



Censorship - MPAA

Film Ratings



Journal Questions:

- What are the different ratings a movie can get?
- Why do movies get ratings?
- Who might want to know what a movie's rating is and why?
- How do you think a film's rating is determined?

In the beginning...

- Prior to the 1960's, movies studio's and filmmakers “self policed” their films.
- Very few studios/filmmakers pushed the limit
- The 1960's brought a “new kind of American Movie”.
 - Social and political unrest resulted in more “real” and graphic/abrasive films

In the Beginning.....

- This “New kind of American Film” created a new problem for film go-ers... “what films are appropriate to see?”
- In order to address parental concerns about the decency of films held meetings with community groups, industry representatives and film makers to find a solution.

Motion Picture Association of America

- The MPAA viewed films prior to their releases, then gave a “certificate of approval” or not.
- Based their decisions on a number of factors:
 - 1) Language that was spoken in the film
 - 2) How people were portrayed or shown in a film.
- Negative ratings would cripple box office performance. An approval would usually increase box office sales.

Initial Rating System

- Nov 1, 1968 the first rating system came out:
 - G – general audiences
 - M- mature audiences (like our current PG and PG-13)
 - R – Restricted
 - X – No one under 17 allowed

How do Ratings work?

- Film Ratings are VOLUNTARY
 - Films can choose to not be rated...
- Ratings given in accordance to:
 - Language, violence, nudity, content

Who rates the films?

- While the actual names of the people that review films and vote on a rating is kept secret there are stated criteria for being a reviewer:
- *“members must have a shared parenthood experience, must be possessed of an intelligent maturity, and most of all, have the capacity to put themselves in the role of most American parents so they can view a film and apply a rating that most parents would find suitable and helpful in aiding their decisions about their children and what movies they see.”*

Criticism

- While many people agree with MPAA ratings
 - It helps families choose which films to go see/buy
- Some people see the power the MPAA wields as dangerous
 - If a film gets an R or NC-17 rating, it's like a “kiss of death” for some movies

Rating Assignment

- List 3-4 films that you have seen and supply the ratings for those films. Explain the following:
- Do you agree with the ratings of the film?
- Describe what occurs in each film that you believe caused the rating it received.
- If you do not agree with the given rating, argue why it should have a different rating (higher or lower)
- **ASSIGNMENT DUE MONDAY!!!!!!**