Chapter 7 Movies & the Impact of Images
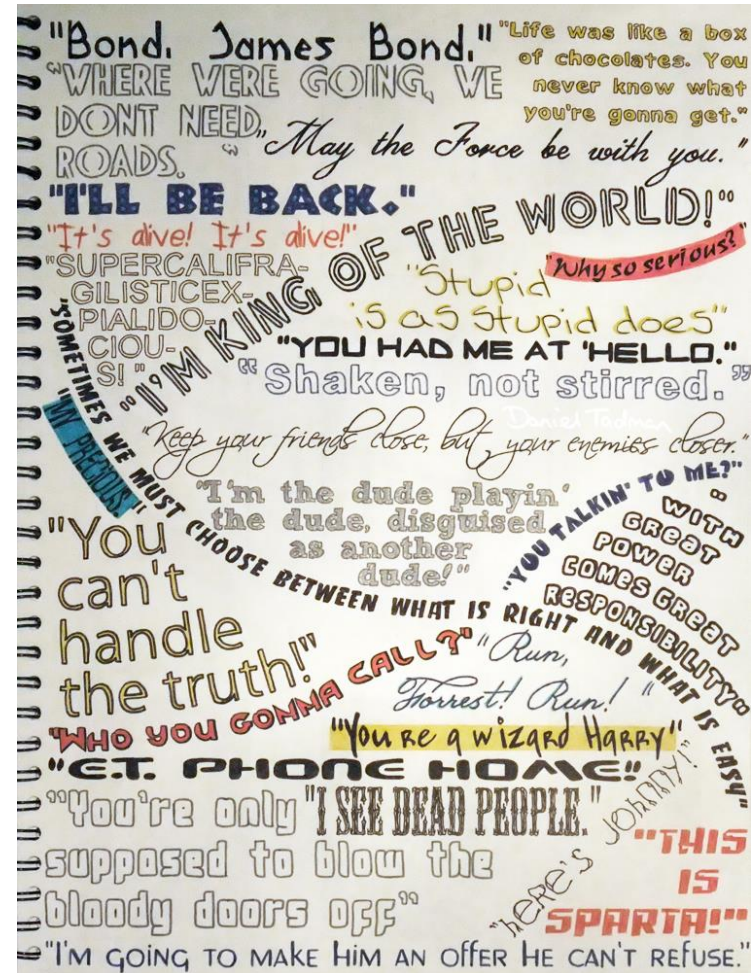
- *"I'M GOING TO MAKE HIM AN OFFER HE CAN'T REFUSE"*

- *"TOTO, I'VE GOT A FEELING WE'RE NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE"*

- *"HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KID"*

- *"Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn"*

- Dating back to the late 1800s, American films have had a substantial social and cultural impact on society.

- Blockbuster movies such as *Star Wars, E.T., Jurassic Park, Titanic, Lord of the Rings*, and *Spider-Man* represent what Hollywood has become—America's storyteller.

- At their best, they tell communal stories that evoke and symbolize our most enduring values and our secret desires.

- The most popular films often make the world seem clearer, more manageable, and more understandable.

- Over and above their immense economic impact ,

- movies have always worked on several social and cultural levels.

