedarnath apologises to Raja and commends Ravi from saving him from the sin of getting an innocent man punished. He also pats Vijay on the back. Laxmi rushes in and bumps into Kedarnath. Kedarnath recognizes Laxmi and they reunite. Kedarnath hugs Vijay and laments his bad luck on losing them. He says that he just missed Raju (Raja) at the orphanage and Raja overhears that, recognizing his parents. He is overwhelmed with emotion and reveals his and Ravi's real identity to them. They hug and reunite. Meena's mother comes and apologizes to Ravi and agrees to the marriage between Meena and Ravi. Renu also arrives with her parents and her match with Vijay is reconciled.

**Closing scene** Kedarnath opens up a new store with a new "Lala Kedarnath and Sons" signboard. Raja assures him that the three brothers will take the business to new heights. But Kedarnath stops him and says that time is the ruler of all, it can make or break one's fate. Kedarnath is overjoyed that his sons are now about to get married. The film ends with the tune of "Oh mere zohrajabeen" ("Oh my bewitching beauty") playing over traditional wedding music.

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

**Raja** Hindi film superstar Raaj Kumar, with his intense screen presence, delivers a powerful performance as Raju/Raja, making him one of the film's most memorable figures (indeed, his performance won the only Filmfare award for this film in the acting category). Raja is a dashing and enigmatic character, with the courage to speak truth to power and reform himself through his own efforts.

**Brave** From the beginning of his journey at the orphanage, Raja shows his mettle in daring to hit the orphanage manager for not giving enough food to the children and protesting the ill-treatment meted out to them. In another scene, after Chinnoy threatens to expose him, he subtly threatens him back, saying, "Jinke ghar sheeshe ke hote hain, woh doosron par patthar nahi phenka karte" ("Those who live in glass houses don't make a habit of throwing stones at others"). Again, when Balbir brandishes a knife at him, he easily disarms the henchman and tells him, "Chaku se mat khelo, chot lag jayegi" ("Don't play with knives, (you) will get injured").

**Enigmatic** For the majority of the film before his incarceration, Raja maintains an air of enigma and mystery. For instance, the sequences where he easily fools the police and then Meena into thinking that a random thief had accidentally dropped her expensive diamond necklace in his home are masterful, leaving no doubt as to his honesty and gentlemanly manner, which impresses Meena enough to call him her friend.

**Selfless** Once he realizes the truth about Ravi, he abandons his previous scheming persona and turns over a new leaf, with enough personal risk both from Chinnoy and from later at the party where he saves Meena from Balbir's advances. His selfless act culminates in him being arrested and tried for murdering Balbir. Even in the small things, when Meena promises him a favour for returning her necklace, he enigmatically defers his wish and later asks her to make Ravi the happiest person on earth, instead of something that benefits himself.

**Ravi** Another Hindi film superstar Sunil Dutt plays Ravi, Kedarnath's second son and Raja's middle brother. His hearty, life-of-the-party affability and easy romantic charm hide a determined and righteous character, when he unknowingly crosses paths with his lost family members.

**Affable** Ravi throws himself wholeheartedly into every situation and is quite the people-pleaser and fast-talker. On their first meeting, he runs circles with his words around the usually suave Raja and leaves him in the dust, running off with Meena. Again, at several house parties, he asks after all the guests and

they, too, aren't shy about praising his manners.

**Romantic** Ravi and Meena enjoy a charming romance and spending time with each other, going to parties, going swimming, dreaming of romance in misty gardens and mountains and so on. He even proposes to her from the other side of the shower stall when they change out of their swimming costumes, in a very shy yet romantically exciting sequence.

**Determined** After being outed by Renu and rejected by Meena's mother, Ravi shows determination to put his upbringing and education to good use by making a name for himself. And even when things look hopeless for Raja's case, he still presses on, to the final win.

**Renu** Sharmila Tagore plays Renu, a rich young woman in love with Shashi Kapoor's Vijay. Her on-screen presence is elegant, almost mesmerizing, especially when paired with the handsome Shashi Kapoor (who plays Vijay). Somewhat spoiled and carefree, she is somewhat less conventional (than Sadhana's Meena) in her romantic pursuit.

