

МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ РЕСПУБЛИКИ
БЕЛАРУСЬ
ГОМЕЛЬСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ
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ИСКУССТВО КИНО
Практическое пособие
для студентов IV-V курсов
факультета иностранных языков

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Практическое пособие предназначено для студентов старших курсов факультетов английского языка. Оно составлено в соответствии с программой по данному курсу и включает тексты и упражнения к ним. Упражнения содержат задания, направленные на развитие навыков неподготовленной монологической и диалогической речи, а также ведению дискуссий и диспутов.

Введение

Пособие состоит из пяти тематически организованных разделов. Каждый раздел включает задания и упражнения, направленные на развитие устной речи, как монологической, так и диалогической. Задания и упражнения, включенные в пособие, опираются на аутентичный материал текстов, подчеркнутых из зарубежной периодики, книг по искусству.

Каждый тематический раздел состоит из двух частей. Упражнения и задания в них располагаются по принципу возрастающей сложности.

Первая часть включает тексты, которые содержат общие сведения о том или ином аспекте искусства кино и словарный минимум, необходимый для работы над данной подтемой. Текст, как правило, дискуссионен.

Работа над упражнениями и заданиями второй части предполагает не только высказывание собственного мнения, но и обмен мнениями по затронутым проблемам. Упражнения направлены на обучение умению правильно строить аргументацию, формулировать основной тезис, а также на подготовку к широкой дискуссии по различным проблемам, связанным с современным кинематографом.

CINEMA

READING 1.

Spend some time trying to absorb the language of the cinema contained in this text.

HOW A FILM IS MADE.

John Tchalenko is a student at the National Film School. Each student has about ... 300 with which to make a film. John decided he was more interested in exploring fiction than documentary, and this is how he went about making his film. First of all, he had to decide whether he would use a script or not. He decided against this, and instead, he found a group of actors who were willing to work with him. They decided on a subject together, then John chose his crew: a cameraman, who does all the shooting; a camera assistant, who helps the cameraman, changes the film and helps with the lights. At the end of the day, the cameraman assistant has to prepare the laboratory report sheets, which tell the lab exactly what is on each roll of film and how to print it. There is also a soundman that has to make sure that all the sound is recorded. He usually works the tape recorder while the sound assistant works the microphone on the end of the sound boom. If a boom is not being used, the microphones have to be fixed in position beforehand. Alternatively, radio microphones can be attached to the actors. The soundman has to keep a careful record of everything that goes onto the tapes, so that the director can identify, at a glance, what is on each tape. In commercial fiction films, there is a continuity girl, who keeps a careful record of all the details in every shot. When the shots

are done out of order, the director can refer to her notes to make sure that everything is consistent. Otherwise, in the same scene, a character might have a bracelet in one shot, but not in the next. John wasn't worried about continuity so he didn't have a continuity girl. In John's film, the production manager was responsible for drawing up the shooting schedule, calculating the budget, paying the actors, booking the studios and arranging transport for the crew and actors to and from the set (scene) or locations (places where outside shooting was done). She also had to get hold of all the props (objects used in the film) and costumes, although the actors helped her a great deal with this. Finally, she was responsible for providing the crew and actors with lunch and cups of tea. The most expensive thing John had to pay for out of his budget was the film and its processing. He also had to pay for food and transport hire one or two props, buy tapes for the soundman and pay the actors. He didn't have to pay the crew however, because they all did it to get experience. And he didn't have to hire equipment or pay for the editing facilities, as the film school provided them free. In commercial films, there is usually a clapperboy, but on John's film, the camera assistant was responsible for the clapperboard. The clapperboard is filmed either at the beginning or at the end of each shot. On the board is marked the name of the film, the number of the shot and whether it is the first, second or third take. The clapperboy shouts out the number of the shot and the take. For example: if he shouts, 24 take 1 this means it is the first attempt at the twenty-fourth shot. If something goes wrong, they will have to repeat the shot. This will be 24 take 2. If 24 take 2 is all right, they will go on to the next shot, which will be 25 take 1. When a scene has been set up and the director wants the crew to start shooting, he calls out, and Run sound! The soundman calls out, Sound running! Then the director shouts, Roll Camera! And the cameraman shouts, Mark it! He points his camera at the clapperboard,

which the clapperboy is holding in front of the scene. They are about to shoot. The clapperboy calls out 22 take 3, and bangs the arm of the clapperboard on the main part of the board. This makes a loud clap. The camera films the exact moment the arm hits the board. The sound of the clap is recorded on the tape. The director will later be able to match the exact frame of the film to the moment of the clap on tape. If there were no clap, there would be problems because there would be no exact moment when the director could match the sound and film. This would mean that the images and the sound would not match and the characters' voices would be heard slightly before or after their lips moved. Every evening, after the day's shooting, the director and crew stay behind to look at the rushes. These are the prints of the negatives. If the film is shot near a film laboratory, someone can take the negatives to the lab every night after the day's shooting has been finished. The rushes come back the next day, so every evening the crew sees the previous day's rushes. The rushes do not include sound, and are printed in the same order in which they were shot. The director and crew check the rushes to see that everything is technically O.K. If any shots are unusable, they make a note of these, in order to re-shoot them. Of course, there are far more materials in the rushes than will ever be used. Once the shooting is over, and the rushes have been shown, the director makes a rough-cut. This is a very rough version of what the film may be. Then, there is a long period of editing of both the picture and the sound. The director can add to the original sound track, which has been recorded. He can put on different sounds and music. Adding the sound is done last of all in special sound studio. Eventually, the film is fully edited. The lab makes a print, which is checked by the director and the cameraman for technical faults. Then the lab can make a final print, and the film is ready for distribution.

PRACTICE 1.

1. Match each person (1-5) with what they would say (a-e)

1. Director
2. Producer
3. Continuity girl
4. Clapperboard Man
5. Cameraman

- a) Can't you get on with the shooting? This is costing me money.
- b) Scene 24. Take 25!
- c) Your make-up's thicker and you're wearing a different dress.
- d) Clear the set! This is supposed to be a film studio! Get those damned extras out of here! Action! Cut!
- e) Rolling!

2. On the right are some of the ways we classify films. On the left are some film titles. Match each title with the most appropriate kind of film from the column on the right.