- While they distract us from our daily struggles, at the same time they encourage us to take part in rethinking contemporary ideas..
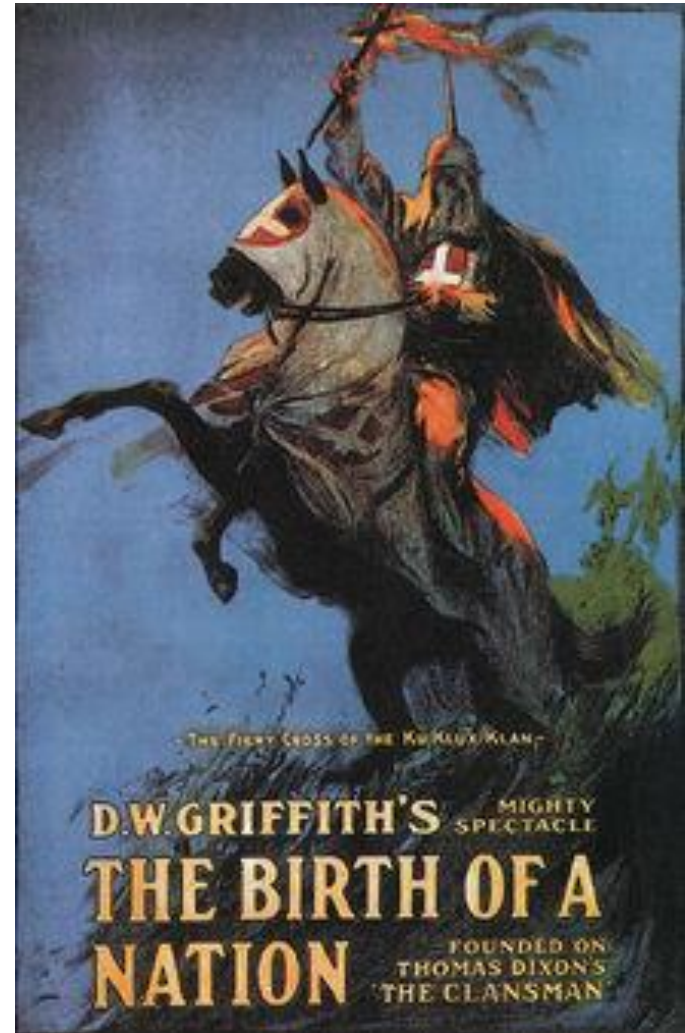
All Time North American Domestic Top 10 - 2013

1	Avatar	Fox	$760,507,625	2009^
2	Titanic	Paramount.	$658,672,302	1997^
3	Marvel's The Avengers	Buena Vista	$623,357,910	2012
4	The Dark Knight	Warner Brothers	$534,858,444	2008^
5	Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace	Fox	$474,544,677	1999^
6	Star Wars	Fox	$460,998,007	1977^
7	The Dark Knight Rises	Warner Brothers	$448,139,099	2012
8	Shrek 2	Dream Works	$441,226,247	2004
9	E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial	Universal	$435,110,554	1982^
10	Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Buena Vista	$423,315,812	2006

The Power of Stories in the Silent Era

- The shift from early development to the mass medium stage came with the introduction of **narrative films**: **movies that tell stories.**

- Once audiences understood the illusion of moving images, they quickly tired of waves breaking on beaches or vaudeville acts recorded by immobile cameras.

- To become a mass medium, the early silent films had to offer what books achieved: the suspension of disbelief.

- They had to create narrative worlds that engaged an audience's imagination.

THE FIERY CROSS OF THE KU KLUX KLAN

D.W. GRIFFITH'S MIGHTY SPECTACLE

THE BIRTH OF A NATION

FOUNDED ON THOMAS DIXON'S 'THE CLANSMAN'

The Triumph of Hollywood Storytelling

- **talkies:** movies with sound, beginning in 1927.
- "Wait a minute, wait a minute, you ain't heard nothin' yet."
  - –First words spoken by Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer*, 1927

- In April 1927, five months before *The Jazz Singer* opened, the Fox studio premiered sound-film **newsreels**.

- Fox's newsreel company, Movietone, captured the first film footage, with sound, of the takeoff and return of Charles Lindbergh, who piloted the first solo, nonstop flight across the Atlantic Ocean in May 1927. Fox's

- Movietone system actually photographed sound directly onto the film, running it on a narrow filmstrip that ran alongside the larger, image portion of the film. Superior to the sound-on-record system, the Movietone method eventually became film's standard sound system.

Classic Hollywood Cinema

- By the time sound came to movies, Hollywood dictated both the business and the style of most moviemaking worldwide.

- That style, or model, for storytelling developed with the studio system and continues to dominate American filmmaking today.

