

A PHILOSOPHY OF FILM EDUCATION

By

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**THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE

FACULTY

OF

EDUCATION

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Fall 2007**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the development of a philosophy of film education. Why film? Films are a rich source of enjoyment for many of us; however, they can also give us insight into the world beyond our immediate experience and can, and often do inspire us, shock us, or make us rethink our assumptions about the world. I argue that film can be an agent of change. Everyday consumers can draw knowledge and self-identity from the mythic content of motion pictures and television programs. Far from being merely entertainment, mass media vehicles such as film convey ideas and ideals regarding the nature of the world and the universe and the moral structure of society. Through its integration of cinematic form and sound, film aspires to become a language, much like the other arts, such as literature, painting, and photography, are languages, and thus is amenable to education.

In this study I attempt to identify, explain, and justify some of the key aims, content, and pedagogical approaches of an education in film. I argue that filmmaking is a cognitive, collaborative and constructivist activity. This dissertation examines the place of film in the broad context of a general education. In order to further place the study in context, I explore and outline a brief history of film education in Canada and illustrate why film is significant to our understanding of the arts in general. I explore the reasons why film music may be seen as being fundamental to the film experience. I argue that the notion of literacy should be broadened to include the visual. Finally, I develop perspectives on teaching film theory and practice, including assessment, as part of a conception of curriculum and benefit in process from interviews with two local film educators.

Keywords: aims of education; film; film music; popular culture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who have helped and guided me through the process of writing this thesis. I would like to express my deepest thanks:

First and foremost, I would like to thank my mom, Odette, and my son, Ryan for their unfailing love, support, and tolerance of my tendency to work too much.

To the wonderful scholars in the Faculty of Education with whom I have been privileged to associate and who have helped guide my writing and thinking: Dr. Yaroslav Senyshyn, Dr. Heesoon Bai, and most especially my supervisor Dr. Stuart Richmond, who encouraged me to write authentically, and for his thoughtful, insightful and critical feedback throughout my PhD experience.

To Dr. Ron Burnett, whose writings have inspired me to investigate filmmaking as an educational medium.

To my friends, Dr. Jared Burrows, whose poetic lens and enormous talent as a musician and educator, has inspired me to write bravely and faithfully, and Robert Millard, a West Van Secondary teacher, whose discussions, interviews and insights has truly inspired me to become the best educator that I can be.

Finally, I would like to thank the many filmmakers / directors who have given me the inspiration to “follow my bliss” as a filmmaker; and especially to George Lucas and Joseph Campbell (1904-1987), who have helped me to understand, through their collective works, the significance of the quest for the ‘Hero’s Journey’.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v

Chapter 1

Introduction.....	1
Aims of a Film Education Curriculum.....	5
Can Film Curricula Satisfy the General Aims of Education?	9
Constructivism.....	12
Media Literacy and Education.....	24
Conclusion.....	31

Chapter 2

A Brief History of Film Education in Canada.....	33
What the Arts Teach Us.....	40
Film as the ‘Art of Our Time’.....	50
Popular Culture as Pedagogy.....	63
Conclusion.....	75

Chapter 3

The Invisible Art of Film Music.....	78
The Birth of Film Music.....	81
The Artistry of Sound.....	84
Sound Effects.....	88
The Role of Film Music.....	91
Film Music-Then and Now	99
Conclusion.....	102

Chapter 4

Once Upon A Reel: Film as a Storytelling Medium.....	103
Film as Mythic Image	111
The Pedagogy of Film in the Classroom.....	119
Why Use Film in Education?	140
Conclusion.....	143

Chapter 5

A Curriculum for Film in Education.....	146
A Curriculum Approach.....	155
Learning Outcomes.....	157
Assessment and Evaluation.....	161
Conclusion.....	163
Bibliography.....	168
Appendices.....	181
Appendix A: Pierre Grenier’s Interview - November 15th, 2005.....	181
Seanna McPherson’s Interview - January 13 th , 2006.....	192
Appendix B: Digital Video Assessment Sheet and Evaluation Rubric.....	207

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

There is an axiom in literature that writers are all too familiar with: ‘write about what you know’. Having studied film on an undergraduate level and later having the privilege of working as a film / video producer, I know films. I love films. Furthermore, I concur with Carroll (2003) when he affirms ‘one does not love films - or for that matter, the moving image – unless one loves every kind of it’ (p. xxv). I stand corrected. I love *all kinds* of films. I especially love those films which are produced today that have no celluloid intermediaries - those very movies that are produced by means of digital cameras, where no film or video tape is involved. One of the main reasons I take this position is because digital films are so much easier to photograph (can see the playback instantly), to edit (much easier to assemble, insert, superimpose, etc.) and so much less expensive to produce than its ancestor, film stock. Aligned with my love for all kinds of film (or as Carroll (2003) calls *the moving image*), I have always thought that film, as an art form, was an undervalued, highly informative, and undoubtedly a *worthwhile* and *constructivist* educational medium. Consequently, I will argue that the study of film theory and practice is as much a *cognitive* educational medium as are our esteemed books on literature, mathematics and science. Ironically, in the realm of my research, I have discovered that film has not been looked upon as a serious subject matter in education, and as such, I found but a few scholarly writings on the benefits of film studies in the classroom. This was to be expected on account of film being viewed as a popular art form and an entertainment medium, and, as such, its serious study, needless to say, arouses suspicion in academic circles. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that film is perceived by

most educators as an unpopular, non-cognitive and emotionally charged popular culture medium, unworthy of scholastic study. Unfortunately, this lack of enthusiasm was most likely concocted in correlation with the birth of film, which began in such non respectable places as peep shows and vaudeville. As early films were first screened in such venues, film was often denied the status of an art form.

In order to address these issues, this dissertation was conceived, in part, as an attempt to secure artistic status for film, and to contribute to and advocate for its favorable acceptance as a suitable object of academic and other serious study. In view of this, several key questions fundamental to this dissertation will be addressed. What are the general aims of education? Can a film education curriculum meet the general aims of education? Is film education a worthwhile activity? What is the nature of film? What makes film the unique art form that it is, or in other words, what is the distinctiveness of film as an artistic medium? How do films engage our emotions? In an attempt at answering these questions, I will argue that Plato, one of the first philosophers to examine the central role emotions play in our experience of art, was wrong when he suggested that an art form (think film) like tragedy, was an invitation to irrationality, since it ‘watered’ down the emotions; instead he thought that *reason* should be dominant in a person’s soul. In my view, it is the emotions that seem to be the most problematic of films’ troubles in relation to its value for education. Regardless, should a curriculum in film education address only cognitive matters and avoid all emotional issues? By virtue of the fact that films engage our emotions, this is hardly possible. Last, but not least, should films raise deep criticisms of the societies they depict, and if so, what can we learn from these films? These are a few of the inquiries that I propose to respond to in this dissertation. To that

end, the purpose of this dissertation is to illustrate films' invaluable contribution to education. My approach will be to argue that film is a worth-while, cognitive, collaborative and constructivist activity, and in so doing, I will show that film education contributes positively to an overall curriculum both within a high school and collegial setting. In order to achieve this outcome, I will aim to identify, explain and justify the aims, content and pedagogical approaches to an education in film.

With these aims of education in mind, my intention for Chapter One, aptly entitled *Aims of a Film Education Curriculum*, is to address film education as not only a worthwhile component of a larger curriculum, but also as a necessary building block for any high school or collegial curricula, thereby assimilating students' academic knowledge to include a critical understanding of our ubiquitous media-saturated society. In order to place film education in a contextual framework, Chapter Two will review *A Brief History of Film Education*, and will examine what the Arts teach us. I will also illustrate in Chapter Two why *Film as the Art of Our Time* is significant to our overall understanding of the Arts in general. In the last essay of Chapter Two, *Popular Culture and Pedagogy*, I will argue that since film and images are very pervasive in our society, many words in our English language are triggers to visual images as a foundation for their meaning, in large part, due to our 'popular' culture' way of life. In Chapter Three, *The Invisible Art of Film Music*, I will explore the notion that film music is as fundamental to the film experience as are subjects like mathematics and science are to the development of mind. In Chapter Four, *Film Education in the Classroom*, I argue that the notion of literacy is in need of broadening its conventional verbal definition to include the visual. In an unpublished manuscript, Broudy (1983) understood that 'the store of images that a person

develops through experience and education is relied upon to construe meaning [primarily] from language'. I argue that without such allusions to images, meanings cannot be fully conveyed and understood. Consequently, Broudy's notion that the essential role of images are foundational for meaning in both verbal language and in our thinking process is the central theme of this manuscript. This is not to suggest that our educational institutions need to abandon their curricula and teaching methods (which I maintain focus primarily on the literal and numerical). Our Canadian school curricula have, after all, served us well for many generations. Rather, Chapter Five, entitled *A Curriculum for Film in Education* will focus primarily on teaching film theory and film practice at a high school and collegial level, authenticating the notion that film assessment and film evaluation is as much a worthwhile activity as is any other traditional curriculum presently taught, thereby asserting that film education contributes positively to the overall aims of education.

Finally, as film, like other areas of knowledge, takes place at a certain historical time and place, the *approach* of this thesis will be contemporary, literary, philosophical, personal, narrative and including interviews with film educators. The *context* of a film education curriculum will take into account film's historical roots, and to that end, a brief history of film education in Canada will be reviewed. Film genres will be examined and evaluated for their educational and philosophical appeal; the setting of the film education curriculum is to take place in latter-day British Columbia's high schools and colleges with the age groups to include both male and female students between 14 – 21 years of age. The *content* will focus on subject matter such as constructivism, media literacy, popular culture, the notion that film is the 'art of our time', the role of film music, the

significance of film as a storytelling medium, and the pros and cons of film viewing from both a critic's and a spectator's perspective. Lessons in leadership will also be investigated, Walker's (2001) notion of 'big ideas', and the principles of film assessment and film evaluation will also be examined. The *raison d'être* of implementing a film education curriculum will reveal film to be a cognitive, mind developing, philosophically sound, and unique art form, thereby delegating film education as a worthwhile educational activity to pursue.

The conclusion will authenticate the notion that film education has social, moral, intellectual, philosophical, cross-cultural and emotional overtones that are transformational to students' general body of knowledge and thereby contributing to a critical understanding of the world around them.

AIMS OF A FILM EDUCATION CURRICULUM

What should the aims of a film education be? Before an answer can be drafted, the term 'film education' needs to be defined. The term "film education" points in two directions – towards learning about films and towards learning about how to make them. People learn about films by joining film societies, attending film festivals or by taking a course or even an entire program offered by a high school, college, or a university. Since film education is about *education*, the presumption is that people go to school to learn about a certain culture (a culture of learning), and in the case of a film education, its culture would reflect film, or film culture, if you will. In my view, people desire to learn about different cultures in order to formulate an understanding of said culture, or in a general

sense, to add upon or modify their particular viewpoint which they believe to be either true or false.

Having said that, it would seem that if an educational aim or objective, as McDonald (1965) suggests, is 'a statement about desired behavior change' (p. 81), it would follow, therefore, that the aim or objective of a *film education* would have to elicit or invoke some kind of behavioral change. Is this behavior worthy of curricula? Given that behavior change usually involves value choices, what kind of behavior is necessary in order to measure a degree of change in the student? Will the film education curriculum be one of inculcation or exploration? Will this behavior change promote a student's appetite for learning? Given that film is a collaborative art, will a film education foster co-operation? We must bear in mind that since a student is acquiring a certain set of facts or skills, it would follow that any change in behavior as a result of these acquired facts or skills are consistent with the student becoming a person who has an appetite for learning, or who understands his / her society, or who appreciates beauty. Therefore, a film education must, by definition, educe behavior change by fostering the development of intelligent participation in the process of democratic government, or by appreciating beauty, or at the very least, by fostering co-operative behavior in the student.

'To ask questions about the aims of education', Peters (1966), a contemporary British philosopher of education, suggests, 'is therefore a way of getting people to get clear about and focus their attention on what is worthwhile achieving' (p. 28). Needless to say, it is obvious that schools, for the most part, see their mission, that of seeking out behavior changes, as promoting the development of the intellect. I would imagine that 'promoting

the development of the intellect' is what makes school a worth-while pursuit, and that most parents and teachers alike would agree with this proposition. Similarly, Eisner (2002) suggests that "hard subjects" such as mathematics and science are regarded as primary resources for that development and that the process of reading, writing, and computing are believed to be the best means for cultivating the mind (p. xi). Paraphrasing Eisner, I submit that one of the aims of film education is to accept the notion that the Arts, in general, and film education, in particular, is intellectually demanding, emotive as well as reflective, and done with the hand (heart) as well as with the head (reason). For Barrow (1984), the aims of schooling are to 'develop breadth of understanding at the logical level (as opposed to the level of information); particular understanding of the realm of emotions and the nature of morality; some historical and cross-cultural awareness; and a degree of socialization' (p. 37). And Peters' (1966) suggests that 'while education involves the intentional transmission of what is worth-while, to raise questions about its aims', he suggests, 'is to invite clarification of and concentration on what is worthwhile in the enterprise' (p. 35). Peters brings up a very good point concerning the general aims of education. What is worthwhile learning when it comes to academic achievement? Does a worthwhile activity necessarily imply an appetite for learning? If so, is film education a worthwhile activity to pursue?

On the positive side, there is evidence indicating that people can learn about alternative lifestyles from both film and television and that this can bring ethically significant changes in their everyday existence. People from Third World cultures can learn about ways of life in the First World and women can learn about male culture, and this exposure can encourage them to alter their lives (Carroll, 2003, p. 109).

Yet, on the other hand, Carroll warns us that:

One of the more frequent charges against (film and) television in the name of morality is that it is escapist...escapism in this context has to do with the tendency to indulge in fantasy....where fantasy itself is regarded as morally disreputable (2003, p. 116).

To the point, if a curriculum is to foster 'behavior change' by promoting a student's appetite for learning, or is a 'mind-altering device' as Eisner (2002, p. 13) proposes, then the quintessential question this dissertation will address is this: *Can we learn from films?* If so, can film education contribute to academic excellence? I suggest that it can, and furthermore, I will demonstrate that we most certainly engage in this intellectual activity on a daily basis. Eisner thinks so as well; he states that:

An artistic endeavour, such as filmmaking, requires the ability to deal effectively with multiple demands simultaneously. And it is in learning to engage in that process that perception is refined, imagination stimulated, judgment fostered, and technical skills developed. Given the complexities of these demands, it is ironic that the arts should be widely regarded as non cognitive (2002, p. 15).

For myself, I would argue that the aim of education should be to teach us how to think, rather than what to think; in other words, we should try to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, rather than to memorize the thoughts of other people. Therefore, why shouldn't film education be viewed as a worthwhile academic endeavor? In my view, a film education teaches us how to think, rather than what to think, *through* film, by presenting us with various scenarios of life's challenges and choices, thereby providing students an opportunity to question the film's authenticity and realism based upon their own acquired view and knowledge of the world. After all, as Peters (1966) suggests, 'we would not call (someone) who was merely well informed an educated (person). (They) must also have some understanding of the "reason why" of things'

(p. 30). Given that there are so many well known educators (Burnett (1995), Carroll (2003), Eisner (2002), Giroux (1994, 1996, 2002), Richmond (2004, 2005), Smith (1989) Wartenberg & Curran (2005), et al) that espouse the Arts (in general) and film (explicitly) as a worthwhile educational activity, why then, is there resistance in implementing the Arts / film education as traditional subject matter in our schools today?

CAN FILM CURRICULA FULFILL THE GENERAL AIMS OF EDUCATION?

It is well known that to a large extent the information used to educate students at the high school and college level is still, by far, text and lecture based. However, I argue that this methodology has significant limitations. While reading is a very important learning mode, not all students learn effectively from reading. It is also true that in a traditional education environment, the role of the teacher is seen as that of a transmitter of knowledge, who is consciously aware of the fact that each student does not learn in the same way. In view of this, I propose that the classroom should no longer be a place where the teacher as “expert” pours knowledge into passive students, who wait like empty vessels to be filled. According to Driscoll (2000) ‘Learners... are not empty vessels to be filled but rather active organisms seeking meaning’ (p. 376).

No one ought to argue that the student comes to the classroom with a distinctly individual and valuable background, and as such, may need opportunities and guidance rather than lectures and rules. Each student has unique stories to tell and arrives in search of meaningful learning opportunities that build on what they already know. Assuming students know little or nothing (*Tabula Rasa*) insults their intelligence and does not honor their past experience. The solution, I submit, is to include the study of visual literacy as

part of our curricula, thereby acknowledging, formally, that visual images are becoming a major form of communication across a range of learning and teaching resources, delivered across a range of media and formats. In an article written for Adobe products entitled, *The Visual Literacy White Paper*, Bamford (2003) suggests that ‘the proliferation of images means that visual literacy is now crucial for obtaining information, constructing knowledge, and building successful educational outcomes’ (p. 2). In itself, this would suggest that visual literacy ought to be construed as an intellectual activity. For if film education were to meet the general aims of education, it ought to be of a cognitive nature, since an education is essentially about developing mind, according to both Eisner (2002) and Barrow (1984). A film education should also ‘seek to promote moral development (the basic ingredients of morality being the responsibility of autonomous decision-making, concern for others; impartiality and consistency) and emotional development, given that a desirable aim of schooling is to develop emotional maturity’ (Barrow, 1984, p. 36). Additionally, film education ought to have some historical and cross-cultural awareness, and it ought to encompass a degree of socialization, and in so doing, initiate students into a democratic way of life. These are the intentions I will attempt to answer in the following chapters.

The above-mentioned questions raise another good point; what is the particular function of a film education? After all, don’t the general aims of education cover the moral, emotional, historical, cross-cultural and cognitive conditions well enough to rule out yet another adjunct to our overburdened curricula? Perhaps my question, however, is whether the present curriculum does enough to stimulate a student’s ‘appetite for learning’.

Charles Ungerleider (2003) a Professor of the Sociology of Education at The University of British Columbia, explains:

A curriculum should always exhibit the following four attributes; it should be meaningful, enabling students to connect what they learn in class with their lives outside of school; students should be challenged by the curriculum to reach beyond previous boundaries in knowledge and experience; the curriculum should stimulate students' curiosity, prompting them to want to know more, and the curriculum must require students to think deeply, to invest mental effort in their learning' (p. 107).

I submit, on the one hand, that the general 'aims of education' are not enough to teach students how to deconstruct the modern world's constant bombardment of media images, the depth and breadth of film philosophies and the explosive and constant growth of the World Wide Web, all by itself. Media literacy, in general, and film education, in particular, promote an appetite for learning and elicit behavior change, because film is a *meaningful* topic of discussion for so many people and, therefore, is a worthwhile subject matter to teach in the high school and college curriculum. Is meaning tied solely to its medium of expression? I think not and Chapter Four will illustrate this point in more detail. Furthermore, in Chapter Four, I propose to show that film education is a meaningful exemplar for education in general by exploring film's distinctiveness and uniqueness as an art form. In addition, I suggest that the screen version of a story is uniquely different from that of the text version, not only due to the fact that films *challenge* student's knowledge base, but more importantly, films convey important philosophic truths. The verity that film theory pertains to filmic practice underscores film studies as a cognitive function; and that film, like any other humanistic phenomenon, is shaped in profound ways by the natural universe. Also, I will endeavor to show that film education stimulates a student *curiosity* by questioning how films reflect societal norms;

the question here being whether film education can be socially critical. As we shall also see, films such as *The Matrix* (1999), *Star Wars* (1977), *Apocalypse Now* (1979), and *The Color Purple* (1985) as well as many others will prove this line of reasoning, accentuating the notion that film is a socially thought-provoking medium. And last, but not least, I will undertake to explain Ungerleider's notion that (film) education *requires* students to think deeply and to invest mental effort in their learning. I will also venture to show that a film education incorporates not only the *content* of film, but *forms* as well. Wartenberg & Curran (2005) suggest that '*form* or means of representation (prevailing patterns of thought, perception, and behavior, that help sustain capitalism and patriarchy) not only determines cognition, how one experiences the world, but also helps students' understanding of social institutions, practices and values' (p. 213). This touches upon the question of morality, which determines a person's way of being, modes of action, and forms of behavior.

CONSTRUCTIVISM

As indicated by Brooks & Brooks (1993), one of the best ways to learn, is by having students construct their own knowledge, instead of having someone construct it for them. This belief is explained by the constructivist learning theory. This theory posits that learning is an active process of creating meaning from different experiences; students will learn best by trying to make sense of something themselves with the teacher as a guide to help them along the way. In other words, the role of the teacher in the constructivist classroom is to act as a 'guide-on-the-side' (Brooks & Brooks, 1993). The basic tenet of constructivism, according to Walker (2001) is that students learn by doing, that knowledge is actively created or invented by the student, not passively received from the

environment. ‘This constructivist approach to teaching and learning argues that the goal of teaching is students’ understanding and that students *construct* knowledge, not simply reproduce it through memorization, recall, or routinized application’ (p. xiv). What constructivism suggests is that no one true reality exists, only individual interpretations of the world. These interpretations are shaped by experience and social interaction. The concept of constructivism has roots in classical antiquity, going back to Socrates’ dialogues with his followers, in which he asked direct questions that led his students to realize for themselves the weakness in their thinking (See Plato, 2000). It was in the 20th Century that both Jean Piaget and John Dewey developed theories of childhood development and education, what we now call Progressive Education, which led to the evolution of constructivism.

Almost a century ago, Dewey (1916) called for education to be grounded in real experience; Dewey recognized that ‘knowledge, which is mainly second hand, other men’s knowledge, tends to become merely verbal. Communication necessarily takes place through words. But in the degree in which what is communicated cannot be organized into the existing experience of the learner, it becomes mere words; that is pure sense stimuli, lacking in meaning’ (p. 188). Susanne Langer (1957, 1967) discusses the incapacity of verbal statements to adequately form and convey human feeling. Verbal language is ‘clumsy and all but useless for rendering the forms of awareness that are not essentially the recognition of facts’ (1967, p. 103). Dewey (1916) warns against ‘the standing danger that... formal instruction will be...isolated from the subject matter of life-experience’ (p. 8). Here, Dewey recommends that lesson plans should be meaningful to students in order for them to retain the information long after it is learned. His

suggestion of the meaning-making metaphor puts the student at the center of the learning process, reducing the importance of the teacher-centered approach.

In our own time, highly visible in our current school reform literature, is the notion that 'students be engaged with understanding and meaning making. This constructivist approach to teaching and learning argues that the goal of teaching is students' understanding and that students *construct* knowledge, not simply reproduce it through memorization, recall, or routine applications' (Walker, 2001, p. xiv). As described earlier, this approach holds that learning should build upon knowledge that a student already has, and that learning is more effective when a student is actively involved in the construction of knowledge, rather than when he/she is passively listening to a lecture. The learners, therefore, give meaning to the knowledge based on their personal experiences. The implications of this for arts education are that students not produce art works from rote formulas or create products that have little meaning beyond the exploration of media or the development of technical skills, but, instead, that students make art works to investigate and express ideas. This notion is based upon constructivist practices of authentic learning originating in the real world, signifying that students model their art making on that of adult artists and thereby learn how adult artists make art. 'The goal', Walker (2001) suggests, 'is not to develop students into professional artists, but to structure classroom art making into a more meaningful activity, one based on real-world authenticity' (p. xiv).

Why should meaning-making be an important focus in curriculum, and what does it have to do with an education in film? Perhaps it is borne of humankind's most powerful need,

for life to have meaning, to make sense of things? In order for meaning to make sense for an individual, a personal breakthrough and social transformation must take place. Some find it through science, others through the arts. In a world of My Space, You Tube, cell phones, and digital cameras, educators must find curricula and pedagogical strategies that are inclusive and affirmative, facilitating the development of academic, critical and visual literacies. Smith's (1989) suggestion that 'if students are to understand and develop fluency with the technology and idioms so strongly influencing their world, they need access to them' (p. 158) is a strong theme that runs throughout this dissertation. Art education, especially at the secondary and post-secondary level, should ensure that the newer visual mediums, such as photography, film, video, and the computer, are included in its content. Healy's (1991) research on learning shows that students think more perceptively when they feel personally responsible for getting meaning out of what they are learning, remembering those ideas long after the classes end. 'If the learning situation is structured appropriately', says Healy, 'the students also present fewer discipline problems' (p. 297).

If we were to understand the concept of meaning-making in the classroom, it is the notion that lessons become internalized, more often than not, from an emotional rather than from an intellectual level. Why is this significant? Well, according to Eisner (2002), 'developing a language with which to talk about visual qualities is an attitudinal as well as a linguistic achievement; when teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in tasks that practice such skills and attitudes, they are providing opportunities for the *development of mind*. And when they organize the tasks students address, so that students learn to connect what they have learned in their school to the world beyond it, they are

developing their students' abilities to extend and apply what they have learned to other domains' (p. 13). This is a process that in the psychological literature is referred to as *transfer*, an ability teachers are encouraged to foster:

How do we know when someone has acquired cognitive behavior? Essentially such behavior is manifested by intellectual power; that is, in psychological terms the ability to apply what has been learned – concepts, generalizations, and process skills – to new material. Also, the learner acquires “learning-to-learn” behavior; he / she becomes increasingly autonomous, is more self-directive and, in a loose sense, self-instructive. He / she is, in short, able to *transfer* what he / she has learned-discovering new instances of the generalization, new problems for critical analysis (McDonald, 1965, p. 242).

An artistic endeavor such as filmmaking requires the ability to deal effectively with multiple demands simultaneously. And it is in learning to engage in that process that perception is refined, imagination stimulated, judgment fostered, and technical skills developed. Eisner (2002), as we have seen, muses over the irony that the arts are widely regarded as non-cognitive, which is doubtful given the complexities of the filmmaking process. The irony here is that film has always been shaped more by inventors (Thomas Edison) than by producers (George Lucas), or directors (Steven Spielberg) or film actors (Harrison Ford). No matter how brilliant the filmmaker, he/she is ultimately a slave to the available technology. We saw a perfect example of this with Lucas in 1977, when he had made his first attempt to bring *Star Wars* to the silver screen. In that era, his ideas were bigger than the hi-tech reality he faced, and consequently his first few attempts at bringing special effects to a technologically unsophisticated 1970's audience resulted in near disaster for Lucas and his producers. After sinking over one million dollars in special effects for his *Star Wars* film, he had, in the end, nothing to show for it. He couldn't use a single shot that was created. He had, in effect, to go back to the drawing

board, literally having to re-invent, what we now know as CGI or Computer Generated Images. In essence, that was the moment in film history where a director had become an inventor. In that sense, *Star Wars*, the film, and George Lucas, the producer / director, redefined film as we now know it. Not since Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941), had we seen a film so revolutionize a film industry, which in the early seventies, was itself lacking in vision. Myopically, critics blasphemed Lucas' film as 'fluff' or 'entertainment' rather than what it really was – a film that had meaning. I suspect that is the reason they will never erect a monument for a critic.

Seanna Nice. But I do think, if you look at the whole culture, I think academics come in, in a sense, and that critics come into play within that whole academic culture, but I do believe that whole field we are in, is a kind of storytelling field; and its objectivity is about telling a story about something. I'll tell you a story about my view of that thing which is the critic's voice, but it is a voice.

Ralph I agree with you. Critics have a place in society, much like anyone else, but I can't help but think of the Native American parable; 'you should never judge a person until you walk a mile in their shoes', and I add, 'if you must judge them, you are a mile away and you have their shoes'.

Seanna (laughs out loud) – (McPherson, 2006)

The moral of the above parable is that before a critic can judge the validity of film as an educative medium, they should be able to embrace film and understand it from a producer's, director's or a scriptwriter's perspective. As I see it, it's different when you are in the 'mindset' of such things. Artists are forever trying to create something in another medium, another representational form, and some critics are not so clear about the production values that go into a film, or any arts - related artifact; they don't always 'get it'; after all, it's easy to criticize something you don't truly understand. For these reasons, filmmaking can be a wonderful medium to learn from. Worth (1981) suggests

‘the student can learn how film differs from other art forms, how important the director is, and why film editing is an art. Thus the goal in teaching film to students is to develop within the student criteria for the appreciation of aesthetic awareness so that he or she can evaluate film’ (p. 121). The question we must ask ourselves, therefore, is whether we know the answer to such questions as why film editing is an art, or whether watching films and discussing them is the best way to teach students aesthetic awareness. The fact remains, we do learn through film, and as Youngblood (1970) reminds us, ‘film is a way of seeing; we, as spectators, see through the filmmaker’s eyes’ (p. 72). It is quite unfortunate, however, that in our culture the knowledge that children and adults usually have of film is viewer knowledge. It is difficult for viewers to place themselves in the role of the filmmaker. Consequently, it has become clear that ‘the film theory paradigm conceived of viewers too passively, as mere receptacles for dominant views with no critical capacities of their own’ (Wartenberg & Curran, 2005, p. 3).

Nonetheless, what is of authentic value here (as we shall see in Chapter Four) is that film is also an important scientific tool that has opened up new areas of knowledge. George Lucas has proven this with his first Star Wars film (1977):

Lucas was an innovator who changed filmmaking through technology. He created the first blockbuster with visual effects when he made *Star Wars*... And because the movie was such a success, he simultaneously created a marketplace – an appetite – for the kind of film he was capable of delivering. He parlayed his innovative technology into several technology companies: ILM, Skywalker Sound, LucasFilm, and a digital film editing company (Topping, 2006, p. 6).

Gregg Toland had also proven that film could also be an important scientific apparatus as well. Working with Orson Welles on *Citizen Kane* (1941), Toland combined many elements and filmmaking techniques that no one, up until that point in time, had imagined

any of these techniques could be used in filmmaking. He developed a technique for deep focus photography, wherein the extreme foreground, central middle-ground, and background were all in focus at the same time, allowing the eye to focus on any part of the image. Topping (2006) adds:

He (Toland, the principal cinematographer for *Citizen Kane*) used a technology called deep focus camera (all of the images in the frame were in focus rather than distant and very close objects being fuzzy). He used documentary reel newsreel introduction, flashbacks, and deep space imagery (where there are many things happening in the background and foreground as well as where the main action is taking place). He utilized sound technology to create abrupt changes in sound (e.g., echoes to mimic vast spaces in the Kane mansion in the film). The film also used ambitious tracking shots (when the camera moves independently of the characters) to set up sequences in the film. For years to come, his film stylistically influenced thousands of filmmakers worldwide including Brian de Palma, Martin Scorsese, and Steven Spielberg. (p. 5)

Taken one step further, one can see that film provides the first alternative means of communication since the invention of writing more than seven thousand years ago. Film covers a broad range of elements, from practical to environmental, from pictorial and dramatic to narrative to music. The strong narrative element greatly enhances both the teaching and learning experiences, potentially providing an innovative supplement to literary materials. Students must, therefore, think seriously about how films not only give meaning to their lives but also mobilize their desires in powerful ways. Turner (1988) suggests that 'narratives can be described as a means of 'making-sense' of our social world, and sharing that 'sense' with others. Its universality underlines its intrinsic place in human communication' (p. 79). Film also assumes a major educational role in shaping the lives of many students and the pedagogical importance of films such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) or *Easy Rider* (1969), both in terms of what they teach and the

role that they can play as objects of pedagogical analysis, cannot be underestimated.

According to Giroux

Students learn more about race, sex and class from movies than from all the theoretical literature [teachers urge them to read]. Movies not only provide a narrative for specific discourses of race, sex and class, they provide a shared experience, a common starting point from which diverse audience can dialogue about these charged issues. (2002, p. 10)

‘The powers of film,’ Giroux (2002) continues, ‘are mobilized through their use of images, sounds, gestures, talk, and spectacles in order to create the possibilities for people to be educated about how to act, speak, think, feel, desire, and behave. Films provide teachers with a pedagogical means for offering students alternative views of the world. Of course, films not only challenged print culture as the only viable source of knowledge, they were attractive cultural texts for students because they were not entirely contaminated by the logic of formal schooling’ (p. 3). ‘Although film may not have grammar’, for Monaco (2000) ‘it does have systems of *codes*. It does not, strictly speaking, have a vocabulary, but it does have a system of *signs*’ (p. 64). It also appears that film and television are easy to decode because they call upon pre-existing visual and cognitive skills. This is the notion of the image preceding language. In other words, according to Hobbs (1992), ‘learning to understand images does not require the lengthy period of initiation characteristic of language learning, and therefore the permeability of cultural boundaries is much greater for images than it is for language’.