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Last days of the Black Rock Gang. | A cartoon |
| 2. Bridge over the Seine. | A western |
| 3. John loves Mary loves Tom loves Judy.
movie | A science fiction |
| 4. Born to be a star. | A disaster movie |
| 5. Light Years from Yesterday. | A travelogue |
| 6. The Blood of the Innocent is White. | A documentary |
| 7. The London to Glasgow Express. | A war film |

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 8. Avalanche. | A (Hollywood) musical |
| 9. Goldilocks at the Teddy Bears' Picnic. | A horror film |
| 10. Wildlife and the West. | A blue movie |
| 11. Bonaparte and Alexander. | A thriller |
| 12. Casablanca to Cape Town in 20 days. | A historical film |
| 13. Life begins at Midnight in Amsterdam. | A romantic comedy. |

3. Now a more challenging task: match reviews of the films with their titles and category headings-They are all jumbled. Explain your motivation. Consider the setting, the characters, and the story line.

Genres: a) action / adventure, b) comedy, c) epic, d) fantasy, e) film noir, f) gangsters, g) horror, h) thriller, i) period / swashbuckler, j) science fiction, k) war, l) western.

Titles: a) Gremlins, b) Buggy, c) The Lawnmower Man, d) Dances With Wolves, e) Rambo: First Blood, f) Twin Peaks, g) Pretty Woman, h) Phantom of the Opera, i) Ghandi, j) Dangerous Liaisons, k) Platoon, l) Cape Fear.

Reviews:

- a) By virtue of its subject matter, and of the prodigious effort that has gone into its production, the film has to be considered one of the major's British films of the year. Its subject is an Indian spiritual leader almost unknown to today's western youth, who not only preached a more sophisticated and forceful version of the pacifist ethic ever flowered in the '60s, but succeeded in using it to help liberate his country and change its political history. Of course the film raises more questions than it comes near to answering, but its faults rather pale beside the epic nature of its theme, and Kingsley's performance in the central role is outstanding.
- b) Choderlos de Laclos' 18th century novel is a monument to lust, guilt and duplicity, written in letterform. One of the film's enormous strengths is scriptwriter Christopher Hamp-

ton's decision to go back to the novel, and save only the best from his play. Frears, under commercial pressure but also determined to start afresh, has chosen American actors for the main roles: Malcovich as the professional philanderer Valmont; Close as the sadistic aristocrat with whom he plots to ruin both a social union and a virtuous woman (Pfeiffer, splendid). The result is a sombre, manipulative affair in which the decor is never allowed to usurp our interest. Broader, nastier even than the play, it uses recurring epistolary motifs, shadow and close-up to convey the themes of the piece: the relationships between pleasure and pain, our inability to control others, our endless desire to do so. Malcovich's final demise, run through, wasted and resigned, recalls the misty-eyed days of Fairbanks and Flynn; while Close, all eye-contact, front, and self-possession, ends the film unforgettably as a sacrificial lamb on the altar of decency.

- c) Stone's Vietnam film is a savage yet moving account of a 19-year-old's baptism under fire: clambering out of a transport plane, Sheen is soon plunged into the bloody chaos of combat. The use of his letters home as a commentary establishes personal experience as the core of the film; but broader political issues do manifest themselves when, unable to make any headway against the elusive Vietcong, the grunts turn their anger and weaponry on one another, the platoon splitting into warring factions that reflect peacetime social divisions. Two conflicting impulses appear in the movie: a desire to assault the audience with searing images that will cauterise the Vietnam wound once and for all; and a wish for a more artistically distanced elegy, given its purest expression in Georges Delerue's plaintive score. That said, Stone's eye-blistering images possess an awesome

power, which sets the senses reeling and leaves the mind disturbed.

- d) Vivian (Roberts) is not a happy hooker. She looks the part, but unlike her feisty friend Kit she retains a core of vulnerability. So does workaholic Edward (Gere), even though he's a multi-millionaire take-em-and-break-em tycoon. In LA for the week, he hires Vivian to act as a beautiful, disarming escort while he dines the opposition, grooming and schooling her in the process. Before you know it, she's discovering a sense of self-worth, while he's taking shoes and socks (and tie) off to stroll in the park and overhaul his ethics. This is predictable 'Pygmalion' stuff, but with plenty of laughs along the way Roberts can act, and Gere, though not renowned for his comic skills, is more than a smoochy foil to kooky Vivian, and just about manages to look like a man who has channelled all his sexual energy into corporate ball-crushing. Retchmaking moments (he thinks she's doing drugs in the bathroom, she's really – aaawww! – flossing her teeth) are kept to a minimum and the sex scenes sweetly restrained. But for a film that attempts to satirise snooty materialism, it focuses too pantingly on the designer labels, and comes down firmly on the side of 'rich is better'.
- e) Sent by Meyer Lansky and Lucky Luciano to take care of West Coast business, the womanising Benjamin Siegel (Beatty) settles down to a life of Hollywood glitz. His fraught affair with starlet Virginia Hill (Bening), which places great strain on Siegel's otherwise happy marriage, is only one of the psychopathically violent mobster's obsessions. For he dreams, too, of building a casino-hotel in Las Vegas. But Beatty's twin passions put him at risk: his extravagance with Mob money and his high profile turn the crime barons against him...One can, of course, remain sceptical about the film's unabashedly romantic portrait of Siegel

(though Beatty is truly unsettling when called on to come up with murderous rage), but its virtues are many: Siegel's risible efforts at self-improvement through language; a farcical tour de force where he juggles a daughter's birthday meal, phone calls from Virginia and a business meeting; mad plans to kill Mussolini; brutal humiliations meted out to disloyal wiseguys. With a sparkingly witty script, classy direction and terrific performance all round, Beatty's return to the fray is his best movie since "McCabe and Mrs. Miller".

- f) The first feature film to explore the possibilities opened up by Virtual Reality is derived in part from a Stephen King story, merged with an existing project. Using mentally retarded gardener Jobe (Fahey) as a guinea pig, mad scientist Dr. Angelo (Brosnan) exposes him to Virtual Reality teaching technology and powerful drugs which accelerate his learning ability, transforming him into a calculating genius. But tampering by a mercenary Cyber tech executive produces unforeseen and dangerous side effects. Despite the hackneyed sub-Frankenstein plot, the dazzling computer-generated special effects almost carry the film. The irony is that almost nothing that matters actually depends upon, or takes place within, Virtual Reality. Until the final showdown between Jobe and his creator, what we see is merely the Jobe's exposure to Virtual Reality affects his behaviour in the real world. Only when he and the lubricious Marnie (Wright) suit up to enjoy 'cybersex' are the storyline and computer effects fused, like their fluid bodies, together.
- g) Although financed by television, this – the pilot for an eight-part serial – was shot on film, allowing Lynch free rein to work in the partly surreal, partly expressionist style that has suffused his work to date. Set in the eponymous small lumber town in the Pacific Northwest, it begins with the discovery of a girl's corpse on a lakeside beach. Her parents are

devastated, and when another girl is found wandering into town, dazed and speechless after having suffered unthinkably horrific torture, the local sheriff (Ontkian) calls in the FBI to help investigate the case. Already the spiritual unease and corruption of the community has been signalled, but when agent Dale Cooper (MacLachlan) drives into town, entranced by the Douglas firs, conversing endlessly with a cassette recorder, and grinning like a madman, the inimitable Lynch vision begins to grip like a strangler. Nightmare merges with comedy, and normally flies out the window. The result, like a soap reimagined by a Bosch or Magritte, is more genuinely cinematic than many a big screen thriller. See it, and shudder.

