

Chapter 3: Film-making

NCERT · Class 12 · English · Kaleidoscope · Non Fiction

Questions

Question 1

Pick out examples from the text that show Bergman's sensitivity to sensory impressions, which have made him a great filmmaker.

Solution

Answer. There are various instances in the story that depict Bergman's bravery as a filmmaker. The prominent one is connected with a wall hanging. He could imagine the wall hanging and represent it vividly, bringing the whole scene alive through his narrations. He could also imagine the church bells ringing and visualize the pigeons flying, transforming his readers into a completely different world. Through his imagination, it was a completely dramatic scene created by Bergman. Another example is when he left all the work just to watch the cranes fly at Dalarna. All these incidents highlight Bergman's sensitivity to sensory impressions that made him a great filmmaker.

Question 2

What do you understand of the complexity of the little invisible steps that go into the making of a good film?

Solution

Answer. Filmmaking is an art that includes many procedures before achieving the final product. So, the first step in making a film is to determine the theme. Then, with a strong concept, the shape of the story can be formed accordingly. The next step is the storyline. The components of montage, rhythm and the relation between two pictures are integral parts of the storyline. With proper execution of the story, using these three crucial aspects results in the liveliness of the story. And finally, the last important step is shooting the film, where proper coordination among different departments can make the movie a huge success. So, the steps of filmmaking decide upon a theme, creating a consistent storyline and coordination among all the departments while shooting results in a good movie.

Question 3

What are some of the risks that film-making involves?

Solution

Answer. Typically, filmmaking is a process of executing a sequence of actions, which involves a series of pictures to convey the story to the masses. Firstly, the masses must try to identify with the theme of the movie. If the theme is entirely dissimilar, they will not understand the film's message, and the film will be a colossal failure. For a film to be successful, the story must be obvious to capture the audience's attention, which is a huge risk in filmmaking. Thus, the filmmaker should be wise in selecting a storyline matching the current demand of the public. Otherwise, it would be difficult for the filmmaker to impress the viewers and make the film successful.

Question 4

What misgivings does Bergman have about the contemporary film industry?

Solution

Answer. Bergman believes that the contemporary film industry thinks in the creation of unique work. The current generation of filmmakers believes in secluding oneself and creating works in solitude. According to Bergman, borrowing ideas from other works is considered equal to using plagiarised content, which is entirely wrong. However, they fail to understand that filmmaking is a continuous process, one that involves constant inspiration and learning from each other. Thus, Bergman believes that learning from one another is the ultimate source of knowledge in the film industry.

Question 5

Compare Bergman's views about making films out of books with that of Umberto Eco's.

Solution

Answer. According to Bergman, one cannot put a novel into a film entirely. It becomes a complete injustice to the book because it triggers the intellectual faculty, whereas the movie triggers emotions directly.

However, according to Umberto Eco, the film takes over the popularity of a novel. It is only when the movie is made out of a book that it reaches the epitome of its popularity. So, the film indirectly helps the

novel. Thus, Bergman believes that the individual effect of each of these two art forms on the audience is different from each other.

Talking about the Text

Question 1

According to the author, split-second impressions form a ‘mental state, not an actual story, but one abounding in fertile associations and images’. Compare this with Virginia Woolf’s experiment with the stream of consciousness technique in ‘The Mark on the Wall’.

Solution

Answer. Ingmar Bergman’s description of split-second impressions, which form a ‘mental state’ and not an actual story being a brightly coloured thread sticking out of the dark sack of unconsciousness, is very much similar to the technique of ‘Stream of consciousness’ employed by Virginia Woolf in her work, ‘The Mark on the Wall’.

In the story, ‘The Mark on the Wall’, a series of images form in Woolf’s mind as she hops, skips and jumps from one thought to the other through those images, trying to explain the reason behind a mark on the wall. The pictures do not form realistic stories but fantasies of her ideas, views and opinions, giving an insight into her mind, which is brought forth to the readers through them. With all these insights, Woolf traces back to the cause of the mark on the wall.

Similarly, in ‘Film-making’, Bergman talks about the split-second impressions that form the film’s theme. They do not create an actual story but help in forming a mental state with all the imaginative pictures that gradually develop into a full-fledged movie. Thus, in both cases, a series of images helps develop the big picture and, therefore, is quite similar to each other.

