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MCA 220
THE ART OF MOVIE MAKING

WEEKLY RESPONSES

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Chapter 1 Question 1:

Explain why moviemaking is described as a process involving the elements of art, technology, and business? What are the positive aspects of this relationship? What are the negative aspects of this relationship?

Response:

When watching a film the average viewer's main objective is to be entertained. However, movie making is not just about entertaining. The process of movie making involves different aspects; art, technology and business. Each component compliments the other. These three elements are distinct yet interconnect to share both positive and negative relationships.

Art, technology and business intertwine to share a positive relationship. Filmmaking is an art form. It allows people to express their creativity and imagination and share it with a wider audience. To be able to produce a film that resonates an art form the use of technology can be employed. The use of sophisticated technology that will transform the screen into an art that can be appreciated and respected is costly, thus the business end of their shared relationship. The business aspect of the positive relationship provides the necessary financial backing. An example of this is James Cameron's film *Avatar*. Through his imagination and the use of technology Cameron was able to captivate movie goers and transport them into a visually stunning world. By using technology such as CGI and motion capture technology he was able to produce a piece of art that awed audiences around the world. The ability to access this technology would be impossible without the business aspect of film making, which provided the financial backing in the form of 237 million dollars. As positive as this relationship can be it can also develop into a negative relationship.

Art, technology and business can interconnect to form a negative relationship as well. The gratuitous use of sophisticated and complex technology diminishes the artistic value of a film. Its artistic merit and its success and/or failure is measured by box-office revenues. Thus, the negative end of the business connection is that it then seems to be all about the money. Sometimes a film requires less technology in order to maintain its artistic worth and to be able to generate a more meaningful message. Another factor that contributes to the negative aspect of the business end are all the business people who are now involved in film making who lack experience in the industry. As a result the end product loses its art form and creativity. On the flip side there are artists who are allowed too much creative freedom. Take for example, the *Star Wars* prequels where too much CGI was used, and George Lucas was given too much creative freedom. Resulting in prequels with poor dialogue, subpar acting, and pacing that seemed to lagged. It essentially created a pun for the *Star Wars* franchise. Consequently, it lost its artistic merit, but yet on the business end it earned billions of dollars at the box office and through sales of memorabilia. Once again proving the almighty dollar prevailed.

Filmmaking can not exist without an art, technology and business relationship. The three must coexist both in a positive and negative nature where one element affects the other. The result of which the overall value and merit of a film.

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Chapter 2 Question 2:

An essential point of conflict for many screenwriters is creative control. How much creative control does a screenwriter have in comparison to a novelist or playwright? What is it about the process of filmmaking that dictates this relationship between screenwriter and director or producer? How does this relationship influence the final product--the released film? More simply put, what is the role of the screenwriter in Hollywood?

Response:

Screenwriters struggle with creative control of their screenplays. In comparison to a novelist or playwright screenwriters lack creative control of their work. Novelist and playwrights are consulted prior to the modification of their submitted work. No changes are made without their approval. Whereas, screenwriters lose total control upon selling their screenplays. The production company that purchases the screenplay has also bought the right to make any and all changes to the screenplay. Those changes include revising the dialogue, altering characters, amending the ending and adding subplots.

Filmmaking requires a process that determines the relationship between screenwriter and director or producer. A film does not come to fruition without a screenplay. However, the screenplay comes alive when it is tangibly transformed on the screen. The director asserts creative ownership of a finalized work. The director morphs the script's dialogue and concepts into film reality and conveys its ideas through the use of images and sound. The relationship between the screenwriter and the director or producer has an impact on the released film. In the process of producing a final product many creative people work together to try to convey the screenwriter's message. For example, the film *True Romance* written by Quentin Tarantino and

directed by Tony Scott is a film where the director asserts full creative control while staying true to the screenplay. Scott's suspenseful thrill ride style is evident in the film and Tarantino's talent for creating eccentric characters, dark humor, and unexpected dramatic twists is pervasive in the film. However, the norm is for the producer to manipulate the screenplay's creativity, for the director to mold it cinematically, and for actors to bring it to life on the screen. The finished product may often be very different from the original screenplay. *Natural Born Killers* is an example of a film that deviated from the original screenplay due to heavy rewrites by Director Oliver Stone, Associate Producer Richard Rutowski, and Writer David Veloz. The film received mixed reviews from critics. In many reviews of the film critics were unsure of what the film was trying to accomplish. The screenplay was degraded from its original version and as a result the story appeared confusing and lacked meaning. Quentin Tarantino who wrote the original screenplay received only story credit.