- h) Culture slips back into a comic strip mode for retarded schoolboy types. The hero is a man of big biceps but very little brain. He is assigned to prove that American Pows are no longer being held by the Vietcong, but instead finds a cageful of his fellow fighters. Left to undergo protracted torture by pig manure and electrified bedspring, he breaks out to rescue the Pows and blast all the Commies and Gooks to Kingdom come. It may be mindless escapism, but one would prefer a hero who is less of a machine, and a plot which refrains from including the sort of MIA / POW myths likely to convince audiences that the Americans are still at war in SE Asia.
- i) Eccentric inventor Axton gives a cute little Christmas present to his 20-year-old son Billy: it's a mogwai, latest in the long line of coy, furry creatures to send the blockbuster audience into paroxysms of communal cooing. When accidentally splashed with water, however, it spawns nasty offspring which, when fed after midnight, transmute into brawling boozing, murderous creatures, who proceed to trash the Spielbergian, Disneyish, small town setting. Though sloppily

plotted and stickily whimsical in parts, the film is kept afloat by its splendid special effects and set pieces, which culminate with its nasty wee beasties whooping it up at a screening of 'Snow white', much in the manner of the mewling, puking blockbuster movie audience which will no doubt be lapping up all this tomfoolery.

- j) Disenchanted after being wounded in the American Civil War, Lt. Dunbar (Costner) is assigned to a frontier outpost. Finding nothing but a deserted fort and left to his own devices, Dunbar gradually gains the friendship and trust of both a wolf and the Sioux Indians. Won over by the native Americans' love of the land, the honourable soldier joins in their buffalo hunt, courts a white woman the tribe adopted in childhood, transfers allegiance from predatory white man to peaceful Indian, and discovers en route his true self. At three hours long, and with a largely Indian cast delivering (subtitled) Lakota dialogue, Costner's debut as a director is genuinely, impressively epic. It may lack complexity and political sophistication – the Sioux are a mite sentimentalized, the US Cavalry too obviously ignorant bigots, and Costner's two-dimensional hero too prone to cute pratfalls – but its sentiments are conspicuously sincere and its dramatic sweep hugely confident. Historical and cultural authenticity is virtually an end in itself, and although the last half-hour founders in repeated farewells, it looks great. Once you are sucked into the leisurely narrative, it's hard to resist.
- k) Max Cady (De Niro) – the manic, bible-quoting rapist who sets out to wreak sadistic revenge on the family of defence attorney Sam Bowden (Note), who suppressed evidence that might have kept him out of jail – comes over less as a credible human being or as Scorsese's 'malignant' spirit of the Bowdens' guilt, more as a virtually indestructible monstrosity. Likewise, the Bowdens' newly acquired 'sins' – flirtations

with adultery for Sam, unforgiving neuroses for his wife (Lange), nascent interest in sex for his daughter (Lewis) – neither deserve the punishment the film inflicts on them, nor lend substance to the conceit that the family must embrace the violent nemesis Cady represents if it is to find redemption. Except for Lewis and a typically solid turn by Baker, the performances are largely unimaginative in this overblown horror-schlocker.

- 1) Knocked unconscious while auditioning for a Broadway musical, aspiring starlet Christine Day (Schoelen) awakens to find herself mysteriously transported to Victorian London, where she is understudying for objectionable prima donna Carlotta (Lawrence). When Carlotta is struck dumb by the discovery of a freshly peeled stagehand in her wardrobe, Christine is manoeuvred into the spotlight by the shadowy figure of deformed and demented composer Eric Destler (Englund). Soon the temporally displaced diva finds herself the centre of a murder investigation as all who slight her are swiftly and stickily dispensed with by her pathological par amour. Little's rehashing of the well-worn melodrama (with added sub-Faustian angle) pays half-hearted visual homage to Hammer's 1962 Herbert Lom vehicle. It also chucks in gruesome skin-grafting special effects for good measure. Englund romps around doing his standard 'hideously deformed anti-hero' routine, but the rest of the cast remain resolutely wooden. Sporadically interesting, occasionally inept, and not a little uncalled for.

FOLLOW-UP DECIDE:

1. Which of the reviews are favourable and which are unfavourable;
2. What you'd like and dislike about each film;

3. Which of the films sounds most entertaining / least entertaining, violent or boring;
4. Do you identify with any of the characters? If so, with whom?
5. Work out the structure of a film review. What information blocks are there? What aspects of a film are commented on (e.g. direction, acting, photography, screenplay, sound effects, etc.)?

READING 2.

Note the genres invariably popular with film audiences.

NO FORMULA FOR HITS.

Like every competitive industry, Hollywood tries to offer a comprehensive range of products appealing to each segment of the market. Genres, like stars, offer publicists and audiences quick identification. Comedy, action–adventure, and romance are the basic trio, ever versatile and popular. Musicals, born with the coming of sound in the late 1920s, flourished through the 1950s, and then began a steady decline. Contemporary inner-city dramas of crime and violence are drawn from the head lines as were the gangster movies of the early 1930s. Then the spur was the gang warfare and corruption spawned by Prohibition; now the catalyst is drugs. Such movies can exorcize our nightmares, but the justification for violence on the screen is visceral. Shootouts on dark streets, the menace of shadows, the conflict of good and evil are basic dramatic material. As one subgenre stales, a new one emerges. Period pieces and Mafia stories (Married to the Mob, Dick Tracy, Bugsy) are currently very popular, a trend that suggests a nostalgia for simpler times, when bad was bad, and good, good.

The old division between action – adventures for men and romantic dramas for women and girls survives in a succession of hairy-chested manly conflicts and sentimental tales of motherhood and terminal sickness. Happily, good writers and directors can subvert the conventions and breathe fresh life the most overworked genres. Ridley Scott's "Thelma and Louise" (1991) is a "buddy picture", a durable Hollywood staple, but with two women (Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis) who are as aggressive, independent, and ultimately as destructive as any pair of male outlaws.

Most of today's pictures are hybrids – covering as many bases as possible to reach a fickle, fragmented audience. But all the wisdom of market researchers and Harvard Business School graduates, all the insights of producers and agents, studying trends and gazing into crystal balls, can be foiled by the capricious tastes of movigoers. In 1989, the three top draws were, as expected, 'Batman', a moody special effects extravaganza based on a comic strip; "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade", third in a high-powered series inspired by Kids' serials; and "Lethal Weapon II", another action sequel.