- The model serves up three ingredients that give Hollywood movies their distinctive flavor: the narrative, the genre, and the author (or director).

- The right blend of these ingredients—combined with timing, marketing, and luck—have led to **blockbuster** movie hits,

  - from *Gone with the Wind* to *Avatar.* Major studios have historically relied on blockbusters to underwrite the 80 to 90 percent of films that fail at the box office.

Hollywood Genres

- In general, Hollywood narratives fit a **genre**, or category, in which conventions regarding similar characters, scenes, structures, and themes recur in combination.

- Grouping films by category enables the industry to achieve two related economic goals: *product standardization* and *product differentiation.* By making films that fall into popular genres, the movie industry provides familiar models that can be imitated.

  - **It is much easier for a studio to promote a film that already fits into a preexisting category with which viewers are familiar.**
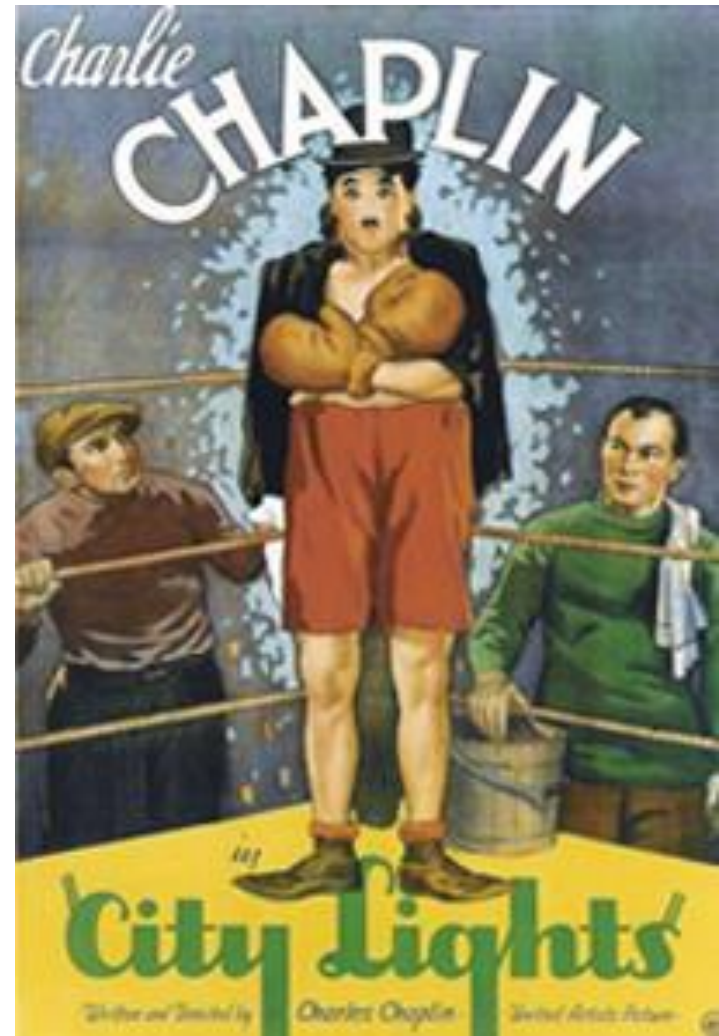
American Film Institute Film Genres

Best films according to AFI (American Film Institute) by genre

- Animation - AFI defines "animated" as **a genre in which the film's images are primarily created by computer or hand and the characters are voiced by actors.**

HIS FIRST FULL LENGTH FEATURE PRODUCTION!

Walt DISNEY'S

Snow White
and the
Seven Dwarfs

MULTIPLANE TECHNICOLOR
Distributed by RKO RADIO PICTURES, Inc.

Best films according to AFI (American Film Institute) by genre

- Romantic Comedy - AFI defines "romantic comedy" as a genre in which **the development of a romance leads to comic situations**.

