

Image is a word picture which appears to our five senses, sight, sound, touch, smell and taste, "Strictly Ballroom" was directed by Baz Luhrmann and was released in 1993. The film has a combination of all these three approaches. It is a romantic, musical and comedy. The director makes use of ~~all~~ all these possibilities in the plot, characterisation, camera work, ~~and~~ editing, lighting, directing and music. The film sets itself up as a fairytale - fantasy. The title "Strictly Ballroom" signals the fact that we are to enter a world that is bound by strict rules - in which our hero Scott will rebel.

When we first see the main character Scott Hastings, we see him in the image of a typical ballroom dancer, wearing flashy clothes and sparkling hair. But his use of the deviant dance steps, quickly marks him as the rebel against the authoritarian regime. His next image

is of true or 'pure' dancer. Wearing plain clothes, a white singlet and black pants as he dances in front of the mirror, ~~is~~ Throughout the course of the film Scott's hair and costume is what you could term 'normal' compared to the other characters. This marks him as the 'everyman' the audience can relate to.

Scott has a fiery individualistic and rebellious element to his character as revealed by comments such as this one to his coach Les Kendall, "Maybe I'm just sick of dancing somebody's else's steps all the time". This fundamental issue to his character is how to resolve his love for ballroom dancing with his individuality and creativity.

The example of Fran is an important one in the course of the film. Throughout the film she is presented as a 'frump', unattractive in herself, plain in clothing. Luhrmann deliberately



indulges in the 'ugly duckling' image with Fran. He even uses the most common device of the glasses. Gradually as Fran rehearses with Scott she becomes more attractive with more fitting-flattering clothes, softer hair and finally the removal of the glasses.

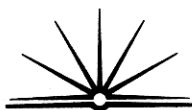
The film opens up with the image of the theatre curtain. ~~This effect is~~ - This immediately suggests the world of fantasy - that is the theatre. This effect is enhanced and sparkling lighting effect writes "Strictly Ballroom". We see figures in silhouette, in slow motion. The famous waltz "The Blue Danube" plays as the music builds in intensity as we see swirling dancing couples.

One effective image of the film is when Fran and Scott dance on the rooftop. This visual image is interesting. It has the rooftop,



the large coca cola neon sign, the clothesline and the city in the background. The clothesline reminds us of the humble origins, the ~~coca~~ coca sign is the glittering commercial world that is the ballroom, the rooftop lifts them from above the world and the city in the background reminds us that there is more out there than ballroom dancing. It reflects the power Fran and Scott both have not having to listen to anyone and their rules.

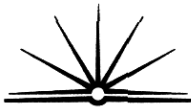
Luhrmann ^{uses} ~~uses~~ a wide variety of different types of camera angles and shots to ^{make} ~~explain~~ the film more successful. He uses ~~as~~ a lot of close ups. Some examples are looks of horror as Scott does the deviant steps but for his ^{father} ~~dad~~ Doug watching it is a close up of his delighted face. His father always wanted his son to dance his own steps and to be free. Luhrmann uses extreme close up also. He used it when Fran is discussing to Scott that she wants to dance with him at the



Pan Pacific. He also a lot of bright lighting like blue, yellow and red to capture the glitz and glamour of this ballroom world. He uses dark lighting to create evil and secretiveness.

Image of Power and Authority is dealt with throughout the course of the film. Barry Fife who is the president of the Australian Dance Federation is the most powerful man in the film.

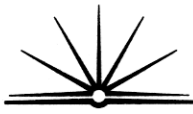
The scene which demonstrates his power is when the dance federation hold meetings but it is actually a business board meeting, with Barry as chairman. Another scene which shows authority over Barry is when Scott ~~is~~ knocks over the Barry Fife 'Dance to Win' videos. It shows he emphasises that he does not care about who is the president. ~~Similar~~ Similarly this happens to Barry at the end when he falls knocking over the trophies. Nor the audience or his characters seem to care about him.



His toupee also falls indicating that he is a sad and pathetic character.

Image of Authority occurs when at the end Fran and Scott are dancing to the rhythm of the people's hand claps and soon they are joined by them.

The fairytale "Cinderella" relates to "Strictly Ballroom" in many ways. Cinderella as well as Fran transformed during the course of the film. Cinderella lives with her two step sisters and step mother, they don't really enjoy having her around. Cinderella is a slave to them. At the beginning she used to wear ugly clothes, bad hair and never wore make-up. Once her sisters and mother were going to the ball and didn't let her go she wished that she could go. Her wish came true, Cinderella transformed into a beautiful princess once she got her wish. This image ~~casts~~ portrays that anyone is beautiful!



Tuesday the 22nd, the daily telegraph an article called "Sadam lets prisoners go" is an article about Hossen, Sadam who let out all the prisoners except for the murders in his country Iraq. He like Barry Fife has the power to do whatever he wants. The president can do in their power what they wish.

Image is created everywhere in our world. "Strictly Ballroom" has taught me to be myself and don't follow the rules of others. We can not stop image but can create a good image.