Conversely, ‘one of the dangers of using a feature film in the classroom is that students often confuse what they see in it with the truth, or attribute to a film the factual characteristics of a documentary. Although most films are not documentaries, they can

carry great emotional power while delivering truths that reality obscures, as has been said about fiction. This emotional power can be a catalyst for thinking and learning. It is important to remember, however, that films are a starting point, not an end, in and of themselves' (Harper & Rogers, 1999). Part of the problem is perception. Not only is film often not taken as seriously as literature, but in schools there is frequently a perception that showing movies amount to lazy teaching, allowing instructors to read a newspaper in the back of the class while the DVD player does his job. Eisner (2002) suggests this is a case of 'a way of seeing is also a way of not seeing' (p. 85).

Giroux (2002) believes that all films function pedagogically in and out of schools. Many students, he says, feeling powerless and insecure in a society marked by a cutthroat economy, increasing privatization, and a breakdown of all notions of public life, find a sense of relief and escape in the spectacle of film. He suggests that films both entertain and educate; for 'movies are a source of shared joy, entertainment, escape, and a source of knowledge that, unlike what we were privy to in school, connected pleasure to meaning'. He says films do more than entertain, they offer up subject positions, mobilize desires, influence us unconsciously, and help to construct the landscape of (world) culture (p. 2). He concludes by saying that film connects to students' experiences in multiple ways that oscillate between the lure of film as entertainment and the provocation of film as a cultural practice. In *The Hero's Journey*, Phil Cousineau asks Joseph Campbell (1990) the following: 'There seems to be an uncanny parallel between myth, dream, and the movies; magical transformations, dream time, the hero's journey, vision quests, and so on. Do you see the filmmakers in what they've called the 'dream factory' of Hollywood as modern myth-makers?' To which Campbell replied; 'there is no better

medium in the world than film. I mean, my God, you can do anything with it; the only thing is to find out what it is that's worth doing' (p. 183). This is a key point for education to investigate.

'Whether it is features, documentaries, newsreels, educational or home movies, film', according to Sherill (1998), 'is the second most popular source used in history classes, though often films are shown on videotape'. In many ways, she suggests, the celluloid world has influenced our perceptions of reality. In some cases, it has changed the way we live today, how we conceive of the past, and how we envisage the future. Historical novels, radio, television and films combine to generate an unprecedented degree of illusion that we can, if only vicariously, participate in the lives and loves, thrills and spills of the past, which is thereby made much closer to the present. The powerful emotional response that historical novels and dramas engender among audiences is testimony to the ease of identification they permit. This, Giroux (1996) understood, supports the insights of cultural studies, saying that we are better equipped to examine the effects of cultural pedagogy with this identity formation, its production and legitimating of knowledge, that is, a cultural curriculum.

Clearly there is much to be gained by teaching students filmmaking techniques. Making a film not only can help a child learn how films are made or why they are Art, but can help him / her to learn how to manipulate images in his / her mind, how to think with them, and how to communicate through them. Making a film can be part of a process of teaching children how to understand and to use the visual mode in thinking and communication. Listening alone is not necessarily the best way to teach people to play

the violin or to compose symphonies; neither are looking and talking the best ways to teach people to use the visual mode. Filmmaking, like other modes of expression and communication, must be a 'hands on' activity in order to be fully understood (Worth, 1981). In my view, all elements of film images are essential, but what makes film so powerful is its complex message (visual, auditory, music and dialogue). In other words, different sign systems of film message reinforce each other. These multiple messages are much more powerful than any linear language message. Carefoot (1996) argues that when we have students watch films or television, we enable them to become more conscious of "watching" and "listening to" how their media world communicates. And until we are aware of what we see and hear, how this information is conveyed to us, and how we extract meaning from it, it is difficult to expect deeper analysis and understanding. In addition, Carefoot suggests that if we want our students to communicate using various media formats, students must have a basic understanding of the codes and conventions of each medium. These theories, in my view, do indeed, support the notion that the Arts, by their very nature, involve learning and are worthy of a piece of the educational curriculum.

Finally, Eisner (1998) proposes that 'our first avenue to consciousness, the refinement of sensibilities, ought to be a prime aim of education' (p. 24). Our culture regards language skills as important and defines intelligence as the ability to handle abstract, language-based tasks. And yet the senses, Eisner suggests, are part of thinking and intelligence. So the question remains: 'how and for what purpose we should introduce film into the educational process as a substitute for the "debased" verbal language' (Worth, 1981, p. 121). Inexorably, according to Arnheim (1966), works of Art present a complex of

profound meanings in special forms that are referred to as visual metaphors. To comprehend meanings embodied in works of Art (and in this case *film*) requires education that develops student's abilities to unravel such meanings. Arnheim's work is significant because students who have not learned to understand images might be easy prey to manipulation through the use of images in the mass media. Susan Langer (1957) adds that the power of images conveys feeling: 'A work of art expresses a conception of life, emotion, inward reality. But it is neither a confessional nor a frozen tantrum; it is a developed metaphor, a non-discursive symbol that articulates what is verbally ineffable - the logic of consciousness itself' (p. 25). For that reason, when we include forms of representation such as art, music, dance, poetry, film and literatures in our programs, we not only develop forms of literacy, we also develop particular cognitive potentials. Eisner makes a good point: '*what one does not or is not permitted to use, one loses*' (my italics; Eisner, 1998, p. 16).

MEDIA LITERACY AND EDUCATION

Today's definition of literacy is more than reading and writing. In order to be functionally literate in our media-saturated world, children, young people, and the rest of us, have to be able to read messages that inform and entertain us and sell to us, on a daily basis. No one can deny that media in general – particularly popular culture – now take a far more prominent position and role than in past generations. Nevertheless, before I discuss the *educational value* of media literacy, the definition of media literacy must be addressed. According to Jane Tallim (2007):

Media literacy is the ability to sift through and analyze the messages that inform, entertain and sell to us every day. It's the ability to bring critical thinking skills to bear on all media - from music videos and Web environments to product

placement in films and virtual displays on NHL hockey boards. It's about asking pertinent questions about what's there, and noticing what's not there. And it's the instinct to question what lies behind media productions - the motives, the money, the values and the ownership - and to be aware of how these factors influence content.... who is this message intended for? Who wants to reach this audience, and why? From whose perspective is this story told? Whose voices are heard, and whose are absent? What strategies does this message use to get my attention and make me feel included?

Given that the media seems to be such a large part of our worldview, students need to be well versed in the knowledge, skills, abilities and competence to communicate, critique, create, care and contribute to society at large. After all, it is the media, in my view, which is responsible for the majority of observations and experiences from which we construct our personal understanding of the world and how it works. It often seems that much of our view of reality is based upon media messages that have been presented to us with its built-in attitudes, interpretations and conclusions (read as propaganda). In other words, the media, in a sense, constructs our reality for us. In view of this, I will argue that media literacy and popular culture studies support Barrow's (1984) supposition that the aims of schooling are 'essentially about developing mind' (p. 34) and the notion that 'education is cognitive development' (p. 84); and contributes to Eisner's (2002) notion that schools are the best means for 'cultivating the mind' (p. (xi).

Before responding to how media-literacy contributes to the general aims of education and what approach would need to be taken to accomplish such a task, an essential question must be asked. What is the significance of media literacy for education? By addressing this question, I speak to the aims of film education as a referent. In my view, media literacy is the ability to create personal meaning from the verbal and the visual symbols we take in every day through films, television, radio, computers, newspapers and

magazines and, of course, advertising. It's the ability to choose and select, the ability to challenge and question, the ability to be conscious about what is going on around us, and not be passive and vulnerable. However, the goal of media literacy is not so much to study what's on television, how advertising works or how to make a movie (although it can include those activities) as it is to explore how human beings can interpret (read) and make sense of the complex media culture in which we live. In Tallim's (2007) own words, 'in our world of multi-tasking, commercialism, globalization and interactivity, media education isn't about having the right answers—it's about asking the right questions. The result is lifelong empowerment of the learner and citizen'.

R.S. Peters (1966) has argued, rightly so, that educators have a real dilemma on their hands when they are competing with modern mass-media, most likely because traditional curriculum methods often lead children along less exciting paths. Yet, as suggested earlier, if education involves the transmission of what is worthwhile, can media literacy be viewed as a worthwhile educational activity? And Barrow (1984) advocates that 'while the business of schooling is generally agreed to be valuable, there is a lot of disagreement about what it is that is valuable' (p. 15). He promotes the notion that, "there is an ambiguity between interests in the sense of 'what interest's one' and interests in the sense of 'what is in one's interest'" (p 83). And while it would make sense that what is of interest to someone is usually a worthwhile activity, it was Plato who originally suggested that 'the coat of what is worthwhile must be cut according to the cloth of the individual aptitude' (See Plato 2000, p. 127; 433a).

Nevertheless, it is an interesting thought when one contemplates, as Peters (1966) does, 'Why do this rather than that?' (p. 154). What is it, precisely, that differentiates the study of media literacy as being less worthwhile than those of other academic subjects such as math or science? From a contextual perspective, I do not think there is much difference at all. Given that we are a media-saturated society, how can we separate students' interests from learning? The problem, however, is that students are interested in trivial things like pop culture, which is 'counterproductive, short-term', and otherwise 'puerile interest', and therefore 'we cannot sensibly take their interests, whatever they may be, as the criterion of curriculum selection' (Barrow, 1984, p. 83):

The prevailing fashions of society, especially mediated through popular newspapers, television, cinema and radio, likewise obviously serve to sustain a particular type of curriculum. Emphasis on technology is clearly nurtured by a general media pre-occupation with the technological side of life, just as at other periods of history an arts-dominated curriculum has gained support from the arts-centered ethos of journals and newspapers. We should not forget, however, that the fact that these are not in themselves good reasons for doing anything does not mean that there might not be good reason to support a curriculum that actually owes its survival to tradition, current fashion or even professional laziness (Barrow, 1984, p. 25).

Nowadays multi-media culture, which includes print but is not limited to it, provides a nearly limitless resource for acquiring a range of skills, e.g., how to identify "point of view" by examining how camera angles influence how we think about the subject being photographed, or how to determine whether information is bogus or not by learning to evaluate websites on the Internet:

Today, information about the world around us comes to us not only by words on a piece of paper but more and more through the powerful images and sounds of our multi-media culture. Although mediated messages appear to be self evident, in truth, they use a complex audio / visual "language" which has its own rules (grammar) and which can be used to express many-layered concepts and ideas about the world. Not everything may be obvious at first; and images go by so fast!

If our children are to be able to navigate their lives through this multi-media culture, they need to be fluent in “reading” and “writing” the language of images and sound just as we have always taught them to “read” and “write” the language of printed communications (Thoman & Jolls, 2003, p. 6).

As we all know, multi-media is an enveloping text; in other words, we are now using multi-media tools such as PowerPoint, digital photography, digital video, computers and the like in addition to traditional text, as modes of presentation. It would seem logical that we encourage students to use these multi-media formats. For if we do not encourage students to embrace the latest technological tools by utilizing them extensively in the classroom, are we promoting techno-luddites, or even worse, fostering within our students a fear of *anything* new / or different. Having said that, film studies in the classroom *are* experiencing an encouraging reception amongst educators, and though many may support them, many others are still very skeptical. As Simon (1999) reminds us, popular entertainment has always been an easy target for critics, who claim that ‘it demeans us, confuses our impressionable children, cheapens everything it comes in contact with, and represents a terrible loss of core human values’ (p. 175). Strong words for an unyielding phenomenon. It is not surprising, therefore, that traditionalists have not yet understood that the contemporary eye is no longer innocent.

Perhaps educators should recognize that what we see all around us is invariably informed by pre-fabricated images. There is, of course, a fundamental difference between the image of today and of former times: now the image precedes the reality it is supposed to represent. Or to put it another way, reality has become a pale reflection of the image. I say this in belief that media literacy and popular culture is the politics of the Twenty-First Century. An example of this supposition is warranted here for the sake of clarity: in

politics, we find presidents and prime ministers being elected because of the media image they represent, rather than the issues they uphold. An example: the outcome of the 1961 presidential race between John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon was highly influenced by the 'televised image'. If one were to revisit these outdated televised tapes, one could see that Kennedy was calm, cool, and collected and had articulated his position very well. On the other hand, Nixon was extremely uncomfortable in front of a televised nation; nervous and sweating profusely, he appeared confused with the whole media circus atmosphere. In the end, it was widely agreed that the televised debate between these two candidates ultimately sealed the fate of Richard Nixon and allowed JFK to win the presidency. More recently, we see politics, religion, and media personalities through the same lens. The central pronouncement of popular culture today, as it was in the past, is the notion that 'image is power'. This notion reflects Burnett's (1995) view that:

The visual literacy movement...sees images as predators on all expressions of human subjectivity. Thus, although images are fundamental to the ways we see the world around us, they are somehow alien, imported into our everyday activities by forces we cannot control. We only gain that control by becoming more literate, by more fully understanding the image and how it is created. But this must be done not for the pleasure it might bring but because images are inherently dangerous and their effects need to be neutralized (p. 212).

Paradoxically, Burnet (2000) suggests that popular culture, from television to music to films to video games and the Internet be included as a component of all school curricula. He argues for the importance of shared knowledge, recognizing how fundamentally difficult it is to create and sustain sharing through conventional forms of communications within school environments. As such, he favors the inclusion of popular culture in workshops and discussions. Burnett also wonders, as I often do, why students are forced to listen to symphonies and opera (high culture) when, in their own lives, rock and

country music sing to them (low culture). I am often amazed that my fourteen-year-old son can memorize hundreds of mythological names and sort them all out in specified categories in order to play a game called *Magic*, and yet has the most difficult time remembering a few names and dates in a school quiz in social studies. However, this is not the time or place to delve into popular culture here; *Popular Culture as Pedagogy*, a Chapter Two subheading, will corroborate Burnett's claim that popular culture is a worthwhile activity. Suffice to say that, simply put, unless a child finds something interesting, he or she, most likely, will not remember it:

When you're bringing children up, don't use compulsion in teaching them. Use children's games instead. That will give you a better idea what each of them has a natural aptitude for (Plato, 2000, p. 246).

As Burnett's sharp insights reveal, 'It is precisely this frailty and weakness of our culture's efforts to define who we are that creates the gaps within which identities grow and develop' (1995, p. 217). Needless to say, the inherent problem, it would seem, is in the fact that educators today have a love-hate relationship with mass media and its new communication technologies. In an essay entitled *Silences*, Ted Sizer (1995) wrote:

All of us know that the hearts and minds of our children are influenced in ever-increasing ways by the information and attitudes gathered far outside the schoolhouse wall, from an insistent media and commerce that depends on it. How the schools do, do not, or should connect with the newly insistent media world is rarely mentioned. We live in an information rich culture, one controlled by commerce, but we plan the reform of our educational system as though the schoolhouses were still wholly encapsulated units (p. 83).

In response to the ubiquitous nature of our media-saturated society, Douglas Rushkoff (1996) has coined the current youth generation *Screen-Agers* because their media use is not distinguished specifically as television, video games, movies, computers,

or even telephones, but simply as a series of screens which they access and manipulate in a constantly evolving stream of shared communication. In many ways, as you might expect, the televised or celluloid world of film has influenced our perception of reality for all time. Isn't it time, in view of this, that we revisit the influence popular culture has on its youth? In the secondary school curriculum, media literacy is not so much a process of teaching students about what they don't know about media industries, but instead, according to Hobbs (1999) 'media literacy is pedagogy of inquiry, a process of asking questions about what we watch, see and read. Often', she insists, 'media literacy in secondary schools is an elective, with units of instruction on news making, advertising, violence, and so on' (p. 56). Thoman (2003) explains:

Media literacy transforms learning and teaching because very often students know more about their media culture than the teacher does. Retaking the principles of democratic pedagogy dating back to Socrates, wise teachers realize that their role is returning from being a "sage on the stage" to a "guide on the side." Their job is not to give answers but to stimulate more questions—to coach, prod, challenge, and open up an inquiry process that lets the learner discover how to find an answer. As media literacy penetrates the educational system, classrooms in every discipline are becoming lively laboratories for critical thinking (analysis) and creative communication (production) (p. 5).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we saw that film education was as much a cognitive, constructivist and worthwhile educational medium as are the "hard subjects" such as mathematics and science which, traditionally, were believed to be the best means for cultivating the mind. Since this chapter advocates that the aim of education is about developing mind, the aim of a *film education*, therefore, should also be seen as a cognitive, constructivist and a worthwhile activity. We also saw that a film education should seek to promote moral as well as emotional development and towards that end, the desirable aim of schooling in

general and a film education in particular, is to contribute to emotional maturity, leading to the ability to think critically. And in order for any curriculum to be worthwhile and meaningful, we saw that a curriculum in film education must transmit some degree of cross-cultural awareness. Last but not least, as we shall see in Chapter Four, film is a social mechanism and as such, a film education ought to encompass a degree of socialization. In so doing, it endears students to a democratic way of life. The following Chapter titled *A Brief History of Film Education in Canada*, will show how the Arts open avenues of aesthetic experience, stimulate the mind and give students a way of drawing meaning from their world.

CHAPTER TWO

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FILM EDUCATION IN CANADA

The earliest films that were exhibited in the 1890s, first as a curiosity, then gaining popularity as an inexpensive entertainment vehicle, were primarily shown in *nickelodeons* (an early movie theater charging an admission price of five cents). By the 1910s, there were more than ten thousand nickelodeons in both the United States and Canada, and motion pictures had become a mass media.

In that first year, 1895, two kinds of films were made, proposing two modes of what cinema could be: cinema as the transcription of real, unstaged life (the Lumiere brothers), and cinema as invention, artifice, illusion, fantasy (Melies)...For those first audiences watching the Lumiere brothers' *The Arrival of the Train at La Ciotat Station*, the camera's transmission of a banal sight was a fantastic experience. Cinema began in wonder, the wonder that reality can be transcribed with such magical immediacy. All of cinema is an attempt to perpetuate and to reinvent that sense of wonder (Sontag, 2001, p. 118)

Nevertheless, my interest here is not to address the history of film as an entertainment medium, but to acknowledge the humble beginnings of the Canadian film industry, which started out as a marketing / advertisement campaign to lure immigrants from Great Britain to Canada. In view of this, it would seem that Canadian films began as a didactic medium, more in the tradition of the Lumiere brothers, by showing Canada as it *was*, much like when Lumiere's train pulled into the station. In fact, one of the things that differentiated Canadian films from American films was that 'Canadians associated their own filmmaking with education, propaganda and advertising' (Feldman, 2006, p. 1).

The first Canadian films were produced in the fall of 1897, a year after the first public exhibition of motion pictures on 27 June 1896 in Montréal. They were made by James Freer, a Manitoba farmer, and depicted life on the Prairies. In 1898-99, the Canadian Pacific Railway showed them throughout the UK to promote immigration. They were so successful that the federal government sponsored a second tour by Freer in 1902 and the CPR began directly financing

production of immigration films... These promotional films were characteristic of most Canadian production through 1912: financed by Canadians but made by non-Canadians to sell Canada or Canadian products abroad. American film companies were beginning to use Canada as the setting for story films that featured villainous French-Canadian lumberjacks, the Métis, gold prospectors and noble Mounties (Morris, 2006, p. 1).

Yet, according to Feldman (2006), 'for some forty years following the invention of cinema, Canadians demonstrated little interest in either the formal training of filmmakers or the appreciation of film as an art form. Most filmmakers prior to the 1960s learned their various crafts as apprentices' (p. 1). And it wasn't until 1935 that Donald Buchanan legitimized film as an art form by assembling a sufficient number of film enthusiasts to launch the National Film Society of Canada. That organization, largely modeled on the British Film Institute, took as its mandate the establishment of a genuine film culture. However, the arrival of World War II caused a suspension of film society activities. Yet, the war also saw the creation of the National Film Board (NFB), founded by John Grierson. During the war years, the NFB, which naturally began to train and develop Canadian filmmakers, greatly enhanced the presence of film in Canadian life, providing numerous screenings of its work in theatrical and non-theatrical venues. According to Handling (2006), the NFB 'acted as a kind of film school and it was only natural that with time these people would turn their energies to the more complex form offered by the fiction feature film, which commanded the greatest popular attention' (p. 1). The NFB was the first film organization that produced a general awareness of Canadian films. It also provided apprenticeships for a generation of Canadians who were to become the nation's pre-eminent filmmakers in the decades following the war. The genre, virtually synonymous with the National Film Board for most of the 20th century, was the

documentary, but earlier work preceded this development and, by the late 20th century, an independent tradition of documentary filmmaking had again emerged. In the first decade of the 20th century, companies such as Canadian Pacific and Massey-Harris used film for promotional purposes (Handling, Piers & White, Jerry, 2006, p. 1).

The documentary idea has unique significance in Canadian art, and most especially for Canadian cinema. Indeed, the realist tradition dominates even our fictional cinema. Perhaps its roots can be traced to a number of sources. According to Handling & White (2006), this distrust of the "imaginary" and the irrational could have arisen out of a utilitarian philosophy that provides the cornerstone for our educational and social system. Grierson's philosophy, which had a great influence on documentary film in Canada, was essentially educative and informative. He wanted to bridge the gap between people by showing them how others lived. This pragmatic approach found its natural form in the factual or documentary film (p. 6). Aside from the NFB, the emerging filmmakers of the 1960s, both English and French, looked to government to protect their fledgling interests. In 1967 the federal government took a significant step by creating the Canadian Film Development Corporation, now Tele-Film Canada, funded with \$10 million to develop a feature film industry that would last. Albeit, Feldman (2006) proposes that it was the McLuhan's of the mid-1960s, the success of the EXPO 67 films, and the birth of a government-subsidized feature film industry – all amid the rapid expansion of post-secondary education – that greatly increased the demand for film courses at universities and colleges (p. 2). That may have been the case, since the Canadian Film Development Corporation (CFDC) was only to concern itself with production, and not with commercial distribution or exhibition. In 1983 the CFDC changed its name to Tele-Film Canada and

according to Handling (2006) 'projects were geared more for potential television release, as opposed to theatrical distribution, but it proved impossible to suppress those brave individuals who kept insisting on making feature films for theatrical exhibition' (p. 2).

By the mid-1970s, Feldman (2006) adds that film courses were offered at most Canadian universities, most likely to take over the training of future filmmakers as the NFB was scaling back its operations. The largest film programs are at York University, Concordia University, Ryerson Polytechnic University, the University of Regina, the University of British Columbia and the University of Québec at Montréal. This rapid expansion led in 1976 to the formation of the Film Studies Association of Canada which, in 1990, began the publication of its own learned journal, *The Canadian Journal of Film Studies* (p. 2).

Besides the colleges and universities, Canadian filmmakers may also find training at freestanding film organizations such as: the Canadian Screen Training Centre in Ottawa; the Directing, Acting and Writing for Camera Workshop in Toronto; the Vancouver Film School; and the Praxis Centre for Screenwriters in Vancouver. The most ambitious of these private academies is the Canadian Film Centre, founded by director Norman Jewison in 1988. In terms of film productions, British Columbia has been the third-most important production centre in the country.

In the mid-1980s, my film instructor at Simon Fraser University (SFU), Sandy Wilson, emerged with a charming coming-of-age story set in the 1950s, *My American Cousin* (1985), and followed this with its sequel, *American Boyfriends* (1989). Her features, following hard on the heels of Phillip Borsos' *The Grey Fox* (1982) did much to inject new energy into Vancouver filmmaking. Patricia Gruben, an experimental filmmaker of

considerable originality, and another of my film instructors, directed three idiosyncratic features: *Low Visibility* (1984), *Deep Sleep* (1990) and *Ley Lines* (1993). At about the same time, a fellow SFU film student, Bruno Pacheco, achieved modest success with *The Traveller* (1989), a finely crafted debut film. My immediate recall of SFU's film school in the early 1980s was one of great fondness and appreciation for the Arts as I was exposed to many genres of film. My first introduction to a particular genre was the avant-garde style of filmmaking, and studying with BC's most renowned avant-garde and experimental artist, Al Razutis, who taught us the canons of filmmaking, was an ironic experience given that he immediately taught us how to break the very rules we had just learned. I also recollect studying the documentary genre with Sandy Wilson and Tony Reif who introduced me to Robert J. Flaherty, whose film *Nanook of the North* (1922) was one of the first ethnographic films of its kind. Flaherty himself offered that 'Nanook is not primitive man any more than he is a polar man; he is man in all his truth' (Calder-Marshall, 1963, pp. 76-98). The other film genre I remember our class had spent a fair amount of time on, was the animation genre (led by Norman McLaren, who is hailed as one of Canada's greatest animators) and his film *Neighbors* (1952), who, when asked one of those *Sophie's Choice* kind of questions, 'if all but one of his films had to be destroyed, which one would he pick to save?', chose *Neighbors*, his 1952 film that won an Academy Award for best animation (Griffin, 2007, Section D, p. 4). All in all, what I remembered most about SFU's film department was the creative atmosphere and the input and enthusiasm that everyone contributed in crafting their short films (and as it turned out, much longer filmmaking careers).

Nevertheless, several decades later and many years after Grierson founded the NFB, Handling & White (2006) suggested that ‘many Canadian filmmakers of the 1990s rejected Grierson's belief in the instrumentality of documentary film and moved away from the dry, earnest style he exemplified’. They claim that post-NFB filmmakers approached their subjects as ‘playful and sometimes mocking in a way that differentiated them from filmmakers working within the Grierson tradition’ (p. 5), which was often said to be utilitarian by nature and mostly concerned with education, propaganda and advertising. ‘By the year 2000’, Handling & White (2006) confirms ‘the NFB was making few films in 16 mm, shooting almost everything on cheaper video format. While widespread use of small video cameras has liberated documentary much as lightweight 16 mm cameras did in the 1950s and 1960s, it has also changed the photographic aesthetic that made the NFB internationally respected. The cheapness and simplicity of video, as compared with the expensive and technically demanding format of 16 mm film, has been said to encourage aesthetic laziness or carelessness’ (p. 5).

Consequently, since the turn of the new century governmental funding cuts have taken their toll. Tele-Film Canada has been cut, numerous provincial agencies have either been disbanded or cut back, and arts councils, most notably the Canada Council, have also seen their activities severely curtailed. With these drastic cuts in Federal funding, the new generations of filmmakers are now being forced to raise their money from non-government sources. Canada has been typically undercapitalized and lacked an entrepreneurial class prepared to take the risks inherent in feature film production. Some successful production companies are diversifying, producing both television and film, and owning distribution arms to release their films, but there are very few of these

companies willing to risk it all. Most productions are still relentlessly independent with producers living from project to project.

As we have seen, the history of English-Canadian cinema 'has been one of sporadic achievement accomplished in isolation against great odds. It has existed within an environment where access to capital for production, to the marketplace for distribution, and to theatres for exhibition has been extremely difficult. It has largely been a concurrent history of a struggle against an entertainment monopoly (Hollywood) and a search for an audience that is still largely unaware of a local industry. The lack of production can only be understood against this economic backdrop, where the major distribution and exhibition outlets have been owned and controlled by foreigners' (Handling, 2006, p. 1). Fundamentally, the early days of Canadian filmmaking were meant to be utilitarian in nature and were a precursor to the documentary, or Cinéma-vérité style of filmmaking. The theatrical films most Canadians saw at that time came directly from Hollywood as an entertainment vehicle, and these film exports were anything but art. It was only much later that filmmaking was looked upon as an art form in Canada (marketed exclusively through the film festival circuit) and accordingly, under the umbrella of the faculty of arts, filmmaking is now taught at the college or university level, as an Art form.

In summary, whether it is features, documentaries, newsreels, educational or home movies, 'film is', according to Sherill (1998), 'the second most popular source used in history classes, and more recently, films are often shown on videotape. In many ways,' she suggests, 'the celluloid world has influenced our perceptions of reality. In some

cases, it has changed the way we live today, how we conceive of the past, and how we envisage the future'. In closing, I would like to draw attention to a study conducted by the National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Association Standards for the English Language Arts (1996), which discloses that the historical content of popular film and television as visual texts are worthy of study in K-12 classrooms. In this landmark statement, the committee concludes that:

Being literate in contemporary society means being active, critical, and creative users not only of print and spoken language but also of the visual language of film and television...Teaching students how to interpret and create visual texts...is another essential component of the English language arts curriculum. Visual communication is part of the fabric of contemporary life. (Morell, 2002, p. 5)

WHAT THE ARTS TEACH US

According to Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1), *art* is defined as 'the quality, production, expression, or realm, according to aesthetic principles, of what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance'. For Ruhl (2006) *art* usually refers to the intentional process of creating something to fulfill an aesthetic purpose. And the word *aesthetics* comes from the Greek word *aisthanomai*, which means *to perceive*:

Aesthetics is the area of philosophy that studies the nature of beauty and art. Aesthetic appreciation, then, is the admiration of beauty, such as valuing the fine arts of music, literature, dance, and visual art. What is considered beautiful and even what is considered *art* are not always agreed upon by everyone in the same culture, much less across different times. Recognizing what is appreciated aesthetically for a given group can help us understand the values that inform their decisions, how individuals interact with each other, and even how advanced a past civilization was according to how art was incorporated into their tasks. Much of what we know about ancient civilizations in Egypt, Greece, South America, and China, for example, comes from the art and artifacts that have been uncovered by archaeologists. (p. 1)

More than this, aesthetics refers to the whole region of human perception and sensation, in contrast to the domain of conceptual thought. According to Jenlink (2006), ‘The perception of artworks is not merely an affair of sensation. Memory, expectation, imagination, emotion, and reason (including narrative reasoning) play key roles as well. Since its advent, the field of aesthetics has been concerned with the operation of fundamental psychological and cognitive processes, especially in relation to the Arts. Aesthetics is born of the recognition that the world of perception and experience cannot simply be derived from abstract universal laws, but demands its own appropriate discourse and displays its own inner logic’ (p. 1).

With that in mind, I propose to show that what the Arts teach us is more than just the sum total of a conventional lesson plan. The Arts can be educational, representative, and motivational. The Arts can enrich our lives in the way music, architecture or film inspires a mood. In view of the fact that this chapter’s focus is about *film* as an art form, I will not consider any of the other art forms at this time. Oddly enough, the distinctive thing about film is that it embraces both *art* films and *popular* films. And yet, to quote Sontag (2001), ‘there was always a conflict between (popular) film as an industry, entertainment, and film as art (or high art, to be more precise); film as routine and film as experiment’ (p. 121). What gives film its noticeable qualities is explicated by Sontag’s notion that ‘all of cinema is an attempt to perpetuate and to reinvent that sense of wonder’ (p. 118). Similarly, Smith’s (1989) book entitled *Discipline-Based Art Education; Origins, Meaning, and Development*, explores the notion that ‘philosophy is said to begin in wonder, and who among us has not wondered what makes one person a creative artist, while a second person, who might try just as hard or have the same amount of training,

always remain at best an imitator' (p. 234). This idea, the notion that some people are creative and others not, has always fascinated me over the years. After all, we live in a world where we are bombarded by visual cues, metaphors and evidence that the arts are all around us. The arts are an exceptionally important component of our culture, which reflect the clothing we wear, the places we live and the environments we construct. Smith (1989) again, 'We turn to the arts when we wish to convey our most profound observations and values. Through the arts we imbue thought with feeling, plumb the mysteries of existence, record our tragedies and triumphs, and celebrate the joy of living' (p. 197). What Smith is proposing here is the notion that we live with passion through the arts. How is it, then, that some people are moved to be creative individuals, more so than others? How is it that others are content to be mere spectators? Surely students exude passion when they realize that they are responsible for drawing meaning from artworks and that, in turn, these crucial lessons will ultimately help them make informed choices in their day to day lives:

In large numbers, we pay money for entry to concerts, plays, movies, pageants, and festivals because we have learned that through the arts we are most likely to gain significant, even profound, aesthetic experiences. This is because art objects are created with the express purpose of providing vivid, intense experiences uncluttered by the contingencies of daily concerns. In the greatest works of art, therefore – works in which form and content are integrated and related to larger cultural contexts – properties can be found that evoke aesthetic experience in its purest form (Smith, 1989, p. 140).