**Carefree** Renu enjoys a great deal of freedom even for a rich, highly educated family like hers; she studies at a college in a different city, owns and drives her own car and even teaches Vijay to drive. They go on picnics and dates and pay very little attention to their college classes.

**Romantic** For Renu, love comes before everything else. She is heartbroken after Vijay leaves for Bombay but follows him regardless and continues to express her love to him even when he rejects her as he has clearly fallen below her status. In one telling scene, when Vijay argues about their relationship now being that of master and servant, she just skips over the back of the seat to accompany him on the front seat.

**Limited** Unlike the heroes, who have more at stake, both heroines' characters are limited to their romantic personas. Renu could have been a much more interesting character if its entirety didn't revolve around her romance with Vijay, but then again, strong heroine roles weren't common in that era in Bollywood film. Despite that, she is honest and outspoken on class issues especially when it comes to Vijay's defence and she doesn't hesitate to chew Ravi out for his rude words to Vijay. But she isn't willing or able to leave behind her luxurious lifestyle to support Vijay, which limits her character further.

## THEMES

**Fate** Belief in fate/time as the master of all is a popular governing theme in Bollywood generally, but *Waqt* leans heavily on this unpredictability as the main mover for the plot, foiling individual ambition and ego. As the astrologer warns Lala Kedarnath at the beginning of the film, one must never take one's success for granted as fate can throw a curveball at any moment, but Kedarnath believes that one's luck is in one's might, not in the lines of his palm. The almost immediate decimation of Kedarnath's fortunes in the earthquake, separation of the brothers from their parents, their differing upbringings and eventual convergence nevertheless illustrate the unpredictability of life's course. At each narrative juncture, fate plays cruel tricks that prevent recognition/ reunion; for instance, when Kedarnath's incarceration prevents him from reuniting with Raja at the orphanage, or when, after being released from jail, he laments that he would never recognize his grown sons and that fortune is laughing at him, followed by the several tantalizing instances when Kedarnath meets but fails to recognize his grown sons. Again, Ravi's unknown parentage, a source of social stigma that bars his marriage with Meena, not only adds complexity to his character but also reinforces the theme of fate's role in shaping destinies, regardless of personal merit or achievements. Laxmi's cancer, another stroke of fate, almost leads to perjury for one son, a guilty murder verdict for another, and a black mark on a budding career for her third. Thus, the final revelation of Raja and Ravi's identities as Lala Kedarnath and Laxmi's long-lost sons is a powerful moment of catharsis, fulfilling the astrologer's earlier warning about the unpredictability of time. The entire family's reunion in the courtroom signifies that despite the twists of fate and hardships, destiny has finally brought them back together. The film closes on a hopeful note, with the message that while time is unpredictable, love, family, and justice ultimately prevail.

**Illustrative moment:** The song "Waqt Se hain Din Aur Raat" ("Time makes day and night/ Everyone is a slave to time/ Time rules over all") plays in the background while we see snippets of the divergent lives of the main characters. Kedarnath returns to the ruins of his neighbourhood, sees the shattered remains of

his signboard and wanders like a madman. Laxmi walks around despondently with the infant in pouring rain and manages to find a job. Raju cleans the orphanage floors and is beaten by the manager for falling asleep. And Ravi plays happily with a new toy train, then sleeps soundly on a nice, comfortable bed.

**Social class** In *Waqt*, the characters largely adhere to conservative social practices, especially of the upper class, with a few (surprisingly fresh) exceptions. The most striking example of course is Ravi's parentage, which suddenly and without warning comes to the fore when the issue of his marriage with Meena arises. Meena's father, surprisingly, says that he doesn't care about it at all (but neither does he force his wife to back down) and Ravi's adoptive parents support him as well. Raja, on the other hand, accidentally reveals Ravi's identity while attempting to murder him. But he is so deeply agonized by the truth and his own inability to do anything about it or prevent Ravi's suffering that he agrees to be a bonded lackey to Chinnoy in exchange for the latter's silence about Raja's nefarious past. This issue remains in limbo and is overshadowed by the courtroom drama soon after. Only after the case is over, the family reunited and the three heroes' excellent parentage established, do Meena's mother and Renu's family acquiesce to the respective matches with Ravi and Vijay. Notably, no one questions Kedarnath's history of incarceration or vagrancy over the years and takes his word for his former success and lineage.