In 1990, the three popular winners (Ghost, Pretty Woman and Home Alone) were moderately budgeted, relatively nonviolent, and without major stars. Each could have been made at any time over the past 70 years, which may be the real secret of their appeal.

'Ghost' is a whimsical comedy, as light as air. A young family are planning their future when the man is suddenly slain on the street, apparently by a robber. His ghost stays behind to protect his distraught fiancée and to investigate and avenge his murder.

Invisible and immaterial, our hero (helped by a fraudulent medium) eliminates both villains, and their ghosts are immediately whisked off by what appear to be winged demons. One can

trace the story and treatment back, through every decade of Hollywood – and beyond, to the trick films French pioneer Georges Melies made around 1900.

In "Pretty Woman", Julia Roberts plays a feisty prostitute with a heart of gold and the sweetly uncorrupted look of the girl next door, who wins the affection of a selfish millionaire. You could take your grandmother to see it, and she might remember being mildly shocked as a young woman when she saw an earlier version of story. Though the lovemaking scenes are more explicit, Roberts has the innocent sexiness of Marilyn Monroe in "The Seven Year Itch" (1955); costar Richard Gere is a chic caricature of a ruthless capitalist.

"Home Alone", which went on to become the third – biggest earner of all time, is another fairy tale – about a spirited eight-year-old who is mistakenly left behind when his family flies to Paris for Christmas. Alone in a big house, he kicks up his heels, briefly pines for his mother (who is frantically trying to get a plane back), and makes mincemeat of a pair of sadistic but incompetent burglars. Its popularity rested on the diminutive shoulders of Macauley Culkin, who delighted the kid that lurks in all us. His believability complemented the cartoon violence in which the predators are burnt, impaled, fall down icy steps, but keep coming, while the child remains unharmed.

Six other films grossed over 100 million dollars at American theatres in 1990: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles", a live-action cartoon unintelligible to anyone over the age of fifteen; a Cold War Thriller, "The Hunt for Red October", in which a Russian submarine captain is the hero; and "Driving Miss Daisy", a sweet-sour period drama about an elderly Jewish lady and her black chauffeur, which later won the Oscar for best picture. Any generalizations about Hollywood founder on such contradictions.

PRACTICE 2.

1. Comprehension check.

1. What evidence is there that popularity of some genres may fade in time?
2. What factors make other genres perennial?
3. In which sense nostalgic motives may lead to emergence of new subgenres?
4. What are the stereotypical assumptions concerning the gender-related popularity of specific genres?
5. Can reality of Hollywood productions subvert conventions of this kind?
6. What makes films like "Ghost", "Pretty woman" and "Home Alone" especially appealing?
7. Sum up the plot of each in just one sentence.
Can you come up with a generalization of the sort "Virtue rewarded" and claim it applies to all the three?

2. Here are some of the categories for the annual Academy Award Winners. Each winner gets an Oscar. Look back over the past few years - not just this year – and note down who you would give your awards to for as many as you can of the categories below. If you don't know the name of the person involved, then just give the name of the film. If you are working in a group, compare and discuss your notes with a partner.

Best film

Best Actor

Best Actress

Best Supporting Actor

Best Supporting Actress

Best Director

Best Original Screenplay (Script)

Best Screen Adaptation

Best Cinematic Photography

Best Editing

Best Special Effects

Best Original Score (music)

Best Costumes / Wardrobe

Best Title Sequences / Credits

Best Short (film)

Special Award for Services to the Cinema Industry, the motion picture business, the dream factory, the movie world.

3. Write a review for a film you have seen. Include the following: title, director, cast, screenplay, setting, characters, photography, special effects, etc, evaluation.
4. In what situation might you say the following? Match each question with one of the situations on the right.

1. What's on?	I want to know whether the actors are any good.
2. Who's in it?	You can't see a free seat anywhere.
3. What's it about?	You need to know what time to get to the cinema.
4. Where's it on?	You're thirsty.
5. What time does it start?	You're leaving and there are three cinemas in town and you don't know which is showing the film you want to see.
6. Where shall we seat?	There are three cinemas in town and you don't know which is showing the film you want to see.
7. Where's the bar?	You haven't a clue what to go and see.
8. What did you think of it?	It might be a horror film and you wouldn't enjoy that.

5. You are looking through a "What's On" page in the Directory listing new releases.

Choose a film you would like to see; explain your reasons to a partner.

-The English Patient (15): Can this adaptation of Michael Ondaatje's novel really be worth 12 Oscar nominations? No, though it stands out from the pack through its epic imagery and old-fashioned love story – Ralph Fiennes smoulders with passion for the aristocratic Kristin Scott Thomas. Writer-director Anthony Minghella gives the material his best shot.

- Fierce Creatures (PG): Broad comedy in an English zoo, from the "Fish Called Wanda" team: John Cheese, Kevin Kline, and Jamie Lee Curtis.

- Fly Away Home (U): Endearing family movie about orphan geese, with Anna Paquin and Jeff Daniels.

- Shine (12): Child prodigy pianist crumples under the strain. Uplifting treatment of a true story.

- Blood and Wine (15): Seedy adventures of wine merchant Jack Nicholson from director Bob Rafelson.

- Bound (18): All style, no content, in the Wachowski brothers' film about two sultry lesbians and a pile of Mob money. With Jennifer Tilly and Gina Gershon.

- Carla's Song (15): Bus driver follows his love to Nicaragua and receives his political education. Heartfelt drama from Ken Loach.

- 101 Dalmatians (U): Glenn Close knocks spots off the dogs in the live-action edition of the cartoon classic.

- Mars Attacks! (12): Tim Burton's silly spoof of the alien invasion movie with Jack Nicholson as the US President faced with an army of little green men.

- Michael (PG): Romantic fable saved by John Travolta's starring role as an angel with William Hurt, Andia MacDowell.

- Ransom (15): Intermittently absorbing Kidnap drama, with Mel Gibson, Rene Russo and Gary Sinise.

NOTE: After the doldrums of the Sixties and seventies when many picture houses were converted into bingo halls, cinema-going boomed in the late eighties. The greatest innovation has been the building of new multiplex 10- and 12-screen cinemas around Britain. By paying more attention to audience comfort, these houses have found they can tempt people away from the TV and video. Contoured chairs, plus wine, coffee and ice-cream bars, are replacing the frayed furniture and steamy hot-dog stands of the old 'flea-pits'.