Accordingly, one of the unique lessons the Arts teach is that there can be more than one answer to a question and more than one solution to a problem; in other words, variability of outcome is acceptable. The question, however, is as follows: What can film education learn *from the arts*? An education in film truly defines the afore-mentioned notion that

there can be more than one answer to a question and that *variability of outcome*, for the most part, is not only acceptable, but *necessary*. This is most often the case in filmmaking because it is a well known convention that improvisation, whether from an actor, director or a cinematographer's perspective, takes place on a film set because as they say in the film business, *time is money*. There are no hard and fast rules. If something doesn't work on a film set, there isn't time to go back and rehearse another scene. Improvising, or thinking laterally, is more or less a rule of thumb on a film set. Accordingly, Topping (2007) proposes that, 'there are only two things you might hear from Hollywood insiders in the know: First, there are no rules, only success and failure; and, second, Hollywood is high school with money. While somewhat flip', Topping insists, 'these clichés accurately describe a volatile environment created by a group of individuals who are continually chasing the intersection of commerce and fantasy' (p. 1). After all, the film industry *is* a business. Contrast that with Eisner's (2002) notion that 'so much of our current schooling is predicated on the assumption that success in teaching, means getting a class to converge on the single correct answer that exists in the curriculum guide, or in the textbook, or in the teacher's head. The aim of teaching', he concludes, 'is to get everyone to the same destination and, in our culture, at about the same point in time' (p. 196).

This philosophy would never work in the film industry, for obvious reasons. Producers, directors, and most actors, often pride themselves on the very fact that they are, indeed, different from one another; and that there is certainly no such occurrence as producing, directing, or acting in a film (or the production of any artworks, for that matter) that takes place in one genre *only*. The very idea, that in order to succeed in the arts one must conform to the same practices and procedures as everyone else, is certainly not an option

for most artists. Albeit, artists may often imitate one another, as in a director's love of a film style (i.e., westerns or adventure, or sci-fi films) but in the end the director often disguises his cookie-cutting techniques with original twists. This was certainly the case with George Lucas' *Star Wars* (1977). In creating the epic 1977 film, Lucas copied from the western (John Sturges' *The Magnificent Seven* (1960)), the adventure (Buster Crabbe's *Buck Rogers* Film Serials (1939)), and the sci-fi genres (Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927)), ultimately offering a new and novel twist to an old formula. Quentin Tarantino's films are also quite different from the normal genre of violent films. Tarantino rapidly rose to fame in the early 1990s as a latter-day auteur whose use of non-linear storylines, edgy tough-guy dialogue, and stylized violence brought new life to familiar American film archetypes (see *Reservoir Dogs* (1992); *Pulp Fiction* (1994); and *Sin City* (2005)).

In view of these unusual directors and their memorable films, there is little doubt that the Arts teach students that their personal signature is important and that answers to questions and solutions to problems need not be identical. In the Arts, therefore, diversity and unpredictability are more important than having the right answer. This certainly was the case with both Lucas and Tarantino's films. But how do the Arts (and especially film) affect consciousness? Eisner (2002) proposes that 'work in the arts is not the only way of creating performances and products; it is a way of creating our lives by expanding our consciousness, shaping our dispositions, satisfying our quest for meaning, establishing contact with others, and sharing a culture' (p. 3). By studying film as an aesthetic form, students learn how to respond to film as a medium of social and cultural expression. Students learn that films challenge the viewers' assumptions and values by raising

complex issues about how individuals relate to each other within specific social and cultural contexts. Lateral thinking is emphasized in viewing films, discussion of characters, conflicts, and themes. Furthermore, students examine their own values and philosophy of life, their social and cultural contexts, and all aspects of character and individuality. Students gain insights into the way the filmic texts provide insights into the human condition through metaphors, themes, or symbolic language.

The truth is, the Arts inspire and indeed require, self-discipline, and may be more basic to our national survival than the traditional credit courses. The problem, of course, is that those areas of our formal education, which deal with the symbolic and value content of our cultures, do so almost entirely in terms of the past. Assuming symbols are the basic instrument of thought – those who create new symbols – artists, scientists, poets, philosophers – are those who, by giving us new instruments to think with, give us new areas to explore in our thinking. So what can teachers do to promote students' needs to become self-disciplined? In an article entitled 'Choices for Children: Why and How to Let Students Decide', Kohn (1993) explains:

One is repeatedly struck by the absurd spectacle of adults insisting that children need to be self-disciplined, or lamenting the idea that 'kids just don't take responsibility for their own behavior' while spending their days ordering children around. The truth is that, if we want children to take responsibility for their own behavior, we must first give them responsibility, and plenty of it. The way a child learns how to make decisions is by making decisions, not by following directions... To talk about the importance of choice is also to talk about democracy... the only way this can happen, the only way children can acquire both the skills of decision making and the inclination to use them, is if we maximize their experiences with choice and negotiation.

If choice does indeed lead to democracy, as Kohn infers, how then is it possible that we might become, as Berger (1984) suggests, 'active agents of our own destiny'? I believe

the solution is right under our noses. We have to revisit the idea of ‘active humanity’, the idea that we are all, as Zohar (1990) writes, ‘stitches in the same fabric’ (p. 200). If, indeed, we are all part of the same ‘fabric’, how then can modern human beings maintain their passion, enthusiasm and energy in every area of their lives? How can we, as Greene (1995) suggests, ‘find ways of enabling the young to find their voices, to open their spaces, to reclaim their histories in all their variety and discontinuity (p. 120). Finally, how do we modify the entrenched educational system? A partial answer is addressed by Healy (1991), who suggests that we must stop simply blaming children and their teachers. Parents, policy-makers, and the trendsetters of popular culture are also part of the problem. In the context of the vast political, social, economic, and technological changes, the purposes of the curriculum need to be questioned. If in the past, the curriculum had been seen as the site of the reproduction of young people in the image of their society and of its values, that view is clearly no longer tenable. There are few stable values, few reliable or agreed structures. All we can know is that tomorrow will not be like today, let alone like yesterday. The idea of making the young in the image of what we know today, which is itself a version of what has been handed down to us from yesterday, will no longer do.

Fittingly, an Arts education not only enhances students’ understanding of the world around them, but it also broadens their perspective on traditional academics. The Arts give us the creativity to express ourselves, while challenging our intellect. The Arts integrate life and learning for all students and are integral in the development of the whole person. Arts Education must be thought of as a special case of assimilation or better still, *acculturation*, the complex process by which a culture manages to ensure that

almost all of its newly born develops into viable members of the group. In our culture, films, like television, books, newspapers, and other message systems, are institutionally organized and supported. Like school, it is a part of the assimilation process. Like verbal language and other symbol systems, film could not be a part of the acculturation process if it were not also capable of being used to communicate. After all, communication requires that members of a social group share the meaning of the symbolic forms that they use. It is in this sense, therefore, that I believe that amongst all the art forms that teach us about communication, film is the most effective of all the communicative arts. Films are fundamental to commerce, art, entertainment and wish-fulfillment. This is most likely because filmmaking, like photography that precedes it, is primarily understood as an imitation of reality. Conceivably the very reason film is such a powerful artifact is because of, and not in spite of, the fact that film is an *imitation* of reality. Film is a *mimetic* device; it permits individuals to enter the realm of make-believe. Was this not the *raison d'être* that Plato disavowed the Arts? Plato thought that the Arts were dangerous because he saw Art as an imitation of life; and although the Arts can be entertaining and beautiful, they are falsehoods because they are only representations of true reality. Contrast Plato's thinking with Seventeenth Century thinkers, the likes of:

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) (who) was concerned less with emotions than with separating the world of appearances from things as they truly exist. For aesthetics, this means that we admire things because they are beautiful and not because of the pleasure they produce. Beauty is a universal concept, something that exists independently of our recognition of it. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) both emphasized the role of the human will and art as a means of freeing oneself from misery. Music for Schopenhauer is the purest of the arts because of the abstract creative powers it employs. For Nietzsche, two opposing powers are present in both art and the artist: Apollonian (light, beauty, and measure) and Dionysian (chaos). Nietzsche's "will to power" – inspired by Schopenhauer's "will to live" – embraces pain. Aesthetics here is a

natural drive that reveals and transcends the burden of the individual human condition, uniting all of humanity across cultures (Ruhl, 2006, p. 2).

A contemporary Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor (1991), discloses that from art comes revelation. The notion that revelation comes through expression is what Taylor calls 'expressivism' of the modern notion of the individual. This suggests a close analogy or connection between self-discovery and artistic creation (p. 61). All the same, some critics will go as far as to profess that film is not necessarily an art, for art is thought to provide an aesthetic experience that is elevated and distinctive; a 'high' art, if you prefer. As a result, I am certain that if Plato were alive today, he would have contested our view of film as a mode of knowledge. Indeed, as Herbert Read (1937) informs us, Plato's objection to art is precisely that it cannot convey knowledge, and therefore cannot act as a guide to men in their moral actions (p. 215). He describes Plato's theory as follows:

Art is not knowledge, for it cannot be praised for its truth, and its object is not the concept. It is not opinion, for it cannot be praised for its utility, and its object is not the percept...Its own right name is imagination, and that of its objects is phantasms or images, sheer appearances apprehended and indeed created by an activity resembling, if not identical with, dreaming. This imaginative activity does not assert anything; hence the artist lacks, not only knowledge but even opinion; and his works contain no truths, nor even assertions which by some chance might be true, but only a glamour which when stripped off leaves nothing behind (ibid, p. 217).

I couldn't disagree more with Plato's assertion that Art is not knowledge. For example, in modern terms, Plato's description of the Allegory of the Cave (Plato, 2000, Book VII, 514a-414b, pp 220-224), the notion that we are all like prisoners chained up on the floor of the cave, blinded by the darkness, bears an uncanny resemblance to a movie theatre. Instead of fire and puppets, we have a projector, light and film. Instead of shadows, we have focused images – much more compelling than shadows. The irony is that what we

see on the movie screen usually bears no more resemblance to reality than what Plato expected from the shadows on the cave wall; in truth, sitting in a dark room does not necessarily imply that we cannot learn from 'shadows-dancing-on-the-wall', an allegory that could be construed as a cinematic rendering of certain social, educational, ontological, epistemological, and political concerns. In part, the point of Plato's imagery is to contrast the "common" understanding of knowledge, truth, and reality with what seemed an obvious "un-reality," the cinematic projection of images. Plato is correct on one count: it can be argued that film is entirely constructed by fantasy or illusion. The screen, the actors, the dialogue, the events, and the film's setting are not what they seem to be. However, given that film is an illusionary device, is it therefore a worthless pedagogical enterprise, as Plato seems to suggest?

Not at all; the Arts (and in this case, film) teach us so much about the world around us. As Taylor reveals, art (or film) enables us to discover our unfolding self. Not only do I believe that film is responsible for clarity of thought, but I also trust that film frees us from ambiguity as well. Ambiguity, according to Dictionary.com (unabridged, v 1.1), is defined as follows: 'doubtfulness or uncertainty of meaning or intention: *to speak with ambiguity; an ambiguity of manner*':

There is some evidence to indicate that highly creative individuals can tolerate high degrees of ambiguity, that is, they don't go to pieces in situations where the guidelines or directions are not clear. They can explore a range of possible solutions to a problem before they make a selection of the ones they are going to employ. It might be useful for teachers to encourage students to consider alternative ways of solving problems, to put off formulating answers until they have looked at the problem from a variety of viewpoints (Eisner, 1964, p. 46).

It seems to me that when we are watching a film, we don't see things as they are, but as we are. In other words, we ultimately educe meaning from a film according to our own experience and understanding of the film's philosophical message. Once again, my understanding of constructivism tells me that if we were to make meaning out of something, lessons would therefore inevitably become internalized, which, in my view, resonates from an emotional rather than from an intellectual level. For that reason, watching a film frees us from 'uncertainty of meaning and intention' or *ambiguity* because we, the viewer, are given license to believe in what transpires on the screen in front of us. We suspend our judgments and in doing so, we free ourselves from ambiguity. For that brief moment, sitting in the dark, we believe in the 'shadows-on-the-wall'. The fact is, if film were an illusion, a mere representation of the real, as Plato's allegory of the cave might reveal, then, in my view, the following adages would also ring true: what we see is not necessarily the truth; illusion has its own reality; what film is to propaganda, education is to post-modernism; and what virtue is to Plato's Forms, film is to the 'Art of Our Time'.

FILM AS THE "ART OF OUR TIME"

According to Sontag (2001) 'while the point of a great film is now, more than ever, a one-of-a-kind achievement', she insists, in contradiction, that commercial films have settled on repeating their past glories in remake after remake. In a *Century of Cinema*, Sontag laments:

Every film that hopes to reach the largest possible audience is designed as some kind of remake. Cinema, once heralded as *the* art of the twentieth century, seems now, as the century closes numerically, to be a decadent art (p. 117).

I take exception with Sontag's view that film, as *the* art of the twentieth century, is a decadent art. In fact, I believe film to be just the opposite; in my view, film is the *art of our time*. Film, I argue, is a ubiquitous art form and the art of our time because it is one of the most creative, collaborative and constantly developed art forms there is out there. Even Sontag admits that cinema 'was an art unlike any other: quintessentially modern; distinctively accessible; poetic and mysterious and erotic and moral-all at the same time' (p. 118). She offers the suggestion that the movies encapsulated everything; 'it was both the book of art and the book of life' (p. 118). Carroll (2003) would agree: 'the case for film as art was made by arguing that film is a distinctive medium, one with its own range of properties and effects such that it warrants a place of its own in the system of the arts; film, in other words, was not merely theatre in a can' (p. 1). So what, therefore, gives film the distinction of being the *Art of Our Time*? Could it be that film, unlike theatre, is cinematic by nature? Perhaps the reason that film is one of the more distinct of all of the art forms may be because it stands alone as being one of the only art forms that combine *all* of the other arts into one. Recall that we often see displays of painting, music, dance, theatre, opera and acting, all within one medium, film. Be that as it may, what is truly distinctive about film is its *mobility* of vision; after all, its uniqueness includes such devices as the close-up, and other distinct camera angles (such as an establishing shot, medium shot, extreme close-ups), trick photography (here-in called special effects), transitions such as fades, wipes, and superimpositions, which, in my mind, differentiates it from most other mediums.

As with editing, these techniques were prized because they both declared the difference between film and theatre and departed from the 'straight' recording of reality. In other words, the use of these devices indicated that film differed from

theatre and from what was thought of as 'normal perception'. They displayed film as a unique artistic category - film as film (Carroll, 2003, p. 153).

Another distinction of film as the art of our time is that a great deal of our experience of film is saturated with emotions. Emotions like anger, fear, hatred, sorrow, jealousy and so on, are central components of the film experience as we know it. Yet by comprehending our experience and cognition of a film, (via our emotions, film devices, genres, etc.) we can think about thinking, and discuss ideas about ideas. According to Stoehr (2002), 'film is a natural medium to be utilized in the teaching and study of epistemology, a branch of philosophy that is concerned with knowledge in the widest possible sense of that term. And since epistemology is intimately related to (and even overlaps) most other fields of philosophical inquiry, film is a valuable pedagogical medium for the teaching of philosophy in general' (pp. 2-3).

Movies provide much intellectual engagement, especially for the philosophically curious. Simply put, it is a roller-coaster ride of the mind and senses, if not the heart. Its daring dips and climbs provide a great opportunity for the movie viewer to ponder whether or not life's overall meaning can lead to any definite answers. Films tell us that life itself is brimming with answers to such questions. Better stated, life itself is the answer. The meaning of life is, then, a life of meaning - an existence composed of truly significant choices and actions (Blessing, and Tudico, 2005, p. 33).

Stoehr's (2002) notion that 'film is a valuable pedagogical medium for the teaching of philosophy in general' (p. 3) might well suggest that there is, indeed, a constructivist approach in viewing a film, because like the student's learning experience, the viewer understands that a film may 'speak' to them as no one else in quite the same way can.

Richmond (2005) adds:

Contemporary art, meaning art that is current and often reflective of the concerns of post-modern theory (seen as skepticism towards "grand narratives" such as truth, objective knowledge, self-identity, history, the canon, universal values,

morality, creative authorship, intended meaning) explores such features of culture as the media, sexuality, politics, gender, ethnicity, technology, the environment, language and art itself in trying to get a fix on what life means for us in the twenty-first century. The answering of Berger's question "Where are we?" falls into this realm (p. 19).

Berger's question, as to 'Where are we?' is a fitting inquiry in a 21st Century post-modern society because as Boghossian (2006) underlines, 'post-modernism is the notion that there are multiple perspectives, interpretations and truths, and that each perspective has its own validity; no one perspective is 'more valid' than any other perspective'. In other words, no two realities are the same. And yet, although it may be plausible that contemporary art was borne as a by-product of our modernity, Read (1966) reminds us that the secret of our collective ills was to be traced to the suppression of spontaneous creative ability of the individual. My question is this: what is so fearful about engaging in imaginative inquiry? Is it that we fear something dangerous will happen if we teach students to appreciate the Arts? Is it a case of xenophobia, a fear of the unknown?

Carriere (1994) notes:

We have only imagination to rescue us from oblivion, to haul us out of our rut. Without our knowing it, it is always there, returning again and again to the attack, and with unfailing grace. However, regularly thwarted, imagination is hedged about in mistrust. It often shrinks back into the darkest depths of its lair. In some people – we have only to look around us – it seems to have disappeared, to have been murdered by routine and by fear. So many people are forever locked into rigid living, into closed thinking (p. 164).

So to reply to Berger's question as to *where we are*, we might have to look towards Whitehead's (1978) notion that 'all western philosophy consists of footnotes to Plato' to give us a more accurate glimpse of the response we are seeking. Yet, on the one hand, whenever people write about making teaching and learning imaginatively engaging, there

rises up, appropriately, the objection that this can be a covert way of replacing education with entertainment. On the other hand, Egan (1992) concedes that ‘there is obviously nothing wrong with making schools more entertaining, but it is important’, he states, ‘to make a clear distinction between that aim and educating. Things educational can often be entertaining, but things entertaining are not always educational, unless one holds the most flaccid conception of education, wherein all experience is educational’ (p. 165).

Therefore, it would follow that human learning does not involve simply mirroring what is outside the mind, but crucially involves constructing, or composing:

Not always, but oftentimes, the extent to which we grasp another’s world depends on our existing ability to make poetic use of our imagination, to bring into being the “as if” worlds created by writers, painters, sculptors, filmmakers, choreographers, and composers, and to be in some manner a participant in artists’ worlds reaching far back and ahead in time (Greene, 1995, p. 4).

Conceivably, if imaginative developments are made dramatically visible, more people may act together to repair certain of the reparable deficiencies, to do something about the flaws. In so doing, they may create values in their own lives, make commitments that are new, invent ways of acting that may radiate through the community and beyond.

Northrop Frye (1963) suggests, ‘One of the most obvious uses of imagination is its encouragement of tolerance. In the imagination, our own beliefs are also only possibilities, but we can also see the possibilities in the beliefs of others... what produces the tolerance is the power of detachment in the imagination, where things are removed just out of reach of belief and action’ (p. 32).

One must keep open-minded; we must especially be open-minded about films, because films mirror life and life, in my view, is about *meaning-making*. In life, we attach

significance to everything we do, think and feel. We are the creators of meaning. Therefore, if we can solve the problem, answer the question of how to best lead our lives, and we implement that knowledge as we would the result of any other kind of breakthrough, couldn't we in the highest sense, be said to be creating our own lives? Wouldn't this, in fact, be 'higher creativity'? And wouldn't it be the ultimate breakthrough? Couldn't films help us get there? As an active perceiver, the spectator (of a film) is constantly testing the work for larger significance, for what the film says, or suggests. This proposes film viewing as an active, not a passive activity, and is therefore not as damaging to learning as many educators advocate. For instance, Andre Bazin assumed realistic aesthetics was based on his conviction that photography, TV, and film, unlike the traditional arts, produce images of reality automatically, with a minimum of human interference. This technical objectivity, he thought, connects the moving image with the observable physical world. The filmmaker's image, as a matter of fact, is essentially an objective recording of what actually exists. Bazin felt that no other art could be as comprehensive in the presentation of the physical world. No other art, he thought, could be as realistic, in the most elementary sense of that word (Giannetti, 1993, p. 147-148). Bazin was most certainly correct in alluding to the filmic image as realistic. Like a photograph, film captures the fundamental nature of an image. Carroll (2003) advocates that 'the visual codes or recognitional capacities that we use to navigate its images are the same or pretty much the same as the ones that we use to navigate everyday life' (p. 112).

Paradoxically, we must also keep in mind that our experience of actions and events in films differ radically from our normal experiences, even though we wish to deny this fact. For the most part, we accept that movie actions and events are so organized, so automatically intelligible, and so clear; however, films such as *Memento* (2000) and most of Quentin Tarantino's films, as well as many others, defy this logic. Carroll (1998) presupposes that the arresting thing about movies, contrary to realist theories, is not that they create the illusion of reality but that they 'reorganize and construct...naturally encountered actions and events' (p. 86). Yet, as Bazin discovered, there is undoubtedly a strong case for using films in an educational setting. Movies or films, themselves, can really be inspired machinery. They can evoke a spiritual life, a higher ideal, models that are both negative and positive, or a paradigm for society to function by. That is, not just a comic book, but a mirror. What makes film a unique medium is that film has the capacity to reflect upon itself. Films like Fellini's *8½* (1963), Truffaut's *Day for Night* (1973) and Tornatore's *Cinema Paradiso* (1988), can depict the very activities of movie making and movie-watching. And the dialogical tension between passive voyeurism and the active interpretation of images, a tension that is pronounced within cinematic experience, can be especially emphasized when a film director wishes to draw attention to such a tension. The nature of cinematic perception and cognition, in other words, become mirrored at times by the cinematic artwork itself, in terms of both style and narrative; sometimes literally, sometimes figuratively.

Films by Fellini, Truffaut, Spielberg and Lucas, for example, can be construed as 'the art of our times' because they teach us key lessons in life by unraveling mysteries that we all face as human beings. Through films, we learn from other people's mistakes, and because

of this, we benefit from others' misfortunes as well as from their triumphs. It's 'the agony and the ecstasy' of real life; it's the 'try it before you buy it' scenario. These are the lessons film teach us. Films can literally possess us, in the double meaning of the word: they take possession of us, dominate and manipulate us; and also take us in, deceive us. This creates a paradox. Carriere (1994) explains that 'film makes use of illusion precisely because it is a sequence of photos set in motion, given sound, and then projected onto a given area; precisely because it is an art rooted in reality, *as if* in exploiting illusion it acknowledges its inability to grasp and reconstruct that strange reality even scientists hesitate to give a name' (p. 75). Christian Metz, a French film theorist with a semiotic approach, saw everything in the cinema as happening *as if* someone would believe it, yet any spectator will tell you that he or she 'doesn't believe it'. It thus animates the 'general refusal to admit that somewhere in oneself one believes they (screen images) are genuinely true, on which cinema spectatorship at some hidden level nonetheless depends' (Moore, 2000, p. 3-4). Elsewhere, Carriere (1994) suggests that every film-goer is in his own way a little Doubting Thomas, believing only what they see. The audience is hardly ever able to pursue the image outside the screen, to stretch it out, to distort it. 'If the trick is convincingly performed, there is no escaping it...we consent, often happily, to be fooled' (p. 54).

In my mind's eye, I see film as a metaphor for imaginative power, for the unpredictable, for the possible. Film jolts our senses and stretches our imagination, forcing us to confront our delusions about who we are. 'The magic of film', according to Moore (2000) 'with its ability to touch you with no hands, elates you, and shocks you, is a defining feature of the medium. A film's practice of attraction, distraction, tactility, shock

and repetition not only are film's stock-in-trade but also makes for healing and sorcery. Directors who craft their films by deploying its specific devices, those who maintain the preeminence of the filmic, make magic'. In order to create magic in films, however, filmmakers must be able to get their audiences to suspend their belief systems. Steven Spielberg says:

Making movies is an illusion, a technical illusion that people fall for. My job is to take that technique and hide it so well that never once are you taken out of your chair and reminded of where you are (Taylor, 1992, p. 40).

These illusions, ranging from the Chinese belief that one actually enters the landscape painting one contemplates, to his or her own experience of identification with the film image; 'we walk amid crowds, ride, fly, or fall with the hero' (Moore, 2000, p. 20). These illusions bring to life the need for the power of the imagination to 'act out', to dare to dream, or to suspend beliefs. Nevertheless, film spectators, it was argued, are under neither a perceptual nor a cognitive illusion that they are watching actual events or even that they are watching a film of actual events. According to Stoehr (2002), 'films do not trick our senses or give us false beliefs, not even temporary ones. They do not (necessarily) render us passive by dulling our powers of judgment, but instead, they invite us to become mentally active by triggering our imaginations' (p. 158). Margolis (1988) adds:

Movies meet, wisely or unwisely, man's need for escape from his / her anxieties; they help assuage his loneliness, they give him vicarious experiences beyond his own activities; they portray solutions to problems; they provide models for human relationships, a set of values and new folk heroes (p. 278).

If we were to embrace Margolis's notion that films 'portray solutions to problems' and that 'they provide models for human relationships', then this brings up an earlier question

that needs to be re-visited; is film education an ‘intrinsically worthwhile’ or ‘valuable’ pursuit? Who decides what activity is worthwhile pursuing? When Peters (1966) asks ‘are such activities any less worthwhile than theoretical pursuits?’ (p. 175), can we answer without bias? According to Barrow (1984):

One of the problems is that it is not even clear what is meant by the phrase ‘intrinsically worthwhile’ (or ‘inherently valuable or ‘valuable in itself’). Some argue that to call something ‘intrinsically worthwhile’ is no more than a way of saying ‘I value this, and that’s all there is to it’. Others point out that very often when people say that something is intrinsically worthwhile, they don’t actually mean that; they mean rather that it is valuable for some immediate, but none the less further or extrinsic purpose, such as providing better understanding of the human condition. Some think that the value is a matter of taste (what I value is what I have a taste for), while some link it to happiness, seeing worth in whatever promotes happiness, and others regard it as a unique quality, comparable in its logic to the quality of beauty that is thought to reside in the object or activity itself (p. 75).

Barrow (1984) continues; ‘Who would deny that children are likely to get more out of situations where they are already motivated and interested, or where they can be brought to be interested by the material or motivated by something extraneous, than where they are not motivated or interested?’ (p. 30). An example of an intrinsically motivated development was found in the music and culture of the mid 1960s and particularly in the life and character of Jimi Hendrix who fit closely the picture of the creatively gifted achiever. Morrissey (2001) suggests that although Hendrix’s background was characterized by adversity-poverty, racial prejudice, parental divorce, and the virtual emotional abandonment by his mother in early childhood, followed by her death when he was fifteen, Hendrix retreated into his imagination, developing an elaborate fantasy life, often expressed through art. When Hendrix was first drawn to the guitar at eight years of age, his family could not afford to buy an instrument or pay for lessons, so the young

Hendrix resorted to auto-didacticism and improvisation. His first guitar was 'symbolic', a straw broom that he carried around continuously, pretending to play it. Fittingly, Dewey (1916) wrote that imagination is the 'gateway' through which meaning derived from prior experience feeds into and illuminates present experiences. Imagination, Greene (1995) adds, may also be viewed as the source of a future vantage point from which to consider what is lacking in the present, or the now.

Morrissey's example demonstrates the significance of a child's intense motivation in an area of interest, and raises questions about what we should look for as indicators of future potential. Are intellectual and motivational characteristics such as passionate commitment, imaginative capacity, individuality, and self-direction as significant and reliable markers of gifted potential as academic or artistic precocity? Could this be the reason teachers shy away from availing themselves of the full range of available skills and responses as they face their meaning-hungry children? 'This', says Alvarez (2005), 'may not necessarily be so. Real artists tend to be battered, fallible, and tiredly self-centered; so by concentrating on them and their unspeakable lives, you conveniently sidestep the effects of their art' (p. 115-116). I don't agree. I don't think we 'sidestep the effects of their art'; even though we know these artists had a very difficult life. When I think of Vincent Van Gogh, John Lennon, or Jimi Hendrix, for that matter, I think of the enormous talent that was borne, much like the rest of us, with a fragile ego and lots of self-doubt. But I always remember what they did best and what they were remembered *for*. They were artists who were free to express themselves, free to create their art, and they did so, despite their fears.

So why shouldn't artists, or anyone else for that matter, be free to express themselves? Aren't we as individuals and as a society, free to create? Free to create, in this sense, implies living in a society that does not seek to control the outcome of the creative process. Plausibly what we truly fear, as Greene (1995) suggests, is connecting with students on an imaginative level, due to the fact that teachers seldom apply imagination themselves to their own work. As a consequence, they are incapable, or perhaps more realistically, are not empowered to use it as approval in pedagogy. Can you imagine if we were to introduce students to all of the Arts? Perhaps they would grow up and develop into free thinking individuals, without fear of censorship, free to express themselves, without fear of judgment, and ultimately free to sidestep the rational, pragmatic, scientific "logos" that seizes and immobilizes us to avoid becoming risk-takers, afraid of making mistakes. We must embrace imaginative inquiry, 'as if' we were powerful beyond our own intellectual capacity. Richmond (2005) adds:

In making art, seen broadly and inclusively, students are learning to give personal shape to their critical and aesthetic responses. Art is a way of understanding experience, others and ourselves. It can be both rewarding and challenging as there is no rule in art concerning what to do or how to proceed. A drawing or raku pot has a life behind it, however, which is part of its uniqueness. We all see and connect with things a little differently. Education for me is about empowering understanding and the self in the context of a shared existence. Such capacities make it possible for us to think about and strive for the kinds of lives we would like to live, and, hopefully, resist the importunities of global capital (p. 21-22).

Education is about balance; a balance between reason and imagination, between critical and lateral thinking, between scientific theories and the practical arts, and between fact and fiction. Although cognition is an important component of education, 'of all our cognitive capacities' Greene (1995) adds: 'Imagination is the one that permits us to give

credence to alternative realities; it allows us to break with the taken for granted, to set aside familiar distinctions and definitions' (p. 3). And Mary Warnock (1978) stressed 'The cultivation of imagination ... should be the chief aim of education' and that 'we have a duty to educate the imagination above all else' (p. 203). For Warnock, it is the imagination, with its capacity to both make order out of chaos and open experience to the mysterious and the strange, that moves us to go in quest, to journey where we have never been. Maxine Greene (1995) verifies that 'we must make the arts central in school curricula because encounters with the arts have a unique power to release the imagination. Stories, poems, dance performances, concerts, paintings, films, and plays all have the potential to provide pleasure for those willing to move out toward them and engage with them' (p. 27).

There seems no doubt that artists engage in imaginative endeavors; it's what they do. They seek approval from others. Artists have a need to be accepted and to be *popular*. It was Read (1966) who recognized that 'artists implicitly understood that in all its essential activities, art was trying to tell us something: something about the universe, something about humankind, or about the artist himself or herself. Art is a mode of knowledge, and the world of art is a system of knowledge as valuable as the world of philosophy or the world of science. It is only when we have clearly recognized art as a mode of knowledge parallel to but distinct from other modes by which human beings arrive at an understanding of their lives and environment that we can begin to appreciate its significance in the history of humankind' (p. 7).

