



A History of Film Stardom, Part 2

The Post-Studio Era, 1960-2010

Introduction

- This lecture is about the economics and business practices of stardom and the ways in which stars have been operating within the industrial context of film production, distribution and exhibition since the 1960s.
- It sets out some of the main characteristics of the Hollywood star system, noting how stars have functioned in the post-studio era.
- It also looks at the roles of shadowy figures in Hollywood such as agents, managers, publicists and attorneys.

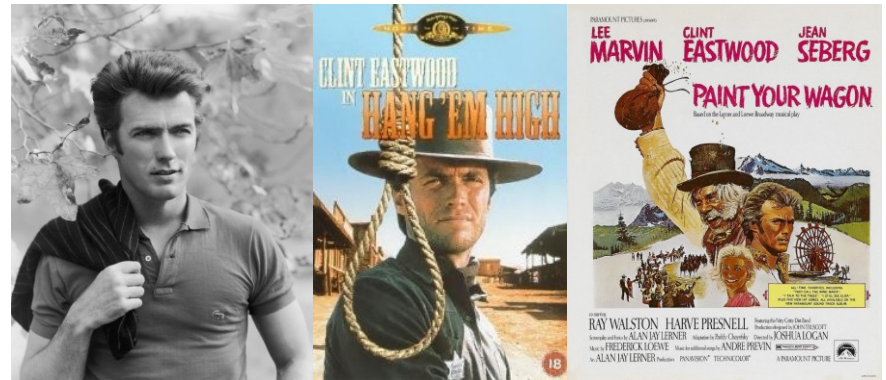
The Post-Studio Era

- The Hollywood studio system crumbled after 1960 as a result of anti-monopolistic legislation, competition from television and declining audience figures.
- Yet stars remained central to the new production systems implemented to ensure the industry's survival.
- The 'unit-package system': independent production companies negotiated distribution deals with the major Hollywood studios with at least one star as an integral component (See Paul McDonald, *The Star System*, 2000: 71-8, 81-8 and 111-13).

Clint Eastwood: Star-Producer

- Became a movie actor in the late 1950s
- His appearance in the TV show *Rawhide* in 1959-65 propelled him to stardom.
- He made Spaghetti Westerns in Europe in the early to mid-1960s
- He formed his own production company Malpaso in 1967, which produced:

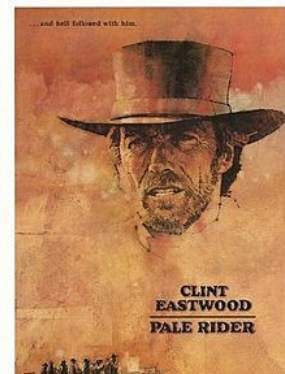
- *Hang 'Em High* (1968)
- *Coogan's Bluff* (1968)
- *Paint Your Wagon* (1969)
- *Two Mules for Sister Sara* (1970)
- *Play Misty for Me* (1971)
- *Dirty Harry* (1971)
- *High Plains Drifter* (1973)
- *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* (1974)
- *Every Which Way but Loose* (1978)
- *Sudden Impact* (1983)
- *Pale Rider* (1985)
- *Heartbreak Ridge* (1986).



Clint Eastwood
Dirty Harry



Clint Eastwood
Every Which Way But Loose

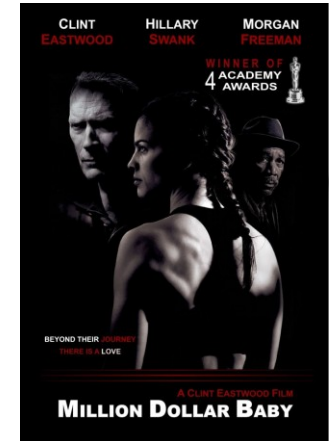
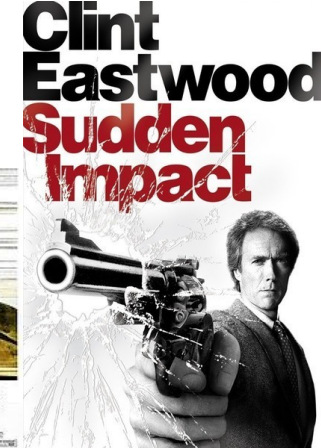