Interestingly, the film also glosses over the transition from the Muslim-majority culture of Kedarnath's original (unnamed) city, as revealed in the notable usage of Urdu at the party where he sings, "Oh meri zohrajabeen" ("Oh my bewitching beauty") to the Hindu-majority Bombay upper class circles (Meena, Renu's families, Chinnoy). Was this a subtle attempt to legitimize Partition refugees after the country was torn asunder? Yash Chopra, born in Lahore (now in Pakistan), is known for his consistent and lifelong engagement with Partition in his films. This is best expressed in his 1959 film *Dhool Ka Phool's* (*Flower of Dust*) iconic song, "Tu Hindu banega na Musalman banega, Insaan ka aulad hai insaan banega" ("You will become neither Hindu nor Muslim/ You're a human child, you'll become a human"). This sequence in *Waqt* is certainly reminiscent of that humanitarian ideology.

*Illustrative moment:* Soon after Renu accuses Ravi of hypocritically insulting Vijay when his own parentage is unknown, Meena's mother suddenly withdraws the marriage match and states that Ravi could be Muslim or worse by birth. She rakes up a furore about the purity of his lineage being established before she could let them marry: "what would people say?" (always the invisible demon of societal peer pressure in Indian family dramas!) One is led to wonder why this thought hadn't occurred to her earlier after letting Meena fraternize with Ravi since childhood.

**Class: master vs servant** Along with issues of origin/lineage, the film explores deep divides between classes, seen best in the hurdles Vijay and Renu face. Even as college classmates, the class divide is stark and Vijay is always hyper-aware of hailing from a lower-class family with a single, working mother. For instance, when Renu, the rich girl who had the privilege of learning to drive as a matter of course, gives him a ride and teaches him to drive, he is somewhat shy and reserved. He wouldn't have imagined in his dreams that this skill would land him a job when his college degree couldn't and he remains in perpetual embarrassment of status around Renu. When Renu proposes that they elope and marry, he tells her, angrily, that he cannot take her to live with him in Chinnoy's servants' quarters. Renu has no answer to that and can't think of an alternative to her affluent lifestyle, such as making a life together in a different city regardless of whether she has her family's blessings. Instead, she tries to force Vijay's acceptance, resulting in an uncomfortable exchange with Ravi. Why Ravi, who's usually very exuberant and egalitarian, somewhat uncharacteristically adopts this attitude isn't clear— perhaps it was to highlight entrenched class biases while heightening dramatic tension in unknowingly wronging his own brother. That said, this is a false/ constructed master-servant dichotomy in this film (though not in many of Chopra's other films), since Vijay isn't originally from a lower-class family, just placed in that circumstance by fate; the film doesn't show any other lower-class characters for a comparison. In contrast, Raja's origins or class are somehow never questioned as he dresses and behaves like an affluent gentleman who's familiar with Chinnoy, even though he is a thief and liar.

*Illustrative moment:* When Ravi rudely insults Vijay, "He who sits in the front seat is the driver and he who sits at the back is the "maalik" (owner/master/boss)"; there can be no commingling between the two classes.

**Morality** Morality is a core engagement in Yash Chopra's oeuvre: no matter what life throws at them,

characters in Chopra's films show their mettle not by class or religion but their innate sense of right and wrong. For most of the characters in this film, honesty seems to be the best policy, especially if tempered by hard work. Laxmi is a stellar example here; even after she loses her dreamlike, affluent life, she literally picks herself up from the dust with an infant in her arms and begins anew. As a young and pretty widow (she was mistakenly led to believe that Kedarnath was dead), she could easily have chosen dishonest and/or disreputable means to easy wealth; instead, she works hard as a maid and seamstress to raise Vijay in the image of his honest father. Vijay, too, is a straight-shooter especially in his dealings with Renu and never minces his words about the impracticality of their romance. His internal turmoil, when faced with the choice to lie under oath in court after Laxmi told him that she would rather be dead than have him lie for her cancer treatment, causes Vijay to have a complete mental breakdown under Ravi's interrogation. Similarly, Ravi and Kedarnath are also honest in their dealings; in fact, Kedarnath even apologizes to Raja for having testified against him and is overjoyed that an innocent man wasn't punished because of his testimony.