In view of art as a mode of knowledge, one might look upon *popular culture* in modern times as incongruent with high culture, especially when distinguishing between the Arts and Literature symbolizing the status of a society's elite classes, and the entertainments of the masses. However, the fact is popular culture is often taken to encompass the material practices and symbolic representations connected to leisure and recreation. In my view, popular culture is much more than just a leisure activity connected to recreation; it is also an important educational journey. Most current work in human geography, for example, uses an anthropological definition of culture and tends to view the practices and symbols associated with popular culture as cultural expressions that may reveal, reproduce, or create aspects of place, space, landscape, and identity. Consequently, the following is an attempt on my part to authenticate popular culture as an essential feature to educational thought.

POPULAR CULTURE AS PEDAGOGY

If one were to assume that popular culture changes and influences the way we think as a society, how can educators then ignore the influences that shape its very existence?

Perhaps the most convincing answer to this question is that many people see popular media as a negative influence on children's behavior and morals. For example, according to Hahn (2000), today's classrooms fear teaching popular culture, which stems from the notion that popular culture simplifies education in a way that shortens the attention span of students, that it is merely a titillating, capitalistic enterprise in which students become mindless consumers of the media, and that it is the leading and most central cause of violence in individuals. In my view, if one believes, as Hahn does, that popular culture is the 'leading and most central cause of violence in individuals', then we should declare all

forms of popular culture – media genres such as situation comedies, film noir, best-selling novels, or rap music – off limits, and consider them all a transgression. Of course, this is hardly possible, and absurd. The truth is closer to the fact that in the academic world, growing attention for popular and marginal cultures threatens the absolute values on which intellectuals have built their autonomy. Nevertheless, from an educationalist perspective, film seems to have been regulated towards the low arts, ostensibly falling into the popular culture realm of things, and overall, is not viewed as a worthwhile academic activity. What is it about popular culture, then, that allows educational theorists to ignore it? Perhaps it is the disapproving response mass culture receives from a few levels of society; from parents to teachers, from politicians to neo-conservatives. Perhaps it is due, in large part, to the following:

All mass media in the end alienate people from personal experience and though appearing to offset it, intensify their moral isolation from each other, from reality and from themselves. One may turn to the mass media when lonely or bored. But mass media, once they become a habit, impair the capacity for meaningful experience...the habit feeds on itself, establishing a vicious circle as addictions do; they lessen people's capacity to experience life itself (Gans, 1999, p. 41).

'Ideally, the study of popular culture should be done holistically, viewing it both aesthetically and also within the social and cultural contexts, in which the materials are created, disseminated, interpreted, and used. In this way the study of popular culture involves the use of methodologies from both the humanities and the social sciences in the effort to interpret expressive cultural forms, specifically those that are widely disseminated in a group (that is, that are popular) as part of dynamic social intercourse' (Browne, 1992). As a matter of interest, in an article in *The National Post*, dated October 18th, 2005, entitled "A Rock & Roll Curriculum; History 101", Heather Sokoloff writes

‘The University of Western Ontario (Western U) is launching the first undergraduate degree [program] in popular music, with lectures to be delivered by rock band managers and songwriters’. And, according to Robert Toft, Chairman of the Musical History Department at Western U, ‘the program is designed for people who want a university education but their main interest is music, and it’s not classical music’ (Sokoloff, 2005). Dr. Toft suggests the program was created after administrators noticed a high level of interest from students for a course dealing with rock or pop. He adds that the program is intended to train creative musicians to produce records. What is of value here is the fact that popular culture programs, such as the Western U pilot project, have traditionally been offered at either private or public colleges in the last ten years or so. Universities are, for better or worse, embracing the motto ‘if you can’t beat them, join them’. In other words, popular culture studies are here to stay, and if universities want to keep their enrollments high, they will need to compete for students by offering programs of interest to them.

I have advocated up to this point that film studies, in particular, and popular culture, in general, ought to have a place in the curriculum. I adopt this position because I believe that popular culture, as I have indicated earlier, is the *politics* of the 21st century.

Wartenberg & Curran (2005) address this notion where they disclose ‘to a certain extent, culture precedes and determines politics’ (p. 224). I must agree; to a certain extent, many actions that are perpetrated in any given society are not only politically motivated, but media-infiltrated as well. For example, politics has always had theatrical elements to it, but now it is all theater. Whether it is Stephen Harper trying to appear soft and cuddly in front of the House or Commons outlining his ‘dreams’ for Canada, politics has become

posturing-positioning oneself in the most workable narrative of the day. Yet the misuse of cultural narratives doesn't end with politicians. The news channels have been all-too-eager to spend the bulk of their "political" coverage discussing the quality of the presentation rather than the intricacies of the policy. Films have also been exploited to make political statements: War films such as Lewis Milestones' *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) and Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979); adventure films such as Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969) and Disney's *The Lion King* (1994); dramas such as Steven Spielberg's *The Color Purple* (1985) and John Ford's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), political thrillers such as John Frankenheimer's *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) and Oliver Stone's *JFK* (1991) to name but a few.

Although popular culture may rear its ugly head in a variety of formats, be it in newspapers, popular novels, TV, movies, the internet and others, the focal point of this dissertation is not about popular culture, per se, but about *film education*. Consequently, in order to assess what popular culture material is valuable and worthwhile for film education, we must look at its moral, intellectual and aesthetic significance. In other words, what is of concern here is a popular culture *study*, which, by definition, is the scholarly investigation of expressive forms widely disseminated in society. These materials include, but are not restricted to, products of mass media such as television, film, print, and recording. These popular culture studies may focus on media genres such as situation comedies, film noir, best-selling novels, or rap music, to name a few. Other, non-mediated aspects of popular culture would include such things as clothing styles, fads, holidays and celebrations, amusement parks, both amateur and professional sports,

and so forth. However, for the purposes of this argument, popular culture will be limited to *film* genres only. For Henri Giroux (2002):

Popular culture, including film, now plays pedagogically and politically in shaping the identities, values, and broader social practices that characterize an increasingly post-modern culture in which the electronic media and visual forms constitute the most powerful educational tools of the new millennium (p. 10).

Giroux indicates in the aforementioned passage that film can be construed as social commentary. In particular, film can be socially thought provoking. In effect, Wartenberg & Curran (2005) declare ‘the form of Hollywood film has in recent years come to be characterized as inherently ideological because it tends invariably to reinforce the dominant forms of patriarchal and capitalist life...Hollywood films are in our view ideological because they replicate the figures and narratives that constitute the very substance of those values, practices, and institutions that shape a society of domination’ (p. 213-214). As an example, Frank Capra’s *It’s a Wonderful Life* (1946), a post war film, based upon a short story written on a Christmas card by Philip Stern, was a story about the loss of freedom, the ‘what ifs’ of life, and the value of humble dreams, even if those dreams don’t come true. Almost sixty years after the film was made, *It’s a Wonderful Life* remains a holiday favorite for its uplifting message tempered by a foreboding message of ‘what if’. The film is ideological in nature, because it challenges people’s conception of reality; in other words, what we ‘see’ is a product of what we believe to be ‘out there’; we see things not simply as ‘they’ are, but as ‘we’ are.

Ron Burnett (1995), a noted Canadian film educator, argues the notion that as educators, we must all refrain from initiating students into an artificial, esoteric culture (i.e., high culture), when their own culture (i.e., low culture) is so rich and satisfying. My question

emulates Burnett's: Why don't we help students engage in their own popular culture from a critical perspective and have school make a difference in their lives? This is fitting because, as Jim Collins argues in *Uncommon Cultures* (1989), 'there is no master's voice anymore, but only a decentralized assemblage of conflicting voices and institutions' (p. 2). To that end, I interviewed Pierre, a high school social studies and film teacher, who explains the influence that popular culture has on the work that his students engage in:

My strategy is to ask them to talk about their culture [in general] rather than from a personal point of view. So from this perspective, it is much easier; they can now talk about their own pop culture perspective. All their friends, including themselves, have a cell phone, I-Pods, etc. I ask them to explain what it means to have an I-Pod, a cell phone, etc. Why do they all want to have an I-Pod, what does it really mean to them; the I-Pod [after all] is the culture of their times. Once the kids leave the classroom to go anywhere, they immediately put on their headphones and listen to their I-Pod tunes. So I wanted to bring that aspect of their culture to their attention and I [often] ask them to produce a film with that theme in mind. Now the students can use film as a weapon to dig deep inside, to question their values. It does, essentially, make them think so much harder than just doing research from a literary perspective and writing a paper.

You can be sure, that at this age, it is hard for students to make a film; just to choose a subject; but they have to negotiate that with friends, they have to choose and even if they make a bad film, [it's alright], because they went through a process; just to finish a film was a success in itself. The students have learned what it means to make difficult choices, millions of choices.

(Grenier interview, fall 2005)

I concur with Pierre; I believe that popular culture *ought to* inform education. Steinberg & Kincheloe (1997) substantiate my belief by suggesting that popular culture provides a basis for *persuasive* forms of learning for children. They also affirm that film and TV mirror [some] societal norms (for example from an ethical or moral standpoint) and in doing so, reflect the culture of our society. It is from this outlook that I explore the nature of film and its influence on students' ways of life. Film as a visual medium reflects many

modes of communication (TV, the internet, video games, music compact discs, MP3's, such as the I-Pod and movies) that are capable of presenting a variety of textual forms like print, pictures, drawings, animation and sound.

Film Education as an acceptable popular culture medium should be taken seriously because according to Kearney (1988), the 'Culture of the Book' is being replaced by the 'Culture of the Image'; from TV and video to films, billboard advertisements, to neon signs, our Western culture is becoming increasingly a 'Civilization of the Image' (p. 2). This explosion in visual information has presented a major challenge to the world of formal education. Regrettably, 'popular culture is not studied much these days', as Gans (1999) cautions us, 'either by social scientists or humanists, except in the pages of the new *Journal of Popular Culture*' (p. xi -xii). One of the reasons for the lack of interest in popular culture, he says, is the anti-commercial bias, found in scholarly works on culture. In light of this, it is of no surprise that scholars disagree about the value of studying popular culture in the classroom. This disagreement reflects a more fundamental debate over the nature of popular materials themselves. Henri Giroux's (1994) line of reasoning argues that a popular cultural study is largely defined through its correlation between culture and power. Giroux posits this is as particularly evident in two areas: 'First, cultural studies have strongly influenced a shift in the terrain of culture, as Stuart Hall has noted, "toward the popular". Second, cultural studies have broadened the traditional idea of reading to encompass a vast array of cultural forms outside of the technology and print culture of the book' (p. 129).

Giroux's above-mentioned notion, in essence, is justifiable because more often than not, we tend to think of popular culture as entertainment and as escapist fun, in contrast to great literature as tough and demanding food for thought and careful study. Gans (1999) proposes that 'the danger "toward the popular" is that unknown numbers of children and adults are unable to make the crucial distinction between the make-believe of popular culture and the reality of their own lives' (p. 47). Furthermore, he maintains that popular culture is emotionally destructive because 'it provides spurious gratification and is brutalizing in its emphasis on violence and sex; it is intellectually destructive because it offers meretricious (superficial) and escapist content which inhibits people's ability to cope with reality; and that it is culturally destructive, impairing people's ability to partake of high culture' (ibid, p. 41). Yet, couldn't we argue the same thing about the culture of the book? In an article entitled 'Dangerous Reading', Apple (2005) suggests an analogous criticism is being leveled against the culture of the book. He notes,

Neo-conservatives never cease their vigilance against books that are too dangerous for people to read. For example, an "expert panel" was asked to compile a list of the "Ten most harmful books" of the 19th and 20th centuries. At the very top of this list was Marx and Engels', *The Communist Manifesto*...and even more worthy of note to those of us concerned about education's role in developing critically engaged citizens, John Dewey's 'Democracy and Education'... At times, they focus much of their attention on censoring books for children...

One can see that anyone can argue for or against any issue, as long as there is enough passion and interest to sustain the argument. Paradoxically, the very qualities that make film and video so popular, can also present problems as well. For students raised on a steady diet of media consumption, film and documentary footage used in the classroom often becomes "edutainment". This does more than simply distort historical and social

issues. According to Paris (1997), it 'reinforces passive viewing and unquestioning acceptance of received material that accompanies growing up in a video environment, and consequently, that passivity and lack of critical awareness is anathema to a democracy'. One can say, however, that the same criticism can be leveled against popular books, as Apple had articulated in the afore-mentioned passage.

The point is that popular culture, as the most recent object of ridicule with contemporary critics, targets this vernacular culture as a 'hit list', much as books were targeted since Gutenberg invented the printing press in 1436. Needless to say, educators who do not address popular culture issues and continue to ignore negative societal pressures will systematically push students farther away, creating 'subversive communities' which, in turn, fuel the production of more negative attitudes contained in the vehicle of popular culture. For example, in an article entitled '*Becoming Black: Rap and Hip-Hop, Race, Gender, Identity, and the Politics of ESL Learning*', Ibrahim (1999) speculates that the choice of rap music must be read as an act of resistance, an interesting and revealing comment, in itself. He claims that:

Rap has been formed as a voice for voice-less-ness and is performed as a prophetic language that addresses silence, the silenced, and the state of being silenced (p. 366).

This notion of resistance allows marginalized subjects to voice their concerns and their ways of being and learning. As students start to identify with various forms of language and culture, including Black stylized English, hip-hop culture, and rap lyrical and linguistic styles, this identification in turn reinforces the new cultural and linguistic identities they are investing in. According to Taylor & Taylor (2006):

Hip-hop is having a profound effect on young people throughout the world, as technology spreads the message of this new way of thinking and as its ideology is reinforced in the events young people are exposed to daily. Hip-hop is not a monolithic voice or idea, but rather a complex hybrid of, among other things, democratic values, street culture ideology, prison culture philosophy, and, musically, African American and Latino American creeds and cultural traits, rock 'n' roll, rhythm and blues, jazz, world music, and reggae (p. 3).

In light of this, Ibrahim (1999) recommends that teachers must identify the different sites in which students invest their identities and desires and develop materials that engage students' race, class, gender, sexuality, and social identities. If teachers take it upon themselves to understand their students' cultural 'language', they would undoubtedly make a greater and enduring impression on those very students. The benefits of incorporating the students' popular culture experiences or cultural 'languages' into their lesson plans would not only improve students' enthusiasm for these classes, but would make for a favorable and tenable school experience. It is for these above-mentioned reasons that I believe education should forge a relationship between popular culture and the lived experiences of youth. Oddly enough, teachers have long used the media, and particularly film, to achieve various instructional objectives such as building backgrounds for particular topics or motivating student reaction and analysis. However, I don't think it is quite the established norm as yet. I asked Pierre, (a Van Tech High School Social Studies Teacher), what his thoughts were regarding the use of popular culture in the classroom.

Pierre: I see it as the study of film: I also have to say that you have to be cautious about that, but I think it is a good thing; having said that, you have to approach popular culture as a study in icons; why did *Pulp Fiction* become such an icon? Students must choose their icons as meaningful to the society in which they live; I mean, why did we study Shakespeare? Because he was an icon, meaningful to his era...*Star Wars* is our icon

today; but icons don't last very long. They are short-lived. *Pulp Fiction* lasted perhaps five years. Youth today do not know the film *Pulp Fiction*. So for me, I think popular culture has a place in the curriculum, but the teachers have to be well trained in this culture... Basically, when one studies a film, it is much like studying a novel, in that novels can also be limiting (Grenier Interview, 2005).

It is commonly argued that one of the securest findings of educational research is that new information, to be best understood, must be attached to knowledge the student already has (Egan, 1992). This is the fundamental premise behind constructivism as previously mentioned in Chapter One. Think about the possibilities. Students come to the classroom with an internalized knowledge about what directors are trying to accomplish in their films. Students intuitively know who the good and bad guys are in a film by what they wear, say, or do or by what others say about them. If, indeed, the role of experience plays a significant part in learning for both children and adults, then learning has to be based on the learner's experience. Acknowledging Dewey's and Egan's notion of experience-based learning, McPherson (2006) had this to say:

Seanna I think we can easily miss the 'experiential' opportunity to fully re-educate our population primarily through the emphases on writing; that is, literacy and numeracy.

Ralph Yes. But how do we do that? Can we accomplish that through teaching film?

Seanna I honestly believe so. I think that film should be taught at every level. I think it should start in Grade One.

Ralph How would we establish that?

Seanna I think you start with a digital camera because it is an easy tool to use and you say 'go'. You know they're cheap. Whatever cheap technology you can get, use that. And you say, of course with some guidance because they have to be able to physically hold the thing, 'shoot something' and you give them a container, you know like, 'shoot something out in the

playground' and we are going to bring it back and we are going to load it into the desktop and we are going to cut it with music.

I am inclined to agree with Seanna when she suggests that we can easily miss the opportunity to re-educate our population, which is an interesting, albeit frightening prospect. The frightening prospect, in my view, is that there is a compelling reason for education to serve the status quo; and interesting, because I believe it will give us the incentive to reach students *on an emotional* level, and not necessarily to the exclusion of the rational / cognitive level. Most of all, we need to incorporate experience into pedagogy. The message here is that teachers need to help children and adults access their prior knowledge and experience in order to help them assimilate new learning into experiences they already possess. Film has become such an integral ingredient in our motley recipe of mass art and pop culture entertainment that we often overlook its potential for stimulating serious reflection and speculation. Film and the electronic media have drastically changed the way we perceive the world and ourselves during the past one hundred years, yet we all too naturally accept the vast amounts of information they convey to us in massive doses without questioning how they tell us what they tell.

McPherson (2006) thinks that:

The visual medium has more to offer us in a sense, than the written word; I think the written word is more elusive, and I think the image is more direct, in a sense, more, as you say 'truthful'. But it is closer to the way that we experience the world. And I think that in that 'moment' whatever that 'moment' is that there is eternal wisdom; it's that connection that you are talking about, it is the only thing that should be valued. Like whatever could help us make a connection, with our hearts, with our souls, we need to utilize that. That is it! I mean I wouldn't be so excited about the medium if it weren't true. And I think it's true about music, too. And I think that is why everyone is downloading I-tunes so fast.

Popular culture provides children with intense emotional experiences often unmatched in any other phase of their lives. It is, therefore, not surprising that such energy and emotional intensity exerts such powerful influences on one's self-identity. Those who look at popular culture from this perspective see it as a terrain of ideological struggle expressed through music, film, mass media artifacts, language, customs, and values. Ongoing controversies over censorship, rock music lyrics, and the content of music videos and musicals such as *Flashdance* (1983) and *Fame* (1980) suggest the extent to which people in our society recognize the impact and significance of these and other popular forms. One would think, in light of these controversies, educators, parents, and citizens should be deeply concerned with youth trends. Giroux (1994) admits that this might involve attempting to understand youth culture and its problems; combating the ways that youth are being misrepresented in the media and in the schools, and developing pedagogical strategies and cultural politics that will reform and democratically transform media, education, and society. In other words, by understanding the culture that their children live in, parents and educators can begin to understand youth and their own cultural 'language'.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important contributions of the Arts in education is to resist as strongly as possible, the powerful influences on our children and in our students of conformist, secondhand feelings. 'Our aim', as Best suggests, 'is to educate (students) to become capable of a continuously expanding range of vivid and subtly discriminated feelings, which are *their own*, firsthand, and authentic' (cited in Abbs, 1989, p. 71).

There is a large body of literature confirming what we already know intuitively; the Arts teach all of us – students and teachers alike – innovation, novelty, and creativity (see Eisner, 2002; Giroux, 2002; Green, 1995; Richmond, 2004, 2005; Smith, 1989; & Warnock, 1978). Although, our engagement with cinematic fictions is only partly an imaginative one, one cannot deny that reason plays a supporting role in a filmmaker’s undertakings. Nevertheless many directorial and artistic decisions are made from a cognitive, rational perspective. Therefore, the belief that ‘It is impossible to learn anything in the arts; that the involvement in the arts is essentially a matter of experience’ and that ‘the Arts, by their very nature, cannot involve *learning* at all’ (Abbs, 1989, p. 70), perpetuates a damaging educational myth; namely that the human mind is composed of two distinct realms of faculties; the Cognitive / Rational, and the Affective / Creative domains. These Cartesian myths must be dispelled and instead, reason and feeling must be seen to be complementary, rather than divisive.

The fact remains, an arts education not only enhances students’ understanding of the world around them, but it also gives them the creativity and skill to express themselves, while challenging their intellect. The arts integrate life and learning for all students and are integral in the development of the whole person. Arts Education must be thought of as a special case of assimilation or better still, *acculturation*, the complex process by which a culture manages to ensure that almost all of its newly born develops into viable members of the group. In the final analysis, artists of every stripe are people who share qualities such as imagination, the capacity to work hard, and personal vision – qualities that will be sorely needed in a globally oriented and fast changing century that lies ahead. And yet, from a pedagogical perspective, we still live under Plato’s gaze, who looked

upon the Arts as an expression of the emotional and undisciplined part of our natures. Art for Plato was sensuous and seductive, and as such, it was to be discouraged in the interests of rational ideals and virtues. The very fact that the arts have such power over the feelings and imagination is the reason why it must be, as Read (1966) suggests ‘rigorously controlled’ (p. 104). Still, many educators feel that while the study of the fine and performing arts is a nice thing for children, the study of traditional disciplines such as math and science is more important as preparation for the “real world” of college and the workplace.

If we were to look at education from a cultural pedagogical point of view, we can see that pedagogical sites are those places where power is organized and deployed, including libraries, TV, movies, newspapers, magazines, toys, advertisements, video games, books, sports, and so on. As such, popular culture very often conveys dominant narratives, from corporate world to mainstream Hollywood stereotypes. If literature can be read as the reflections and responses of writers to the conditions in which they live, then popular culture can also provide insights about contemporary culture, its social relations, norms and contradictions. One of the ways in which we can understand a contemporary culture is to deconstruct its myths. Myths, as we shall see in Chapter Four, are stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning, and for significance. Yet, another way of understanding a contemporary culture is to explore its music culture. Chapter Three, *The Invisible Art of Film Music*, explores the notion that film music is as fundamental to the film experience as are subjects like mathematics and science to the development of mind. Accordingly, I will show how this is not only plausible but, once again, necessary to the holistic film and educational experience.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INVISIBLE ART OF FILM MUSIC

Music is an inseparable component of movies. Accordingly, Webb (1986) suggests 'certain songs or themes trigger our memories. From the zither music in the *Third Man* (1949), the ballad in *High Noon* (1952), Scott Joplin's rags in *The Sting* (1973), David Raksin's haunting theme from *Laura* (1944) to John Williams *Jaws* (1975), movies have enlarged the audience for the classics' (p. 149). My personal all time favorite film music is 'As Time Goes By'/'You Must Remember This' from Rick's Café that Dooley Wilson played in *Casablanca* (1942). I would even venture to say that *Casablanca* is one of my favorite films and, according to the American Film Institute (AFI; see web address @ <http://www.afi.com/tvevents/100years/movies.aspx>), one of the best films ever made. In fact, Michael Curtiz's *Casablanca* was rated the number two film by AFI, just behind Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941), their number one choice. What about you? If you had to choose just one film, what would you say *your* favorite film of all time was? Can you remember the film's mood, and how the music created that mood? Now, *who would you say wrote the music?* Chances are, you couldn't say. That's because film music is a notoriously neglected craft. The fact is, next to the director, the screenwriter, the cinematographer and the art director, a film's composer is the low rung on the movie ladder. For example, if you've ever seen *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* (1966), or any of the dozen or so other 'Spaghetti Westerns' scored by Ennio Morricone, one of the primary things you'll recall about the film – even years after viewing it – is the music. Yet what you may not know is that Morricone also wrote the hauntingly beautiful scores for such films as *Days of Heaven* (1978), *The Mission* (1986), *The Untouchables* (1987),

Cinema Paradiso (1988) and *Bugsy* (1991). Long overdue to win an Oscar award, Morricone finally received an honorary Oscar during the February 25, 2007 Oscar ceremony awards at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, California. Upon acceptance of the coveted award, Morricone quipped that had he not won, "I would have remained in the company of illustrious non-winners," singling out Stanley Kubrick and other greats who never won the coveted statuette.

As Morricone's film scores (and recent Oscar) can attest to, film music is an art of the people, and to think of a film score as 'filler' for the film spectator is to misrepresent both the creative process and our normal response to it. Prendergast (1977) points out that at times one of the functions of film music is to do nothing more than to be there 'as though it would exist as sound rather than as a *constructed* music'. He continues, 'even though it is filling a rather subordinate role to the other elements in the picture, 'filler' type music is in fact a very conscious dramatic device' (pp. 213-245). Notwithstanding, we must recognize that no culture is without music in some form or another, and film is as important a culture as any other. Some believe, in fact, that music is the universal language, the language of the emotions. In *Politics*, Aristotle (1337a-1342b) suggested that music added 'to the cultivation of our minds and to the growth of moral wisdom'. Music, after all, functions in a wide variety of social contexts, serving not only to provide aesthetic enjoyment but also to validate cultural, religious, economic and political institutions, for example. And according to Roger Scruton in *Musical Understanding and Musical Culture*, music is 'the bourgeois art, *par excellence*'. Yet Scruton also suggests that, 'music is an art of the people. It finds its way into the arenas of common life, churches, workplaces, ballrooms, public and private gatherings. It is the universal

medium, which, being free from concepts, can be understood by anyone who is open to the influence of his surrounding world' (Cited in Alperson, 1987, p. 26).

So how is it that music, like film, is still regarded as mere amusement and not worthy of serious study? For film, at its best, appears the closest to realizing that old dream of fusing the separate Arts, music included, into one. Richard Wagner, who transformed opera in the mid-19th century, had just such a dream of a 'total art' combining music, choreography, drama, poetry, architecture, and painting, thereby advocating a theory of a universal artwork (*Gesamtkunstwerk*). Wagner's ideal is more fully realized in the expressive possibilities of cinema than any other medium. Albeit, the combining of music with drama is a practice extending back at least to Ancient Greece, no other medium surpasses the expressive range of the cinema. It is quite ironic, though, that the ancient Greeks did not even have a word for music – *mousike* – meant something else (the Greek term '*mousike*', or 'the muses' art', actually refers, not to music in the way we perceive it today, but to a comprehensive oral training in poetry, accompanied most often by the lyre, or small harp) nor did there seem to be any such activity separate from dance or ritual. To the ancient Greeks, music was inextricably bound to the fabric of social life. If one were to subscribe to this point of view, it would be justifiable to suggest that music is an integral part of everyday life, and as Scruton suggests, 'Music renews the sense of community without which life is neither tolerable nor wholly lived'. (Alperson, 1987, p. 340). To that end, this chapter examines the notion the ancient Greeks had about the 'ethos' of music, in that music had an effect on the emotions, character and ethical behavior of individuals and society. The main theme here is to illustrate music in film as fundamental to the film experience, and as such, the notion that combining music with

film is somewhat akin to a case of transformation; in other words, without one, we cannot fully realize the experience of the other.

THE BIRTH OF FILM MUSIC

Music has been an essential part of cinema almost from its inception. Films made during the silent era (1895-1927) may have lacked a soundtrack, but movie audiences in Canada, as elsewhere, most often experienced them with musical accompaniment.

Almost from the time Canada's first movie theatre opened in Toronto in March 1906, piano players sat in the pit beneath the screen and performed standard tunes and familiar classical pieces, underscoring the action on the screen and enhancing its emotional power. Yet, have you ever given any thought as to *why* the early silent movies had a piano player in front of the screen improvising to the actions of the drama, and why present day movies would seem bare without music at various points in the action? Could it be that music in films makes us hold our breath, sit up, tense our muscles and psychologically prepares us for what is to come? In the early days of cinema, before the use of synch sound, live music always accompanied 'silent' film screenings and, in early sound films, the music was played on set while the film was being shot. Gaylord Carter, a theatre organist, recalls his early years at the keyboard:

People forget that silent pictures were never silent. Even when they were shooting these emotional scenes at the studio, say, John Barrymore making love to Mary Astor in *Don Juan* (1926), there would be a violinist or a string quartet on the set. The music put the actors in the right mood. So in preserving organ music in the theatre, you were just amplifying what they were working to when the picture was being photographed (Webb, 1986, p. 149).

This was a natural extension of the way musical accompaniment was used in theatre and vaudeville and is just one legacy of the theatrical tradition which so informed the

development of early narrative cinema. With the introduction of synch sound to filmmaking, music became more imaginatively integrated into film. After all, music exists to be listened to, and therefore it seems natural that many films are characterized by the music from the very beginning, even while the credits are still rolling. Oddly enough, Spande (2003) points out that ‘historically, the accompaniment of film by music was a solution to the problem of clanky projectors, a problem which soon corrected itself, and the live piano player, or small orchestra with harmonium, disappeared from the film experience. In a more immediate sense this phenomenon still holds’ (p. 1).

Predictably, ‘from Ancient times to the McLuhanist period, creativity has been most tightly linked to seeing; in other words *to imagine is to visualize*. Terms like motion pictures, cinema, and television trace their etymological roots to visual concepts, not to auditory ones. It is not surprising, then, that so many silent movie directors and theoreticians, most notably Rudolph Arnheim, viewed the arrival of sound to motion pictures as a nearly apocalyptic event’ (Mancini, 1985, p. 361). The irony here is that filmmaking is about the art of narration, the art of story telling. Even philosophers are beginning to take seriously the notion that narrative, the practice of telling ourselves stories about ourselves, is the basis of our understanding of ourselves and the lives we lead (Alperson, 1987, p. 66). The history of music parallels the chronicles of events, detailing biographical facts and dates, alluding to schools, genres, styles and social background. So why bother mentioning music history at all? A common answer is that history provides knowledge of the past, the human past, and self-knowledge justifies itself. ‘Knowledge’, as Nietzsche (1874) rightly points out, ‘is power’; it has an interest in its subject matter’ (p. 67).

As indicated earlier, ever since the dawn of filmmaking music has been a vital aspect of the cinematic arts. Hoffman (1970) writes ‘Since the earliest days of the movies there has really been no such thing as a ‘silent film’. Music was always an integral part of the showing of motion pictures, inseparable from the visual, indispensable as accompaniment to films’ (p.1). As film began to evolve into an art form, the composition of original scores as musical accompaniment was probably inevitable. Yet in 1927, when the first ‘talkie’ film *The Jazz Singer* opened to a mesmerized audience, many critics felt that sound would deal a deathblow to the art of movies. Rudolph Arnheim, writing around the same time *The Jazz Singer* (1927) was released, argues:

The introduction of the simultaneous soundtrack into films marks an artistic disaster. The reason for this is that the mixing of image and sound that constitutes the talkie lacks the unity necessary for significant forms of art. In making this assertion, Arnheim was concerned that the arts stick to a single medium because, in his view, those arts are superior to those that attempt to mix them (Wartenberg & Curran, 2005, p. 40).

Nevertheless, the setbacks were temporary, and today sound is one of the richest sources of meaning in film art. Essentially, there never was a silent period, for virtually all movies prior to 1927 were accompanied by some kind of music. Giannetti (1993) adds, ‘in the very large city theatres, full orchestras provided atmospheric background to the visuals. In small towns, a piano was often used for the same purpose. In many theatres, the “Mighty Wurlitzer” organ, with its bellowing pipes, was the standard musical accompaniment. Music was played for practical as well as artistic reasons, for these sounds muffled the noises of the patrons who were occasionally rowdy, particularly when entering the theatre’ (p. 187). Since the beginning of the “talkies”, sound and music have been a staple in film productions. After the “*Jazz Singer*”, films incorporated classical

scores to enrich the films cohesiveness, raising film to a distinctive art form, combining all other arts into one *film*. However, after the 1950s, every aspect of a film's production has since been affected by the break-up of the studio system, which triggered changes in the creation, distribution and exhibition of feature films in Hollywood. K.M. Kalinak (1992) suggests that with the advent of the 1960s:

The most serious challenge to the classical film score emerged: the "guitar-washed" youth-oriented version based in various kinds of rock and roll. These pop scores... were particularly attractive to the industry in an era when changing demographics revealed an increasingly younger audience. Since many composers of pop scores were already established in the record industry, scores such as those for *The Graduate* (1967), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), and *Good-bye Columbus* (1969) were also easily marketed as records, and frequently out-grossed the films they were composed for. In the seventies producers capitalized on the pop score's ability to create an audience for a film and began the practice of pre-marketing a film's songs. The pop score has, not unexpectedly, produced heated response from established composers who pronounced it the death of the film score (pp. 184-202).

