CONVERSATION AND DISCUSSION

MAN AND THE MOVIES Topical Vocabulary

1. Cinema: cinema (house), open-air theatre, cinema with con­  
   tinuous performance, drive-in-theatre, film, movie, (motion) pic­  
   ture, to go to the cinema (a movie, movies, pictures), normal  
   screen, wide (large, broad) screen, the first (second) showing,  
   entrance (exit), showing (performance, programme) begins at  
   ... (ends at...), colour poster, the box office, to book tickets.
2. **Films:** documentary, educational, popular scientific (or sci­  
   ence) film, feature film, science fiction film, animated cartoon, ad­  
   venture film, musical, puppet film, thriller, comedy, horror film,  
   crime film, Western, children's film, theatrical film, wide-screen,  
   colour (black-and-white, mute, sound, dubbed, full-length, short-  
   length) film, short, two (three) part film, wartime epic, newsreel,  
   serial, "X" film,1 star-studded film, the screen version (adaptation)  
   of the novel.
3. **Parts of films:** scene, outdoor (indoor) scene, the opening  
   scene, the final scene, crowd scene, an episode, still, shot, long  
   shot, close-up, caption, subtitle, flash-back(s).
4. **Cinema work:** to shoot (produce, make) a film, to make  
   a screen version (adaptation) of a novel, to screen a novel (play,  
   story), to adapt a novel for the screen, to film a novel, taplay (act)  
   on the screen, to release a picture, to come out (about a film), to go  
   into production, to remake a film, to reissue a film, to be dubbed  
   in Russian, to present a film in Russian, co-production (joint pro­  
   duction), directed by..., scenery and costumes by ... , the songs set  
   to music by ... .
5. **Cinema workers:** producer, film director, art director, cam­  
   era-man, script-writer, animator, costume designer.
6. **Cinema-goers:** film goers, audience, film fans, to watch the  
   film (screen), to watch smb. acting on the screen, to see a film.
7. **Actors and acting:** the cast, comedian, an actor of great  
   promise, leading actor, star, to play the main (leading, title, key) or  
   small (supporting, minor) role, to co-star, to portray a character, to  
   give a convincing (memorable, captivating, warm, brilliant, su­  
   perb) portrayal of ... , to give a magnificent performance as ... (in),  
   to take (gain) the best actress (actor) award (title), to create a true-

1 An "X" film — a film which may be seen by adults only.

to-life image, to make the most of the role, to bring to life on the screen, to come alive on the screen, a typical N role, to outshine everybody else, a new N film, to star in a role, to be miscast (ill-cho­sen), to be cast to advantage.

8. **Effect. Impression:** the film deals with (depicts, presents, tells of); the message of the film; to win universal acclaim; to praise un­reservedly; to leave a deep and lasting impression on; to appeal so much to the audience; to be (make) a hit with the public; a delight­ful, amusing comedy; entertaining (powerful, gripping, absorbing, vividly dramatic, technically brilliant, sad, depressing, slow-mov­ing, dragged-out) film; to mar a film; to leave smb. cold; empty of serious content; a flop; a good film, not without flaws; a run-of-the-mill film; not a film to everyone's taste; not an easy film to watch; obscure and complex ideas.

1. Read the text for obtaining its information:

No other art form has had quite the impact on our lives that the motion pictures have. Indeed, the movies are truly an art of our time — they were born and have come of age in the twentieth cen­tury, and they now demand the serious consideration given to the other arts.

Everybody loves a story. Children mesmerized for hours before a television set watching cartoons they are seeing for the fifth or sixth time, or long lines of shivering movie-goers outside a theater1 on a winter night, convincingly demonstrate that truth. And today the love of story, as these examples suggest, is requited much more often than not with a narrative told in visual images.

There can be no question about the supremacy of the visual im­age in the realm of story. The fact mat images and movies have many uses besides story-telling simply adds gratuitous evidence in support of the observation that the life of the mind today receives its nourishment primarily from visual, rather than verbal sources.

Clearly, in terms of sheer quantity, visual narrative is the great­est aesthetic and educational force in the world today, and the movies, the visual narrative media — qualify unchallenged as the art of our time.

No one has ever seriously doubted that the movies are a power­ful force in contemporary life. Quite the contrary. Their potential for propaganda purposes was immediately recognized and in some

1 The spelling theater is common in the American variant of the English language.

cases exploited. What has been questioned is the capacity of the movies for doing good. Youthful and perhaps too much a work horse in the cultural market-place, they have been vulnerable to the charge that they are unable to awaken and refresh the mind, that they cannot tap the deepest reaches of man's spiritual life and so, incapable of articulating anything of consequence, are at best a rudimentary art.