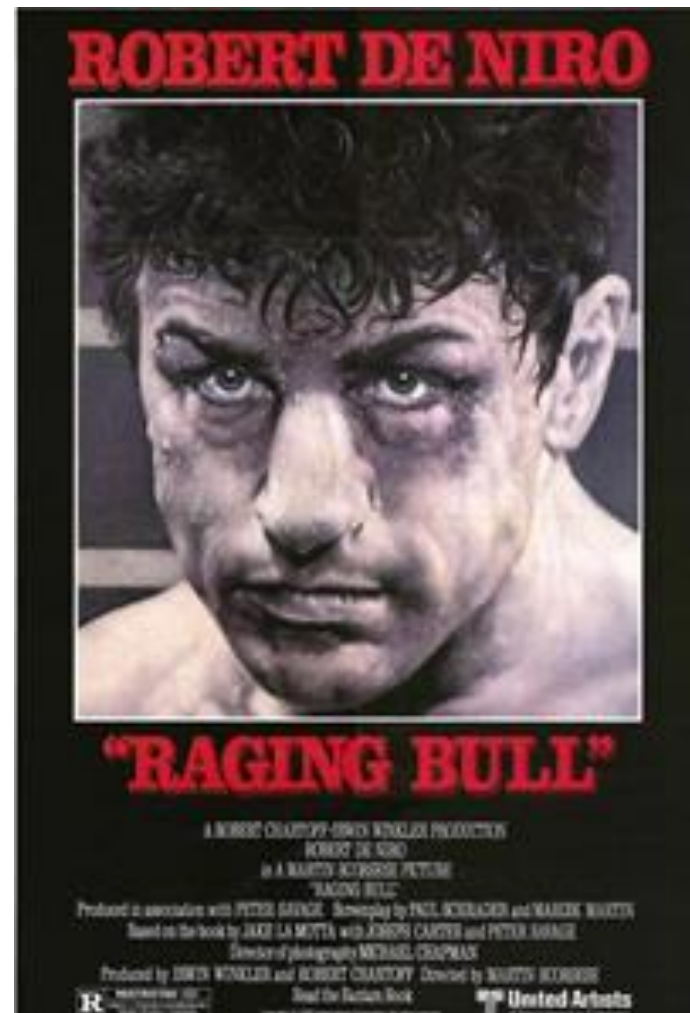# Best films according to AFI (American Film Institute) by genre