The role of the screenwriter in Hollywood is central. Any film begins first with a story crafted by a screenwriter. The screenwriter is tasked with creating a good story that will have interesting characters and progressive dramatic action. Screenwriters begin with an idea and then approach their screenplays methodically breaking them down into components such as, the scene, story structure, the setup, plots, etc. Screenwriters play a key role in the development of a film but transfer their control over the progression of the story's events to the producers and directors. As a result the film the audience view is not always how the screenplay originated.

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Chapter 3 Question 3:

It could be argued that the look of the film is just as important as an exceptional story and the distinctive character interpretation of the actors in determining the artistic success of a film. Do you agree or disagree that this is the case? Develop an argument to support your opinion.

Response:

The look of a film is just as essential as an extraordinary storyline and the unique persona presentation of the actors in establishing the creative success of the film. The various settings and backdrops of a film ties the characters to the world in which they progress and the action unfolds. Spectacular sets, costumes, cast makeup, hairstyles, visual effects, and colors have an impact on the audience's understanding of and enjoyment of a film. The design of the film should be devised with the purpose of captivating its audience and immersing them into the world depicted on the screen.

An amazing script, dialogue, and cast with a quality look can render a film appealing, and entertaining. Furthermore, the audience would be able to form a connection to the plot and the characters. Take for example, *The Godfather, Part II*, which not only has an incredible cast, story and dialogue but the look of the film is authentic and realistic. The clothing, the hairstyles and vehicles are time era appropriate. The scenes of New York City are so realistic it is easy to believe that scenes in the movie are taking place during the 1910s in New York City. Vito Corleone's Italian Manhattan Neighborhood embodies the tenements apartments, horse drawn carts, street vendors, the over crowded streets that depict the time period true to form. The look of the movie contributed immensely to its success.

Visual effects is another instrumental component of a film's look that greatly impacts on its success. It is used to create stunt effects and illusions to surprise, shock and amaze audiences. In 1993, CGI was a relatively new visual effect, although it has significantly been improved since then. CGI was used in its early stages in the movie, *Jurassic Park*. Steven Spielberg understood the importance of employing CGI in a way that would not show its deficiency, to avoid ruining the look of the film. The CGI was shot at a distance, thus it prevented the audience from viewing dinosaurs that would appear unconvincing and fake. As a result, the dinosaurs seemed real and enhanced the look and visual appeal of the film.

Another great example where the film's look helps connect the audience to its atmosphere and reality, is the movie, *Psycho*. The intrinsic mood of this film is fear and the gloomy, shabby look of the hotel on top of the hill infused terror from the screen to the audience. Once again, the attention to the detail of the film's physical environment made the film widely successful.

A film's look is a necessary component to its overall success. Attention to elements such as the clothing, hair styles, backdrops, scenery, objects, fixtures, colors to name only a few forges a connection between the audience and the film's story and characters. The look of a film is as critical as an awe-inspiring story and stellar performance of actors in the finalization of an artistically successful film.

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Chapter 4 Question 4:

One of the primary concerns of producers during pre-production is how to cast major and minor acting roles in the film. What are the most important elements of a successful performance for an actor? Discuss why these elements are necessary to engage an audience.

Response:

At the time of pre-production producers must make decisions about choosing who to cast in the major and minor roles in the film. They must consider thoughtfully who they believe will bring a scripted character to life, and who can best tap into the spirit of a character. Acting necessitates polished role-play and pretend. The actors' performances will have a substantial effect on a film's success. That is not to say that great casting will guarantee a hit, but proper casting adds to the possibility that the film will succeed. Various elements contribute to the successful performance for an actor, all of which are significant to captivate the audience.