Clint Eastwood
Pale Rider

Clint Eastwood: Star-Director

- He directed:

- *Play Misty for Me* (1971)
- *High Plains Drifter* (1973)
- *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976)
- *Broncho Billy* (1980)
- *Sudden Impact* (1983)
- *Pale Rider* (1985)
- *Heartbreak Ridge* (1986)
- *Unforgiven* (1992)
- *The Bridges of Madison County* (1995)
- *Million Dollar Baby* (2004)
- *Changeling* (2008)



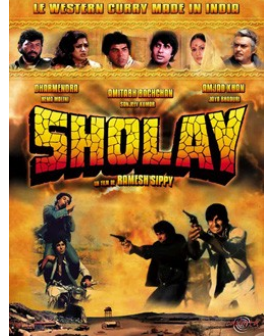
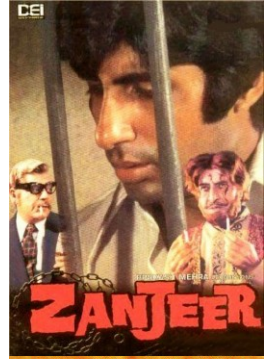
- Between 1971 and 2014, he also produced 40 films and composed the soundtracks to 8 films.

Clint Eastwood: quadruple-hyphenate

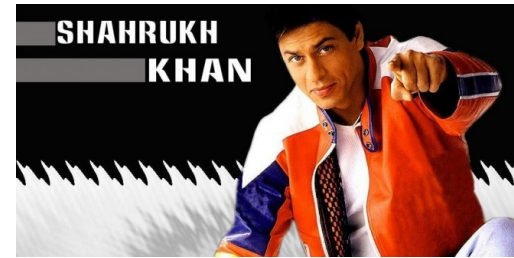
- Eastwood has become an ‘Oscar winning producer-director-actor-composer quadruple-hyphenate status’ (Jeanine Basinger, *The Star Machine*, 2007: 523).
- Burt Lancaster, Kirk Douglas and Marlon Brando all set up their own production companies and directed and/or produced their own films during the fifties and sixties (See McDonald, *The Star System*, 2000: 75-76).
- In the 1990s and 2000s, Oscar-winning actor George Clooney, transformed himself from television star (most notably on the series *E/R* in 1984-5 and 1994-2009) to film star to become the writer-director-star of *Good Night, and Good Luck* in 2005 and the co-writer-director-star-producer of *The Ides of March* in 2011.

Amitabh Bachchan

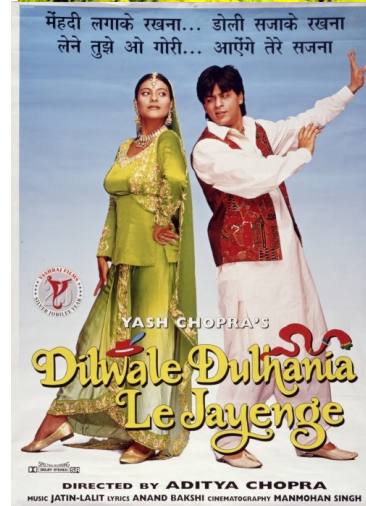
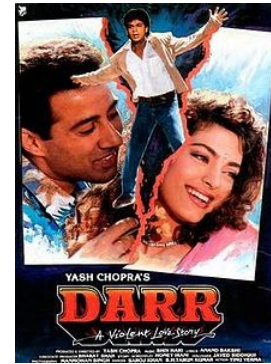
- Break-through role in ***Zanjeer/Chains*** (Prakash Mehra, 1973).
- Became a major star ***Sholay/Embers*** (Ramesh Sippyin, 1975).
- During the late Seventies he became one of Bollywood's biggest stars.
- His star status remained unprecedented until the mid-1980s.
- Amitabh Bachchan Corporation Ltd formed in 1995.
- Produced ***Tere Mere Sapne/Our Dreams*** (Joy Augustine, 1996)
- Produced a further 7 films between 1997 and 2011.