- **Western** - AFI defines "western" as a genre of films set in the American West *that embodies the spirit, the struggle and the demise of the new frontier*
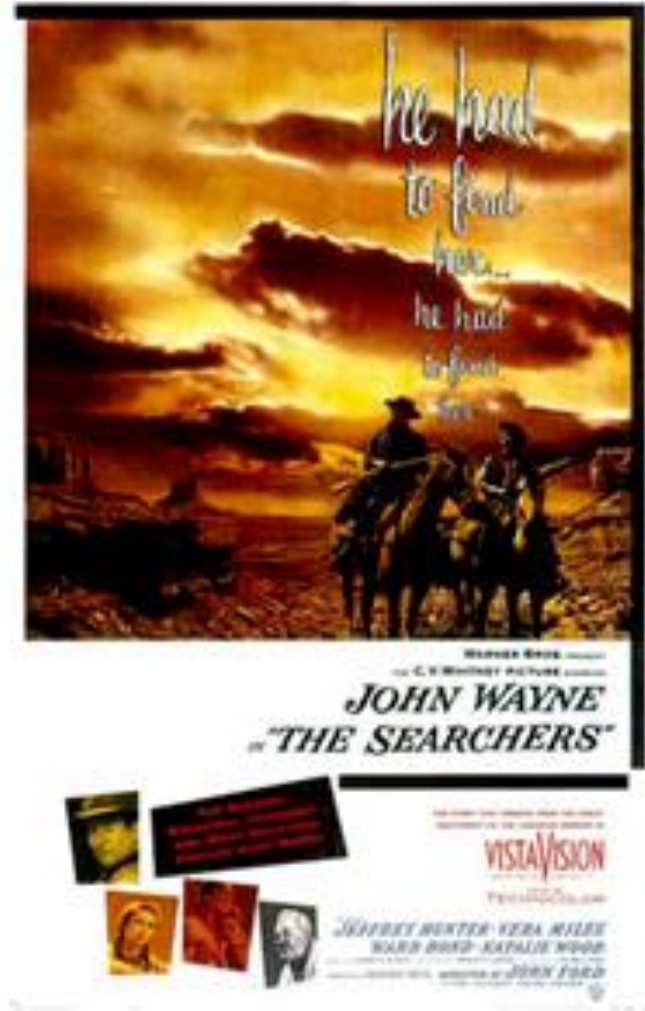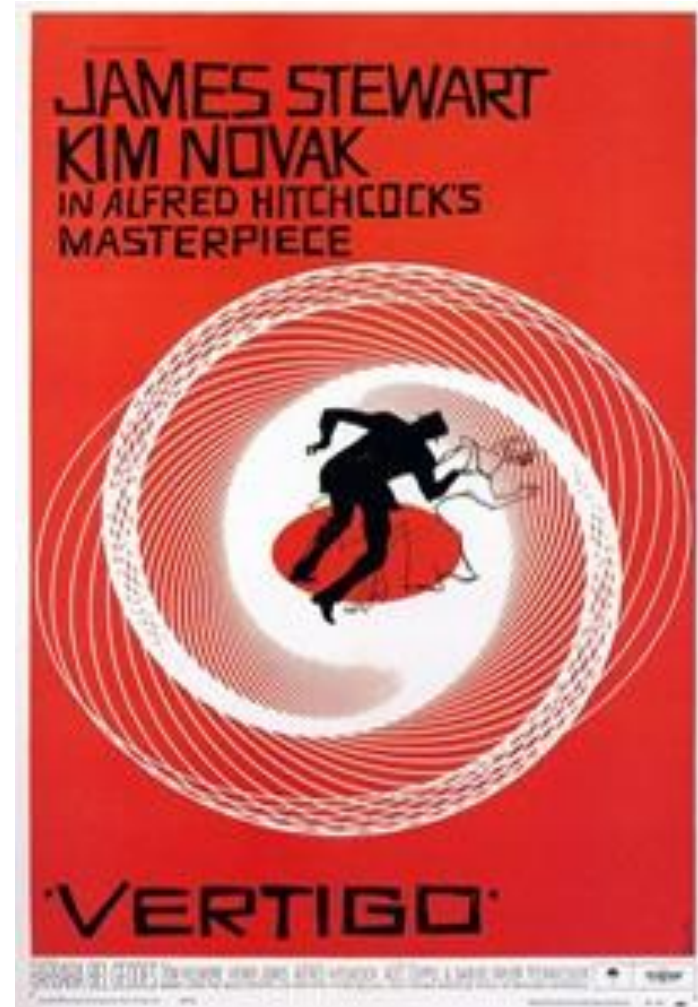
Best films according to AFI (American Film Institute) by genre

- [Sports](#) - AFI defines "sports" as a genre of films **with protagonists who play athletics or other games of competition**

Best films according to AFI (American Film Institute) by genre

- [Mystery](#) - AFI defines "mystery" as a genre that **revolves around the solution of a crime**.

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Best films according to AFI (American Film Institute) by genre

- [Fantasy](#) - AFI defines "fantasy" as a genre where live-action **characters inhabit imagined settings and/or experience situations that transcend the rules of the natural world.**

Best films according to AFI (American Film Institute) by genre

- Sci-Fi - AFI defines "science fiction" as **a genre that marries a scientific or technological premise with imaginative speculation.**