All generations have their iconic stars and casting a star that possess mass box office appeal is one way to assure the success of the film. But a star is not born overnight. An actor must possess raw talent, take example Daniel Day Lewis who has earned three Oscars. He is an actor who has the ability to transform himself into the character he is portraying. He is so gifted, polished, and his performance is flawless. Thus, viewers are engaged and as a result they believe that Lewis is actually the character on the screen. Lewis' performance in *Lincoln* was explosive and intense.

An actor's mental, physical, and emotional traits are conveyed when playing a major role. The strength of their personality comes from within when they allow the cameras to capture and display their most intense feelings and experiences as they perform. The intensity of their

acting exposes their inner psyche which electrifies the screen thereby inviting the audience to connect with the overpowering characteristic revealed on screen.

The most difficult element for an actor to possess is charisma. It is that unique seductiveness that mesmerizes the audience to idolize certain actors such as, Antonio Banderas, Brad Pitt, and Tom Cruise. For instance, in the *Mission Impossible* movies series, Tom Cruise portrays Ethan Hunt, a very elusive, intelligent, fun, appealing character. Cruises's charisma above all captivates the audience and stimulates viewers to root for him.

Actors must have several elements to be able to provide a successful performance. It is precisely specific elements and combinations of these elements that aid the actor to bring the character to life on screen. The various factors that make an actor a great actor also influence they way the audience perceives the character. They also determine if the viewer believes the character is real or just a rendition of someone's role-play. The elements that actors are blessed with helps their performance to nature, realistic and avant-garde.

For producers the task of casting effectively and successfully is affected by creative and practical factors. Certainly, star- studded casting does not guarantee a film's success but it will at least present the a bigger chance for success. Ultimately, an actor's performance is dependent on a myriad of elements, some of which are rare. Nevertheless, elements such as charisma, strength of character, talent, intelligence to name a few are important for a successful performance and are necessary for the audience to be captured.

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Chapter 5 Question 5:

This chapter examines the day-to-day responsibilities of the director in the production of the motion picture as well as the choices a director has in establishing the style of a finished film. A director may have a visual style that arises from a combination of elements that is generally realistic, expressionistic, or that falls somewhere between the two.

During principal photography, the director should be free to concentrate on three areas. Identify those areas, discuss the reasons they are important, and be sure to include the skills a director needs to accomplish his or her job successfully.

Response:

It is a director's responsibility to transform the screenwriter's vision from words on paper to a story on screen. The day a director first begins to shoot a movie, it is evident he is in charge and now claims authorship of the original screenplay. The director must assign certain tasks to members of the production crew such as, equipment acquisition, and labor issues and must convey the essence of the screenplay. Directors must fine-tune scripts, develop creative photographic methods, and command disciplined acting. Every director has unique techniques and specialized skills, but must execute their duties so that the audience is engaged. In the process of digital photography, the director should be free to focus on three areas; the director of photography, the actors, and the director's own personal vision, all of which are important.

First, the director must concentrate on the director of photography, who must coordinate the daily filming schedule and consult about the artistic selections for photographing the action. Strong organizational adeptness is a valuable skill. Meticulous planning is pivotal to a productive set. Everyday the director must start out with a plan that clearly delineates the day's objectives.

Directors view a shooting day as a series of setups, which is a complicated and time consuming process. Therefore, directors must be expert managers of time, material, and people. Setting explicit rules and courses of action decreases confusion, thus the director is able to maintain the set functioning toward palpable achievements. Take for example, director James Cameron who has great control and management of his sets. In his films, *Titanic* he was responsible for the creation of incredible and majestic scene shots and ran interference in correcting problems with lighting, music, editing, and digital disaster effects. Cameron is a tough as nails director and there is no doubt he is in charge.