It wasn't until the 1970s that symphonic scores returned to the movies with John Williams' treatment of *Star Wars* and balanced, once more, the music of the past with pop scores of present day. Once again, thanks to the brilliance of composers such as Williams and Morricone's symphonic scores, film music has come full circle, delighting audiences, young and old, everywhere.

THE ARTISTRY OF SOUND

It is certain that when most children begin school they have already a well-developed awareness of sounds in their environment. Therefore, creating music can start from sounds around them, and imitating sounds of the environment forms the impetus for much of the world's music. When we address the artistry of sound *in* films, we are acknowledging that *all* types of sounds color the tapestry of film's overall production

values. 'The primary function of the sound-track', according to Perkins (1972) 'is to let us hear, to fill out the illusion by recording for our ears, just as the image records for our eyes' (p. 94). For Sobchack & Sobchack (1980), the sound-track is broken down into supporting components: 'sound in a film falls into four categories: spoken dialogue and narration, sound effects, music and silence. All of the aural elements in a film may be used simultaneously or individually to create aesthetic effects and convey information about the film's content. All are as subject to editing as is the visual image' (p. 447). A film's *sound design* is often a series of sounds layered one on top of another, in order to create a rich symphony of film sounds that we are all well accustomed to hearing when viewing a film. Sobchack & Sobchack (1980) again: 'like the images in a film, sound is edited or molded to suit the needs of the individual film. Sound can be used to emphasize or alter our visual perspective of a character or place, to transitionally bridge a cut, or to contradict the image or a previously established mood, and it can be used to establish the identity of a particular kind of film, such as a western or a gangster film' (ibid, p. 155). And yet despite the technical advances of sound films, formalist directors remained hostile to the use of realistic (synchronous) sound recording. 'Synchronous sound is the sound in a film which is synchronized or matched to an onscreen source – such as an actors lips, an axe chopping wood, or a musician playing an instrument' (ibid, p. 136). In contrast, Giannetti (1993) suggests that 'Eisenstein (1898-1948) was especially wary of dialogue, and he predicted an onslaught of "highly cultured dramas" that would force the cinema back to its stogy beginnings. Synchronous sound, he believed would destroy the flexibility of editing and thus kill the very soul of film art' (p. 188). The reality, however, is that for most film editors, a dialogue sequence requires some form of continuity. If

truth be told, there are so many cuts in a film, with its many leaps in time and space that it wouldn't make much sense if realistic (or 'wild') sound had to be provided with each image (wild sound or non-synchronous audio is often recorded independent of picture. For example, rain on roof, screeching tires, or a clock ticking would all be examples of 'wild sound'). Yet, although most of the talented directors of the early sound era favoured non-synchronous sound, Giannetti (1993) writes:

The Frenchman Rene Clair believed that sound should be used selectively, not indiscriminately. The ear, he believed, is just as selective as the eye, and sound can be edited in the same way images can. Even dialogue sequences needn't be totally synchronous. Clair believed that conversation can act as a continuity device, freeing the camera to explore contrasting information – a technique especially favored by ironists like Hitchcock and Ernst Lubitsch (p. 189).

While it may appear obvious that there is a considerable difference between our visual and acoustic education, the truth is, or rather the illusion is we often see without hearing. We see things from afar, through a windowpane, on pictures, on photographs. But we very rarely hear the sounds of nature and of life without seeing something. We are not accustomed therefore to draw conclusions about visual things from sounds we hear. Balazs (1985) suggests that this defective education of our hearing can be used for many surprising effects in the sound film. It would seem that our eye recognizes things even if it has seen them only once or twice. Sounds, however, are much more difficult to recognize. We are far more aware of visual forms than we are of sound forms. We are used to finding our way about the world without the conscious assistance of our hearing. But, 'given that the director finds his effects *within* the action', Perkins (1972) suggests 'the sound-track is more malleable than the image. Our ears are a great deal more selective and less critical than our eyes' (p. 95). Yet, without sight we are lost. Our ear,

on the other hand, is not less sensitive, it is only less educated than our eye. Science tells us that the ear can distinguish more delicate nuances than our eye. The number of sounds and noises a human ear can distinguish runs into many thousands, far more than the shades of color and degrees of light we can distinguish. As an example, the ear can distinguish innumerable shades and degrees in the noise of a large crowd, but at the same time it could not be stated with certainty whether the noise was that of a merry or an angry crowd. The reality is, however, that there is a considerable difference between hearing and listening. Our minds automatically filter out irrelevant sounds. Learning to listen is the sound engineer's job. S/he must not only capture and monitor the sound essential to the production, but also listen for all those extraneous noises that always seem to crop up unexpectedly – airplanes, street noise, voices, white noise, and the like. For example, when we are out and about with a friend, walking in some noisy city location, we often focus our attention on the speaker, barely conscious of the sounds of traffic. What we are doing, in actuality, is *tuning out* any extraneous noises that we deem unfit for the task at hand, which, in this case is *listening* to a friend on a very busy boulevard. It goes without saying, therefore, that the electronics of sound and sound effects in a film are of vital interest to the audience, but more so to the trained technicians who must perform the job of suturing the ambiance of reel sounds to replicate the natural sounds of real life. Needless to say, such use of creative sound effects depends upon the knowledge of highly trained sound technicians to decipher the mechanical principles involved.

SOUND EFFECTS

Until the late 1920s when the sound film became both technically viable and commercially necessary, orchestral scores for the large scale silent movies demanded an entire battery of realistic effects, from horses hooves to pistol shots, designed to replace the sounds which the film itself could not provide (Perkin, 1972, p. 47).

However, since the arrival of sound in 1927, sound effects in films had to be synchronized with the image in order to create a life-like ambiance, in effect convincing the audience that these sounds do, indeed, exist. Yet, the truth is, for many films, synchronous sound effects authenticate visual settings which bear little resemblance to the world we know, as witnessed in Ridley Scott's film *Blade Runner* (1982) or Lucas' *Star Wars* (1977), which replicate fantastic objects and fantastic places that hardly exist in real life. Having established the importance of sound effects in films, what is unknown to the average movie goer is that sound effects are usually added after principle shooting occurs and are most likely matched to the picture in post-production (editing). Albeit, sound effects may be introduced during principle photography, this is unlikely to occur while shooting takes place, due to the precision and timing these effects have on the overall production values. For example, Livingstone (1969) tells us that:

In the shooting of battle scenes, actual shells are not exploded, and blanks are often used instead of real bullets. However, the powder charges used to simulate the exploding shells have a sound entirely different from the real thing, and blanks do not sound at all like actual bullets. Thus, a separate track, with the actual sounds, is synced with the picture. In addition, a loop of miscellaneous battle sounds is usually added for the off-stage and background effects. During dubbing, this loop or loops, as there may be several, is run continuously during the battle scenes (p. 116).

While the function of sound effects is primarily atmospheric, they can also be precise sources of meaning in film. The pitch, volume, and tempo of sound effects can strongly

affect our responses to any given noise. High-pitched sounds (including music) are often used in suspense sequences, particularly just before and during the climax. Low frequency sounds, on the other hand, are heavy, full, and less tense. Low pitched sounds can also suggest anxiety and mystery. Frequently a suspense sequence begins with such sounds, which then gradually increase in frequency as the scene moves toward its climax. Sound volume works in much the same way. Loud sounds tend to be forceful, intense, and threatening, whereas quiet sounds strike us as delicate, hesitant, and often weak. Consequently, sound effects can evoke terror in suspense films and thrillers. Since we tend to fear what we can't see, directors will sometimes use off-screen sound effects to strike a note of anxiety. And because images tend to dominate sounds while we're actually experiencing a movie, many sound effects work on a subconscious level. Yet, according to Livingston (1969), 'sound effects, for the most part, are meaningless by themselves, but in association with the direct idea of the scene, or as an indirect carry-over from the story, they can convey considerable information and, at times, a tremendous emotional impact' (p. 116).

Occasionally, the complete lack of sound effects and music, utter silence, can result in an emotional reaction. For example, since we tend to associate sound with the presence of ongoing life, silence in a sound film can be used to symbolize death. We are so accustomed to hearing sounds in a movie theatre that if there were any absence of sound in a film, we would take notice and in a way, the sudden absence of sound would irritate our sense of reality. Sobchack & Sobchack (1980) suggest that 'the lack of sound can cause us to feel apprehensive and dissociated from reality, which is never without some noise, (although) in some contexts, silence can also intensify our attention, making us

focus more tightly on the image'(p. 164). An example of this is a film by Ingmar

Bergman's appropriately titled *The Silence* (1963):

A film about the difficulty of human communication, both sound and silence combines to convey the film's theme aurally as well as visually. In one scene, for example, the little boy Johann walks down the empty corridors of the decaying hotel in which he is staying and there is absolute silence – no footfalls, no background noise of any kind. The effect produced creates a sense of isolation and claustrophobia, communicating the psychic states of the film's central characters (ibid, p. 448-449).

Another illustration is Kurosawa's film *Ikiru* (1952). Kurosawa uses this (absence of sound) technique accordingly; Giannetti (1993), explains: 'after the elderly protagonist has been informed by a doctor that he is dying of cancer, the old man stumbles out on the street, the sound track totally silent. When he's almost run over by a speeding auto, the sound track suddenly roars with the noise of the city traffic; the protagonist is yanked back into the world of the living'(p. 198). In spite of everything, there are some who believe that there is no need to explain the sounds in a sound film. However, it is the business of the sound film to reveal for us our acoustic environment, the acoustic landscape in which we live, and the intimate whisperings of nature. From the murmur of the sea to the hubbub of a metropolis, from the clamor of machinery to the pleasant rhythm of autumn rain on a windowpane, to a floorboard creaking in a deserted room or to a bullet whistling past our ear, sound effects and image are forever intertwined in film. In effect, 'the addition of sound to motion pictures changed the screen from a silent picture of life to life itself. As characters were given voice, they became alive, and the blend of sound effects and visual action made reality complete' (Livingstone, 1969, p. 103). Next to principal photography and post-production (editing), sound effects such as *Foley* is the most interesting of sound effects in a film. Foley, according to Moshansky

(1996) 'is the art of creating sound effects in a recording studio, whether walking on various surfaces to create footstep sounds, or clanging glasses in a bar scene in time to the action on the screen' (p. 21), thus freeing the director to concentrate on principal photography. Nevertheless, the four categories of sound: spoken dialogue and narration, sound effects, music, and silence all have a special place, which, when sutured together, create an everlasting testament to film as an art form and contributes, in my view, to the notion that film is *the quintessential Art of our time*.

THE ROLE OF FILM MUSIC

"Music in Hollywood is like plumbing", says songwriter and actor Albert Hague, (*Fame*, 1980) laughing. "No one notices it unless it doesn't work. Seldom do people go to a film because of a song. Music adds to, but does not circumvent, the film-going experience" (Bouley, 2000). And Spande (2003) suggests that when 'we watch a film and the music blares from every speaker, the music remains largely unnoticed in the way that a "normal" musical experience, such as might be had in a concert, is noticed and enjoyed. In a very necessary way, film music becomes submerged, producing a field of effects, not the least of which is our enjoyable immersion in the movie. To remember back to the most enjoyable parts of the film rarely includes a similar remembrance of the music that accompanied them; and thus, the film music often "disappears" from the effect (the memory) of the film/ film music complex' (p. 1). So what role *does* music contribute to a film? In '*The Aesthetics of Film Music*' Prendergast (1977) suggests that there are two contrasting viewpoints when it comes to the notion that music adds significant value to film as an experience. On the one hand, he notes that there are critics who object to music in films as being *too effective*, in that we tend to react to music whether we desire to or

not, and on the other, if we do not wish to be moved by it, we resent its presence for making us begin to lose control of our rational, “sophisticated” defenses. In this instance, Prendergast refers to Alfred Hitchcock’s film composer on ‘*Lifeboat*’, David Raskin, as signifying that music’s avowed purpose in films is “to help realize the meaning of a film” (pp. 213-215). Music and drama, as viewed in everyday TV and in films, are often integrally linked. In fact, when one scrutinizes a film, one cannot help notice that car-chase scenes, love scenes, and even battle scenes all use music to heighten the audience’s awareness and increase the involvement of the audience in what is going on. In “Thinking about Films”, film music is described as follows:

Source music (such as classical pieces or popular music) and music especially composed for the film, can be used as another voice in a film, influencing our response to images. It can enhance the meaning or dramatic effect of an image, or challenge it. It can also be used to link apparently unconnected scenes and situations together. While it is not 'realistic' for music to accompany action, it is an accepted convention of classical-styled narrative cinema, and tends to enhance our involvement in and acceptance of the world of the film. Music operates, like pictures, beyond the confines of language and dialect and so helps universalize film (See BFI, 2006).

Needless to say, anyone who has ever seen a film knows how much movies need music. Without Francis Ford Coppola’s moving film score in *Apocalypse Now* or Ennio Morricone’s thinned out but insistent theme music in *Once Upon A Time in the West*, or George Lucas’ *Star Wars* majestic soundtrack, films would not have had the lasting impression that they now enjoy. However, is it Art? This point has been controversial for many scholars. Critics have called *Once Upon A Time in the West* a “Horse Opera”. Other’s thought it was a “Masterpiece”. In my view, any student of filmmaking or film scoring wanting to witness the high point of what can be achieved in film *through* music should watch *Once Upon A Time in the West*. Leone’s operatic sense and the fact that

much of the film was choreographed to a pre-recorded score signify that in many ways this is the ultimate film music fan's movie. In this sense, music is not just an art of sounds, but *an art of sounds and actions*. And yet, film music has a fundamentally paradoxical and contradictory character as both creative expression and commodity. Hufner (1998) suggests that since films cost an enormous amount of money to produce, filmmakers look for every opportunity to reduce costs. He points out that 'one popular and successful way of doing this has been selling the soundtracks by themselves, politely termed secondary usage'. His notion is that 'one should be able to consume this music without looking at the film'. Not surprisingly, Eisler (1947) adds, 'in reality, no serious composer will join the movie industry for other than material reasons' (p. 39). Although the reasons may vary from composer to composer, the notion that composers dabble in film music for material gain has some merit to it. The truth is, film music has never quite gained the reverence it genuinely deserves, and consequently this chapter, aptly titled *The Invisible Art of Film Music* attempts to defend the honor of this neglected craft.

To his credit, in an article entitled 'Musical Aphorisms and Common Aesthetic Quandries', Yaroslav Senyshyn (2003) redeems music from indignity: 'We can speak of music from within our personal experiences of it. But this can only be appropriated or understood by others when our description of it accords with that cultural aspect of music which is shared by others within that same frame of reference'. For George Lucas, the music of *Star Wars* involved a grand musical sound, with leitmotifs for different characters and important objects; an approach used to great effect, for instance, in the operas of Richard Wagner, John Williams' score for the original trilogy (of *Star Wars*) was primarily motif based: individual characters and settings were each given their own,

unique musical theme which would identify their presence in the film, whether physically or figuratively. Williams score for the original *Star Wars* film *A New Hope* (1977), set a new standard for science fiction films by drawing its inspiration primarily from a palette of romantic symphonies, rather than creating completely new music. Apparently in choosing this classical approach, Williams was following the lead of *2001: A Space Odyssey* and a mix tape of Wagnerian opera and other selections compiled by George Lucas. And Berleant's article 'Musical De-Composition' (Alperson, eds. 1987), states 'what is significant here are not the techniques of the individual composer, but rather the aesthetic significance of the process through which music comes into being'. Berleant reminds us that 'music remains perhaps the most arcane of the major Arts, an intriguing yet incomprehensible wonder of creation' (p. 250).

Aaron Copland (1952) believes that we 'respond to music from a primal and almost brutish level – dumbly, as it were, for on that level we are firmly grounded. For on that level, whatever the music may be, we experience basic reactions such as tension and release, density and transparency, a smooth or angry surface, the music's swelling or subsiding, its pushing forward or hanging back, its length, its speed, its thunders and whispering – and a thousand other psychologically based reflections of our physical life of movement and gesture, and our inner, subconscious mental life' (pp. 13-14). And yet, perhaps Beethoven's reference that 'I despise a world which does not feel that music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy' (unsourced), is a testament to the connection between music and emotion as being so intimate and so strong that the attempts to represent emotion as irrelevant to music become nonsensical, belonging to the thought that supposes we are free to invent the world we live in. In some cases, the act of

musical creation itself was seen to be supreme example of human activity. Copeland again:

At no point can you seize the musical experience and hold it. Unlike that moment in a film when a still shot suddenly immobilizes a complete scene, a single musical moment immobilized makes audible only one chord, which in itself is comparatively meaningless. This never-ending flow of music forces us to use our imaginations, for music is in a continual state of becoming (1952, p. 2).

Sergio Leone, one of the great film directors, had the advantage of working with a remarkable music composer, Ennio Morricone in the previously mentioned film *Once Upon A Time in the West*. In this film, Morricone produced a beautiful evocative score that matched the screen action perfectly. Many referred to the movie as Leone's opera. However, one critic suggested that it was an opera where the arias were glared rather than sung; another, as previously mentioned, it was a horse opera, suggesting that there was too much opera and not enough horse. Despite this harsh criticism of the film, Morricone admonishes us:

Most film critics should not judge the music, it's not their job, and in general, when they do, they generally come out very badly. They should talk in general about the film, its expressivity, and what the music is to the film, so that they judge the film in the totality of its elements. Sometimes a critic ventures to say that there is too much music, or that its too loud, or that there's too little music, or too much beautiful music, and when they want to talk about it, they use a single adjective; that's not criticism, really, about the *music* (Burlingame, 1995).

It is interesting to note that many Italian movies feature lyrical, highly emotional melodies, reflecting the operatic heritage of that country. Giannetti (1993) reminds us that 'the greatest composer of this kind of film music was Nino Rota, who scored virtually all of Fellini's films, as well as such distinguished works as Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* and Coppola's *Godfather* movies. Music can also be used as foreshadowing,

particularly when the dramatic context doesn't permit a director to prepare an audience for an event. Hitchcock, for example, often accompanied an apparently casual sequence with "anxious" music – a warning to the audience to be prepared. Sometimes these musical warnings are false alarms; other times they explode into frightening crescendos. Similarly, when actors are required to assume restrained or neutral expressions, music can suggest their internal / hidden emotions' (p. 199).

Part art, part artifice, a great movie score can give a picture an operatic, larger-than-life quality that elevates both the senses and the emotions, while working primarily on the level of the subconscious (Walsh & Brunton, 1995). Music can also provide ironic contrast. A perfect example of ironic contrast is the movie *Apocalypse Now*, a film that nearly ruined director, producer and co-writer Francis Ford Coppola and almost killed leading actor Martin Sheen. Francis Ford Coppola described his own motivation in the making of the 'quest' film, with elements borrowed from the horror, adventure and thriller genres: 'to create a film experience that would give its audience a sense of the horror, madness, sensuousness, and the moral dilemma of the Vietnam war' (Dirks, 1996). The complex tapestry of overlapping dissolves that open *Apocalypse Now* lays out the major theme of the film as the music blares out Jim Morrison's lament 'All the children are insane', for this film is clearly a depiction of the insanity and absurdity of war reflected in the exaggerated images of director Francis Ford Coppola.

The sound mixing in Coppola's surrealistic Vietnam epic is masterful, suffused with grotesque ironies. When you ask someone about the music in *Apocalypse Now*, chances are that they will remember Wagner's 'Ride of the Valkyries' more than anything else. As

well they should; it's part of a scene that is forever preserved in cinematic history. In this sequence, 'American helicopters hover and swirl like huge mechanized gods, dropping napalm bombs on a jungle village to the accompaniment of Wagner's inexorable "Ride of the Valkyries" which thunders on the sound track. As the helicopters fly over the green terrain, the soaring strains of Wagner's music provide an eerie serenade' (MacDonald, 1998). Meanwhile, terrified peasants scurry for shelter as American soldiers prepare to go surfing in the poisonous fumes of battle. In contrast to Coppola's insolence towards the Vietnam War, Federico Fellini's film *8½* (1963) evokes Wagner's composition as a *counterpoint* to the images on screen:

Against images of elderly men and women shuffling slowly in long winding lines towards the fountains of a spa where mineral water is being dispensed, Fellini juxtaposes the sounds of a brisk orchestral arrangement of Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" on the track... The contrast between the heroic, dynamic music and the slow-moving image, the feeble, the elderly, and the ill, produces a sharp sense of discrepancy between man's aspirations and his realities (Sobchack and Sobchack, 1980, p. 163).

Also memorable is *The End* by The Doors, used in the opening sequence of Coppola's film, *Apocalypse Now*. It's dark, surreal, and the middle part is just completely insane. But the underscore really goes to the heart of the film. Carmine Coppola's music ranges from simple and tender, to dark and ominous. Primarily synthesized, with guitar, flute and percussion accompaniment, the music can be harsh at times *Nung River*, and ethereal at others *Letters from Home*. Coppola recalls that:

We made 'Apocalypse' the way the Americans made war in Vietnam; there were too many of us, too much money and equipment and, little by little, we went insane (Dirks, 1996).

Coppola was not the only filmmaker to use irony as a contrast in the making of a film. Stanley Kubrick was a bold and controversial innovator in the use of film music. In *Dr. Strangelove*, he sardonically juxtaposed Vera Lynn's sentimental World War II tune, "We'll Meet Again", with images of a global nuclear holocaust; a grim reminder that we probably won't meet again after World War III. In *2001*, Kubrick juxtaposed images of a twenty-first-century rocket ship gliding through the immense blueness of space with the sounds of Strauss' nineteenth-century "Blue Danube Waltz", an aural foreshadowing of man's obsolete technology in the more advanced technological universe beyond Jupiter. In *A Clockwork Orange*, Kubrick used music as a distancing device, particularly in violent scenes. Musical incongruity undercuts the realism of an otherwise vicious gang fight that takes place to the accompaniment of Rossini's urbane and witty overture to 'The Thieving Magpie'. A brutal attack and rape scene is accompanied by a grotesque song-and-dance routine set to the tune of 'Singing in the Rain' (Giannetti, 1993, p. 204). For Paine (1985) understood that 'the more dissimilar you can get between picture and sound, and yet still retain a link of some sort, the more powerful the effect' (p. 357). By the time John Williams began scoring the prequel (the next three films which served as the back story to the first three *Star Wars* films) to *Star Wars* he had grown and changed as a composer. Rather than the more literal associations to character and setting used in the earlier scores, Williams had expanded his use of thematic motifs, using the technique to highlight the emotional or archetypal structure of the film. His new scores de-emphasized motifs (whereas his original trilogy emphasized motif-based characters) tending, instead, to weave them subtly into a broader and more dynamic musical compositions.

FILM MUSIC - THEN AND NOW

As we have seen, film's musical roots began with the 'Mighty Wurlitzer' organ, and up until 1927 when the first 'talkie' was introduced, the piano reigned supreme. Towards the mid-thirties and early forties symphonic scores had eclipsed the old-fashioned piano playing venues, whose accompaniment to the silver screen died out when a new and full blown orchestral sound was borne. The major technical difference here was that the music was *married* to the actual film stock, no longer separate entities unto themselves. We also saw that after the 1950's, with the departure of the major studio systems, 'the music of the 1960's introduced a new perspective to film music; the 'guitar-washed' youth oriented version based in various kinds of rock & roll' (Goldsmith quoted in Bazelon, 1975, p. 190) pop scores often composed by super-groups of the day such as the Beatles (*A Hard Days Night*, 1964, and *Help*, 1965) and Simon & Garfunkel (*The Graduate*, 1967) to name a few. However, the next major change to confront classical scores and popular music in the seventies and eighties has been the development of synthesized sound as an alternative to, or sometimes as a replacement for, acoustic instruments. As part of the process to keep on the contemporary edge, Hollywood has begun to turn to synthesized scores as a way to update its product. According to Moroder (1982) whose synthesized score for *Midnight Express* (1978) was the first electronic score to win an Academy Award, 'The synthesizer is an extension in musical history the way automobiles were an extension in transportation history'. Dubbed 'the mockingbird of instruments', the synthesizer has an almost limitless ability to create sound, unique and otherwise, including the ability to duplicate acoustic instruments (Morley, 1979 /1980). Kalinak (1997) tells us that:

Synthesizers are most commonly used, however, for the unique sounds they can produce. Thus, they are often exploited in sci-fi and futuristic genres to create an otherworldly effect. Giorgio Moroder's reconstruction and rescore of the 1927 *Metropolis* is such an example, as is Vangelis' score for *Bladerunner* (1982). In more conventional genres, synthesizers can give a film that much-sought-after contemporary edge (p. 4).

In point of fact, the continued fame of the *Star Wars* soundtrack goes no small way to confirm the impact of the score – ‘the one part of the film that turned out even better than I thought’, according to Lucas (cited in Jenkins, 1977). *Star Wars* was also the first film ever to be released in Dolby Stereo. This was an important milestone back in 1977, and as Lucas reminds us ‘sound is fifty percent of the movie going experience’ (Malone, 2005, p. 27). It is most likely thought that a film’s score is approximately thirty percent of a feature films’ full sonic experience. This certainly was the case for Lucas’ *Star Wars* (1977), as well as Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* (1979). In fact, it could probably be argued that the *Star Wars* film score, composed by John Williams, and Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now*, composed by Carmine Coppola, Francis Ford Coppola and a few scores by Richard Wagner were most likely what made these films’ soundtracks such a huge success. Malone (2005) adds that ‘*Star Wars* set a new standard in the sound of motion pictures by offering the sound department an empty canvas on which to paint their soundscape and exploit the full potential of the then new Dolby Stereo 4-channel sound format’ (p. 27). Another interesting device composer’s use is the ubiquitous ‘temp tracking’. Temp tracking is the practice of accompanying the film during the early stages of editing (before the score is composed) with recorded music of various kinds (pop, classical, or even other movie music) to substitute for a score that has yet to be composed:

While the temp track can be useful as a point of communication between a composer and the production team, it can also function as a straightjacket, locking the composer into certain musical ideas, gestures, styles, and even melodies. The most infamous example of the tyranny of the temp track concerns Alex North's original score for *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) which was dumped in favor of the temp track chosen by director Stanley Kubrick: Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Johann Strauss waltzes, and works by Khachaturian and Ligeti (Kalinak, 1992).

Arnold (1980) adds that during the filming of *The Empire Strikes Back*, Irvin Kershner, who directed *Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), was said to have poked around through the classical record collection of producer Gary Kurtz to create a temp track before Williams spotted the film. When Kershner was asked as to whether this would in any way tie Williams' hands or influence him in a certain direction, he answered, 'no, it won't make the slightest difference. John (Williams) has a strong feel for what he wants' (p. 249). Finally, it should come as no surprise to anyone who frequents the movie theatres and film buffs alike that film music has come a long way since the silent era (1895-1927). With the advent of digital sound recordings, twenty-four track studios, Dolby sound and MP3s, film music is so much easier to compose and to mix than ever before. And yet, even though technology may have made the process of recording soundtracks for films a little bit easier for filmmakers and composers alike, the fact remains that making music is still, first and foremost, a creative act. In essence, as Mike Nichols (*The Graduate*, 1967) discovered with Simon & Garfunkel, when the music track works with the visuals, the sum is often greater than their individual counterparts.

CONCLUSION

Dancyger (2007) makes an indelible declaration when he notes that ‘we have far surpassed the skepticism that Rudolf Arnheim expressed when he said that technological changes such as sound could add nothing to the advancement of the silent film. Sound is now an artful addition to the repertoire of the film experience’ (p. 433). Music in films has the power to move us in a multitude of ways that speak to our emotions. Aaron Copland was right in suggesting that ‘the power of music to move us is something quite special as an artistic phenomenon’ (Copland, 1952, p. 9). As a film student, I have always marveled upon the union of film and music, image and sound, which unify films’ cohesiveness into a seamless, timeless narrative that suspends our reality for a brief moment in time. When we watch a film in the dark we are transformed with sight and sound, like Plato’s allegory of the cave, into wondering if, indeed, what we are experiencing on the screen in front of us is real or imaginary. After all, to enjoy a film in the way it was intended, judgments must be suspended, like within a dream:

Once upon a time, I, Chuang Tzu, dreamt that I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes, a butterfly. I was conscious only of following my fancies as a butterfly, and was unconscious of my individuality as a man. Suddenly, I waked, and there I lay, myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am a man (Chuang Tzu, 1961).

In closing, I must acknowledge that the wonder of film as an art form has led me to believe that music in film, no matter what genre or expression it takes, moves us as humans, to the metaphor of Tzu and the butterfly; that without one, we cannot fully realize or appreciate the experience of the other.

CHAPTER FOUR

ONCE UPON A REEL: FILM AS A STORYTELLING MEDIUM

Mankind has been telling stories ever since the first hunter returned to his cave. In the beginning, words, pictures and body movements were used in a variety of ways to tell stories. In time, painting and sculpture, drama, oral and written tales, music and dance were also available to early storytellers. It is certain therefore, that storytelling is, and has always been, fundamentally important to our culture and to our sense of identity, both on an individual and on a societal basis. The earliest form of storytelling known to mankind was oral, followed by written, and in the last century, filmic. My interest here lies with the latter; film as a storytelling medium. In my view, film is an essential storytelling medium because it tells a story through pictures. As a wise man once said, 'a picture is worth a thousand words'. In truth, the original quotation is, 'One look is worth a thousand words'. The quote comes from a classified ad, written by Frederick R. Barnard (1921) and published in 'Printers Ink' magazine in 1921, extolling the benefits of advertising with pictures on street cars. I identify the meaning of this quotation to suggest that a picture tells a story just as well as a large amount of narrative text. I propose, however, that these words may mean more today than they did when first written in 1921. The verity of the aforementioned quote is that pictures exist all around us, and for the most part, across all cultures. Who can deny, after all, that images inundate our environment in a variety of different forms and through several channels of communication? After all, advertisements fuel the economy and, the economy, in turn, depends heavily upon visual representations and a sense of design, style and 'feel'. Understanding pictures in all their

varied forms is a vital life enriching necessity. Therefore, in denying their influence, we are denying our ability to understand them, and not to understand them is visual illiteracy.

Yet, whether a story is being told aurally, literally or visually, McClean (2007) suggests ‘the task of creating *a good story, well told* (my italics) is far from simplistic or formulaic’, and yet ‘the definition of a canonical story – those narratives that conform to the (Aristotelian) structure of a beginning, middle, and end – is essential to the consideration of fiction film story-craft’ (p. 30). What is important to recognize here is that it is the *story* that is the driving force behind a fiction, non-fiction or documentary film, which, in my view, gives the film its meaning and attraction, essentially moving the film to a satisfactory conclusion in an audience’s mind. I point this out because there are those who suggest otherwise; Thompson (1999) alleges, ‘the primary traits ascribed to ‘post-classical’ filmmaking are the breakdown of inherent plot development and character traits by the increasing dominance of spectacular action and special effects’ (p. 344). In spite of this, McClean (2007) proposes that ‘narrative clarity dominates regardless of the increasing use of special effects’ (p. 32-33). Regardless of the devices filmmakers use to tell a story, the truth is ‘no filmmaker can overlook the fact that they are always, first and foremost, storytellers. To become distracted by the graphic imperative is to lose sight of the filmmakers’ primary responsibility in classical storytelling. Both elements – story and image – are necessary to filmmaking but they must work together’ (ibid, p. 147). Once again, whether stories are told through the various arts or through literature as a means of expression, it is but a choice the storyteller makes; the commonality is the story itself. Having said that, one of the criticisms of film, from an educational point of view, suggest that film versions of popular children’s books

(like *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings*, etc.) destroy the imaginative value of reading an original text. And yet Steven Spielberg, one of the most successful filmmakers of all time, suggests otherwise: 'The power of the cinema is a lot stronger than the power of literature, because more people have access to it for one thing, and one picture is worth a thousand words' (Yule, 1996, p. 244). What I believe Spielberg is suggesting here, is that filmmakers realize that memory for images can sometimes be stronger and more enduring than for words and sentences. Paradoxically, Spielberg also admits that filmmaking:

All begins with the writer. It's a fundamental dictum, but somehow it keeps getting forgotten along the way. No filmmaker, irrespective of his eclectic bag of tricks, can ever afford to forget his commitment to the written word (ibid, p. 292).