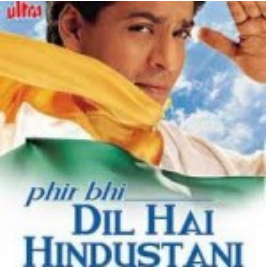


Shah Rukh Khan



- Dubbed 'the Tom Cruise of Hindi Cinema' and the 'King of Bollywood.'
- He initially played villainous and anti-heroic roles in *Baazigar/Gambler* (Abbas Alibhai and Mastan Alibhai Burmawalla, 1993) and *Darr/Fear* (Yash Chopra, 1993).
- However, his break-through came in 1995 with his leading role in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge/The Brave-hearted Will Take the Bride* (Aditya Chopra).





Dreamz Unlimited

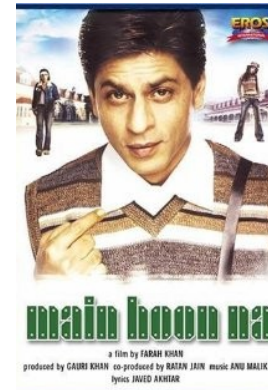


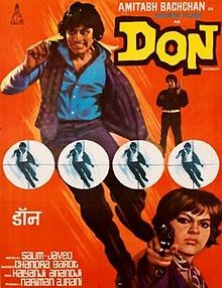
- In 1999, Shah Rukh Khan created the production company Dreamz Unlimited with actress Juhi Chawla and director Aziz Mirzi.
- ***Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani/But the Heart is Still Indian*** (Aziz Mirza, 2000) was their first production.
- Their second production was ***Asoka*** (Santosh Sivan, 2001), an expensive historical drama that attracted attention at the Venice and Toronto Film Festivals.
- Their third film was ***Chalte Chalte/While We Were Walking*** (Aziz Mirza, 2003), their most successful.

Red Chillies Entertainment



- In 2003, Shah Rukh Khan set up his own company, Red Chillies Entertainment.
- SRK hired his former choreographer Farah Khan to direct him in ***Main Hoon Na/I Am Here for You*** (2004).
- Other hit productions include:
 - ***Om Shanti Om*** (Farah Khan 2007)
 - ***My Name is Khan*** (Karan Johar, 2010)
 - ***Ra.One*** (Anubhav Sinha, 2011)
 - ***Don 2*** (Farhan Akhtar, 2011).



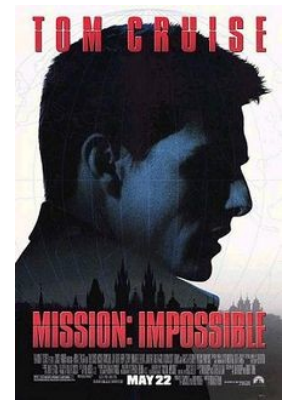


Bollywood transformed



- 10 May 1998, Bollywood was granted 'industry status' by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting.
- This opened up opportunities for investment by banks and other financial institutions.
- This in turn led to the adoption of more formalised operating and accounting systems.
- As a result, productions became more cost-effective and budgets escalated, which led to marked improvements in the production standards of Bollywood films
- Shah Rukh Khan's *Don* (Farhan Akhtar, 2006) is a remake Amitabh Bachchan's *Don* (Chandra Barot, 1978). It is a big-budget glossy spectacular, having more in common with Tom Cruise's *Mission: Impossible* (Brian de Palma, 1996) than Bachchan's tough, gritty underworld thriller.