Secondly, the director must focus on the actors by providing guidance on how to portray the character and the essence of their acting to accomplish it. On a movie set, the director is the actor's sole critic. The director must assess if an actor has delved intensely enough into the character and considered all the options available in performing the role. When gauging a specific take, the director must scrutinize various factors of the actor's performance such as, was the line properly interpreted, did body posture match the line read, was the voice pitch accurate, was the facial reaction honest, and subtlety of hand gestures. Directors have a tremendous amount of power over an actor, in that he decides if the take is to be reshot. Most directors and actors comprehend that inspiration and is crucial, for the movie to work. Their relationship is described by Richard Beck Peacock as symbiotic. Thus, they must depend on each other for inspiration. Actors are expected to transform themselves into their character and as a result directors expect stellar performances from the actors. A perfect example of a director that has an uncanny ability to work well with and bring out an actor's true talent is Martin Scorsese. He is

able to bring out a certain grit and edginess in DiCaprio's acting that is powerful and interesting, as seen in movies such as, *The Aviator*, and *The Wolf of Wall Street*.

The third area the director must focus on is the director's own personal vision. The director must maintain a vision of the central topic and force of the movie, at the same time filming and reassessing all aspects of the movie every day. The director must predict shot progression and determine the shots' relationship in its edited format. Moreover, directors must also consider the artistic desire for the film and it should be felt in every image. Although, directors will usually delegate camera execution to the director of photography, they will be clear about their expectations of a shot or a scene. A director who is true to the source material is Steven Spielberg. He is a quintessential story teller and captivates his audience while still remaining true to the concept and art of the film. In his films, *Jaws* and *Schindler's List* he conveyed stories that had a tremendous impact on the viewers but he maintained the concept of the screen plays.

It is the director's prime responsibility to assure the audience has been engaged and that the intrinsic nature of the film is conveyed. Directors accomplish these tasks by exercising impeccable management skills, delegating duties accordingly to members of the production crew, clearly outlining the day's objectives and schedule, providing critical directions for the actors to follow, and always keeping in mind the artistic goal of the film.

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Chapter 6 Question 6:

This chapter examines the ways in which production techniques create an aesthetic of cinema related to both form and content. Once principal photography begins, the director takes full control and makes many decisions that will ultimately represent his or her artistic vision on the screen.

How does a director do this? Think of film examples and discuss.

Response:

Production of a film requires extensive preparation and planning. Eventually principal photography begins and the director, camera crew, and actors gather to shoot the film. It is on this day that the director exercises the power he possess in creating the final product. The director and cinematographer must develop a plan for each shot. Not every shot will survive, but those that do will be the foundation of the film. The director must be extremely selective of the shots as it's his responsibility to engage the audience and manipulate their perception, so that the film appears to flow seamlessly for them. This is a difficult task that requires the director to employ great skill and talent. The director will have to make decisions of which shots to keep, however much goes into recording the greatest quantity of high quality shots of assorted lengths that will incorporate all the theatrical action of the film's plot. Directors will use an array of shot selections advantageously to transform viewers into the world being presented on the screen.

Directors manipulate cameras to get the selection of shots they will eventually use. He must determine camera distance, which is the space separating the lens and the subject to be photographed. It determines the tangible relationship of the camera to the subject or object. The physical appreciation, the worth and significance given to the subject/object is affected by the distance of the shot. For example, in the movie *The Graduate*, director Mike Nichols artfully

uses distance shots of Benjamin in the airplane to convey his isolation. He begins with a close-up that makes him appear to be alone and slowly pans the camera to show all the other passengers. Camera angles aid in forming the audience's feelings toward the subject. Frame composition is crucial to presenting the action in an interesting format. Mise-en-scène refers to the positioning of elements on stage and has been adapted to film context. This method tricks the audience into believing that the screen has the same dimensions of space that they normally see and experience. The connotation of lines, linear perspective, graphic weight, axis of action, camera movement, body assisted shots, and vehicle-assisted shots are all other ways in which shots are designed and taken. Illusion is a large part of the magic of a movie and various forms of special effects are utilized to create it.

Special effects are very prominent in today's films. There are physical special effects, that requires a team of experts to make these appear realistic. These are not used as often as in the past due to the newer technology available for special effects. There are optical effects that are essentially productions tricks used as shortcuts through visual problems. A few examples of optical effects are blue screens, mechanical effects, matte work, and miniatures. Director Steven Spielberg used mechanical effects through the use of an animatronic E.T. in his film, E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial. The effects were so good that E.T. seemed realistic.