There are five certificates: "U" (Universal) – suitable for all; "PG" – parental guidance advised; "12" (no-one under 12 allowed) – a degree of violence and a hint of sex might be present; "15" (no-one under 15 allowed) – these can be a little more explicit and might include swear words; "18" (no-one under 18 allowed) – most movies are given this classification, the language can be enlightening, and (God and the censors preserve us) there might be nudity.

6. Write or discuss the answers to these questions.

1. Which clip from a particular film would you never tire of seeing?
2. What trailers have you seen recently that really made you want to go and see the film?
3. Can you think of any scenes from films you think should have been cut? Or can you think of any entire film you think should have been banned?
4. Which of these features do you, in general, like a film to have:
 - a. a happy ending?
 - b. a complicated plot or a simple storyline?
 - c. lots of action?

- a political or social message?
- d. totally naturalistic dialogue?
- e. larger than life or true-to-life characters?
- f. (in the case of foreign films) subtitles or dubbed dialogue?
- g. lots of close-up shots of people's faces?
- h. long sequences of desert, jungle, etc.?
- i. a fair number of stars or a cast of "unknowns"?

The cinema is a very powerful medium films can be an important influence in shaping people's attitudes.

READING 3.

What is it that makes the impact of the film so great?

LIFE IS LIKE A MOVIE.

Film is larger than life. It illustrates the values we hold most dearly. There is love and romance, the hero and the heroine. Film provides us with a giant mirror—a reflection of the values, the half-truths, and the ideals of society.

It does this because writers, directors and producers are successful at tapping into our personal emotional treasure chests and translating them to a film. We then "buy them back" at the box-office. The more closely a film approximates our own mixed bag of myths and values, the more likely we are to see it and recommend it to others.

For example, fear is a universal emotion we have all been afraid at one time or another, afraid we were going to die some horrible, lingering and unjust death. The "master of suspense" Alfred Hitchcock successfully played to these fears through his stories on the screen. There is universal audience identification with fear and that translates to box-office success. That success turned Hitchcock into one of the largest legends in filmdom...

These are universal emotions-fear, love, disappointment - but few of us have experienced such total ruin, complete love, realistic fear, and utter violence. The film represents universal emotions but “blows them up” until they are larger than life. When we come upon an experience in real life that is profound we think of movies. “This is just like a movie”, we say. Our ideals – our very way of perceiving intense experience – are shaped by what we have seen on film.

In F. Scott Fitzgerald’s final novel, “The Last Tycoon”, an admirer marvels at the power a movie producer, Stahr, has had over her life: “Some of my more romantic ideas actually stemmed from pictures... It’s more than possible that some of the pictures which Stahr himself conceived had shaped me into what I was.”

Indeed the power of the film-maker to shape our notions about intense experience, to provide a series of fictional experiences through which we funnel “real life”, is unrivaled in all of mass communication. Somehow, the mediated reality we see “up there” takes on an inexplicable significance.

At first glance it is easy to make a distinction between “real life”, the events that happen to us directly and those we experience in “reel life” via film. If I ask what the difference was, you would probably respond rather huffily that you could “certainly tell the difference between fact and fiction”. However, it’s really not that simple.

We have seen how all mass media play a large part in formulating our attitudes, beliefs, and ideals, because we all incorporate perceived mediated reality back into our real lives. For example, most of us have never experienced major crime first-hand, so we formulate our ideas about these types of experiences from what we see in films or on television. If we actually do witness a crime in real life we can’t help comparing it with what we have seen on mass media. We might even react to a

given situation by imitating behaviours of those we have seen in a film or on TV.

Our notions about romantic love are almost completely derived from mass media formed by what we have read and seen. All of us are waiting for that great scene when we will take that special person in our arms for the first kiss. It will be a long, smooth, beautiful kiss. Everything will be perfect. The skyrockets will explode, and we will go off and “live happily ever after” just as in the movies.

The problem with this is that “realife” can’t always measure up to the expectations we have developed by consuming mass media. More often when you take a special someone in your arms, you find that person is in the middle of a peanut butter candy, your mouths are a different size, or your braces get stuck together.

PRACTICE 3.

1. Comprehension check.

1. Explain what the author means by the following:
 - a) Film provides us with a giant mirror - a reflection of the values, the half-truths, and the ideals of society.
 - b) Writers, directors, and producers are successful at tapping into our personal emotional treasure chests and translating them to a film.
 - c) The film represents universal emotions but “blows them up” until they are larger than life.
 - d) The problem with this is that “realife” can’t always measure up to the expectations we have developed by consuming mass media.
2. What films are a success with the film audiences? Give your own opinion as well.

3. What is the author's opinion on the difference between film and "real life"? Do you agree? Is it easy to tell the difference between fantasy and reality?
4. In what situation could you say: "This is just like a movie"? What would you mean?
5. Does the author feel mass media reflect society, or influence society? What examples does he quote to support his view?
6. Do people tend to imitate the behaviour of film characters in real life?
Can films shape our attitudes and values?

2. Here is a selection of quotes in which their authors formulate their ideas about the relationship between film and real life.

In groups, discuss the quotations.

Choose some with which you agree. Explain your arguments to the rest of the class.

- a) A movie as art objectively and vividly displays man's good. It brings moral truth into the world. (W.R. Robinson).
- b) A realist film poses problems, poses them to itself as well. An American paper wrote an attack on my film saying that the cinema is for entertainment and ought not to raise problems. But for me a realist film is precisely one which tries to make people see. (R. Rossellini).
- c) What I look for is whether the idea is true and entertaining. However, if I were ever forced to make the choice I would prefer it to be entertaining. (B. Wilder).
- d) People tell me that the movies should be more like real life. I disagree. It is real life that should be more like the movies. (W. Winchell).
- e) I am bored to death with heroes more or less imaginary. I want to meet the real protagonist of everyday life, I want

to see how he is made, if he has a moustache or not, if he is tall or short, I want to see his eyes, and I want to speak to him. (C. Zavattini).

- f) No, art does not require the absolute equality between something told in a book or shown in a performance or a film and real life. A cultivated viewer or reader remembers that it is not reality itself but its reflection created by an artist, who has noticed some facts or conflicts which deeply move him, and who initiates a viewer into his feelings and thoughts. (G. Capralov).

3. What do you think?

1. If the task of a film is “to reproduce real life”, should everything we see be reproduced? Is there any difference between fantasy and reality?
2. If film as art should “display man’s good”, should films about social evils and human vices be made?
3. If you admit that our ideas and ideals can be shaped by films, then it is a film that comes first. But if you admit that any scriptwriter or film director draws his inspiration from life, it is life that comes first. So which is it that comes first? Do films reflect society or influence society.

READING 4.

What is quintessentially American about American movies?