Enter Tom Cruise



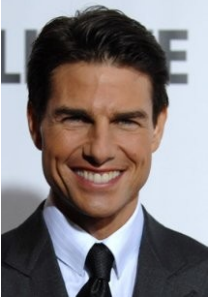
- In 1996, Tom Cruise reportedly earned \$70 million for *Mission: Impossible*.
- These earnings probably ‘did not result entirely from Cruise’s status as star actor, for he was also involved in the project as joint producer through his company, Cruise-Wagner Productions. With a budget estimated at \$75 million, the film took \$181 million at the North American box office during 1996 and \$271.6 million internationally. It can be presumed that Cruise’s cut will have also included earnings from video and television windows’ (Paul McDonald, *The Star System*, 2000: 100).

Tom Cruise: Star-producer

- *Mission: Impossible* launched Tom Cruise as a star-producer.
- He has also produced, among others:
 - *The Others* (2001)
 - *Vanilla Sky* (2001)
 - *The Last Samurai* (2003)
 - *Jack Reacher* (2012)
 - Plus four more *Mission: Impossible*s (2000, 2006, 2011, 2015).



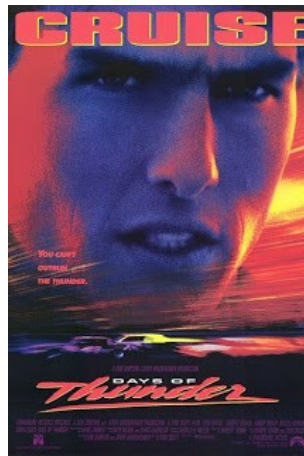
Tom Cruise: 'neo-star'



- 'Neo-star': i.e., the contemporary Hollywood star that has achieved stardom after the breakdown of the studio system and the demise of the star machine that had previously manufactured stars.
- Jeanine Basinger describes Cruise as 'an all-purpose superstar and, to date, a truly durable box office champion', with his combination of blockbuster hits with mass appeal and smaller films that challenge his acting ability (*The Star Machine*, 2007: 549).

Tom Cruise: film celebrity

- P. David Marshall uses Tom Cruise as his main example of a film celebrity (See Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, 1997: 94-118).
- Marshall identifies *Days of Thunder* (Tony Scott, 1990) as the star's real break-through film in that it marked the 'triumph of his "picture personality"' (Marshall, 1997: 103-4).
- He writes that the 'truth of the movie text is borne out in the "real" Cruise' (104).



Cruise in the 1980s

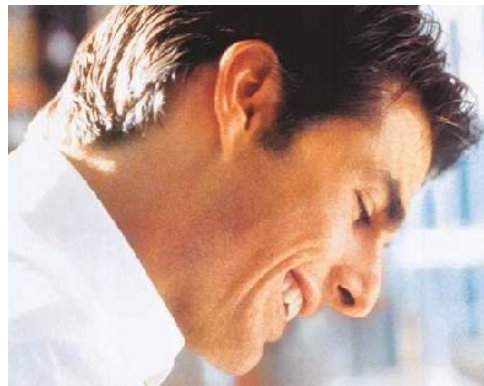


- **Top Gun** (Tony Scott, 1986) made Tom Cruise a major star in Hollywood.
- 1983-5: Cruise starred in **Risky Business** (Paul Brickman, 1983), **All the Right Moves** (Michael Chapman, 1983) and **Legend** (Ridley Scott, 1985).
- 1981-3: Supporting roles **Taps** (Harold Becker, 1981), **The Outsiders** (Francis Ford Coppola, 1983) and **Losin' It** (Curtis Hanson, 1983)
- He personified of youth as pure action, self-assured to the point of being cocky, unthinking and insensitive and focused to the point of being narrow-minded.
- All of this was expressed through his idiosyncratic smile and grin, which soon became his trademark.



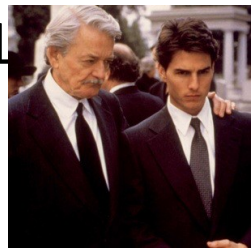
Groomed by Michael Ovitz

- Michael Ovitz was the co-founder of the talent agency CAA (Creative Artists Agency).
- According to P. David Marshall, Cruise's team of publicity agents managed the consistency of his image as he appeared in films for several major film companies, including Geffen Pictures, Universal, Twentieth Century Fox and Paramount (Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, 1997: 100-101).