Digital technology has greatly improved over the years and is now more widely used in many films. There are various techniques used to attain specific results. Take for example, pre-visualization that allow for creation of computer generated design models inside every shot. If the director is pleased with the image then an actual physical model can be constructed in proportion and scale to the computer. Not only is this method way ahead of storyboards but, the

director can view the movie before shooting it. Digital technologies provides endless possibilities in creating incredible effects that mesmerize viewers. CGI or computer-generated-imagery is widely used in movie making. In *i,Robot*, Alex Proyas, used CGI for the entire scene, and the robots. Proyas' use of CGI was so masterful that the movie earned an Oscar nomination for best visual effects in 2004.

A director's job is difficult and requires great skill. Their job begins well before the start of principal photography. They must make decisions that will ultimately affect the quality and vision of what the audience sees on the screen. Directors must employ a variety of shot techniques, and use special effects effectively to bring the film's vision to life. In the end, directors strive to create an artistic piece of cinema that is well made, engages the audiences and is successful.

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Chapter 8 Question 8:

The art of editing assumes two qualities for those working in the field. First, editors must possess the aesthetic flexibility to see the impact of both the most minute editorial choices and, at the same time, the sweep of larger story themes and character development. Second, editing requires technical skills and emotional toughness to successfully carry through the intensity of the process. Discuss the “universal” factors that present themselves in the work of editors. Why are these factors important to editor?

Response:

A film editor is a technician who integrates film footage for the director to examine and consider. Upon the conclusion of principal photography there are literally thousands of film shots that are given to the editor. In collaboration with the film director, and several assistants the shots are reviewed, scrutinized, and pieced together. The editor then begins the laborious task of piecing together the movie, strip by strip and even occasionally frame by frame. He is also an artist who captures the director’s vision and unfolds a riveting story. To give the movie its temporal dimension the editor must maneuver strips of film into their chronological order, that is, he clips them, fuses them, and finally arranges them in sequential order. As Richard Beck Peacock notes in his book, *The Art of Movie-Making*, “Film editing is genuinely creative work”(409). The editor’s skill at interconnecting strips of film properly sequenced culminates in the visual artistry that is viewed by audiences.

An editor’s primary duty is to the director. They must share an artistic partnership, that will enable the editor to be instinctive about the director’s vision. While the editor is required to be in line with the director’s objective, the work performed by the cinematographer, the performers, and the production designer needs to be comprehended. As such, the editor has an

obligation to represent their work as best as possible. Universal factors present themselves in the work of the editor.

An experienced editor offers an objective eye, that is to say, he or she may see a tempo of motion, shots to eliminate, fusion of action and focus of human passion that may differ from what was initially visualized by the director of photography or the director. Editing is not a perfunctory technique that adheres to a firm scheduled strategy. On the contrary, it is an energetic task that calls for artistic choices and surprises.

It is quite possible for the editor to uncover character ties, lively images, and plot thrusts in the process of cutting, resulting in a different emphasis of the concluding structure of the film.

The editor will have to assess and choose from numerous takes of the identical shot. While the shots are repeated, each one will vary in its value, attributed to contrast in lighting, camera placement, actor's performances, or additional production obstacles. The choice to pick one piece of footage over another is a prime component of the evaluative perception an editor develops. Editors should possess a keenly visual insight, so that in addition to scrutinizing the content of the film footage, he or she can also determine how the arrangement of subsequent shots graphically complement one another.

Editors must produce logical spatial relationships. Accomplishing this task is not simple and requires the editor to meticulously depict the theatrical territory. Editors need to create the rhythm of the movie. Peacock quotes Thelma Schoonmaker, "The creation of rhythm is almost fifty percent of an editor's job"(424). The editor must have an instinctual skill to pinpoint just the right timing of each shot. Thus, it is one of the most essential phases in the editing process. In the movie, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, editors George Lucas, and Michael Kahn skillfully transitioned

frames of Indiana Jones attempting to escape out of the temple. Various frames were interconnected depicting him in numerous dangerous situations, each time escaping only to find himself in another trap. The frames were rhythmically fused with a crescendo of music, placing emphasis on the dramatic action.