- **2001 A Space Odyssey 1968**

Best films according to AFI (American Film Institute) by genre

- [Gangster](#) - AFI defines the "gangster film" as **a genre that centers on organized crime or maverick criminals.**
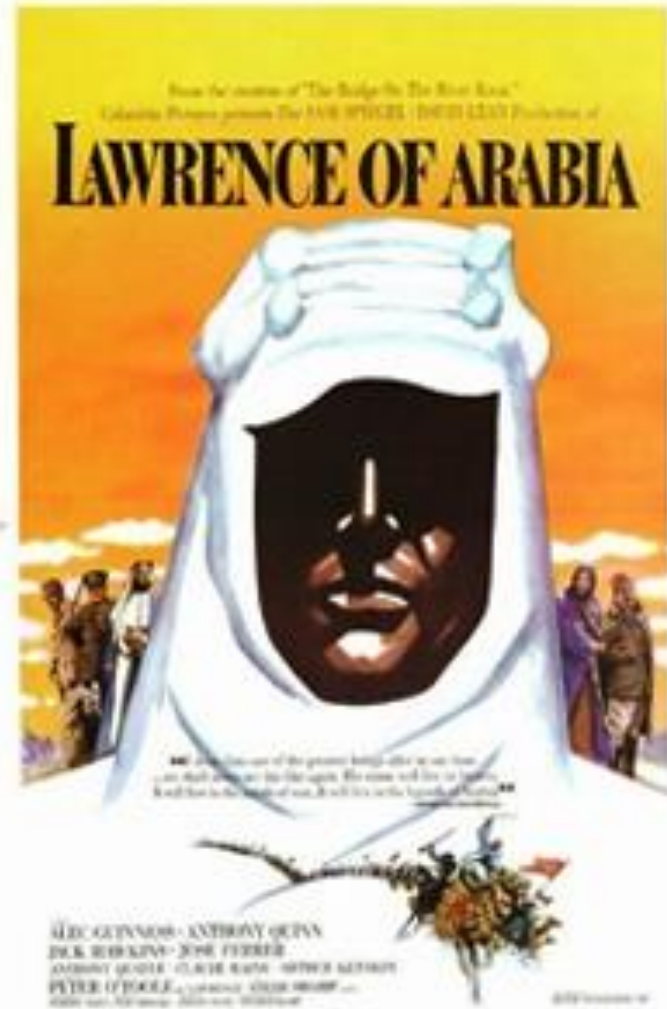
Best films according to AFI (American Film Institute) by genre

- Courtroom Drama - AFI defines "courtroom drama" as **a genre of film in which a system of justice plays a critical role in the film's narrative.**
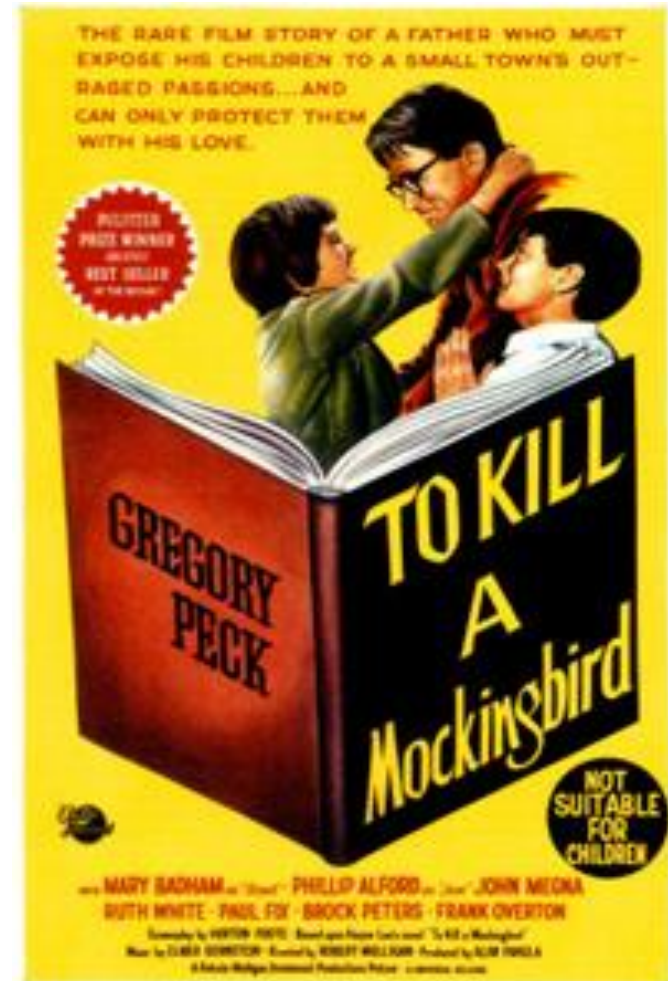
Best films according to AFI (American Film Institute) by genre