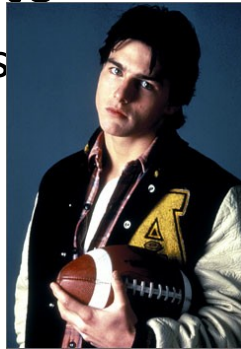
Cruise's Type: The cocky young man

- Cruise was ‘the most successful of the men who became stars at unprecedentedly young ages during the youth film mania of the mid-1980s’ (Dennis Bingham, ‘Kidman, Cruise, and Kubrick: A Brechtian Pastiche,’ in *More Than a Method* (eds) Baron, Carsson & tomasulo, 2004: 253).
- ‘He developed the persona of a callow but cocky young man whose excess of confidence, expressed with a 100-watt smile, makes him attractive but also suggests that he needs tempering and maturing’ (ibid.).
- Examples include: *Top Gun*, *The Color of Money* (Martin Scorsese, 1986), *Rain Man* (Barry Levinson, 1988), *A Few Good Men* (Rob Reiner, 1992), *The Firm* (Sydney Pollack, 1993) and *Jerry Maguire* (Cameron Crowe, 1996).



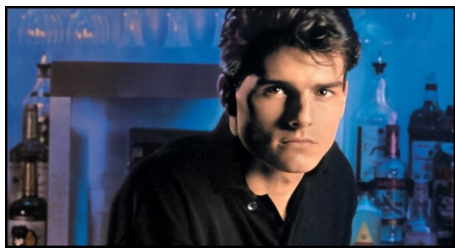
Not a rebel

- ‘The connection of youth and confidence through Cruise’s persona can be characterized as a celebration of personal will, not to transform the system, but to move smoothly through the system to occupy already designated positions of power and influence’ (P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, 1997: 101).
- ‘In the filmic texts, this relationship to the ease of success is manifested around either sports/athleticism or the managing of sophisticated technology. In all cases, Cruise is something of a natural, but also a natural risk taker who goes beyond the bounds of technology or game to demonstrate ultimate human dominance of will’ (Marshall, 1997: 102).



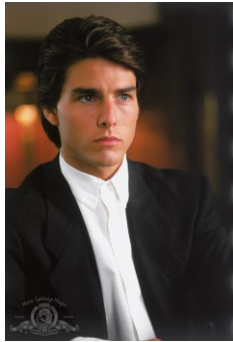
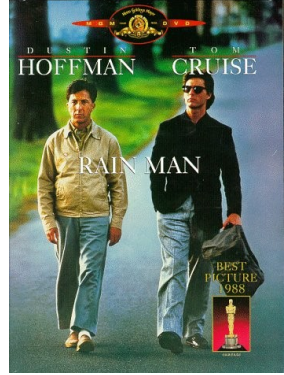
Cruise's character in *Cocktail* (1988)

- '... never separates from our image of the Cruise star and, in fact, the film – through camera angles, obsessive shots of the Cruise smile and grin, and a celebration of Cruise's body and movement – actively plays and integrates the Cruise screen personality into the meaning of the text. Cruise as Flanagan becomes very quickly a bartending star, which allows him to act within the narrative as the star. The character is thronged by adoring fans in several sequences in the film. These fans, the bar patrons, are predominantly women, and their adulation of Flanagan for his acrobatic bartending skills is connected through the film text to the sexual aura of Cruise as male star. He acknowledges their looks and responds with greater histrionics' (Marshall, 1997: 103).



Acting against type

- *Rain Man* (Barry Levinson, 1988) co-starring Dustin Hoffman.
- ‘Cruise, through this film, is working to transform his public image from malleable and predictable male film star to serious actor who chooses very carefully the productions with which he is involved’ (P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, 1997: 112).
- ‘Within the cultural production of films, the name Cruise develops a brand-name status that not only includes his promise of alluring filmic masculinity, but also is symbolic of serious and quality films (Marshall 1997: 112).