An editor must be able to have a good handle on controlling time. He or she does this by consolidating time, that is, time is collapsed within a few shots (Peacock, 425). This allows the viewer to fill in the blanks. In some cases editors decide to expand the moment by extending the action. He or she does this by distorting time with shots that present the steady power of the images. For example, in the movie, *The Godfather Part 2*, editors Peter Zinner, Barry Malkin, and Richard Marks, used various shots to show a series of events in a fragmented fashion that are actually occurring at the same time yet, appears to be over a period of time. Editors tackle these seven universal factors all of which are critical to the editor's work.

The theme and effect of the film is greatly influenced by the way the editor manipulates the universal factors they face in doing their jobs. So, it is important for the editor to make proper editing choices about the film's thrust, action, and actor's performance throughout the post production editing process.

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Raiders of the Lost Ark Scene:

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Chapter 9 Question 9:

Both underscoring and source music are used in a wide variety of ways to enhance films. Discuss the aesthetic uses of film music.

Response:

The visual presentation of a film is so stirring viewers are not able to appreciate the type and value of its sounds. The focus is on the action of the movie so audiences tend to be impervious to the audio components. A movie void of sound loses power. Producing a film's sound requires a combination of creativity and talent. It entails the painstaking endeavor of many people to create a quality sound track. Sound affixes the viewer in the actuality of the theatrical events of the film(Peacock, 471). Sound also enhances and clarifies the movie, supporting the action on the screen. The audience's emotional response is influenced by incorporating sounds to the picture. Sounds reach deep into a viewer's subconscious and makes the movie come alive. Peacock quotes supervising sound editor Gloria Borders"Putting sound on film is probably the most collaborative part of making a movie, and it's one of the most elaborate team efforts you will ever experience"(Peacock, 472). Adding sound is a delicate and intricate part of making a film and must be done skillfully to have the subtle effect necessary so that sound and image appear to fuse effortlessly. Both underscoring and source music are used in many different ways to enhance films. Additionally, there are many aesthetic uses of film music.

Source music is identified as having a source of realistic genesis. For example, an actor singing, or turning on a radio would be the source of the music. Underscoring is the music in a film that does not have a visible or known source but adds emotional significance in a shot, a

scene, or the whole movie (Peacock, 496). Source music and underscore are used in a vast array of ways.

Music is used to introduce or end movies. A song or sound of an instrument as the titles or credits roll create the emotional drive for the plot to build upon. Music is used to enhance thematic resonance of stories. That is, it fuses with the story and metamorphoses the movie into a grander experience. Music is used to establish time period or provide setting. Sounds and images integrate flawlessly to authenticate a time period. The movie, *Good Fellas*, spans several decades and as the time evolves so does the music played. The movie opens in the 1950s introducing Henry's youth, music from that era, Tony Bennet's *Rags to Riches* (1953) and The MoonGlow's *Sincerely* (1954) play in the background. As the movie transitions into the 1960s the music transitions as well. The Crystal's, *Then He Kissed Me* (1962) plays as Karen and Henry walk through the Copacabana Nightclub scene. Then the movie shifts to the 1970s, Derek and The Dominos, *Layla* (1971) plays throughout various scenes as dead bodies are discovered. The music was adapted to each time era being viewed and so the audience was able to follow the movie cohesively. It also added authenticity to the time period. The music attaches the ambience with the feeling of its audio information. Music sets the general mood and pace. It navigates the audience to associate its emotional tempo and temper to the type of music underscoring a film. Music is used to build leitmotif, that is "a musical idea common in the opera and translated as "leading motive" (Peacock, 500). This method allows a composer to link main characters or significant incidents, places and concepts with particular music. It is used to skillfully bring to light lots of unvoiced thoughts and emotions. Music is used to emphasize narrative. The music must complement the action of the scene to prevent the viewer from getting agitated or baffled.

Music is also used to underscore specific action. It helps to merge the audience's feelings to the actions. For example, in the movie *The Raiders of the Lost Ark*, John Williams's *The Raider's March* is played during the desert fight scene. This alerted the audience that the upcoming scene would be suspenseful, thrilling and dramatic. Music is used to create dissonance and surprise to cause shock or irony. Music is used to bridge shots and scenes so that the movie has a good flow. Finally, music is used as a form of experimentation to investigate the limits of musical arrangements for viewers.

