

Academy Awards offers just boring hypocrisy

Commentary by Elaine Ostry

While watching the Academy Awards on Monday night, I just had to laugh. It was bad, not just boring, but really, really bad.

Paul Hogan opened up the show with a few laughs. He encouraged the nominees to let their emotions go — "If you lose," he said, "burst into tears! Or huffing out of the auditorium wouldn't be so bad..."

Unfortunately, nobody did either of these things. It was the usual mix of fashion show/garden party that we have come to expect, with its focus on appearance.

Just as interesting as finding out who won was seeing what everyone was wearing. There's usually someone who shows up looking wierd. Unfortunately, this year no one was really daring; Cher wasn't there. Although trying to rack up the expense of some of those dresses was enough to amaze.

As far as MCs go, Chevy Chase was pretty good. A few cheap shots at the president, but hey, that's OK. But he and Goldie Hawn, and later on William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy, should take prizes for some of the most awkward and contrived dialogue ever. Add to this Shirley MacLaine stepping out of a (get this) starship that was lowered onto the stage. "To me, this is basic transportation," she said, and proceeded to tell us her memories of carving drawings on her cave a millennium ago. Oh Shirley, have you no pride? Or sense?! Bette Midler was one of the very few really funny speakers. She called this "a pompous occasion," and she was right.

Nothing is more predictable than the Academy Awards. Nothing. Sure enough, *Platoon* won Best Picture. It was a picture that

came at the right time, and with the right publicist. It was still a good picture, though. Oliver Stone also won the Best Director award for *Platoon*, and his speech was one of the few direct and honest ones. Woody Allen and Ruth Prawer Thakvala won the Best Screenplay awards for *Hannah and Her Sisters* and *A Room with a View*; they did fantastic work for both.

I was very disappointed that *The Decline of the American Empire* didn't win the Foreign Film award. That film proved that Canadians and Canadian film aren't necessarily boring. I also thought that Maggie Smith deserved the Best Supporting Actress award for *A Room with a View*, but Dianne Wiest of *Hannah and Her Sisters* was so happy that you couldn't hold it against her. Michael Caine of the same movie won Best Supporting Actor; that category, I thought, was the hardest to choose because all of the actors were good. As opposed to the Best Actress nominees, among whom Marlee Matlin was the only one who really shone.

Oh! There are surprises in the Academy Awards! Dear Paul Newman *finally* got his Oscar. I guess they couldn't disappoint him for the eighth time. Too bad we missed out on his emotional speech; it was also the first year he skipped the ceremonies.

Another very ironic surprise was Steven Spielberg winning the prestigious Thalberg Award for Directors of Great Distinction. It was so funny to listen to the (long) intro, the film clips of Spielberg as a child, and Spielberg walking onstage to a standing ovation — remembering how last year he wasn't even nominated for *The Color Purple*, which



Platoon's big win surprises no one

was totally shunned by the very people who were applauding.

All this hypocrisy is a little tedious, and I

heard with relief Goldie Hawn's rather cryptic sign-off: "And a billion goodbyes!" Until next year.

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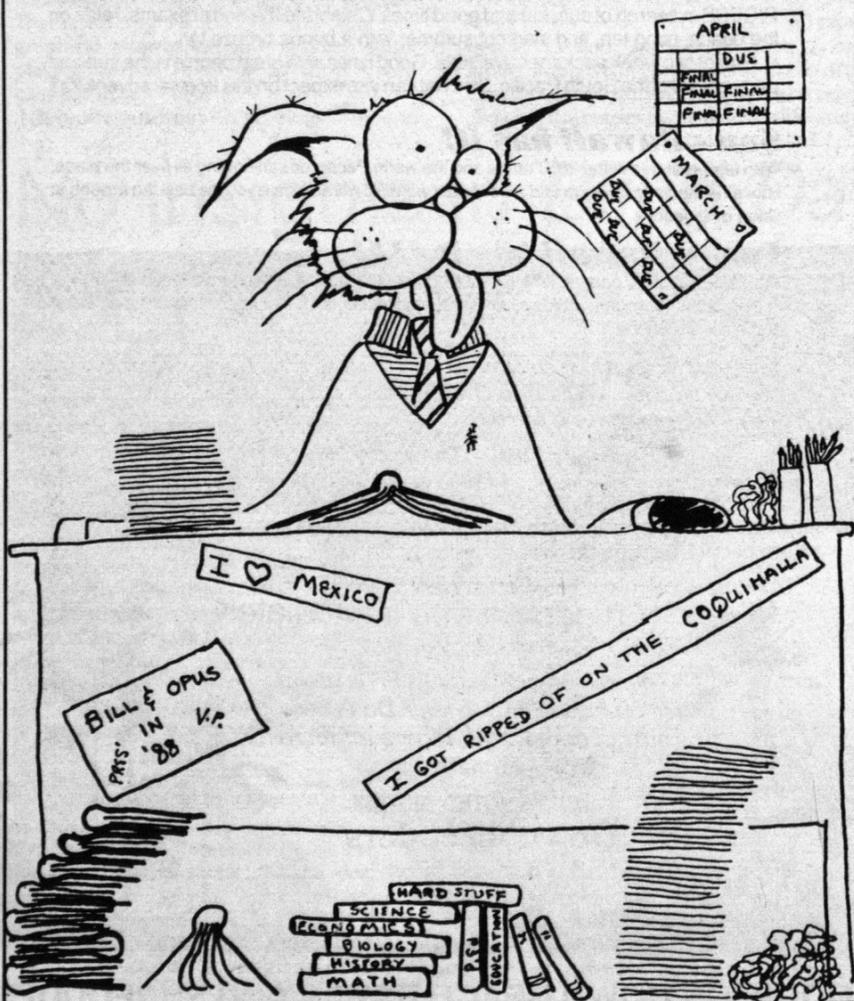
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