Gravitas & Controversy

- ***Born on the Fourth of July*** (Oliver Stone, 1989)
 - Won 2 Oscars (Best Director & Best Editing)
 - Cruise was nominated for Best Actor in a Leading Role.
- ***Interview with a Vampire*** (Neil Jordan, 1994)
 - Controversy when author Ann Rice denounced the casting of Cruise as Lestat.
 - Cruise proved himself as an actor against such critics, extending his range.



Pat Kingsley and PMK



- Pat Kingsley ran PMK (PR company).
- Kingsley and PMK were widely considered to be ‘manipulative and abrasive’ when it came to controlling the media’s access to their star clients, particularly Tom Cruise (Paul McDonald, ‘The Star System: the production of Hollywood Stardom in the Post-Studio Era,’ in *The Contemporary Hollywood Film Industry*, 2008: 175).
- For *Far and Away* (Ron Howard, 1992), Cruise insisted Universal Pictures hire Kingsley and PMK to publicize the film rather than the studio’s own staff.
- Kingsley organized a weekend junket at the Four Season’s hotel in Los Angeles. Journalists were forced to sign a consent agreement stipulating that quotes from the stars could only be used at the time of the immediate theatrical release of the film.

Pre-editing press coverage

- ‘Kingsley and PMK were therefore representative of a climate in which publicists not only rigorously guarded access to Hollywood stars but also wrested control away from magazine or newspaper editors by effectively pre-editing coverage of clients’ (McDonald, 2008: 175).
- This fuelled press and public speculation.
- In 1990, Cruise’s romance with his *Days of Thunder* co-star Nicole Kidman became a hot item in the press and celebrity magazines, with paparazzi photographs showed them leaving restaurants together.



Increasingly controversy & speculation

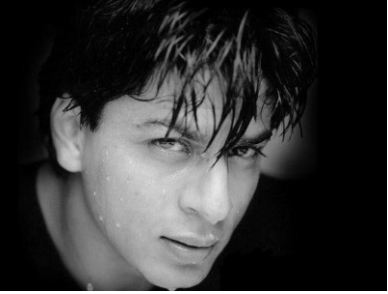
- In 2004, Cruise fired his publicist Pat Kingsley and replaced her with his sister Lee Anne DeVette.
- His subsequent promotion of Scientology, his public criticism of Brook Shields use of antidepressants and his passionate display of his love for Katie Holmes by jumping about on Oprah Winfrey's couch, generated a backlash against the star.
- In the wake of bad press, Paramount terminated Cruise's contract.



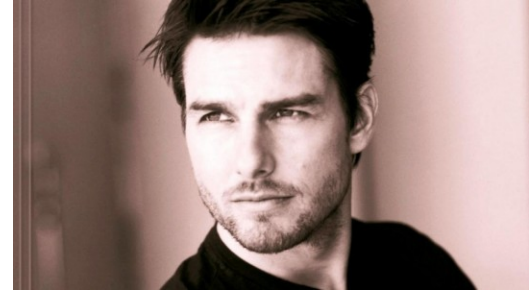
Cruise bounces back

- In 2005, he was involved in a takeover of United Artists and his summer block-buster, *The War of the Worlds* (Steven Spielberg) was a hit, grossing over \$235 million in USA alone.
- His *Mission: Impossible* and *Jack Reacher* franchises continue to prosper (further sequels are currently in production) and *Top Gun 2* promises to excite considerable interest over the next few years.





Conclusion



- Since the 1980s, the careers of film stars have involved via a set recognizable stages, even a shedding of skins in which the earlier stages of development or incarnations are actively cast aside or rejected to produce a sense of growth or advancement.
- Tom Cruise and Shah Rukh Khan have much in common in this respect.
- Having once personified an over-confident and ambitious youthful spirit, they have both proven themselves as actors, as businessmen and as figures who generate gossip and speculation.

After the break

- We will be looking in more detail at the role of agents, managers, attorneys and publicists to consider just how important they have become in terms of managing star careers in the post-studio era.
- Any questions?

