Voyage into the world of cinema & photography

■ Cinema

The birth of the moving image

We can trace the origins of cinematography to 1893 when the Edison company successfully demonstrated the *Kinetoscope*, which enabled one person at a time to view moving pictures. The first to present projected, moving photographic pictures to a paying audience were the Lumière brothers, in 1895. At first, films were very short, sometimes only a few minutes. They were shown at fairgrounds, music halls or anywhere a screen could be set up and a room darkened. Subjects included views of foreign lands, short comedies and events considered newsworthy. Another Frenchman who was a member of the Lumiere's viewing audience, Georges Méliès, expanded the development of film cinema with his own imaginative fantasy films. A wizard at special effects, Melies exploited the new medium with a pioneering, 14-minute science fiction work, *Le voyage dans la Lune – A trip to the Moon* (1902). It was his most popular and best-known work, with about 30 scenes called

Georges Méliès, *Le voyage dans la Lune – A trip to the Moon*, 1902.

tableaux. He incorporated surrealistic special effects, including the memorable image of a rocketship landing and gouging out the eye of the "man in the moon".

By 1914, several national film industries were established. Europe, Russia and Scandinavia were as important as America. Films got longer and story telling, or narrative, became the dominant form. Colour was first added to black-and-white movies through tinting and stencilling. By 1906, the principles of colour separation were used to produce "full colour" moving images. Early processes were cumbersome and expensive and colour was not widely used until the introduction of the three-colour Technicolor process in 1932.

The first attempts to add synchronized sound to projected pictures used phonographic cylinders or discs. By the early 1930s, nearly all feature-length movies were presented with synchronized sound and by the mid-1930s many were in full colour too. The advent of sound secured the dominant role of the American industry, and gave rise to the so-called "Golden Age of Hollywood".

Although there were many experiments with other formats, there were no major changes until the 1950s.

The Golden Age of American cinematography

In the period following WWII, when most of the films were idealized with conventional portrayals of men and women, young people wanted new and exciting symbols of rebellion. Hollywood responded to audience demands – the late 1940s and 1950s saw the rise of the anti-hero – with stars like newcomers James Dean, Paul Newman, and Marlon Brando.

The so-called "Renaissance of Hollywood" was built upon perfecting some of the traditional film genres of Hollywood's successful past – with bigger, blockbuster dimensions, especially following the awesome success of two influential films: Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975) and George Lucas's *Star Wars* (1977).

More power was now in the hands of producers, actors and directors, many of whom had been specifically and formally trained in film-making at universities such as UCLA, USC, and NYU. This new generation of artists included Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Robert Altman, Joe

Dante, Peter Bogdanovich, James Cameron, Jack Nicholson, Robert De Niro.

The decade of the 1980s tended to consolidate the gains made in the seventies rather than to initiate any new trends comparable to the large number of disaster movies, buddy movies, or "rogue cop" movies that characterized the previous decade. Designed and packaged for mass audience appeal, few 80s films became what could be called "classics".

The era was characterized by the introduction of "high-concept" films – with cinematic plots that could be briefly summarized by one or two sentences, making them easily marketable and understandable. One can mention such examples as *Alien* (1979), *The Godfather* (1972), *Flashdance* (1983), *Beverly Hills Cop* (1984), to name but a few.

During the late 1980s and 1990s the proliferation of films helped to satisfy the tremendous demand for new products made by cable stations, video rental stores, the local megaplexes, digital satellite services, and the Internet. Existing alongside mainstream Hollywood film production were also the independent filmakers.

Miramax Studios, for instance, founded in 1979, produced Soderbergh's *Sex, lies and videotape* (1989), Neil Jordan's original British film *The Crying Game* (1992), Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Scream* (1996, 1997, 2000) and *Scary Movie* (2000, 2001).
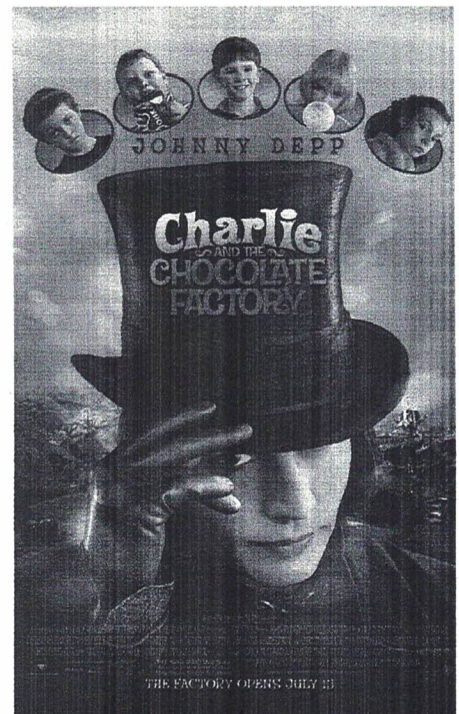
speaking

1   Answer the following questions orally.

1   What was the Kinetoscope?
2   How did Georges Méliès improve the development of cinematographic techniques?
3   Can you list the major developments in cinematography that took place during the first half of the 20th century?
4   In what period do we see the emerging phenomenon of American blockbuster films?
5   In what way, and for what reasons, was there an increase in the film industry at th end of the 20th century?

vocabulary

2   Look up in your dictionary the meanings of the following words/expressions and find an appropriate adjective/adverb for each.

1   motion pictures ....
2   to project ....
3   screen ....
4   special effects ....
5   scene ....
6   story ....
7   synchronized sound ....
8   genre ....
9   "rogue cop" movies ....
10   megaplex ....

JOHNNY DEPP

Charlie AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

THE FACTORY OPENS JULY 15

Tim Burton, *The Chocolate Factory*, 2005.