100 YEARS OF HOLLYWOOD.

Over the course of this century American movies have flashed billions of images before the world: a western hero in full, galloping pursuit of evil, both guns blazing with righteous

indignation; a song and dance man singin's splashily in the rain; a tramp, cane atwirl, bowler hat perched, precariously perky, atop his head, taking his first jaunty steps away from trouble down an optimistically open road; a tycoon dying alone amidst the splendour of his wealth; an enigmatic word falling from his lips as a childhood bauble falls from his hand; a gangster, mortally wounded, sinking into the gutter; victim of a fatal misunderstanding about just how much openness of ambition an open society will tolerate, his last words an expression of astonishment that his end has come so quickly, so squalidly.

One could go on and on. All of us who have gone to the movies with any regularity for any length of time could create an entertaining, historically valid montage of American film imagery and confidently present it as a little visual essay on the American character as it had been reflected in its movies. The trouble is that after almost a century of production the subject has grown too large for any single intelligence, no matter how devoted it is to this subject, to encompass. And, anyway, movies work on us in a highly subjective fashion. If my favourite contemporary actor is Clint Eastwood and yours is Mel Gibson, our reading of what constitutes the American essence will be considerably at odds. If, historically, I say my favourite director is Howard Hawks and your is Frank Capra, what joint vision can we reach? Worse, if I say Alfred Hitchcock and you say Ernst Lubitsch? And we both stop to remember that though each did most of his best work in the United States, the former was English by birth, the latter German, and many of their American films were set in foreign lands and employed artists who were, perhaps, American citizens, but whose gifts, like their leaders', were formed and trained elsewhere. For all that who can doubt that something of a nation's experience, something of its climate – physical, cultural, spiritual – must inevitably inform its films, setting them apart from those made in other lands? In general,

and allowing for a thousand exceptions, one thinks of American movies as less personal and subjective in tone than most European films, for example, are, and perhaps more likely to define their characters through action rather than through dialogue. They are also more likely to be lavish (not to say giddy) in terms of settings, decor, costumes, and in the deployment of expensive technology to tell their stories. The idea is ever and always to make the world and its inhabitants appear not merely preternaturally beautiful, but utterly unblemished. In other words, their principal business, even when they think they are being frightfully honest and earnest, is to transform reality, to bathe it in romantic hues. And this delightful sense of excess, emotional as well as financial, pertains whether a film's ostensible subject is erotic, comic, or melodramatic, melodic or nostalgic or even socially conscientious.

The formula, developed by D.W. Griffith as early as the beginning of the century – the realistic setting, the sense of naturalistic intimacy with the players achieved through the close-up, the improbable but action-filled plot moving through sequences of high spectacle toward a moral and usually happy conclusion – has remained a constant of American movie making, no matter what the genre of the individual work might be. In American movies, realism is the grounding for romance, romance the quality that makes the realistic gesture bearable, a blend of sense and nonsense that ever confounds sobriety.

...The most significant thing the American movie industry generated in its glory years was imagery, glorious and, as it turned out, immortal imagery. Imagery that has taken up permanent residence in the collective consciousness (and unconsciousness) of the world. This was not at all what the movies' many critics, taking their standards mainly from literary modernism, with its ceaseless demand for novelty, for the subjectivity of the individual voice, desired from the movies, or ap-

preciated in them. But it turned out nevertheless that the commercial limits imposed on film by the American industrial system was the source of great strength. For what evolved was a highly stylized art, an art as conventionalized in its way as Elizabethan drama or Italian opera were in their ways. The repetition of certain themes, situations, character types created a high and subtle degree of sophistication in the audience; an ability to discern and appreciate the human authenticity of their screen characters as they were patiently developed over the years by the greatest screen actors, for instance; an appreciation, on the other hand, of particularly elegant presentations of classic generic material and a delight, on the other hand, in novel variations, subtle or gaudy, on traditional themes. One developed an instinct for the good, the bad, the indifferent freely at this most democratically available of the arts.

Whether today's audience continues to enjoy so intimate a relationship with the movies is a nice question. For sometime in the mid-1960s, when it became clear that television had permanently altered the media mix in the U.S., both the movies and their core audience changed, too. Many of the genres that sustained the industry in its greatest days – the western, the musical, the romantic comedy – began to fall into disuse.

The only reliable, week-in, week-out audience for the movies became an almost exclusively youthful one and one whose choice of what it would see was dominated by under – 25 males. Their taste was not, shall we say, very elevated. They liked contemporary, urban action movies, horror films of the splatter variety, broadly farcical comedies of the raunchiest sort.

The rest of the public – the vast majority – came to regard movies as events, not as good old friends, and it now attends them on an erratic and unpredictable basis. Subject matter, especially if it is uplifting and inspirational, is more important to it than stars or genres, and as a result the movies have become

very much a (big) hit, (large) miss business. And we can no longer speak of them in generalizations. We speak now in specifics – of 'Bonnie and Clyde' (1967) and 'Bugsy' (1991), not of gangster films generally; of 'Annie Hall' (1975) and 'Tootsie' (1982), not of comedy in general; of 'Star Wars' (1977) and 'The Terminator' (1984), not of sci-fi as a genre.

Deeply pleasurable movies don't seem to appear as regularly as they once did, and they require larger investments, more hype and possibly more critical mediation to establish themselves than good movies once did. They also appear to rise more sharply out of a generally flattened movie landscape than their predecessors did.

Nevertheless these good films are like those that came before them in this respect: they offer the world imagery that everyone instantly recognizes as immortally iconographic, summaries of universal emotions that seem to arise almost thoughtlessly, seemingly without artful or self-conscious premeditation. Somehow it seems that the process by which American films are made – still a collective and industrial one, still very different from the one that pertains elsewhere – continues to retain at least some of its mysterious ability to tap into another collective – the collective unconscious of the world, the screens of which Hollywood continues to dominate.

Finally, the American movie tradition at its best operates both below and beyond the intellect. How, as on the first day it was released, no intellectual rationale is required for the image of John Ford's 'Stagecoach' (1939), brave and fragile, bucketing through the grandeur of Utah's Monument Valley. For the grace of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in an elegant and witty pas de deux. For the enigmatic eroticism of Greta Garbo's smile or the nervous intensity of a Bette Davis gesture.

For the throwaway charm of Cary Grant or the guppy idealism of James Stewart. For Donald Duck's quacking outrage or

Darth Vader's terrible menace. For Charlie Chaplin's winsome loneliness and the clattering togetherness of a hundred Busby Berkeley Chorines making a giddy new geometry for dance. All of this we have long since taken into ourselves, incorporated in our sense of who we are and what the world may be.

Or could be. Or should be. And made the best and final transformation – of industrial product into permanently haunting, permanently shaping dreamwork.