In contrast, Chinnoy and Balbir Singh are clearly "villains". Chinnoy has a stunning estate and loves lounging by his private swimming pool and his tasteful office suites where he entertains visitors. He's well regarded in upper circles, counting Meena and Renu's parents as friends and hosting lavish parties with all the rich and influential people like Rani Saheba in attendance. But unbeknownst to all, Chinnoy is a career criminal mastermind with the morals of a venomous snake. And what he cannot accomplish by hook or crook is done by his henchman Balbir Singh, always on call for the "dirty work" behind the scenes. That he has trained Raja to be a diamond thief from childhood is a secret known only to a few, and his complete lack of any morals is seen by how quickly he throws Raja, who had only ever been loyal to him, under the proverbial bus. Chinnoy's gentlemanly facade never drops in public, which is why it comes as a surprise to all when he's goaded into confessing that he murdered Balbir. Raja, for his part, though initially corrupt, aims at redemption through his association with Meena and Ravi and eventually reunites with his family.

*Illustrative moment:* When Chinnoy, after dragging and strategically placing Balbir's dead body in Ravi's closet and promising Vijay the money for Laxmi's surgery in exchange for his silence, leads Raja to his room and calmly draws the deadbolt from outside.

**Justice: crime and punishment** *Waqt* features one of the most scintillating instances of courtroom drama in 1960's Bollywood film. After being arrested by the police on the charge of murdering Balbir, Raja seeks Meena's help and chooses Ravi as his lawyer, even though this would be Ravi's first foray as a defence attorney. Ravi, having left his affluent home, is on a path to carve out his own destiny in the world, so he accepts, albeit reluctantly. At the court, experienced lawyers gossip and discuss how Raja is surely ruined as he has such an inexperienced lawyer. Indeed, the opening sequences prove them right, as Ravi lets witness after witness go without cross-examining them. He tries to raise the suspicion that multiple witnesses heard multiple things when Raja was threatening Balbir, but that ruse fails as the judge recognizes Raja's murderous intent, rather than exact words. After the first few days, the case indeed looks dire for Raja.

But Ravi, suspecting from Vijay's nervous behaviour that something didn't match up, browbeats him into a mental breakdown where he confesses that he saw Chinnoy, not Raja, dragging Balbir's body. This serves to throw his eyewitness testimony out of court as unreliable. Ravi's over-the-top antics with a leaking sack, mannequin in wardrobe and a fake knife would certainly not be appropriate in a real courtroom, but makes for an engaging show. Of course, we know from even before the case started that Ravi would win and Raja would be released, because of course the "perfect" legal system cannot let an innocent be punished and release a murderer, especially as this courtroom sequence is the climax of the film. In fact, even Kedarnath's punishment and repentance for murdering the orphanage master by accident is seen as another aspect of this perfectly just legal system. So while fate/ time can play tricks on us, some justice remains in this world, otherwise life would be far too bleak and hopeless, the film seems to suggest.

*Illustrative moment:* After having hit his groove, Ravi pushes on with pure theatre mixed with an impassioned defence, proving that it was impossible for Raja's footprints to be on the blood trail by dragging in a sack leaking red paint. He also proves that Chinnoy knew what the murder weapon was by

again browbeating him with false evidence.

**Love: romantic love of different flavours** We see a fairly thorough sampling of romantic love in the film, whether in the established martial love between Kedarnath and Laxmi, the love triangle between Raja, Ravi and Meena and the unequal romance between Renu and Vijay. Kedarnath and Laxmi's romance is shown the least as they are separated by fate soon after the beginning of the film. Kedarnath sings one of the most romantic songs in Hindi cinema (praising her beauty and charming personality) to his wife and the mother of his children, showing that their mutual affection and attractiveness has not waned despite parenting three children, one an infant. At the end, too, they run into each other's arms without a thought to propriety or what would the onlookers think. As for Raja, he finds Meena extremely comely and begins to court her in his usual suave manner, only to realize that she and Ravi are already in love. He competes hard to win her affection, trying to meet her innocuously at every chance and going on a thrilling car race with Ravi, then when all else fails, even attempting to murder the thorn in his side. But after realizing that Ravi is his own brother, he gives up pursuit and becomes Meena's friend and protector. Ravi and Meena, on the other hand, have a sweet, mutual romance where they enjoy each other's company in everything and there is an understanding that they would eventually marry. This relationship gets the most on-screen time in the film and the most memorable songs. We also see the ups and downs closely, for instance when Ravi leaves home and strikes out on his own merit as a lawyer, Meena continues to support and encourage him. And finally, Renu and Vijay also confess to loving each other. But Vijay's background and male ego gets in the way and almost ruins the relationship. Thankfully for them, Renu is more "forward" in chasing Vijay even after he repeatedly rejects her and is spontaneous (even "unladylike") in some instances.