Yet the movies are not now as disturbing for intellectuals as they once were. One reason, no doubt, is that they are no longer, at least in the United States, the popular art; television has stolen the limelight.

~~~At present suspended somewhere between the hell of mass cul­ture and the heaven of high art, the movies are undergoing aes­thetic purification.

Much remains to be accomplished, however. Since we have to live with the movies, we would prefer not to be embarrassed by them; we want the chance to exercise our humanity in and through the movies, and so we persist in demanding that the movies make more room for man within their aesthetic boundaries.

We would not, by any means take the fun off movies in order to fit them into the traditional earnestness associated with education ... but the aim is, and should be a higher hedonism which more pro­foundly entertains the heart and mind. With the existing film clas­sics and the fifteen to twenty a year from around the world capable of captivating attention — there are enough good and great mov­ies for us to grow by. The movies arouse the mind and eoul when given undivided attention.

2. Answer the following questions:

1. The extract is written by an American critic. Can you find evi­dence of this in the text? 2. Why do you think movies are regarded as "truly an art of our time"? 3. What facts given in the extract prove the idea that nowadays people prefer a narrative told in visu­al images? Do you agree with this opinion? Support whatever you say. 4. How can movies be helpful for people besides relating sto­ries? Which of the spheres do you consider most significant? Give your reasons. 5. Why do you think movies possess the greatest aes­thetic and educational force? 6. How can you account for the fact that the capacity of the movies for doing good has been ques­tioned? 7. Why in your opinion do some people regard movies as a rudimentary art? 8. Would you agree that cinema can be regard­ed as the popular art, that it belongs to mass culture? What do you know about this art? 9. What kind of entertainment is nowadays ri­valling cinema? Why? 10. What is the place of cinema, as the au­thor sees it, among the other arts? Do you agree with him? 11. Do you think movies should be all fun or rather a thought-provoking and earnest art? 12. What is the main aim of the movies as the au­thor sees it? The only word he uses to denote this art is movies. What synonymous expression would a British critic use? What other synonyms to this word do you know?

3. a) Find in the text the arguments the author gives to illustrate the follow­  
ing:

1. cinema— a wide-spread art and entertainment of the 20th century; 2. its impact on people's lives; 3. cinema and story-telling;

4. cinema and education; 5. cinema — an earnest, thought-provok­  
ing or rudimentary art; 6. the place of cinema among the other arts,  
its main aim.

Try and preserve the wording of the original. Add your arguments as well.

b) Summarize the text in four paragraphs specifying the role of the cinema in our lives.

4. Use the Topical Vocabulary in answering the questions:

1. What does a usual cinema showing consist of? 2. How often do you go to the pictures and where do you prefer to sit? 3. What types of films do you know? 4. What films appeal to you most?

5. Do you care for long films? 6. What is a film star? What does the  
success of a film depend on? 8. Which is more important — the  
story, the acting, the directing or ishe camera-work? 9. What do we  
mean when we say that a film has\a message to convey? 10. Why  
does a director trying to interpret a great work of literature on the  
screen take upon himself a most responsible task? 11. How is the  
cinema used as an aid in teaching? 12. What do you know about  
international film festivals? How often are Moscow Film Festivals  
held? What is their motto?

5. Give a review of a **film** you have recently seen and liked (disliked). Use the Topical Vocabulary. Remember: A review should guide and inform. A mere tell­ing of the story is not a review.

**Outline for Motion Picture Review**

**1. Type of film:** feature film, comedy, black-and-white, short, etc.

1. **Production:** What studio released the film? Was it co-pro­  
   duction? Was the film dubbed?
2. **Story (plot):** Is it by a well-known author? Is the story origi­  
   nal? True to life? What is the climax of the story? Is the ending

logical?

1. **Direction:** Who directed the film? Was the introduction of  
   characters and scenes skilful? Are useless scenes included?
2. **Photography:** Is it artistically done? Are there good shots?  
   Are close-ups used effectively?
3. **Acting:** Name the leading characters. Are there any stars?  
   Any outstanding performances of minor roles? True-to-life inter­  
   pretation of characters?
4. **Sound effects:** Does speaking or acting predominate? Does  
   the dialogue seem real? Do actors speak effectively? Are charac­  
   teristic noises employed? Is the music suitable?
5. **Critics:** What do critics say about the picture? Are their opin­  
   ions sound? Do you share their points of view?
6. **General impression and conclusion:** The impression the film  
   made on you. How was the effect achieved? Do you think this film  
   is worth seeing?
7. You are asked to tell a group of English students about the best children's  
   film produced by Russian studios. Which film would you choose? (Describe the  
   film in about fifty words. Use the Topical Vocabulary, Outline for Motion Picture  
   Review of Ex. 5. and conversational formulas for giving opinion. See«Appendix.)
8. Work in pairs. Discuss the films you have recently seen. One of the stu­  
   dents is supposed to speak about a film he liked, the other about a different film  
   which he disliked. Try and interrupt each other with questions to get some more  
   information about the film you have not seen. Use the Topical Vocabulary.

Model: A: I've seen a feature film that was a hit with the public. I, myself, can praise it unreservedly. For one thing the camera-work was wonderful .... B: I was less fortunate. The comedy I saw was a com­plete flop. The leading actor was miscast. As for the camera-work ....

8. Speak about the major problems of the cinema at the end of the 20th centu­ry. Consider the following:

1. the financing of film ptoduction; 2. repertoire (the social and ideological significance of the plots, the main aim of motion pictures, horror and crime films, commercials); 3. acting profession (possibility of choice; guaranteed jobs; 4. photography and sound effects; 5. attendance at cinemas; 6. prices of tickets; 7. videos.

9. In recent years cinema has become a challenge to the everlasting art and entertainment of theatre. What do you think are the reasons for this? Consider the following and expand on the points which you think are especially signifi­cant:

1. cheap price of the entertainment; 2. films can be seen in places where there are no theatres; 3. minimum of effort is spent to get entertainment; 4. casts of players are often much better than at some theatres; 5. varieties of films to suit all tastes; 6. cinema is widely open to various experiments; 7. certain scenic effects (earthquakes, fires, horse races) can be created much better in films.

10. Read the following dialogue. The expressions in bold type show the ways English people express agreement and disagreement. Note them down. Be ready to act out the dialogue in class.