Arguably, the problem we face in our pedagogical institutions is that film, as a vehicle for story, is in the shadow of the book. Despite the fact that books and film are, in many cases, two versions of the same story, we often suspect film as an inferior 'copy' of the original account. How can we compare them, then? One is a literary translation, and the other uses images, sound and music as its vehicle. However, 'one of the major pressures of TV' McLuhan (1964) proposes, 'has been to encourage the *teaching machine*, and that these *teaching machines* are really private tutors' (p. 292). What I believe McLuhan is suggesting here, is that the 'watcher of television'... 'demands social completion and dialogue' (ibid, p. 293) and from this perspective, the TV mosaic image (much like the filmic image) offers viewers private lessons that afford the viewer the luxury of having a dialogue and debate with the screen, in the absence of another human being. It is in this sense that TV and films are seen as *private tutors*. Accordingly, McLuhan writes that

'typographic man took readily to film because, like books, it offers an inward world of fantasy and dreams. The film viewer sits in psychological solitude like the silent book reader' (ibid, p. 292). McLuhan posits that the reel world of film and the private fantasy experience of the printed word are indispensable to our Western acceptance of the film form. Even the film industry takes into account that its greatest achievements are derived from novels. Accordingly, film, both in its reel form and in its scenario or script form, is completely involved with book culture. So, therefore, one might conclude that film is a small piece of book culture. Or is it? If so, why is it that the written word is so revered and that storytelling is so prevalent across every society? Turner (1988) would say that:

Some societies have no equivalent to the novel, but all societies tell stories. Story-telling can take on many forms – myths, legends, ballads, folk-tales, rituals, dance, histories, novels, jokes, drama – and can be seen to serve many apparently different social functions, from entertainment, to religious instruction. It seems that story-telling is part of our cultural experience, inseparable from and intrinsic to it (p. 78).

It appears that although everyone has a story to tell, the motivation, according to Egan (1992), is inherently intrinsic and honorable. The fact that 'mankind in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, is essentially a storytelling animal' (p. 54), and that 'stories are good for educating us into the virtues' (p. 55), says a lot about who we are as a species. Stories not only convey information and describe events and actions, but also engage our emotions, and our experiences are habitually mediated by emotions. Given that emotions often drive narratives, I asked McPherson (2006) what place she thought story has in the filmmaking process?

The reason I am a filmmaker is because I love stories. And it's about two things; it's about a good story, and a story well told. But I'm not the only person. I'm a human being. We all love stories, but this is what we do, we sit around the fire and we share stories, and we have lost that.

A follow-up question was offered: Where would you say we could get that in today's culture?, yielding this paradoxical response:

Only through films; and the thing is, everybody understands that episodic television is there to sell us something. It is not there to tell us a good story. The few anomalies that sneak through the cracks, we are delighted with: *The Sopranos*, *West Wing*, *Six Feet Under*...

What is clear, gathering from what both Egan (1992) and McPherson (2006) have to say is that the 'world' comes to us in the shape of stories. Similarly, Simon (1999) prompts us to 'think back to the earliest days of our childhoods, (where) our world was represented to us through stories, told by our parents, read to us from books, reported to us by friends, overheard in conversations, shared amongst groups at school, and circulated around the playground' (p. 1). Simon adds, 'After all, the stories surrounding us in our daily lives are very similar to the great literature of the past. If you watch television, go to the movies, read popular magazines, and look at advertisements, you are exposed to many of the same kinds of stories as someone who studies the great books of Western civilization' (Ibid, p. 1). Returning to my conversation with McPherson, I then asked her what she thought about the place of visual learning in the educational system and how we, as educators, can foster its development. Her response:

I think, from my own perspective, a lot of people are wounded about learning and education, except for people who really excel which is obviously a really small percentage of the population. I think most people, my students included, feel that education is a nasty, horrible place, and although we talk about numeracy and literacy as these high values, there's all this stuff we hear about how illiterate the culture is and I honestly don't believe we really do a very good job. And I think that if we can have more compassion (in education), and that is what is great about visual learning, in that it is an emotional connection, very much a human connection and that is why, I think, people like watching images. I think if you can create that moment in poetry or in any art form, in the image and once you get that connection, there is an intrinsic beauty to it.

Would you sanction the idea that students in the K-12 system should take a filmmaking course and, if so, should film be a required course in the curriculum? McPherson again:

It's inevitable in our culture and in our schools, and we have seen it. Remember when we were struggling to go to film school in the eighties? It then became acceptable and film schools flourished throughout the nineties. All these (students) had taken film in high school and it is only a matter of time that that will be pushed through in elementary schools.

Call it whatever you want. You can call it Art, you can call it process, you can call it filmmaking, I don't care. It's going to happen. But what I really want for my students is to get [university] degrees, so that they can go into high schools and elementary schools, at least a percentage of them, and I want them to teach. And I want them to teach story, and I want them to teach what really matters. My concern, however, is that [film] will become more like a reproduction of a video game culture, not about stories and storytelling (McPherson interview, 2006).

On the one hand, I empathize with McPherson when she suggests that 'a lot of people are "wounded" about learning and education'. From my own experience as an Employment Counsellor, I can attest to that fact; however that is a moot point and is immaterial for the purposes of this discussion. What is pertinent, though, is McPherson's notion that 'film will become more like a reproduction of a video game culture, not about stories and storytelling' and on that point, I disagree. Filmmaking is a *storytelling* art; yet having said that, the film's narrative may or may not be a *story well told*. And yet, even a so called 'bad' film has a plot of some kind. Furthermore, if one were to assume that *all* films are 'comic-book' narratives or 'blockbusters' aiming for the 'mass' market, maximizing profits at the expense of story, perhaps McPherson would be right. Target-marketing films to 14 year olds may indeed aim, at best, at a 'short attention spanned' audience or a 'quick fix' solution to storylines, and from this perspective she has a point. However, we also have a market which hungers for film as a source of meaning-making.

Consequently Worth's (1981) proposal that we enable students to understand the techniques and "language" of film, and that we need to look at ways of integrating film into our current educational paradigm, makes a lot of sense:

You know, I thought about that quite a bit actually because I'm a snob, I'm a book snob and I do believe that to read the book is better than to see the movie; you know, if you read Robert McKee's book on story, or read screenplays, you will understand more about screenplays or books than if you watch one hundred screenplays. I think there is something to be learned from reading, and I am concerned again from looking at my students from a consumer's point of view (McPherson Interview, 2006).

McPherson was referring to one of the most influential screenwriters in Hollywood, Robert McKee, who clarifies: 'what we go to the storyteller for is some insight into life and human nature. Whether (a story is) comic or dramatic, it doesn't matter because every story has a meaning' (Caesar, 2001, p. 7). For Bruno Beutelheim (1991) 'the search for meaning was our greatest need and most difficult achievement' (p. 3). In his view, the opportunity to examine the struggle between good and evil forces in order to 'make choices about who one wants to be' (ibid, p. 9) is the chief distinctive quality of story for children. However, not every story is necessarily meant to be read:

One of my students said to me the other day after having recommended some books on directing 'are there any movies (about directors)'; it's like the only way he can accept information as valid is through watching, which I think can be quite passive, because how critical can you be when you are (simply) watching. I think, ultimately, that there is a different way of understanding when you read. Although having said that, what I'm really excited about and what I see is that visual literacy, meaning reading and writing so to speak, would also mean producing, writing, and directing which are also critical visual learning skills. It's like being able to look at things visually and being able to understand them critically, which are essential skills now, as of 2006 (McPherson interview, 2006).

It seems to me that McPherson is torn between the culture of the book and the culture of the image. Although she infers that the only way her students can process information is through watching a film, an event she labels as ‘passive’, and yet, paradoxically, she exclaims that ‘visual literacy...would also mean producing, writing and directing which are also critical visual learning skills’. Perhaps her student manages information, or better yet, educes meaning from a documentary or from a televised interview more easily with a talking head than having to interpret a book’s version of the same event. I empathize with McPherson’s student. At times, I’d rather choose to watch a documentary entitled *The Power of Myth* (1988) a six-hour PBS series, basically a conversation between Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell, rather than read the book version of the same title. That’s most likely because one of the primary ways I assimilate information is through visual clarification. I function best as a visual person. Although I love to read, I’ll always choose to see a film *first*, before I read the book. I would venture to guess, however, that most people would rather read a book first before seeing a film. For one reason, there just isn’t enough time in a film to develop the storyline in *depth*. Another is that a two hour film can never do justice to a well written and conclusively detailed book. Although books have been around a lot longer than films, in my view, films have an advantage over books. Unlike a book, which a student must read on their own, a film can be seen by hundreds of students at a time in classrooms and assemblies. And indeed, different disciplines have appropriated film for their own distinctive questions and methods of study. However, I am getting ahead of myself here. Before I speak to the educational value of film in *The Pedagogy of Film in the Classroom* in the latter part of this chapter, I would like to address the notion that the art of storytelling was primarily told through

myths and fairy tales. And since the scholarly study of films is one of the fastest growing areas of research in academia (as previously mentioned in Chapter Two), perhaps one way we might expedite didactic interaction is through ‘the civilization of the image’ and in so doing, prolong the love of story through myth.

FILM AS MYTHIC IMAGE

‘One of the problems of today’ Campbell (1988) tells us in *The Power of Myth* ‘is that we are not well acquainted with the literature of the spirit; we’re interested in the news of the day and the problems of the hour’ (p. 3). Accordingly, one of the biggest blunders I believe we make in education is that we continuously fail to encourage children to embrace their pop culture myths. ‘We must’, Armstrong (2005) insists, ‘disabuse ourselves of the nineteenth century fallacy that myth is false or that it represents an inferior mode of thought’ (p. 135). From an ontological point-of-view, human beings have always been myth makers. We are, as a species, meaning-seeking creatures. As such, we are attracted to myth. One of the primary purposes of mythology and religion is to seek the truth about our purpose in life. It is in this sense that myth shows us how we should behave. Yet, one of the most powerful myths today is that of the supremacy of science. The ‘story’ that science has all the answers, can solve all problems, knows the secrets of the universe also means that the other stories of explanation have been ousted. The scientific paradigm advocates that whatever is not measurable or somehow quantified isn’t real. Yet, the scientific paradigm is, in and of itself, undergoing its own scrutiny; quantum physics and metaphysics are challenging the scientific model. For example, the documentary *What the ‘Bleep’ Do We Know* (2005) implies that a new order of mythology and deity is at play. The film details and introduces the Great

Questions framed by both science and religion. Through the course of the film, the distinction between science and religion becomes increasingly blurred, since we realize that, in essence, both science and religion describe the same phenomena. As absurd as that sounds, it is certainly one point of view to consider. Perhaps George Bernard Shaw was right when he wrote that 'all great truths begin as blasphemies' (Laurence, 1972).

Science has been blamed for replacing God in our myths and taking meaning away from our stories (Malloy, 1998). Yet, the myth of the hero's story often teaches a social lesson about how we should act and what we should aspire to when faced with adversity in our own lives. Perhaps the authentic problem is not that we don't question our myths, but that we are not aware that we have myths and stories. If we don't recognize myths and stories as part of human nature, much like the natural sciences are, we would not be able to fully *explain* or fully *understand* who we are. Myths can be thought of as messages in symbols (archetypes). Our archetypes are part of our myths and stories, for they tell us who we are and give us meaning. Campbell (1949) tells us that 'archetypes are the basic images of ritual, mythology and vision' (p. 18). They give meaning, explain 'why' and allow us to change and to understand change. Today, however, we live in a demythologized world. Our myths and stories are us. Myths and stories tell us who we are, why we are, and how we should be. However, what happens when we stop telling good myths and stories? For that matter, what is a good myth story? Joseph Campbell (1988) would suggest that a good myth story 'would be a story about the wisdom of life', admitting that 'what we're learning in schools is not the wisdom of life. We're learning technologies, we're getting information. There's a curious reluctance on the part of the faculties to indicate the life value of the subjects' (p. 9), and 'mythology has a great deal to do with the stages of life',

Campbell maintains, ‘the initiation ceremonies as you move from childhood to adult responsibilities, from the unmarried state into the married state. All of these rituals are mythological rites’ (p. 11). For Campbell (1988), ‘myths are stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning, for significance (p. 5). In summarizing his body of work, Campbell (1973) states:

Mythology has been interpreted by the modern intellect as a primitive, fumbling effort to explain the world of nature (Frazer); as a production of poetical fantasy from pre-historic times, misunderstood by succeeding ages (Muller); as a repository of allegorical instruction, to shape the individual to his group (Durkheim); as a group dream, symptomatic of archetypal urges within the depth of the human psyche (Jung); as the traditional vehicle of man’s profoundest metaphysical insights (Coomaraswamy); and as God’s revelation to his children (the Church). Mythology is all of these (p. 28).

Could myths, through the medium of documentary films such as *What the ‘Bleep’ Do We Know* (2005), conceivably challenge scientific supremacy? Probably not. As mentioned, most educators view films as entertainment and not worthy of academic pursuits.

However, I suggest that films such as ‘*Bleep*’ and *Who Killed the Electric Car* (2006) can and are doing so, particularly through popular culture conduits, and for the most part through films and documentaries. In edifying us, Armstrong (2005) advises, ‘it is a mistake to regard myth as an inferior mode of thought, which can be cast aside when human beings have attained the age of reason. Mythology is not an early attempt at history, and does not claim that its tales are objective fact. Like a novel, an opera, a ballet, myth is make believe; it is a game that transfigures our fragmented, tragic world, and helps us glimpse new possibilities by asking ‘What if?’ The ‘What if?’ inquiry’, Armstrong maintains, ‘is a question which has also provoked some of our most important discoveries in philosophy, science, and technology’ (pp. 8, 9). As a note of interest,

George Lucas researched mythology and social psychology before writing the screenplay for the original *Star Wars* movie, which he released in 1977. Lucas' interest in philosophy, science and technology was indisputable as he saw mythology as the 'archeology of the mind' (Salewicz, 1998, p. 45). Ironically, Lucas' biographer had earlier inferred that the original *Star Wars* film was, according to Lucas 'essentially a Saturday morning space movie' (Baxter 1999, p. 245). Perhaps this was his initial belief until he discovered Campbell's ideas, fundamentally agreeing that what he was really doing with this film was tapping into the collective memory and a cross-culturally shared history.

From early folklore writings and from many different cultures, Lucas devoured the great themes, epic struggles between good and evil, heroes and villains, magical princes and ogres, heroines and evil princesses, and the transmissions from fathers to sons of the powers of both good and evil. In providing the motive for the *Star Wars* films, Lucas disclosed that:

There was no modern mythology to give kids a sense of values, to give them a strong mythological fantasy life; Westerns were the last of that genre for Americans. Nothing was being done for young people that has real psychological underpinnings and was aimed at intellectual beings (Baxter, 1999, p. 164).

Arguably, I presume we all need myths in our lives and traditions to believe in, in order to feel connected, as humans, to each other; we need to believe in the notion that we have more in common with each other than we really do. Popular culture, in the form of myths, in one way or another, bring us all together to share common stories that have been woven over the centuries to inform us about how one conquers the adversities of life and how one can emulate the legendary path of the 'Hero's Journey'. Paradoxically, in

our contemporary society people do not need to search ancient stories for meaning, because they are amply available in popular culture. And it is primarily through popular culture that we come to understand myths. Movies are our ‘art of our times’ mainly because they are our most powerful medium of myth. Not surprisingly, many of the myths of our time come from Hollywood, for Hollywood is as much a myth factory as it is a dream factory. We can see in our movies all of the traditional myths, woven into our cultural tapestry. We invariably see heroes in almost all films; in Westerns such as *The Searchers* (1956) and *Rio Bravo* (1959); in Fantasies such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Fellowship of the Rings* (2001), *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* (2001); the quest in *Star Wars* (1977) and *The Matrix* (1999); and the journey in *Easy Rider* (1969), and *Thelma & Louise* (1991).

In days gone by, the standard for what constituted a good film was a literary one; a good film had a good story. A great film, on the other hand, had a good story and a moral or social relevance. That was certainly the case with films such as *Star Wars* or the *Lord of the Rings*. In fact, Lucas had often cited Tolkien’s book, *The Lord of the Rings* as the major influence on *Star Wars*. What Lucas learned from Tolkien was how to handle the delicate stuff of myth. It seems to me that myths and fairytales, as portrayed in films such as *Star Wars*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, *The Matrix*, etc., are an excellent way to communicate morality tales – hints for choosing between right and wrong – and that the lessons myths provided for us were the common thread that ran through our human existence. In essence, myths are the stuff that books are made of, and films, in turn, are very much like novels, plays, or stories. What may not be common knowledge, however, is that many current novels, plays and books are translated into screenplays, much like

they were in Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s. Incidentally, in his book *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan (1964) suggested that ‘film, both in its scenario or script form, is completely involved with book culture’ and that ‘typographic man took readily to film just because, like books, it offers an inward world of fantasy and dreams’ (1964, p. 286). Also, the film viewer sits in psychological solitude, just like the silent book reader. So what do books and film have in common? Essentially, it is their ability to tell us stories. Stories answer the eternal questions: *What is the world really like? How am I to live my life in it? How can I truly be myself?* In other words, at one time or another, we all question our purpose in life. Ultimately, we need to find our own place in the sun. Narratives found in stories, myths, and shared cultural experiences help us answer these eternal questions.

Neil Postman (1995), a student of Marshall McLuhan’s, maintains that for education to be meaningful, young people, their parents, and their teachers must have a common narrative. Narratives are essential, he says, because they provide a sense of personal identity, a sense of community life, a basis for moral conduct, and explanations of that which cannot be easily known. He suggests that the idea of public education requires not only shared narratives, but also an absence of narratives that leads to alienation and divisiveness. Yet, Postman’s most compelling argument revolves around what he takes to be ‘false gods’ of modern education. Postman suggests that what keeps our schools from being effective is the lack of commonly accepted stories. He says these commonly accepted stories personify our myths. In an article entitled ‘Mass Media Use in the Classroom’ Aiey (1999) posits that it is the re-telling of myths that embody films and television shows, such as *Star Wars* or *The X-Files*, that consumers embrace and

incorporate them into their beliefs and behaviors. However, these popular culture myths can also be used to vilify society. After reviewing the first *Star Wars* film, Charles Ealy, a Dallas Newspaper columnist wrote:

Some scholars, primarily defenders of *Star Wars*, see the movies as tapping into long-held myths about the coming of age of a young hero who must go through a series of trials before saving civilization. Others see the saga as a political commentary, with the "evil emperor" representing former President Richard Nixon and the dark lieutenant, Darth Vader, representing Henry Kissinger. (Creator George Lucas, having grown up in the Vietnam era, has given credence to this interpretation in various interviews.) Another group sees it in a darker light – as a remake of the racist *Birth of a Nation*, D.W. Griffith's early Hollywood blockbuster about the Civil War, with Luke Skywalker as the noble Southern cavalier and R2-D2 and C-3PO as the "sassy but loyal slaves" (Ealy, 1999).

What are we to believe in regards to the narratives or stories that we hear? Can we substantiate the legitimacy of stories that we hear as truth? As I am writing these words, I am reminded of the controversy surrounding the novel and the recent release of Ron Howard's film *The Da Vinci Code* (2006). The uproar surrounding this film, like Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) before it, will most likely be debated for years to come. But are there any truths to these films? According to Monaco (2000) 'to a large extent, at least in nations in which film is dominant, the cinema helps to define what is permissible culturally; it is the shared experience of the society' (p. 263). And in discussing values, McKee (1998) observes 'ours has become an age of moral and ethical cynicism, relativism, and subjectivism – a great confusion of values' (p. 103). Regardless of one's belief system, much of what we know comes from stories. For Joseph Campbell (1949), all stories are fundamentally the *same* story, which he named the 'Hero's Journey,' or the 'Monomyth' which, in its most elemental form, is the separation-initiation-return motif:

The 'monomyth' is in effect a *metamyth*, a philosophical reading of the unity of humankind's *spiritual* history, the Story behind the story. To paraphrase the ancient Japanese koan, it is the sound of one myth clapping: the universal quest for self-transformation (Campbell, 1990, p. xvi).

Campbell believed that through identifying with the myth (and the archetypal element at its core) our lives could open up (and inward) to reveal a rich symphony of experiences. The archetypes are there to guide us through the situations of life, and when we are in harmony with the form, we are following some deeper level of self-fulfillment. In the end, all stories consist of a few common structural elements found universally in myths, fairy tales, dramas and movies.

Fundamentally, *The Hero's Journey* is a story, which is also a metaphor, a model of some aspect of human behavior. According to Campbell (1990), 'the hero journey is a symbol that binds, in the original sense of the word, two distinct ideas, the spiritual quest of the ancients with the modern search for identity' (p. xvi). And why should educators be concerned with this metaphor or the myth of the hero's journey? One answer, according to Brown & Moffett (1999) is that the 'wisdom embodied in this mythic tradition, personified in the wildly disparate shapes and events comprising the lives of the great heroic archetypes can guide and inform our thinking and bring us back to a part of ourselves from which we may feel alienated, estranged, or even lost' (p. x). Essentially, the hero's journey is a return to the self, a rediscovering of what was lost; an awakening, if you will. If we neglect to follow this path, this 'Hero's Journey', we are, in effect, doomed to live a life of conformity. Armstrong (2005) castigates us:

(As a result of) our suppression of *mythos*, we may even have regressed [as a species]. We still long to 'get beyond' our immediate circumstances, and to enter a 'full time', a more intense, fulfilling experience. We try to enter this dimension

by means of art, rock music, drugs or by entering the larger-than-life perspective of film. We still seek heroes. Elvis Presley and Princess Diana were both made into instant mythical beings, even objects of religious cult... The myth of the hero was not intended to provide us with icons to admire, but was designed to tap into the vein of heroism within ourselves. Myth must lead to imitation or participation, not passive contemplation (p. 135).

In summary, wherever a story is told and whatever approach it takes, be it through myths, fairy tales or narratives, it is certain, as already mentioned, that story-telling is vitally important to our culture and to our sense of identity. Playing on Socrates' famous aphorism, Richard Kearney's (1988) *On Stories* makes an indelible impression when he states that 'the unnarrated life is not worth living' (see McLean, 2007, p. 15). Regardless, 'whether we agree with the values championed in films, and the meanings they convey', McClean (2007) writes, 'they are no different from what philosophers have been espousing since Aristotle's *Poetics*; the notion that the purpose of our storytelling is to give us common ground on which to argue fundamental values' (p. 229). And finally, Campbell's (1971) 'Myths to Live By' (1971), a collection of essays written between 1958 and 1971, summarizes the notion of myth succinctly with the following passage:

The first condition, therefore, that any mythology must fulfill if it is to render life to modern lives, is that of cleansing the doors of perception to the wonder, at once terrible and fascinating, of ourselves and of the universe of which we are the ears and eyes of the mind (Campbell, 1971, p. 257).

THE PEDAGOGY OF FILM IN THE CLASSROOM

Having established that storytelling is a relationship that both films and books share, my interest, at this point, is to highlight film as a distinctive teaching opportunity.

From a pedagogical point of view, when Thomas Edison invented the motion picture, educators hailed it. They understood that this new technology, by bringing the world to

the classroom, would move education a giant step forward. Yet, on the other hand (and much earlier), photographs, or "still pictures" were not so well received. Back in the 1860s, when photography was in its infancy, there was much controversy over the use of photographs and illustrations in textbooks. Many felt the pictures would dilute the meaning of education and the lessons children needed to learn. Pedagogical prejudices towards film haven't changed much since the invention of photography (which, incidentally, means 'light writing'). Views developed about the role of film in education are undeniably colored by the views taken of film as art, film as propaganda, film as communication, and the views regarding the effects of film on society in general. Also, debate about the place, purpose, and usefulness of film as a means of instruction and communication is clouded by confusion, defensiveness, and ignorance.

That aside, being a visual learner myself, I have always wondered how my passion for the visual arts, specifically photography and filmmaking, has affected my overall academic accomplishments. Healey (1991) asks a similar question: 'How much does growing up in the culture of visual immediacy affect a child's performance in the culture of academic learning' (p. 195). In other words, in what ways do media / films affect our society? We are, after all, a society that is bombarded on a daily basis from a visual perspective; from TV ads to feature films, from corporate logos to interactive video games; from billboards to magazines. Advertising firms often target our emotions from a *visual* standpoint as they are well aware of the power of image. I often equate the enormous volume of images that bombard us on a daily basis as hypnotic subliminal suggestions implanted by the large corporate conglomerates intending to capitalize on our greed and need to consume. And yet, as consumers, we often submit to this manipulation

enthusiastically. In addition, the fact that audiences eagerly give up their 'reason' for the 'illusion' of the cinema may be a primary motive critics use for debasing film as unworthy of academic stature. However, Burnett (1995) suggests that 'in speaking about vision, we are dealing with a structure that defies patterns of organization because it is constantly in motion and nevertheless remains functional' (p. 27).

I asked Grenier (2005) the following: What do you say to those critics who liken film to entertainment, those who suggest that film stultifies us, putting us to sleep and effectively dumbing us down?

I think this is a much generalized statement; I think, as an industry, filmmaking might be engaging in this type of thing...

You mean Hollywood? I asked. His response:

Hollywood, commercialism. It's like fashion photography. It's great, it's a beautiful aesthetic, but in terms of an art form, it doesn't allow anyone to think anything of it; what do you think about when you see a nice fashion photograph, a model, if you will; there's nothing to think about; you just say 'it's beautiful'; that's it; it is generalized. But, if you ask, does filmmaking, as an art, contribute to the *dumbing down* of society; I would say no. I think art is full of possibilities. In fact, I believe that art is, or could be, the saving grace of our civilization (Grenier interview, 2005).

Nevertheless, we must realize that a philosophy of film education cannot be developed in a vacuum without reference to the socio-cultural context in which film as a mode of communication takes place. The import, it would seem, is that the inculcation of film and television in our culture helps us form our attitudes, values, and ways of organizing experience. Worth (1981) notes that:

Most of us don't know what a filmmaker does when he puts a film together. We have a vague notion that films are "true", and are "worth a thousand words," and somehow [these prejudices] underlie our own behavior toward film. It is true that

education has ignored pictures; education has ignored teaching how films make sense (p. 124).

According to Giannetti (1993), 'Bazin, who was influenced by the philosophical movement called Personalism, a school of thought emphasizing the individualistic and pluralistic nature of truth, agreed that there are many truths. Bazin felt that in the cinema there are many ways of portraying the real. The essence of reality, he believed, lies in its ambiguity or *illusion of reality* (my italics)' (p. 148). Yet, in the face of Bazin's careful qualifications and disclaimers, Perkins (1972) suggests that 'realist theory becomes coherent only if we identify the cinema's 'essence' with a single aspect of the film-photographic reproduction' (p. 39). In an article entitled 'The Cinema of Absence; Film's Retreat from Total Reality', Shapiro (2001) suggests that film and video do not reflect a prior reality; rather, they make the world over in their image. For instance, he suggests political campaigns and professional sports scarcely exist apart from television; they are enacted directly *for* the camera. 'Reality shows' like *Survivor* go even further, by putting 'real people' into situations that only exist as arbitrary constructions in the mind of some producer. This is what he calls hyper-reality, or post-modernism. Shapiro concludes with the notion that we live in a world that can itself be described, ironically, as 'a total and complete representation of reality'. For Stoehr (2002), films show us that 'all human perception is relative, that each man colors the truth differently, because what he is himself, determines the truth', and that 'human beings describe things the way they want them to appear; truth and reality are co-products of judgment and imagination' (p. 108). Perhaps these afore-mentioned justifications are the reason film and television is still regarded, by and large, as entertainment *only*.

Regardless of how film as an entertainment medium began, it was the film literacy movement, developed in England after World War II and expanded in the United States since the middle 1950s, which took as its aim the development of abilities in the students enabling them to understand the techniques and ‘language’ of film. For film had become the newest art form with the unexplored potential to do what words have failed to do.

Film is multi-modal, multi-sensual, and universal. Worth (1981) described film as an art form, arguing that it was art precisely because it did not reproduce reality exactly. It was Art because it had the same potential for artistic expression as painting and sculpture (p. 112). But the question remains: is film, as an art form, educational? The short answer is an unequivocal *Yes!* Upon closer scrutiny, one can see that there are two predominant uses of film in the classroom. First, and most frequent, is the substitution of films for books or lectures; that is, teaching *through* film. The intention is that *through* the study of films, one gains understanding of political and cultural context. An example of this would be Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* (1993), which is widely employed by teachers at secondary and tertiary levels to prompt discussion of particular historical or ethical issues. Second, and growing in popularity, is teaching *about* film. Teaching *about* film will be discussed in Chapter Five. I will focus here on teaching *through* film.

Teaching through film has been used since the invention of film itself. ‘Films of ‘strange dances’ by ‘primitive peoples’ were made by German anthropologists and used in German gymnasiums in 1905. Films of animals and humans in motion were used by zoologists, anatomists, and artists to teach their various subject matters in universities, medical schools, and art schools as early as 1907’ (Worth, 1981, p. 120). Nevertheless, ‘the truth is *not* that the visual is psychologically, culturally, and sensually the primary

way of experiencing and knowing the world, but rather that the visual mode of communication, along with other modes, permits us to understand, control, order, and thus articulate the world and our experiences' (Ibid, p. 133).

Additionally, in comparison with other media such as the printed page, film has the power to store and to convey a great deal of information. McLuhan (1964) suggests that in an instant, 'it presents a scene of landscapes with figures that would require several pages of prose to describe' (p. 288). Conceptually, the process of putting these film-image events together is a complex, intentional act requiring skill, knowledge, and creative ability. This organizing process takes place not only in planning but in photographing the actual images, and in the selection, rejection, and sequencing that make up the editing process. Finally, at some point, the director decides to 'release' the film. It is now no longer a personal act, but a public and social one, and according to Sol Worth (1981), it is a 'symbolic form available for participation in a communication process' (p. 119). Once a film is released, it is up to the audience to detect the film's intelligibility and its cultural impact on society. The process of becoming intelligent, therefore, is at least partially, the process of building up structures, by structuring reality. Filmmaking could become one of the important forms by which we enable the child, as well as the adult, to develop skill in building cognitive structures and in structuring reality in a creative, communicative way. Worth (1981) suggests that 'although we can teach *through film*, we must begin to understand how the structure of film itself and the visual modes in general structure our ways of organizing experience' (p. 133). In his book, *Visual Thinking* (1969), Arnheim moved from a study of the visual arts to what might be called a general theory of cognition. Essentially, he argues that the visual modes

of experience and expression have been underutilized and slighted in American education. He thought that all thinking was basically and primarily imagistic and based upon visual perception. Arnheim's afore-mentioned reference re-affirms Eisner's (1998) notion that 'the image precedes language' (p. 71). Ontologically, 'examination of fossil records indicate that long before the anatomical apparatus for spoken language evolved, the organs of vision were already highly developed, and visual communication was an important tool of the evolving human species' (Harman & Rheingold, 1984, p. 83).

Nevertheless, if we were to further entertain Eisner's notion that 'The image precedes language', we would come to understand that his theory substantiates the conviction that infants see things, through images first, language second; the idea here is that the image becomes the primary source of knowledge. We see (visual perception) and we understand (knowledge). Image, therefore, becomes the primary source of knowledge. We see and we believe. A child 'sees' grass, a table, a chair, a house, and a car; although the child cannot discern what the object is and cannot 'explain' what these objects are, one thing is clear; he/she sees it. It is a tangible object, one that can be accessed by way of our five senses; it can be felt (tactile), it can be seen (visual), it can be heard (auditory), it can be smelled (olfactory), and it can be tasted (gustatory). Sensory detail is important because information about what things we might encounter with our senses is vital in using our imagination, in creative writing, in making films, in making choices, and in choosing a career. Therefore, the notion of 'image preceding language' is fundamental to the recommendation that educators include more arts based programs, taking account of film which has been a part of the pop culture landscape for over one hundred years.