PRACTICE 4.

1. Comprehension check.

1. What are the variations of American film imagery?
 2. Is American film a purely American phenomenon? In what sense is it also an international phenomenon?
 3. What characteristics differentiate American films from European films (the tone, the typical characters, settings and costumes, the use of special effects)?
 4. What attitude permeates Hollywood production irrespective of the genre and the subject of a film?
 5. What is the essence of the Griffithian formula for movie making?
 6. What can the cinema offer that the theatre can't?
 7. In what way and why can film genres become dated?
 8. What are the film audiences like today? What are the 'mysterious' qualities of American films which allow them to dominate the world screens and be an important influence in shaping people's attitudes?
2. Consider the paradox that the very best and the very worst in cinema have something in common. In certain instances they may even be indistinguishable. Different critics have nominated Michael Cimino's "Heaven's Gate" as among the best and worst films ever made. John Boorman's eccentric "Ex-

orcisr II: the Heretic" features in a book of cinematic turkeys but also in the distinguished French critic Michel Ciment's shortlist of the greatest films ever made. Most films are too inert to arouse much enthusiasm for or against. Authentic badness – like genius – takes energy, which is why the worst films can sometimes be made by the best directors. Now it's time for you to decide the movies and movie stars that truly deserve to be honoured – and those that deserve a resounding raspberry.

My best and worst films are:

Best film	Worst film
Best male performance	Worst male performance
Best female performance	Worst female performance
Best comedy	Worst comedy
Most overrated film	Most underrated film
Who or what I most want to see again	Who or what I least want to see again
Best film ever	Worst film ever

3. Study the cinema techniques which are at the disposal of the director in creating the artistic effect. Comment on their value and illustrate your opinion with the examples from the films you have seen. Extend the list.
 - a) Montage is the process of assembling the desired shots into coherent sequences.
 - b) Close-ups are shots which can show actor's faces large enough for us to see every detail of their expression.
 - c) Double-exposure is a device with the help which you can see two pictures at a time. In film making it can be very useful to suggest the inner life of the character: his thoughts, feelings, imagination, dream. The camera can show a close-up of the hero's face dimly showing through it his thoughts and feelings.

- d) Shooting angle is a device which helps to bring out an object's essential nature. The camera may look at the scene being filmed from different shooting angles.
- e) Slow-motion, accelerated motion is a technique which can multiply objects or scenes, make the characters move slower or quicker.
- f) Lighting is a device which can also bring out the most essential things, give strong effects of depth. Lighting can enhance a scene where feelings are captured without words.
- g) Size as a special technique may represent people as giants or midgets, give a relative scale to different objects.
- h) Colour is one of the modern achievements in film making. It can be used emotionally for symbolic or dramatic effect either in a single scene or to help give a tone to the whole film.
- i) Sound, music are necessary components of modern films.
 - Add some other modern techniques, e.g. Computer-graphics visual effects (computer imagery), digital technology, lazer effects, animated lighting.

4. Memorable lines.

American films have contributed lines that are a part of the American lexicon. Available to now generations through cable television or on video cassette, the great stars of Hollywood remain a continuing part of America's cultural heritage. Some lines from film have entered the American idiom, like Arnold Schwarzenegger's "Hasta La vista, baby". While other lines may transform an audience of viewers into a single community in the sense that they share the emotion evoked by the words, like those spoken by the little girl in Poltergeist: "They're he-e-e-r-e!"

Gone with the Wind. 1939.

After all, tomorrow is another day". Vivian Leigh's closing words.

The Wizard of OZ. 1939.

"There no place like home... There's no place like home...".
Judy Garland.

Tarzan the Ape Man. 1932.

"Me Tarzan... You Jane". Johnny Weismuller (Tarzan).

My Little Chickadee. 1940.

"A thing worth having is worth cheating for". W.C. Fields.

Apocalypse Now. 1979.

"Terminate with extreme prejudice". Jerry Ziesmer (Civilian) to Martie Sheen (Capt. Benjamin Willard).

"I love the smell of napalm in the morning... Smells like – victory". Robert Duvall (Lt. Col. Kilgore).

Patton. 1970.

"I want you to remember that no bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the other poor bastard die for his country". George C. Scott (General George S. Patton addressing troops).

The Best Man. 1964.

"He has every characteristic of a dog except loyalty". Henry Fonda (William Russel) about Cliff Robertson (Joe Cantwell).

Wall Street. 1987.

"If you need a friend, get a dog". Michael Douglas (Gordon Gekko).

The Bridge on the River Kwai. 1957.

"All work and no play make Jack a dull boy." Sessue Hayakawa (Col. Saito) giving time off to the prisoners of war.

Body Heat. 1981.

"You are not too smart, are you? I like that in a man". Kathleen Turner (Matty Walker) to William Hurt (Ned Racine).

Forrest Gump. 1994.

"My mama always said, life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get". Tom Hanks. "Mama says stupid is as stupid does".

Ghandi. 1982.

"An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind". Ben Kingsley.

The Godfather. 1972.

"I'm gonna make him an offer he can't refuse". Marlon Brando (Don Vito Corleone).

The Godfather II. 1974.

"Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer". Al Pacino (Michael Corleone).

Rocky. 1976.

"She's got gaps. I got gaps. Together, we fill the gaps". Sylvester Stallone.

Who Killed Roger Rabbit? 1988.

"I'm not bad, I'm just drawn that way". Voice of Kathleen Turner (Cartoon character Jessica Rabbit).

Love Story. 1970.

"Love means never having to say you're sorry". Ali MacGraw (Jenny Cavillieri) to Ryan O'Neal (Oliver Barrett, IV).

Sudden Impact. 1983.

"Go ahead, make my day". Clint Eastwood (Harry Callahan) to thug.

Miracle on 34th Street. 1947.

"Faith is believing in things when common sense tells you not to". Maureen O'Hara (Doris Walker to her daughter).

No Time for Sergeants. 1958.

"Be good, and if you can't be good, be careful". Dub Taylor (Draft Boardman).

Some Like It Hot. 1959.

"Nobody's perfect". Joe E. Brown to Jack Lemmon (his fiancée) when he (the latter) finally confesses that she's a he.

5. What do you think?

- a) What is your attitude to screen adaptations? Work out the arguments and counterarguments.
- b) Why are stories and films about larger-than-life tough guys so popular? (e. g. James Bond series). Are there female characters that are portrayed as very tough as well? Do you think these heroes and heroines project an image that influences people in their lives?
- c) Do you think films and other forms of mass media (television, press) often present women as “sexual objects”? Do you think it is demeaning to women to be presented as “playthings” for men? Think of examples of films or television programs which, in your opinion, project an image of women that is sexist.
- d) Would you agree to the statement that “far too much sex and violence are shown in films and on television, which is bound to affect people for the worse”? Write an essay giving your considered opinions on the topic.
- e) The cinema in Britain is often regarded as not quite part of the “arts” at all –it is simply entertainment. In what ways does the appreciation of the different aspects of the arts vary in your country?