- [Epic](#) - AFI defines "epic" as **a genre of large-scale films set in a cinematic interpretation**

AFI's top 10 movies of all time

- 1 – Citizen Kane (1941)
- 2 – The Godfather (1972)
- 3 – Casablanca (1942)
- 4 – Raging Bull (1980)
- 5 – Singing In The Rain (1952)
- 6 – Gone With The Wind (1939)
- 7 – Lawrence of Arabia (1962)
- 8 – Schindler's List (1993)
- 9 – Vertigo (1958)
- 10 – The Wizard of OZ (1939)

Characteristics of a Story

- **Hook.** A beginning that grabs the audience attention.

- **Desire.** A protagonist must be motivated to achieve a goal.

- **Conflict.** An interesting conflict.

- **Challenge.** The protagonist(s) must face obstacles and setbacks

- **Climax.** The story must include a turning point.

- **Resolution.** In the ending, the author must tie up loose ends and answer any unresolved questions.

Outside the Hollywood System Foreign Films

- **Postwar prosperity and a rising globalism in the 1950s and 1960s saw a rebirth of interest in foreign-language films by such prominent directors as:**

- **Sweden's Ingmar Bergman (*Wild Strawberries*, 1957),**
- **Italy's Federico Fellini (*La Dolce Vita*, 1960),**
- **France's François Truffaut (*Jules and Jim*, 1961),**
- **Japan's Akira Kurosawa (*Seven Samurai*, 1954),**
- **India's Satyajit Ray (*Apu Trilogy*, 1955–59).**

- **Contrasting the American, Latin American and European film industries are the "Asian" film industries lead by India, China and South Korea. These countries are presenting film in a distinctly non-western style.**

  - **The following clips will give you a sense of a different cinematic approach – but as you will see the "human story" still is central to the content.**

The Documentary Tradition

- Over time, the documentary developed an identity apart from its commercial presentation. As an educational, noncommercial form, the documentary usually required the backing of industry, government, or philanthropy to cover costs.

- By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the development of portable cameras had led to **cinema verité** (a French term for "truth film"). This documentary style allowed filmmakers to go where cameras could not go before and record fragments of everyday life more unobtrusively. Directly opposed to packaged, high-gloss Hollywood features, verité aimed to track reality, employing a rough, grainy look and shaky, handheld camera work.

The Rise of Independent Films

- The success of documentary films like *Super Size Me* and *Fahrenheit 9/11* dovetails with the rise of **indies**, or independently produced films. As opposed to directors working in the Hollywood system, independent filmmakers typically operate on a shoestring budget and show their movies in thousands of campus auditoriums and at hundreds of small film festivals.

- "After the success of *The Blair Witch Project* . . . it seemed that anyone with a dream, a camera and an Internet account could get a film made—or, at least, market it cheaply once it was made."
  - –Abby Ellin, *New York Times*, 2000
- In 2004, Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* became, by far, the most successful independent film to date.

Popular Movies and Implications for Democracy

- At the cultural level, commercial U.S. films function as **consensus narratives**, a term that describes cultural products that become popular and command wide attention. For all their limitations, classic Hollywood movies, as consensus narratives, provide shared cultural experiences, operating across different times and cultures.

- At the international level, countries continue to struggle with questions about the influence of American films on local customs and culture.

- With the rise of international media conglomerates, it has become more difficult to awaken public debate over issues of movie diversity and America's domination of the film business.