*Illustrative moment:* The song-scenes were shot in picturesque locations that provide much-needed change of scenery and bring a breath of fresh air to the audience. For instance, "Maine Ek Khwab Sa Dekha" ("I saw something like a dream") featuring Ravi and Meena, was largely shot in Nishat Bagh, Srinagar, a Mughal- era garden laid out in 1633. In their rosy-hued dreams, the two lovers played by Sunil Dutt and Sadhana wander all over the place, from a snowy yard to a misty mountainside—but they do spend a good bit of the song in the garden, amidst the flowers.

**Family** *Waqt* is, at its core, a wholesome film with robust family values, geared to advance an image of the idealized modern Indian family onto future generations as well. In fact, the film set the style of modern urban living that its audience could aspire to, in the lavish fashion choices, locations, lifestyles and relationships depicted, all circumscribed by family values. For instance, we see Renu and Meena's upper-class families who enjoy generational wealth and status quo and whose members are quite close to each other. These upper-class families are quite liberal when it comes to some things, like adopting Ravi and allowing Renu to roam free and romance at will, yet simultaneously conservative in hesitating to allow their daughters to "marry down" (i.e., marry men of unknown parentage/ lower class). They also have little occasion for toxic family drama of the kind popularized by Bollywood and Indian television; the only noticeable rifts occur over Ravi and Vijay's background.

In contrast, as a small business owner, Kedarnath and his family hail from a middle- or lower-middle class background and far from the urban centre, so their family dynamics are somewhat different to begin with. For instance, Kedarnath's dearest dream, as he confesses to Laxmi on the night of the earthquake, is to obtain a bigger house, new cars and to wrap her in expensive jewellery, all aspirations of a rising middle class; Renu or Meena's parents wouldn't have reason to discuss such matters as they already owned such things and more. Unsurprisingly, class thus informs their family values when Laxmi replies that she's happy with what they have and riches are nothing compared to being able to live and love as a family, an ideal she instils in Vijay while raising him single-handedly. Vijay and Laxmi's tiny family continues to hold on to these middle-class hopes and dreams, to the extent that Vijay finds hard to reframe his own impoverishment in any other terms with Renu. That said, these families have in common love for their children above all and the parents work tirelessly towards their children's happiness and success. And the children also work towards perpetuating family structures and values upheld by their parents.

And apart from these typical families, we see the almost-family relationship between Chinnoy and Raja; Chinnoy picked Raja up after he escaped from the orphanage and raised him so there is certainly a parental angle. But their relationship is always conflicted since Raja wants to escape Chinnoy's clutches

and Chinnoy wants a loyal servant to do his bidding and steal for him. In fact, the source of their final showdown is exactly this and also, perhaps, Chinnoy's frustration in losing control over Raja and jealousy over his attraction to Meena.

*Illustrative moment:* In the closing scene, Kedarnath comments that now they not only have their sons back together but also new additions to the family in their prospective daughters-in-law and their families. This brings the plot back full circle from separation, facing and overcoming challenges and then the final reunion.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) *Waqt* became a trendsetter in family dramas in Bollywood. Identify and analyse the reasons behind its tremendous success.
- 2) Which three aspects of the film do you think were inspirational to its contemporary audience. Would these have the same impact today?
- 3) Analyse one major female character. Do you think she has much significance to the plot besides being a nurturer/ supporter to the menfolk in her life?
- 4) All the major male characters face complex challenges to their innate sense of self. Who do you identify with most and why?