READING 5.

The most enduring of all Hollywood mystiques is that of the star. “God makes the stars,” as studio head Samuel Goldwyn once put it,” and the public recognizes his handiwork. ”Film audiences the world over know a star when they see one, yet defining the breed is no simple task. Stars play themselves. Stars are larger-than-life. Stars you can bank on the box office. There is still much truth in these truisms of old Hollywood. It’s also true that studio system that once manufactured and nurtured stars has

long departed and today's independents stars have changed in some fundamental ways. They are more powerful behind the scenes, more likely to write or direct, and more willing to take on challenging roles outside their established screen persona. But as to that ineffable essence of stardom, the old-style film director Hollywood Hawkes perhaps came closest when he said, "I have a theory that the camera likes some people... And the people it likes can't do any wrong."

Read the passage about Sylvester Stallone, actor, writer, director.

STAR POWER.

Tears plop onto the page. Sylvester Stallone is Killing Rocky. He's trying to write Rocky's death scene on the last page of the "Rocky V"(1990) script, but as he writes, tears keep smearing his ink. He scribbles: "Cut to the statue" – the one of Rocky with his arms raised in triumph. "Adrian reads a statement to the press." (She's pregnant, and Rocky's just died in a street fight). "Adrian: At 9:15 my husband passed away. He was not a great man. But he did great things. And as long as there are people willing to take a chance, the way my husband did, the world will always have its Rockys." The shot of the statue dissolves into a still photo of Stallone in "Rocky"(1976), standing a top the museum steps, his arms raised in triumph. The credits begin. The film ends.

Stallone puts down his pen, and the tears really to waterfall. He feels like throwing up. After 13 years, five "Rocky" films, and a half-billion dollars in ticket sales, Stallone's alter ego is finally dead. But that's how Stallone-tears and all-wants it. It doesn't matter to him that Rocky-along with Rambo-has pushed his acting fee to about 25 million dollars per movie. Stallone wants out. He wants to try new things-like comedy and character dramas.

His desire to redirect his career had begun during the filming of “Rambo III” (1988), in which Rambo had fought in the Afghanistan war. Before the movie’s first scene, Stallone had lifted weights to puff up his muscles. “I was very pumped,” he recalls. “Veins were bulging in my neck, and I looked like a berserker. “But suddenly the image struck him as all wrong. “I said, ‘We’re in trouble.’ Because this man can’t be defeated. There’s no jeopardy – and that turns people off! Why didn’t I see it?”

So Stallone had vowed to take a new path. No more playing dumb hunks of meat. His first order of business would be to kill off Rocky.

He submitted his tear-stained Rocky script to United Artists, the studio that owns the “Rocky” series. But United Artists, which also owns the lucrative James Bond films, rejected the death scene-vehemently. “I could hear screaming all the way from the United Artists building to the Pacific Ocean”, Stallone says. “It’s like, why don’t we blow James Bond’s brains out, too?”

Stallone fought back. As one of Hollywood’s wealthiest and most powerful figures, he wielded a mighty arsenal.

But he lost. Rocky stayed alive – allowing the studio to do more sequels, and make more money.

In Hollywood, business often clashes with art. And when it does, business usually wins. Even if you are Rocky and Rambo combined.

Still, it’s hard to generate pity for Sylvester Stallone, or for other Hollywood artists who complain about the pressures of the profit-oriented Hollywood system. They are paid too well to pity. Also, they’re free to indulge their artistic visions in films that they finance themselves, or in films they make for scaled-down fees.

Ron Meyer was the agent who represented Sylvester Stallone on “Rocky”. Meyer believes that Stallone has considerable

artistic flexibility within the profit-oriented Hollywood system, but not unlimited freedom, Stallone, says Meyer, can “do almost anything, within reason – unless it’s something the studios feel is completely noncommercial. He has a tremendous following in the action-adventure market. But doing non-action-adventure films doesn’t mean they can’t be profitable”. Meyer points out that Stallone made two early non-action films that flopped, “Paradise ALLRY”(1978) and “F.I.S.T.”(1978) “I think he was very proud of his work in both those films”, says Meyer. “But I don’t think anyone is pleased with lack of commercial success.” Over the past four years, Meyer has helped steer Stallone mostly toward lucrative action-adventure films. Sensitive to Stallone’s desire for diversity, though, Meyer has also helped put Stallone into non-action films, such as the critically endorsed but little seen comedy “Oscar”(1991).

Although actors are more famous than the industry’s money-men-agents, producers-only the very top stars have real power. Because of this financial uncertainty, it’s hard for actors to resist cashing in on their fleeting popularity. “You get seduced by the security of never having to go back where you came from”, says Stallone, who lived in poverty as a young actor. “But there’ll be a period when I’m finally going to feel I’ve done my commercial tour of duty”. When that time comes, Stallone says he’ll “do something noncommercial and experimental.” But Stallone admits that “you get caught up in it. You make these deals, and they’re very lucrative, and before you know it, years go by”. Stallone believes the Hollywood system is quick to typecast actors in their most commercial roles. “For example”, he says, “take Mel Gibson. Because of this film (“Lethal Weapon”, 1987) he’s typed. Whether he accepts it or not”.

PRACTICE 5.

1. Comprehension check.

1. What public image do film stars typically project?
2. How do today's stars compare to the stars of the early 20th century? In what important ways are they different?
3. What is the "ineffable essence of stardom" as you see it?
4. Is it common to sacrifice quality and creativity to profit in Hollywood? Who is the winner in the clash between art and business?
5. Was it easy for Sylvester Stallone to redirect his career by switching from action-adventure films to nonaction films?
6. Can you have unlimited artistic freedom if you are a top star?
7. Explain the notion of "typecasting" an actor in a role. Can a film director get typecast by studios?

2. What do you think?

Would you allow your ten-year-old son go off to Hollywood to be in a film, with or without you there?

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 3. Shirley Temple | Jodie Forster |
| Mickey Rooney | Brook Shields |
| Judy Garland | Drew Barrymore |
| Ricky Schroder | Macaulay Culkin |

All these people were child stars in films. Several books have been written about people who became famous stars when they were very young and about the extra pressures they were under as a result of this. Find out what you can about any of the above or about any other child star who interests you. Concentrate on details about how they got into films, how their careers developed, what difficulties, if any, they encountered and how

their experiences affected them. Take notes on what you read and write an account of their life and career.

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