If, indeed, we buy into Eisner's notion that *image precedes language*, we must therefore pay more attention to the ascendancy of the visual in our school system. Berger (1984) writes, 'Seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it; the relation between what we see and what we know is never settled' (p. 7). And according to Greene (1995), 'Before we enter into the life of language, before we thematize and know we have already begun to organize our lived experiences perceptually and imaginatively' (p. 73). Additionally, in the language of many cultures, seeing is equated with understanding. The entire Indo-European linguistic system is filled with examples: *I see, ya vizhu, je vois*. Marcel Danesi (1990) suggests that the interaction of visual metaphors with language is worth exploring:

I cannot *see* what you're getting at; there is more to this than meets the *eye*; that is my point of *view*; That's the way I *visualize* it; It all depends on how you *look* at it; *Seeing* is believing; I cannot quite picture that; That idea is really *out-of-sight*; I do not see the point of your argument; Please *look* your idea over; They always *focus* on the same concept, etc. (pp. 221-238).

By drawing our attention to the emphasis on the eye as the 'site' of perception, thought, reflection, communication, and representation, Burnett (1995) suggests that more is at stake with regard to the above inventory than might initially seem to be the case. Burnett asks 'What stands between the eye and knowledge?', and 'What makes a world seen, a world understood?' (p. 4). One answer might be the camera lens; for it is through this lens that we view the world and its images. Yet another, as Perkins (1972) reminds us: 'we make sense of the movie image by *relating* it to our common knowledge and experience of the visible world' (p. 122). This revisits the notion that knowledge is a constructivist activity (see Chapter One). The 'recognition and interpretation of the film's

experience both depend on an immediate responsiveness at the level where meaning is *given* rather than created (Perkins, 1972, p. 117). After all, we can watch and we can listen; all the rest is in the mind.

Paradoxically, twenty - four hundred years ago, Plato suggested, 'The world of our sight is like the habitation in prison' (Plato, *The Republic*, Book VIII). I believe what Plato presages here, is that we have come to see that we do not really see; that 'reality' is more within than without. In other words, reality as we 'see' it is inherently an illusion. Seeing does not necessarily mean believing. We therefore have to use words to help us validate the experience. In paraphrasing Goddard, Burnett (1995) writes, 'the supposed illusion of the real in the cinema is the reality of the illusion' (p. 95) further suggesting that 'the photographic image is not the platonic world of illusions, that place and space within which the real is somehow transformed into a shadow or worse, the shadow becomes the real' (p. 17). Perkins (1972) explains that 'as an illusion-spinning medium, film is not bound by the familiar, or the probable, but only by the conceivable; all that matters is to preserve the illusion' (p. 121). The irony here is that since science has always professed that the 'external', and 'objective' are real, everything else is suspect. Hence, 'illusion' or the 'shadow becoming real' is not considered, for most scientists, in the realm of the possible. Contradicting scientific paradigms, Youngblood (1970) holds that 'the objective and subjective are one' (p. 46). Youngblood's observation is one of the reasons film is a great teaching medium, because film never exists in and of itself. Film is always interpreted. Even if the viewer does not analyze it, he/she still engages in some interpretation of what is happening in the film and some interpretation of what he/she is watching. Her interpretation creates the film that he/she watches. He/she may watch it a

second time and have a different experience of the film; it may become a different film for him/her. Freeland & Wartenberg (1995) suggest that 'film critics and theorists actively engage in interpretations that create different readings of films. The critic can bring elements in a film together to create a different film for an audience. A very powerful analysis may change the way that we view a particular film. And although visual images are different from words and communicate differently, they do not have to be impoverished versions of words' (p. 234). Even if words help our understanding of films, Worth (1981) suggests giving up the dependence on words alone does not necessitate throwing out either verbal language or the cognitive skills associated with the ability to speak, read, and write.

And yet, literal language and quantification are not the only means through which human understanding is secured or represented. Consequently, the introduction of film as a medium for education is an excellent idea because it has both the narrative and the visual components at the same time. As we have seen, information about the world around us comes to us not only by words printed on a piece of paper, but more and more through the powerful images and sounds of our multi-media culture. Although mediated messages seem to be self-evident, in truth, they use a complex audio/visual 'language' which has its own rules (grammar) and which can be used to express many layered concepts and ideas about the world. If our children are to be able to navigate their lives through this multi-media culture, they need to be fluent in reading and writing the language of images and sounds just as we also teach them to read and write the language of printed communications. Full understanding of such a text involves not just deconstruction (analysis) activities but also construction (production) activities using a range of multi-

media tools now available to young people growing up in today's media culture. So, once again, media literacy is not about discarding geography in order to have time for making videos; it's not about dropping Shakespeare in favor of Spielberg. It's about augmenting the curriculum rather than replacing it. According to Simon (1999), 'many of the men and women who write for television and the movies are literate, articulate, and highly educated, and some of them know the great tradition of literature as well as, if not better than, the English professors teaching in our colleges and universities' (p. 23). An exemplar is Lawrence Kasiden, a USC film school graduate who, as the principal screenwriter for Lucas' *Star Wars* series and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, has also written and directed the film *Body Heat* (1981), a film inspired by Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* (1944). Kasiden who has also taught at various colleges and universities, confirms Simon's conviction that there are many fine screenwriters out there who are literate, articulate, and highly educated. In light of this, educational programs could reasonably aim at developing and strengthening students' skills in organizing their visual world for purposes of both thinking and communicating. As film offers a new means or mode of cognition and communication that stands parallel to the established modes, it does not deny the intellectual, creative, and social values upon which our society is based.

Film communication offers a wonderful link between classrooms and society. Films help explore these cultural contexts and may be integrated easily into the curriculum. They are entertaining, and allow flexibility of materials and teaching techniques. Far from being merely entertainment, these mass media vehicles transport ideas and ideals regarding the nature of the world and the universe, the moral structure of human society and lessons regarding the construction of self-identity. And yet,

In a concrete environment, students have a hard time connecting things with their own lives (making meaning from things) so film is an opportunity for students to make a film that does not necessarily connect with their own lives, because it is the psychology of the times; you know, when you are sixteen or seventeen, you're not as reflective with your life as you are when you are twenty or thirty. In essence, they are just in the process of discovering their own identity, so it is difficult when you are in a vulnerable age, to use film to discuss your own personal life. But I try to push them to make films that are autobiographical, in a way. But it is a very difficult thing to do, to entice students to use film as a reflective medium because they are not as mature. And this for me has been a kind of a challenge to push them towards (acknowledging) their own culture (Grenier interview, 2005).

Grenier, a classmate of mine at Simon Fraser University's film program, believes, as I do, that there is a strong case for using films in an educational setting. Movies or films, themselves, can be inspired machinery. They can evoke a spiritual life, a higher ideal, models that are both negative and positive, or a paradigm for society to function by. What makes film a unique medium is that film has the capacity to reflect upon itself. As in movies like Fellini's *8½* (1963) and Truffaut's *Day for Night* (1973) and Tornatore's *Cinema Paradiso* (1988), film can depict the very activities of movie making and movie watching. According to Stoehr (2002) 'the dialogical tension between passive voyeurism and the active interpretation of images, a tension that is pronounced within cinematic experience, can be especially emphasized when a film director wishes to draw attention to such a tension. The nature of cinematic perception and cognition, in other words, become mirrored at times by the cinematic artwork itself, in terms of both style and narrative sometimes literally, sometimes figuratively'; and 'Film, like human thought', Stoehr adds, 'has a capacity for self-reflection' (p. 5). Nowadays, the technology that we have in terms of video and digital film and editing equipment allows almost anyone (with an interest) to produce, direct and edit a short film, or a documentary, or even a feature

film for that matter. Production (cameras, lighting, etc) and post-production equipment (such as editing suites and computer generated images or CGI's) are becoming quite affordable and of the highest quality. For example, editing software programs like Apple's 'Final Cut Pro' can produce amazing digital effects that were unheard of when directors like Spielberg or Lucas first began directing their own Hollywood films back in the early 1970s.

It may seem obvious by now that film is a powerful entertainment medium, and yet, what is not as obvious is that film, as a *collaborative* event, enables writers, directors and actors to craft their storytelling skills in a cooperative milieu in order to unfold a morality tale, for all to see. The audience, in turn, identifies with films because each person's 'world' or 'cosmos' is like a film that is viewed, scene-by-scene by the creator of that movie. For Blessing & Tudico (2005) 'life is like a cinematic narrative that is constructed by each of us, that is narrated by each of us, and that stars each of us as the main character' (p. 42). By going regularly to the movies, we give ourselves permission to indulge in a fantasy life away from the 'reality' of our ordinary existence. It gives us a moment in time and space to dream of things 'unrealized'. For the student filmmaker, however, the process of putting these film-image events together is a complex, intentional act requiring skill, knowledge, and creative ability. This organizing process takes place not only in planning but in photographing the actual images, and in the selection, rejection, and sequencing that make up the editing process. According to McPherson (2006):

The kids I'm teaching think visually, but they have no idea how much hard work it is to actually make a film, and my biggest struggle is to transform them from consumers into producers, and to be a producer, it takes leadership. You do this

by listening to the director and hear his vision and then take as much charge as you can. The world will change if people take charge. That's where I feel that filmmaking transcends film-watching.

Considering some of the prejudices that are held about film, it is not surprising that film education has not been an academic success. In contrast, if we were to scrutinize film's pedagogical virtues according to theorists who argue the ascendancy of film on social and psychological grounds (see Arnheim 1957, Campbell 1988, and Taylor 1992), we might find that it is a fruitful enterprise. This argument is based upon Arnheim's (1969) notion of '*visual thinking*', and leads to the conclusion that film or television is emotionally superior to words or, at the very least, complementary to words. By stressing the intelligence of perception, Arnheim underlined what many had intuitively realized: perception intertwines thinking and feeling and has a cognitive character. People in general, he emphasized, think with their senses. Similarly, the belief that imagery plays an important role not only in artistic and aesthetic activities but in all thinking (cogently argued in Arnheim's *Visual Thinking* (1969). Smith (1989) declares that 'it was the psychologist Arnheim who, through his studies of visual perception and visual thinking had a dominant influence on psychologically - oriented art educators' (p. 12). For Messaris (1994), visual 'literacy' as a pedagogical goal encourages 'analysis and evaluation', and equips 'the viewer for drawing inferences about the broader social implications of images, and can also be assumed to make one less vulnerable to their influence' (p. 138).

If educators learn how to utilize this powerful medium, film as 'the culture of visual immediacy' becomes much more than an entertainment vehicle. According to Giroux

(2002), films are a source of shared joy, entertainment, escape, and a source of knowledge that, unlike what we were privy to in school, connected pleasure to meaning. Films connect audiences, publics, and events within the concrete relations of power that characterize everyday life. He posits that films both entertain and educate; they offer up subject positions, mobilize desires, influence us unconsciously, and help to construct the landscape of (world) culture; and film connects to students' experiences in multiple ways that oscillate between the lure of film as entertainment and the provocation of film as a cultural practice (pp. 2-4). Similarly, in an article discussing the use of video as a tool of empowerment in third world countries, Christine Haussmann (2004) promoted the idea that 'film and video as tools to disseminate information can have a marked influence on society not only by transmitting information and knowledge or by entertaining, but also, by mobilizing people and persuading them to adopt new behavior... Film and video can translate thoughts and abstract concepts into identifiable experiences to be shared... as an educational tool; film can deepen the power of comprehension and memory' (p. 77).

Furthermore, Gene Youngblood's (1970) book *Expanded Cinema* argues convincingly for changes in the teaching of communication modes. He suggests that for too many years schools have concentrated on teaching skills in verbal language. Many educators have since examined this issue, authors such as Eisner, (2002), Giroux, (1997, 2002), Palmer, (1998), Gatto, (1992), and Burnett, (1995, 2000). Youngblood's perception that schools focus primarily on verbal language is still very much a central argument of pedagogy today. His critique of education parodies McLuhan's proverb, 'the medium is the message' implying instead, that the 'tedium is the message' (p. 64-65). However, the issue, according to Worth (1981), is not whether we have over-emphasized words in our

educational system, but rather how and for what purpose we should introduce film into the educational process as a complement to verbal learning, describing film as the "debased" verbal language (p. 121). For Worth, and for most semioticians, 'film is a language', and that it is becoming the primary sociological, and cultural language of the current generation; and elsewhere, he asks, 'given that 'film is a language' and is one of the 'cultural languages' of the "now" generation, what are its educational implications?' (p. 109). Can film break free from its 'entertainment' label and, in turn, be given a legitimate bill of rite as a pedagogical pathway? Again, in my view, the short answer is *Yes*.

For Freeland & Wartenberg (1995), 'literary scholars construct readings of film 'texts', while historians use film in courses on the history of wars, protest movements, or pioneer voyages. Sociologists and anthropologists, on the other hand, view films as fruitful fields for the exploration of social and cultural issues concerning family structures, urban violence, teenage rebellion, sexual initiation rites, or religious taboos. Feminist scholars from many different disciplines study films to highlight their concerns with the representation of gender, sexuality, patriotic power relations, and canon formation' (p. 1). If this is the case, why shouldn't we use film in education? We all know films are a great source of enjoyment for many, but what few of us realize is that they can also give us insight into the world and beyond our direct experience, and can inspire us, shock us, or make us rethink our assumptions about the world. They are potentially an invaluable resource to use with young people to develop their awareness and understanding in order for them to become active thinking participants in society. McPherson suggests that:

Film is not an industry, it is a metaphor; if you want to learn how to work and you want to learn how to work with people and you want to learn how to make positive changes in the world, I'd say, you know, get on [a film] set because nobody works harder... you need to create the meaning as you go along. I mean if you can create that meaning and find that focus, it's different and transformative (McPherson interview, 2006).

Similarly, Italian director Federico Fellini's notion that everyone sees life around him in a more-than-superficial manner is food for thought. He questions the decisions in critiquing what one sees on film rather than making sense of what one sees on screen for themselves. 'What's the sense of being 'objective' in film? I don't even think it's physically possible" (Jacobs, 1970, p. 5). Like Fellini, I also don't think it is possible to be fully objective about *anything* for that matter. We do not see the world as it *is*; we see the world as we are. Consequently, it is very difficult to be objective as we perceive the world from a contextual perspective, the context being what we believe to be true.

Boghossian (2006) maintains that 'in a literal sense, learners construct or find meaning in their subjective experiences, and this result becomes knowledge'. And Poerksen (2004) writes, 'for the constructivist, each person's subjective experience is just as valid as anyone else's, and no one has an epistemically privileged viewpoint. Therefore, there are no objective criteria for what constitutes knowledge' (pp. 379-398). Richmond (2004) again: 'while there can be no totally objective truth since all pictures involve selection and construction, artists can at least try to be sensitive to contextual qualities and meanings and to the possible effects and interpretations of their work' (p. 23).

Nevertheless, there is a contradictory aspect that must be recognized in order to become a creative filmmaker. For instance, a film student must learn the canons of filmmaking from an historical perspective. In other words, as Richmond (2004) purports, a teacher's

job is to ensure that a student is well versed in the history of film and in the elements of design such as the ‘technicalities and use of cameras, lenses, and now, about digital options and techniques’. In addition, students ‘can be taught about composition; about balance, about rhythm...and qualities of form and light’ (p. 18). Yet, on the other hand, students must also produce original works of art; they must, in essence be authentic to their own vision of what filmmaking means to them. Richmond (2004) adds that they must also be ‘true to their own aesthetic and perceptual ideas’ (p. 18), rather than to merely produce a ‘film that hopes to reach the largest possible audience...as some kind of remake’ (Sontag, 2001, p. 117).

If it is true that revelation comes from art, as Taylor suggests, then my question is as follows: does art imitate reality or does reality imitate art? In other words, where do film students get their inspiration? Is it from the teacher? Does the motivation come from books, from films themselves, from divine inspiration or from a combination of all of these influences? In an article entitled ‘The Alchemy of Creativity: Art, Consciousness and Embodiment’, David Peat (1989) argues that much of what we do and make, from playing music, painting, or editing a film or video, involves processes that arise out of an internalized body of work and move towards an act of projection onto the outer manifest world. By projection, he means taking inner material and throwing it out onto the external, social world through the act of making, carving, painting, dance, music, writing, editing a film or any one of the innumerable ways we express ideas or engage and communicate with the world. In this sense an artist knows what she is doing when she projects her artwork into the outer world, through expression and brings out form into

being. Often a creator does not really know the value of a piece of work until it has been made public and thereby separated from its creative host.

When I am in the process of making a film or a video, I am never quite sure what the result of my efforts will be, and therefore must rely on how the public receives my work, in order for me to understand its impact on others. I cannot be objective about my own work. How can I? On the one hand, everything I do is embodied with my own values, thoughts, attitudes, feelings and perspectives. Yet, on the other, it is only from an 'objective' perspective, however, that I can derive some sense or meaning from my work. In other words, is there meaning or value to the artwork outside of my personal stake in the work itself? Fortunately, Read (1966) suggests that 'the individual can, and does, create a work of art for himself; however, he only reaches the full satisfaction, which comes from the creation of a work of art if he can persuade the community to accept his creation' (p. 83). For example, in film, there is a notion that there are certain 'tricks-of-the-trade' that characterize the art of filmmaking, therefore allowing the filmmaker to express his or her point of view in the production of a motion picture. These characteristics can be found in semiotics (the study of film as language); in pre-production (scriptwriting, set design), in production (camera, lighting), and in post-production (montage / editing), and last but not least, in how the film is marketed. Needless to say and regardless of the technology used, one must be authentic to oneself. After all, it's not how good the technology is, but how it is presented to its users. Taylor (1991) speaks of authenticity involving originality; he says it 'demands a revolt against convention. Authenticity is in itself an idea of freedom; it involves finding the design of your own life against the demands of external conformity' (p. 67). Conformity, I would

argue, is the antithesis of authenticity and is our true nemesis in the age of modernity. The notion that 'the lust for comfort murders the passions of the soul' (unsourced) is a chilling reminder that we ought to heed Campbell's (1988) proposition to 'Follow your bliss' (P. 148), lest we fall into banality and personal disarray.

Taylor's notion of authenticity rings true, not only for myself, but for many other artists I have spoken with and perhaps this is the reason I personally enjoy filmmaking as an Art form. Most particularly, the preference for post-production work (editing) over other production values such as camera work (cinematography) and lighting (grip) works best for me. The reason for this proclivity that the power and ability editing affords me, is in the manipulation of 'reel' time over my own generalized feelings of helplessness to control spatial and temporal time. As such, throughout the editing process, I can manipulate or control 'reality' or what seems to be 'real' (in essence, what is seen on screen), in a way I cannot control in real life. As an artist, this gives me the 'illusion' of power. The lesson here, as Perkins (1972) aptly suggests, is this: 'if we are without power, we are also without responsibility' (p. 71). As an example, the editing process involves 'logical' decisions to do with unfolding the 'story' of the film; and yet once the various scenes have been spliced in sequence, the more serious side of editing takes place. This is about establishing the pace, the visual rhythms of the film, and selecting how various physical movements fit together according to the ways the eye scans the screen and moves from scene to scene and the frame by frame relationships of light, form and shape. If you look very attentively at a videotape of the same movie – rewinding it back again and again, you begin to notice, for example, that the sound of a champagne cork popping occurs a fraction of a second before the cork actually leaves the bottle. You

also see discontinuous 'jump shots' of fast action, and so on. The more you examine the film the more you detect a pattern of discontinuities and visual tricks that, in the hands of a skillful editor, have combined together to produce the illusion of continuous reality. For myself, the editing process enables me to be as creative as I can, without the usual self-imposing limitations I would find myself in when I am in a conventional mode of thinking. In essence, when I am in my 'editor's mode' I am utilizing my lateral thinking skills. When it comes to traditional educational experiences, it seems to me that we are taught to think from a pragmatic point of view. There is nothing wrong with thinking in these terms, except for this: when we give students directions such as 'don't make waves, follow the rules, and conform to policy', we are not encouraging them to think 'outside the rules'. As Richmond (2004) notes, 'the danger in this line of thinking, if pushed too far, is that it may be perceived as focusing too much on the Western canon, and requires skills and fluency that cannot be developed in time and conditions available in school' (p. 6). In my experience, in order to become a creative filmmaker, one must be prepared to break the conventional rules of filmmaking and reinvent new ones in a way that would seem to satisfy certain innate subconscious needs in both the artist and audience alike.

Nevertheless, since the advent and affordability of digital video cameras and non linear editing equipment such as the *Avid* or *Final Cut Pro*, anyone can learn how to shoot and edit a video or film project, if given enough instruction, motivation and direction. In fact, according to Kukulska-Hulme *et al.* (2004), 'digital video offers a raft of benefits in educational contexts. It can be used for recording and analyzing classroom interactions and to develop students' critical thinking, creativity, language skills and collaborative learning' (p. 125). It would seem, therefore, an appropriate place and time to reflect, once

again, on the evolution of film as an art form and its implications for education. Recall that our age, as indicated earlier (in Chapter Two) has been called ‘the civilization of the image’ (Kearney, 1988, p. 1) and with good reason. The evocative power of the new digital means of communication evokes the belief that an image discloses much more than a word, and is infinitely more suggestive. Yet ‘in a world in which people of other cultures are being taught to make movies and television, in a world in which our own children are learning to make movies and are being increasingly acculturated and educated through film and television, can the teacher afford’, as Worth (1981) asks, ‘to remain a *blind mute*? For a blind mute can never have anything to say to a person who respects visual ‘speaking’ and whose culture (and nature) demands social interaction through pictures’ (p. 131).

WHY USE FILM IN EDUCATION?

In our culture, films, like television, books, newspapers, and other message systems, are institutionally organized and supported. Like school, they are a part of the assimilation process. Like verbal language and other symbol systems, film is a vehicle used to communicate. In this sense, communication requires members of a social group to share the meaning of the symbolic forms that they use. One cannot argue that our aptitudes and our psychological balance are a result of our relation to images. Once again, we revisit Eisner’s (1998) notion that ‘the image precedes the idea in the development of consciousness’ (p. 71), because it is an inherent quality most of us possess, simply by virtue of sight. Recalling the notion that ‘image precedes consciousness’ is to revisit the idea that an infant doesn’t think ‘green’ when it looks at a blade of grass; it just sees grass. In light of this verity the visual arts today continue to be a means whereby we

attempt to give form to our ideas and feelings and to gain personal satisfaction through individual accomplishment. The growing complexity of our contemporary culture, including its visual aspects, also requires of every individual a capacity for visual discrimination and judgment:

Some say that participatory encounters with paintings, dances, stories, and all other art forms enable us to recapture a lost spontaneity. Breaking through the frames of presuppositions and conventions, we are enabled to recapture the processes of our becoming. Reflecting on our life histories, our projects, we may be able to resist making a “divinity” of the technological revolution, and we may gain a perspective on the men in white coats or even on our own desires for withdrawal and for harmony. Made aware of ourselves as questioners, as meaning makers, as persons engaged in constructing and reconstructing realities with those around us, we may communicate to students the notion that reality is multiple perspectives and that the construction of it is never complete, that there is always more (Greene, 1995, p. 130-131).

Steinberg & Kincheloe (1997) argue that students should not merely analyze the representation of electronically mediated, popular culture – they must also be able to master the skills and technology to produce it. This means making films, videos, music, and other forms of cultural production. I think this is a very interesting and novel proposal. This confirms Dewey’s original notion of experiential learning by integrating students’ experiences into their school lessons. I asked Pierre what he thought his students learned by engaging in the filmmaking process:

Pierre: I teach Grade 11s. In the film class they learn about sound, composition, the camera, etc...and then they work on a documentary, and then afterwards they work on short fiction films, and maybe, if time allows, a personal project at the end. In going through making these films, they not only learn the difficulty of making films but in the process, they mature. I find that my students really mature; I see kids coming in to work on a collaborative film and watch them fight over a cut; they have to find an argument to sell their cut and sometimes they get angry, so the experience is reflective of life. They are never as involved with their peers in a collaborative work as in making a film. I think this aspect is great because we are now living in a world where more and more people are working

together, where they have to engage in arguments, be critical, be respectful and respect other people's ideas. At 16 years of age, it isn't easy (Grenier interview, 2005)

In my view, Pierre's comments are extremely perceptive. Pierre suggests, students 'not only learn how to make films, but in the process, they *mature*'. An educational aim a curriculum ought to adopt is to allow students to 'mature'. In this case, the meaning of 'mature' is defined as enabling students to struggle with real world issues. This can be accomplished by having them assimilate the relevant material through direct *experience*. Pierre has shown that by working on a film in partnership, students cannot help but mature because they are sowing the seeds of collaboration; they are learning to work together, to solve problems together, and to understand the process and progress of delegation. In other words, Pierre is teaching his students to mirror positive, real world work activities and experiences. One can see that Pierre is making the most of the constructivist learning theory in the sense outlined here:

The constructivist classroom relies heavily on collaboration among students. There are many reasons why collaboration contributes to learning. The main reason it is used so much in constructivism is that students learn about learning not only from themselves, but also from their peers. When students review and reflect on their learning processes together, they can pick up strategies and methods from one another (From an article 'What is Constructivism' Retrieved from <http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/constructivism/index.html> November 3rd, 2006).

If Dewey (1916) were to recapitulate Pierre's perspective, he would suggest that 'Education is the process of preparation or getting ready. What is to be prepared for, of course, are the responsibilities and privileges of adult life' (p. 54). We have therefore, come full circle with Dewey's notion of education, that of linking the responsibilities and privileges of adult life, to Joseph Campbell's (1990) astute observation to 'follow your

bliss'. Campbell continues: 'following your bliss just seems to me to be the clue to believing what might be called the *mythologically inspired life*' (p. 64). Therefore, whether one pursues film as a career path or not, a film curriculum would teach students collaborative skills, thus enabling them to develop their teamwork and leadership skills as well. Films can do this by stimulating discussions, sparking debates, and frequently challenging our perception of the lives of others. As such, one can see how films can be more than just entertainment and diversions. In today's media-saturated culture, films carry a power and influence that is easy to underestimate. Indeed, a dangerous assumption suggesting that today's students already have the necessary level of visual literacy must be dismissed. As Frank Tomasulo (1995) has argued:

Students may have been widely exposed to media literacy, but they may not understand film 'language'. Encouraging students to think cinematically still involves breaking some habits they have acquired over a lifetime of watching films and television as entertainment (p. 75-76).

As a consequence, the nature of film as a device for storytelling and for the communication of information has ensured that its presence in a teaching context stretches far beyond the confines of film studies as a discipline. In the last few decades, in particular since the availability of video, film has become accepted as an object of study and an effective teaching aid in a range of subject areas, including language teaching, literary studies, history, sociology and the sciences.

CONCLUSION

Film has always been the most technologically intensive of all the popular arts. In effect, film could never have hoped to achieve the status of 'the art of our time' if, indeed, it had not also been the most technologically innovative medium of all art forms. In view of

this, we can certainly appreciate that the ability to change is the most urgent need we face in the 21st Century. In a speech given by President John F. Kennedy on October 26, 1963 at Amherst College in Massachusetts, in honor of the poet Robert Frost, Kennedy proclaimed, 'We must never forget that Art is not a form of propaganda, but a form of truth'. Kennedy's aphorism attempts to clarify the confusion that clouds the critical appraisal of "content" in the popular arts. All too frequently eclectic thinking is confused with creative thinking. The distinction is subtle to be sure: integrative thinking can be the highest form of creativity. And yet, there's an art and craft to thinking, and the popular entertainments remains at the craft level by the very nature of their purpose. Youngblood (1970) differentiates between entertainment and art, in that entertainment is inherently 'local', that is, of limited significance, whereas art is inherently universal and of unlimited significance (p. 57). McLuhan (1964) posits that 'we had assumed cinema was mere entertainment, but yet, it is part and parcel of what we wear and how we behave, of our ideas, our desires, and our terrors... It is, therefore, not accidental that the movie has excelled as a medium that offers poor people roles of riches and power beyond the dreams of avarice' (p. 291). The paradox of the cinema is, on the one hand, a shared experience, and on the other, an individually perceived event. As a result, all opinions about it can be said to be equally valid. And so we must ask ourselves, "*Do we know ourselves better than we did before the birth of film?*"

In conclusion, 'making a film cannot only help a child learn how films are made or why they are art, but can help him or her to learn how to manipulate images, how to think with them, and how to communicate through them. Making a film can be part of a process of teaching children how to understand and to use the visual mode in thinking and

communication. One can appreciate that listening alone is not the best way to teach people to play the violin or to compose symphonies; neither are looking and talking the best ways to teach people to use the visual mode' (Worth, 1981, p. 123). Ultimately, as Carriere (1994) suggests, 'history is going to need us filmmakers. We remember' he writes 'that it was amateurs, journalists, war correspondents, and spies that have filmed the whole of the 20th Century. Political addresses, invasions, refugee flows, expenditures to far countries, fights-of-the-century, famous writers remarks – all have been recorded and...well preserved on film.

Our vision of the past and perhaps even our sense of history now flow chiefly through film. There is no escaping it. Cinematic images write themselves into us without our knowledge, like masks placed over past centuries. Little by little, they replace the older official versions; the great battle panoramas, official portraits of monarchs and dignitaries, celebrated scenes, the long procession of lofty lies that once helped form our notions of history; so one lie replaces another (p. 61).

CHAPTER FIVE

A CURRICULUM FOR FILM IN EDUCATION

Can we learn from films? We can and do learn a great deal about the world through film. But films, as we have seen, are more than the sum of their parts. They also convey important philosophic truths. And consequently, in the context of the vast political, social, economic, and technological changes we face on a daily basis, the purposes of the curriculum need to be questioned. Barrow (1984) asks, 'What is the school curriculum for?' (p. 37). He suggests that the curriculum 'is for developing breadth of understanding at the logical level (as opposed to the level of information), particular understanding of the realm of emotions and the nature of morality, some historical and cross-cultural awareness, a degree of socialization, and some concern for physical health' (p. 37). When we ask the question, *Can we learn from films?*, we must keep Barrow's notion in mind that the curriculum, and above all film, in this case, speaks to us about ideas, from a moral and emotional level, and most certainly from a historical and multi-cultural level as well. We must, therefore, acknowledge that films do not deny the intellectual, creative, and social values upon which our society is based. With that in mind, educational programs need to aim at developing and strengthening students' skills in organizing their visual worlds for purposes of both thinking and communicating. EnGauge (2003) explains, 'today's schools face a serious dilemma: communities expect their graduates to be ready to thrive in the Digital Age, but the 21st century skills required for such success are not well defined' and as a result 'schools must do more to keep pace with the rapid technology, research and societal changes' (p2).

We can certainly appreciate, at this point, that film viewing is an active, not a passive activity, and therefore is not as damaging to learning as many educators advocate.

Neither can we deny, if we were so inclined to believe, that film as the 'art of our time' is an ubiquitous art form because it is one of the most creative, collaborative and constantly developing art forms in existence. The notion that film is 'the art of our time' would echo Peters' (1966) interest, who summarily asks 'How can schools contribute to initiating each fresh generation into this way of life?' (p. 313). And by 'this way of life' Peters' means educating citizens for democracy:

Democracy is an extremely difficult life to sustain. The fundamental moral principles on which it rests – those of fairness, liberty, and the consideration of interests – are principles which are imposed on strong and primitive tendencies... It needs, as is often said, constant vigilance to prevent encroachments on the liberties of the individual, as well as institutional safeguards through which such vigilance can find expression (ibid, p. 319).