The task of producing a powerful sound track is difficult and involves the collaboration of many talented people. But sound provides the life a film needs and without it, movies would lose their emotional and dramatic energy. Sound is instrumental in evoking the emotions and connections viewers have with specific scenes, shots and entire movies. Underscoring and source music are key components in the audio art of motion pictures. The many varied aesthetic uses of film music complements the finality of a strong and passionate movie.

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Chapter 10 Question 10:

What is marketing research? How does this research influence the process of distribution and, sometimes, even the production process of a particular film? Why is the study of marketing research relevant to understanding the motion picture industry?

Response:

The business end of the movie making process manifests upon the release of the film for distribution. The complete examination of the moviemaking process should not exclude the final stage. “In the terms of *communications theory*, the cycle of exchange is incomplete if the message (the movie) is without a receiver (the theater audience)”(Peacock, p.523). That is, moviemakers are recompensed financially and with artistic acknowledgments by the public based on their appreciation of the film. The film’s distribution techniques impact on its success, and its distribution strongly relies on marketing research. Marketing research is “the gathering and studying of data relating to consumer preferences, purchasing power, etc., especially prior to introducing a product on the market(dictionary.com). It is essential in the movie business to be educated about who goes to the theater and what they enjoy watching. Market research influences the process of distribution and at times the production process as well.

The qualitative value of a consumer’s movie perception has been shown to be a prime determinant of a film’s financial success(Henning-Thurau, Houston, Walsh, p.25). Thus, it is important to conduct market research to help moviemakers learn what will produce successful results with the audience. Viewers pick the movies they watch in a variety of ways. Audiences become aware of a movie through advertisements of the movie, word of mouth recommendations by family, friends or critics, or by watching previews, to mention a few. Whatever the method

used, market researchers are able to narrow down or pinpoint what will sell or appeal to a movie goer. This may impact on the production of a movie and consequently, its distribution. “Virtually every major U.S. movie produced today uses test screenings to obtain the key reactions of consumers likely to be in the target audience” (YouSigma). A sneak preview of a movie is arranged and several hundred viewers are invited to attend, at the conclusion of the movie, they fill out an in depth survey about the movie. The information collected is used to decide if changes to the movie will be required. Knowing how viewers react to particular scenes, endings, or entire movies help filmmakers determine what and if any changes are necessary to make the movie a hit. In turn, once they fine tune any aspect of a movie, after a test viewing, the moviemakers have a more refined product ready for distribution that will perhaps have a better chance at success. In comparison to a movie that has not been fine tuned as a result of a test viewing which, may run the risk of costly distribution and redistribution. For example, the movie, *Fatal Attraction*, “had probably the most commercially successful “ending-switch” of all time. In its sneak previews, audiences liked everything but the ending, which had Alex (Glenn Close) committing suicide and managing to frame Dan (Michael Douglas) as her murderer by leaving his fingerprints on the knife she used. The studio shot \$1.3 million of new scenes for the ending that audiences eventually saw”(YouSigma). Similarly, after a sneak preview, Disney made changes to the original *Pocahontas* plot by, “Making the plot move faster. Disney cut a duet by Pocahontas and John Smith in *Pocahontas* because it got in the way of the action and confused test audiences”(YouSigma). Hence, the production of the movie was influenced greatly by viewer reaction as a result of market research.

In order for viewers to recognize, understand, and find pleasure in the artistic value of a movie, essential details about the movie must be disseminated through the media. Thus, the public's attention is captured and they are coaxed into watching the movie. It is important to understand that the study of market research is relevant to comprehending the movie making business. "Movie studios use market research to decrease their risk of losses by hiring firms like the National Research Group to conduct test screenings and tracking studies"(YouSigma). Market research provides methods in which vital information about movie viewers can be collected that influence the production, marketing and distribution of a movie. Properly marketing and distributing a film connects the movie to its possible viewers. It also increases the possibilities of the movie's economic success and presents the potential for filmmakers to proceed with their work in subsequent movie enterprises.(Peacock, p. 574). To fully understand the moviemaking process, it is necessary to look at the process involved in marketing research as it influences factors such as production, and distribution of a film.

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