Question 2

Bergman talks about the various influences in his life including his parents and his religious upbringing. To what extent are an individual’s achievements dependent on the kind of influences he or she has had in life? Discuss.

Solution

Answer. An individual’s life is a mixture of the experiences and influences they have had throughout their lifetime. All the experiences a person faced in his past help shape an individual’s personality,

which paves the way to his future achievements and successes.

Bergman portrays his childhood and religious upbringing that helped shape his interest in filmmaking. Similarly, how a person is brought up serves as a foundation for their future success. The way they handle those successes reflects their upbringing—both nature and education help build up an individual's personality. Thoughts, feelings, and behaviour collected over time reflect a person's personality. The learned behaviour that an individual acquires over time is a result of his life experiences. Thus, Bergman's various life influences helped shape him to be the individual he is in the present day, and that is how someone's personality is developed.

Appreciation

Question 1

Autobiographical accounts make interesting reading when the author selects episodes that are connected to the pursuit of excellence. How does this apply to Ingmar Bergman's narration of the details of film-making?

Solution

Answer. Autobiographical accounts make exciting reading when the author selects episodes connected to the pursuit of excellence. Bergman's detail of filmmaking is highlighted through the various incidents that he shares with his readers throughout the story. It is an autobiographical account that helps him connect with the readers personally and humanely. With references to his own past experiences, he portrays his hunger for perfection in the process of filmmaking. He describes the split-second impressions, which, when appropriately organised, can make a good movie. To visualise a proper screenplay, Bergman highlights and portrays the importance of giving attention to his past and works at the root level to ensure perfection. He talks about how the novel differs considerably from the film and the difference between film and literature. Finally, he acknowledges his childhood experiences which paved the way to turn him into a courageous filmmaker. Therefore, the various incidents from the narrator's life induce life to the narration and portray the author's feelings distinctly, and thus this autobiographical account makes for an exciting read.

Question 2

Comment on the conversational tone of the narration. Compare this with the very informal style adopted by Umberto Eco in the interview.

Solution

Answer. A conversational tone of writing is essentially a powerful way of writing. With the author's writing tone, the reader gets a feeling of being directly involved in the text. The author tricks them with his writing skill and creates an illusion of being directly involved in the text. Thus, a conversational tone is essentially more effective in getting a message to the readers. They can connect with the narration personally, picking out the incidents and relating them to their own lives.

On the other hand, the style adopted by Umberto Eco in the interview has a close resemblance to reading a documentary or reading answers. It contrasts with Bergman's conversational tone, and the reader remains detached from the writer in this style. Thus, the Umberto Eco-style is an efficient method while addressing large masses.

Language Work

A. Vocabulary

Find out and write down the definitions of the following terms used in the film industry.

script project montage flashback
stage prop footlights

Script- the written text of a complete film, including instructions for the actors and directions for filming the entire film.

Project – an assignment of a complete film

Montage – the technique of selecting, editing, and piecing together separate sections of the film to form a continuous whole

Flashback – showing a past event in a moment at present. It is the recalling of a past event at present.

Stage – a raised platform for performances

Prop – things used to make visualisation prominent in a film.

Footlights – a row of spotlights along the front of a stage at the level of the actors' feet.

Things to do

Think of a particular episode that could be enacted. Now imagine that you are a scriptwriter and write the screenplay for the first ten minutes of the episode in the following format.

Title:
Actors:
Scene -1
Description
Dialogue

The column 'Dialogue' would contain the words to be actually spoken by the characters. 'Description' would include instructions regarding stage props, the position of lights, movement of actors and so on.

The enactment of the "Mother's Day" by J.B. Priestly-

Description	Dialogue
Footlights- dimmed. Atmosphere- sad Prop- False smoke to show a change in the thoughts of Mrs. Pearson. Both actors stand mid-stage.	Mrs. Fitzgerald- (angry face. Stern voice) why don't you teach your kids a lesson? They need to know your importance! Mrs. Pearson- (lost in deep thoughts. Still thinking as to why her children and husband don't treat her with respect.) I think we need to teach them a lesson as soon as possible.