As mentioned, films convey important philosophic truths; more so, as Arrowsmith (1969) contends 'what the novel was to the nineteenth century, the film might be to the twentieth' (p. 77). And if we were to acknowledge this fact, we would appreciate that films provide teachers with a pedagogical means for offering students alternative views of the world. Teachers ought to make use of video and films in the classroom because 'these materials can help explore cultural perspectives, are easily integrated into the curriculum, and allow for flexibility of materials and teaching techniques' (Aix, 1999). And since knowledge about the world comes to us through powerful images and sounds of our modern culture, the introduction of film, as a medium for education (as we saw in Chapter Four) is an excellent idea because it has both the narrative and visual components integrated together. We have also seen how a film education can enhance a

student's critical and lateral thinking skills by advancing cognitive, collaborative and constructivist learning outcomes, and in so doing, help students become informed viewers, critics, and consumers of visual information. However, according to Barrow (1984):

The prevailing fashions of society, especially as mediated through popular newspapers, television, cinema and radio, likewise obviously serve to sustain a particular kind of curriculum. Emphasis on technology is clearly nurtured by a general media preoccupation with the technological side of life, just as at other periods of history an arts-dominated curriculum has gained support from the arts-centered ethos of journals and newspapers. We should not forget, however, that the fact that these are not in themselves good reasons for doing anything does not mean that there might not be good reason to support a curriculum that actually owes its survival to tradition, current fashion or even professional laziness (p. 25).

Nevertheless, having established film to be a cognitive, collaborative *and* a constructivist activity, I propose, once again, that we adopt the notion that a film education ought to teach us *how* to think, rather than simply *what* to think; that we should try to improve our minds so as to enable us to think for ourselves, rather than to memorize the thoughts of other people. In other words, a film education would address 21st century literacy needs, and film as a medium of understanding would add to existing curricula, which include strong academic, thinking, reasoning, and teamwork skills *in addition to* proficiency in using technology. According to Arrowsmith (1969), 'film will be not only the future medium of instruction, but that film will also challenge and eventually claim the place and prestige accorded to literature and the arts in the traditional curriculum' (p. 75). He writes:

I know of no art with such potential for stating our problems, complexities, anxieties, and powers more naturally or comprehensively than film. And this is why film seems to me a natural curriculum, a curriculum – in process, a creative project – with which to replace much of what we now do in literature and philosophy and humanities (p. 79).

Smith (1989) adds:

The combined effect of recent developments in philosophy, psychology and educational theory is to underline not only *what* should be learned through schooling, that is, a particular body of knowledge and skills, but also how a person *comes to know* something (p. 19).

Recall that Dewey (1916) called for education to be grounded in real experience. He reminds us of ‘the standing danger that...formal instruction will be...isolated from the subject matter of life’ (p. 8). And Eisner (2002a) adds that:

We have a long philosophic tradition in the west that promotes the view that knowing anything requires some formulation of what we know in words... And Dewey tells us that while science states meaning, the arts express meaning. Meaning is not limited to what is assertable. Dewey goes on to say that the aesthetic cannot be separated from the intellectual, for the intellectual to be complete it must bear the stamp of the aesthetic.

In addition, it is important to note that through film, students make connections and associations by questioning a film’s authenticity and realism based upon their own acquired view and knowledge of the world. These interpretations are shaped by experience and social interaction. Stoehr’s (2003) suggestion that ‘all human perception is relative, that each man [sic] colors the truth differently, because what he is himself, determines the truth’, and that ‘human beings describe things the way they want them to appear; truth and reality are co-products of judgment and imagination’ (p. 108), prompts me to agree that truth is relative; you are what you think. The point is this: one of the dangers of using film in a classroom, as discussed in Chapter One, is that students often confuse what they see (in films) with truth. However, while films carry great emotional power while delivering images/ideas that obscure reality, the emotional power that films elicit can be a *catalyst* for thinking and learning. ‘If real education – and not merely the

transmission of knowledge – is to take place’ Arrowsmith (1969) recommends that ‘a curriculum is required which corroborates and exemplifies moral discovery, the making of a fate, the hunger for identity’ (p. 75). He suggests that ‘what we desperately need is a general education, a general curriculum, which would focus the realities of our present existence, present them as fact or hypothesis in a telling way which could deal with our obsessions and tell the truth about our lives’ (ibid, p. 78).

That curriculum is film, a medium which is instantly acceptable, which provides, as reading does not, an immediate and shared experience of unparalleled intensity, which is still largely unencumbered by a scholarly literature, and whose vitality and future seem undeniable...here, we have an art that is wholly available to the whole world, a truly ecumenical art. Given only subtitles, it is accessible to anyone, anywhere. And precisely because it *can* go anywhere, it tends to have, at least among the great directors, precisely the kind of ecumenical ambitions - the hope of reaching all mankind – that great writers, to some degree always imprisoned in the parish of their language, have hungered for’ (ibid, p. 79).

Consider this: The growing complexity of our contemporary culture, including its visual aspects, requires of every individual a capacity for visual discrimination and judgment. In other words, how many people, can claim to be able to express complex ideas pictorially that they could not express verbally? As such, we have within the last decade, seen film become a dominant means of communication and expression worldwide through the advent of theatrical releases, home video, DVD and now the Internet. And according to Hobbs (2006) ‘children grow up in a culture where most of their information and entertainment comes through the mass media, and teachers can promote the development of critical thinking skills by using television and video materials as texts to be interrogated and analyzed’ (p. 36). We have also established that film says something about culture and the people in it, and teaches us about morality and how we should behave. We can understand that films address moral and ethical issues (as viewed in

films such as *Star Wars* (1977), *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *Memento* (2000) (and many other films like them), and speak to family dynamics and the fragility of humanity.

According to the National Teacher Training Institute (2004):

Video (or film) is uniquely suited to take students on impossible field trips, inside the human body, or off to Jupiter; to take students around the globe, or to meet new people and hear their ideas; to illustrate complex, abstract concepts through animated, 3-D images; to show experiments that can't be done in class; and to bring great literature, plays, music, or important scenes from history into the room. Furthermore, by exploiting the medium's power to deliver lasting images, teachers can reach children with a variety of learning styles, especially visual learners, and students with a variety of information acquisition styles; engage students in problem-solving and investigative activities, begin to dismantle social stereotypes; help students practice media literacy and critical viewing skills; and provide a common experience for students to discuss' (p. 1).

By studying film as an aesthetic form, students learn how to respond to film as a medium of social and cultural expression. Students learn that films challenge the viewer's assumptions and values by raising complex issues about how individuals relate to each other within specific social and cultural contexts. We also learned that the arts give us the creativity to express ourselves, while challenging our intellect. Consequently, I would argue that film, as a visual communication medium, should receive greater attention from schools and educators because the process fundamental to filmmaking incorporates experience into pedagogy quite well. The message here is that teachers need to help children and adults access their prior knowledge and experience in order to help them assimilate new learning into experiences they already possess. In my view, I cannot think of a better intrinsic method of experiential learning than through filmmaking. And as McClean (2007) reminds us 'whether we agree with the values championed in films, and the meanings they convey, they are no different from what philosophers have been espousing since Aristotle's *Poetics*; the notion that the purpose of our storytelling is to

give us common ground on which to argue fundamental values' (p. 229). The irony here is that we have seen film become such an integral ingredient in our motley recipe of mass art and pop culture entertainment that we often overlook its potential for stimulating serious reflection and speculation. However, consider that 'some teachers do make inappropriate choices in terms of the content of film and television programs used in the classroom' (Hobbs, 2006, p. 37), and 'a few teachers probably use videotapes, computers or camcorders for reasons that may not be truly educational; for example, they may use videotape to fill time, to keep students quiet, just for fun at the end of the week, before vacations, or as a reward for good behavior' (ibid, p. 46-47).

Nonetheless, the point is not to deny that there is a tendency to use inappropriate content of film and video in the classroom, but that, according to Hobbs (2006) 'there has been little scholarly inquiry concerning the *instructional methods* of using film or video in secondary classrooms, or about teachers' perceptions of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of various methods or approaches' (p. 38). Paradoxically, teachers sometimes avoid assigning media production work such as films, videos, posters, web pages, or collages because they feel uneasy about assessing student work that is not in a traditional written format. A particular objection to introducing film as a core subject in a curriculum, according to Hughes (2005), is the notion that 'students have to learn to read before they can learn to see films' (p. 1). Yet, with clear criteria for assessing media work, many of these fears can be put to rest and teachers can be more confident about what qualities they are looking for in student work. Thoman (2003) elucidates:

Each form of communication - whether newspapers, TV game shows, or horror movies - has its own creative language: scary music heightens fear, camera close-ups convey intimacy, and big headlines signal significance. Understanding the grammar, syntax, and metaphor system of media language increases our

appreciation and enjoyment of media experiences, as well as helping us to be less susceptible to manipulation. One of the best ways to understand how the media are put together is to do just that: make a video, create a Web site, or develop an ad campaign about a community issue. The four major Arts disciplines - music, dance, theatre, and the visual arts – can also provide a context through which one gains skills of analysis, interpretation, and appreciation, along with opportunities for self-expression and creative production (p. 3).

The fact is, moving images (film) are being used in an ever increasing way to convey information and to shape attitudes and values. A common strategy teachers employ is to use film and video clips in the classroom to get students' attention. In effect, according to Hobbs (2006), 'film and video clips have become a clever way for teachers to force the television generation to pay attention in class; at least for the introduction of new ideas' (p. 43), and 'while content delivery approaches are dominant, teachers do use a wide range of methods for using films, videotapes and other media materials in the classroom in science, language learning, health, literature, and social studies' (p. 48). However, Hobbs concedes, 'this research shows that many teachers use video and mass media in routine ways without much explicit reflection on their educational aims and goals' (ibid, p. 48). Nevertheless, so long as schools neglect film as an art form, audiences and students will be at the mercy of those who seek to manipulate them and will remain intellectually impoverished in an art form that is closer to them than many others. Denby (1996) makes a compelling argument:

Education forces us to ask all those questions about self and society we no longer address without embarrassment. In order to ask those questions, students need to be enchanted before they are disenchanting. They need to love the text before they attack the subtext. They need to read before they disappear into the aridities of electronic "information". They need a chance at making a self before they are told that it doesn't exist (p. 463).

Ultimately, whether one pursues film as a career or not, a film curriculum would teach students collaborative skills, thus enabling them to develop their teamwork and leadership skills as well. Films can do this by stimulating discussions, sparking debates, and frequently challenging our perception of the lives of others. We saw another example of this in my interview with Grenier (2005), a Van Tech Social Studies teacher and Film Instructor, who helps his students struggle with real world issues *through* film. This was accomplished by assimilating relevant material through *direct experience*, utilizing film as a means of expression. Grenier has shown that by working on a film in partnership, students cannot help but mature because they are sowing the seeds of collaboration, in that they are learning to work together as a team, they are solving problems together as a team, and they understand the process and progress of delegation as a team. Essentially, Grenier is teaching his students to mirror positive, real world work activities and experiences. Thus, films entertain, educate, enlighten and inspire audiences. The visual elements of cinema need no translation given film's universal power of communication. We have also learned that films are artifacts created by specific cultures, which reflect those cultures, and, in turn, affect them. Recall Haussmann (2004) promoted the idea that

film and video as tools to disseminate information can have a marked influence on society not only by transmitting information and knowledge or by entertaining, but also, by mobilizing people and persuading them to adopt new behavior...Film and video can translate thoughts and abstract concepts into identifiable experiences to be shared... as an educational tool, film can deepen the power of comprehension and memory (p. 77).

If this were true, how then would a teacher go about designing a film curriculum in order to assimilate cognitive, collaborative and constructivist activities into the traditional pedagogical context?

A CURRICULUM APPROACH

Teachers are not often prepared professionally to be able to clearly articulate their goals and objectives for the use of video or film in the classroom, and perhaps this may be a major reason why curricula has not as yet embraced film in the pedagogical mainstream. Consequently, I would like to share a pedagogical model for teaching film in a developmental education context. Since affective objectives matter to me, my hopes are to attend to students' needs in relation to course materials and finding ways of rearranging, assimilating and integrating their values into a meaning-making paradigm for all students. As such, I found an affinity with Culkin's (1964) following declaration:

At their best, films communicate valid and significant human experiences which illuminate our common humanity and which we should want to share with our students. At their worst, and they share this fault with all media, they present a dehumanizing view of mankind against which the best defense is trained intelligence and aesthetic judgment. The power of the moving image to manipulate, to editorialize and to form values and attitudes makes it imperative in this age of film and television that the audience be equipped with the competence needed to understand the rhetoric of the projected image.

Barrow (1984) suggests that 'in considering some of the factors that may influence curriculum practice, it is helpful to distinguish between what influences curriculum as such (i.e., curriculum content), and what may influence the effect that the curriculum has on individual students so called 'learning outcomes' (p. 24). He continues, 'Nonetheless, in order to distinguish so-called 'learner-outcome' from 'teacher-input', and in order to make sensible observations about the gap between them, one does need to have a clear idea of what in principle one is trying to get across' (p. 73). Accordingly, in keeping with the focus on student based learning, my goal as a teacher is to employ teaching methods

which enhance *student participation*. While lecturing should be kept to a minimum, it remains one of the key ways of conveying information, so it is crucial to work on technique: pitch and inflection, pauses, body language, story form, stimulating questions, enthusiasm, etc. I would also find it useful to use a variety of audio-visual aids such as slides, Power Point presentations, props, audio and video clips, etc. Implementing various kinds of interactive in class exercises should also be pursued: pairing-up, discussion groups, creative exercises, and the like. Upon viewing any given film, I would interrupt the screening as needed in order to discuss the issues they present, and afterwards, I would give students a small viewing assignment in order to assess and evaluate what they have learned from the film. The course goals and assignments should bring the students to realize the importance and relevance of film history in general, and Canadian film history in particular, to their education, and that media studies can indeed be both entertaining and pedagogical. For example, as we saw in Chapter Two, Grierson's philosophy, which had a great influence on documentary film in Canada, was essentially educative and informative. It is in this sense that I venture to say that *all* films are documentaries, in that they are all, for the most part, informative and educative in one way or another.

My main goal as a film instructor is to aid students in developing critical and analytical skills, and not necessarily to inculcate or to encourage them to adopt specific moral or political positions. The idea is to allow students to explore their creativity through art making; and by exercising their beliefs and their creativity they may, to their surprise, discover their own individuality and latent talents. Ultimately, I believe true learning occurs, most frequently, when passion meets creativity. However, Barrow (1984)

suggests, ‘the mere fact that a student regards a pursuit as relevant to his purpose is not a sufficient condition for making that pursuit part of his curriculum’ (p. 78). He surmises that ‘in so far as a curriculum is going to be built upon students’ needs, we shall have to predict needs’ (ibid, p. 83). Even so, Barrow continues, ‘the fact (is), some curriculum proposals deserve to be rejected for a number of good reasons, such as that they are ill thought out, badly presented, don’t serve the ideals of the schools or teachers, or are impractical or unnecessary’ (p. 219). In any event, a film curriculum would not fall prey to Barrow’s aforementioned criticism. Recall Giroux (2002) notion that:

Students learn more about race, sex, and class from movies than from all the theoretical literature teachers urge them to read. Movies not only provide a narrative for specific discourses of race, sex and class, they provide a shared experience, a common starting point from which diverse audience can dialogue about these charged issues (p. 10).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

You may recall that in Chapter One, Peters (1966) argued that ‘education implies both cognitive content and the disinterested pursuit of what is worthwhile’ (p. 177). Peters also explains ‘it is almost a platitude of democratic thinking that the aim of education is to develop the potentialities of each individual or to enable the individual to realize himself (or herself)’ (ibid, p. 55). With that in mind, it is very important to acknowledge the diversity of learners and learning contexts. One of the main qualities of a learner is curiosity, keeping an open mind to new ideas and the teacher’s responsibility is to nurture that curiosity. As Grenier (2005) reminds us, ‘the difficulty for students is to discover, to find their own voice because, it’s like, what can I invent? Everything has been invented’. Therefore, if one were to accept the notion that a student’s ability to engage with the world in a mature and critical way upon graduation is one of the goals of a successful

education, it follows that an ideal teaching environment is one which is less centered on the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge and more on the development of the student's own learning process. Consequently, I genuinely support a constructivist approach to teaching; I see teaching as creating an environment which facilitates intellectual growth, by encouraging students to actively participate in their own learning. The teacher may start with what the students are familiar with, and then guide them into exploring related issues of interest with a hands on project which may involve a group of people, while learning critical skills and research methodology in the process. On the other hand, I must acknowledge that not every student is equally motivated to work together in a group project. Nevertheless, I venture to suggest that teachers ought to be able to get students excited about any given topic. Perhaps this can be undertaken by giving students tools (such as a video camera), notwithstanding in a scholarly fashion (with clear objections and outcomes) while at the same time leaving plenty of room for them to show some initiative.

A crucial part of the curriculum is the definition of the course objectives which are often expressed in terms of *learning outcomes* and normally include an assessment and evaluation strategy for the program. In regards to learning outcomes, Hughes (2005) suggests that 'learning outcomes focus on the development in participants of understanding and appreciation of the films and their context, and of spoken and written *articulacy*' (p.6). He proposes that a stated learning outcome is not just to 'talk about film with interest', but to 'demonstrate basic visual literacy in the analysis of films' (p. 7):

In practice, if visual skills are to be attained and students to develop a more active and critical visual literacy, the teacher needs again to employ a more varied methodology which takes account of the specifics of the study of film, and

perhaps also of differences in students' learning styles. Expecting students to have watched the film in advance is useful in two ways: it gives them an initial 'flavor' of the film to be studied, and an awareness of its plot and some of its themes (p.7).

Arguably, the necessity to integrate media literacy into the curriculum depends upon the teacher's familiarity with art as a subject matter. Regardless, Walker (2001) writes, 'by using big ideas, students find that art making is more than creating an interesting design or learning a particular technique with a specific medium (such as film); art making also becomes an expression of important ideas related to their own life and the lives of others' (p. xiii). Walker posits that 'we can encourage students to examine big ideas in relation to their own lives. For example, some of the big ideas Walker speaks to are about identity issues, such as the fear of loss, assimilation, the tension between self and others, occupation, and reinvention, to name a few' (ibid, p. 241). Other examples of big ideas, Walker submits, are about power, community, nature, and culture. By integrating these big ideas through film, students learn to appreciate real world events, and the hope is that the maturation process takes place as a result of the learning that occurs. In view of that, after having debriefed his students on their filmmaking assignments, Grenier (2005) speaks to their maturation process:

It's a funny thing, but every spring we have a showing of student films in a theatre in town at the Pacific Cinematheque, and the more of themselves that they put onto the screen, the less they want to see it up there on the big screen for all to see; in other words, the deeper they explored themselves in these films, the way they felt, their own thinking and feelings, and the more they put what they themselves thought about in their films, the harder it is for them. That is why I say it is a maturing exercise. You tell people, you are telling the whole world what you are thinking (cited from appendix A).

In Chapter One I argued that a film education ought to promote moral and emotional development, the idea here being that a desirable aim of schooling is to ‘develop emotional maturity’ (Barrow, 1984, p. 36). As a follow up to Grenier’s interview, I asked McPherson (2006) if she believes that film contributes, as Grenier believes, to a ‘process of maturity’, she discussed that in making a film, the maturation process begins, in her view, when one becomes a part of a (film production) family:

The way I see it, the producer is the ‘Father’, the director is the ‘Mother’, and the film is the ‘Child’. This is the metaphor I give them (students), and the creative force in the relationship needs to look after the story; and the producer needs to look after the family. And so, on a film, there are many sophisticated relationships.

Ultimately, I must bear in mind that even though I am required to assess students learning outcomes, the emphasis of all my film classes should focus on the process itself, and not inevitably on the outcomes. After all, a film education has social, moral, intellectual, philosophical, cross-cultural and emotional overtones that are transformational to the students’ general body of knowledge, contributing to a critical understanding of the world around them. This is an important milestone in the 21st century, given the realities of globalization, knowledge work, and accelerating societal change. According to EnGauge (2003), ‘we are living in a new economy powered by technology, fueled by information, and driven by knowledge. The influence of technology will go beyond new equipment and faster communications, as work and skills will be redefined and reorganized’ and ‘students require higher levels of education to succeed in the new, knowledge-based economy’ (p. 8). Having said that, the upshot of a film education is to ensure that learning has taken place, and in order to do so, assessment and evaluation of all students work must occur.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

A.V. Kelly (1977) remarks that ‘without some kind of evaluation any curriculum innovation becomes meaningless and probably also impossible’ (p. 143). Yet Barrow (1984) makes an interesting point: ‘things are not necessarily worthless because they cannot be evaluated formally’ (p. 231). I argued earlier that one of the aims of a film education is to accept the notion that the arts, in general, and film, in particular, are intellectually demanding, emotive as well as reflective, and done with the hand (heart) as well as the head (reason). Therefore, any assessment tools implemented with reference to these qualities would be dedicated towards a combination of observations, student self-assessments, performance reviews, final projects and portfolio assignments, and as such, would not necessarily be assessed through formal evaluation. In other words, informal evaluation seems to be a more appropriate way of assessing a student’s work because the appraisal of a work of art, such as film, is often a judgment call and therefore falls outside the realm of formal evaluation. Nevertheless, British Columbia’s IRP Guide (1997) outlines the following:

Assessment is the systematic gathering of information about what students know, are able to do, and are working toward. Assessment methods and tools include: observation, student self-assessments, daily practice assignments, quizzes, samples of student work, pencil and paper tests, holistic rating scales, projects, oral and written reports, performance reviews, and portfolio assessments... Student performance is *evaluated* from the information collected through assessment activities. Teachers use their insight, knowledge about learning, and experience with students, along with the specific criteria they establish, to make judgments about student performance in relation to prescribed learning outcomes. (p. D3).

As schools seek to promote the development of the intellect, an assessment and evaluation of all student assignments will follow the aforementioned IRP format to some

extent. To that end, I will make use of a Digital Video Assignment Sheet & Evaluation Rubric (see Appendix B) at the end of the course in order to properly assess and evaluate individual student's coursework. However, since my film course will follow a constructivist approach, the emphasis, once again, will not be on assignments, quizzes, pencil and paper tests, or written reports necessarily, but towards a critical and an analytical evaluation based upon student performances, efforts, final projects and peer reviews. In other words, the final mark will reflect the process (production values) rather than the outcome (final project). Barrow adds that 'different subject matter, different educational aims, different immediate concerns, different classrooms, different students and different teachers, may all be variable factors that combine differently to make it sensible to adopt different assessment procedures' (p. 233). In my view, film is best assessed through informal evaluation, and once again, the thinking behind this reflects the notion that students learn not only how films are made or why they are art, but also learn how to manipulate images, how to think with them, and how to communicate through film. In my view, it would be counterproductive to employ formal evaluations to a film curriculum. Barrow (1984) would agree:

Why should schools not encourage activities and experiences that they have *reason to believe* might be valuable, without any certain way of establishing this? There can be good reason to believe in the value of an activity, even in the absence of any means of establishing success (p. 231).

To paraphrase Barrow, it may, for instance, be argued that the nature of *film* and the nature of emotional maturity are such that it is very likely that, *through the study of film*, students will develop more sophisticated emotional awareness. 'We cannot measure' however 'whether people are becoming emotionally mature or better educated on a scale

of 1-10, but we can assess and estimate impressionistically, provided we have very clear concepts and an eye for the complexity of the classroom' (ibid, p. 249). In light of this, what are we to make of Kelly's (1977) argument that 'innovation without evaluation is meaningless and probably impossible?' (p. 143). Barrow's (1984) answer is that we can (and often do) innovate without evaluating. I must profess, I agree with Barrow when he suggests that 'the current emphasis on evaluation, particularly if that is taken to mean formal evaluation, seems without reasonable foundation; formal evaluation exercises are vastly overrated' (p. 251). And yet, I recall Margolis (1994) who suggested that 'visual literacy as a pedagogical goal *encourages* (my italics) analysis and evaluation, and equips the viewer for drawing inferences about the broader social implications of images, and can also be assumed to make one less vulnerable to their influence' (p. 138). The message here is clear: regardless of what methods we use to assess and evaluate students' work, we do need to measure their work in some (logical or esoteric) way because that is what curricula require teachers to do. Nevertheless, curriculum content should be selected with a view to developing critical thought, logical powers, creative thought, and lateral thinking powers. To that end, it really does not matter what form evaluation takes. Be it formal or informal, the proof, as they say, is in the pudding.

CONCLUSION

One theme running through this dissertation has been the suggestion that we can learn from films, and therefore, the study of filmmaking as an art form can teach us many skills such as basic life skills, creative and critical thinking skills, to name a few. In light of this, Barrow (1984) makes a thought provoking point when he suggests that:

A great deal of the seemingly straightforward language of education begs too many questions for a sensible person's comfort. We hear, for instance, a great deal about skills (basic skills, life skills, reading skills, the skill of critical thinking, creative skills, teaching skills, etc.) but are these things all skills? What is a skill? Are not some of these, at the very least, markedly different kinds of skill? And on what grounds are we assuming that, say, thinking critically is a unitary skill at all (p. 253).

For instance, in comparison with other media such as the printed page, film has the power, as we have seen, to convey a great deal of information. Conceptually, the process of putting film images together is a complex, intentional act requiring skill, knowledge, and creative ability. According to EnGauge (2003), '*visual literacy skills*, the ability to interpret, use, appreciate, and create images and video using both conventional and 21st century media in ways that advance thinking, decision making, communication, and learning are routinely used in communication' (p. 24). And most importantly, if one were to acknowledge that pedagogy deals with the unfolding of human potential at its most delicate stage, we cannot therefore dispute the fact that imagination is as important in the lives of teachers as it is in the lives of their students. This may be, as Greene (1995) reminds us, 'because teachers, who are incapable of thinking imaginatively, or of releasing students to encounter works of literature and other forms of art, are probably also unable to communicate to the young the value of imagination' and 'if imagination enables us to feel our way into another's vantage point, (those without imagination) may also be lacking in empathy' (p. 36). And Kane (2004) reflects a sentiment I hold dearly: the notion that 'a teacher who does not avail him or herself of the full range of available skills and responses as they face their meaning-hungry children, whether it's the latest multi-media presentation technology, or the quiet conversation in a corridor after class is surely less than a teacher can be' (p. 187). Walker (2001) concludes with a compelling

argument, suggesting that ‘creativity is no longer (considered) an innate attribute that requires only encouragement and opportunity, but, instead, one that benefits from overt, instructional intervention’ (p. xii). She adds:

An instructor’s attitude towards art making is crucial to how his or her students learn to understand the art making process. When art teachers include such art making practices as purposeful play, manipulation of media, risk taking and experimentation, they communicate that art making is about searching for and discovering meaning. Such strategies encourage deeper levels of thinking and allow students to hold meaning loosely, leave it open, discover it, rediscover it, reinvent it, and develop it. However, as art teachers, we must instruct, encourage, and give students permission to play, experiment, take risks, change their mind, and raise questions (p. 137).

What Walker is suggesting here is that we need to allow students to make meaning by injecting their own experience into current lesson plans, thereby allowing themselves access and expression of their own individuality. The struggle for individuality is still an important ideal in Western culture. Undoubtedly, understanding and productively engaging our youth in the context of their everyday lives is clearly one of the big issues for educators, parents, citizens, and those of us concerned about the future. Therefore, I propose that it is vital that parents, educators, and cultural workers attend to how films and visual media are used and understood by diverse groups of students. Not only does this provide an opportunity for parents and others to talk to children about popular culture, it also creates the basis for a better understanding of how young people identify with films, what issues need to be addressed, and how such discussions would open up a language of pleasure and criticism rather than simply shutting such a conversation down. This suggests that we develop new forms of literacy, new ways of critically understanding and reading the electronically produced visual media. Since film also both reflects and affects society, our society, in turn, should require that we embrace models of

communication so the next generations of students become cine-literate. The notion that our students learn to be cine-literate is inspiring, in light of the fact that the use of film in education as a communication device involves more than teaching our children about film or how to make film. As we have seen, film teaches students critical and analytical thinking skills, not to mention leadership skills as well. Yet, the most empowering theory comes from Eisner (2002) who maintains that ‘those who control images, those who influence decisions about which images will be shown, those who manage the media, control a disproportionate amount of power in society’ (p. 28). In conclusion, if film is to fulfill its possible role of enhancing classroom instruction, it will require the sensitive guidance of teachers who know how to teach about film as communication, so as to foster the development of personal intelligence and cultural sensitivity:

To be visually illiterate – that is, not to be able to apprehend the expressive and communicative power of images – is to be placed at a great disadvantage. For it is unlikely that verbal literacy alone will enable one fully or critically to understand the visual messages being communicated so incessantly. Thus, education in the visual arts, the domain of imagery, should be seen as a fundamental need for all students, not just those with a penchant for drawing, painting, or sculpting. Indeed, more than ever, the study of the visual arts is of fundamental importance to a sound education for all students (Smith, 1989, p. 198).

In conclusion, film teaches us about ourselves, about our humanity, about our differences and similarities. It teaches us to think because it asks us questions we are often afraid to confront in ourselves: *Who are we?* Peters (1966) concludes by stating that ‘somehow or other, the individual must come to care sufficiently about what is intrinsic to these worthwhile activities so that he no longer has any need of extrinsic motivation’ (p. 62). ‘The ultimate aim of education’ Eisner (2002) concludes, ‘is to enable individuals to become the architects of their own education and through that process, to continually

reinvent themselves' (p. 20). In closing, I find myself echoing Dancyger's (2007) challenge: 'We have learned a great deal *from* and a great deal *about* the greatest art of this century; how do we want to use our knowledge' (p. 434). Can you imagine if we were to introduce students to a curriculum of visual literacy, including films? Perhaps they would grow up and develop into free thinking individuals, without fear of censorship; free to express themselves, without fear of judgment; and ultimately free to sidestep the rational, pragmatic, scientific 'logos' that seizes and immobilizes us to avoid becoming risk takers, afraid of making mistakes?

And finally, we must embrace imaginative inquiry, 'as if' we were powerful beyond our own intellectual capacity. As such, education needs to foster a variety of new competencies in using, analyzing, and producing popular culture pedagogies to empower students and to make education relevant to the challenges of the present and the future. For youth *are* the future, and the quality of life and the prospects of this new millennium depend on educating our youth and helping produce generations who can themselves create a better, freer, happier, and more just society.

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APPENDIX A

Pierre Grenier's Interview – November 15th, 2005

NOTE: Pierre Grenier and I went to film school (Simon Fraser University) together. He is currently teaching at Van Tech High School as a Social Studies / Film Teacher; he also teaches documentary filmmaking to Grade 11s and 12s.

Pierre The medium of film is, as you mentioned before, a multi-media format; the whole concept of film is changing in the sense that when you do now a presentation, you have PowerPoint, video clips, photography, painting, multi-literacy if you will.

The problem, however, is this: How do we use multi-media tools for communication? As an audience, we read the text, but then images are added to it, perhaps film clips, photography thus creating a narrative that the audience can follow your thoughts.

Also, how does one assemble visual narratives from all these multi-medias? Nowadays, multi-media are taking over where before all we had were essays to read, as a text, as a presentation tool.

Gilles Deleuze; he wrote two books entitled 'Image Movement' and 'Image Time'; and 'Cinema & Philosophy'. Roderick wrote Deleuze's 'Time Machine' and 'The Brain is the Screen'.

Where does human's interest in images come from?

French thinkers are coming up with the concept of the 'Cinema as a thinking machine'. Film itself is a thinking machine.

Ralph: Pierre, what do you say to critics, such as Gene Youngblood, who likens film to entertainment; he says film dulls us; in effect, it puts us to sleep; he says that film contributes to the 'dumbing down of society?' Any thoughts?

Pierre: I think this statement is very generalized. I think, as an industry, filmmaking might be engaging in this type of thing.

Ralph: You mean Hollywood?

Pierre: Hollywood commercialism. It's like fashion photography. It's great. It's a beautiful aesthetic, but in terms of an art form, it doesn't allow anyone to think anything of it; what do you think about when you see a nice fashion photograph? A model, if you will; there's nothing to think about-you just say 'it's beautiful'; that's it - it is generalized. But, if you ask, does filmmaking, as an art, contribute to the 'dumbing down' of society? I would say no, I think art is full of possibilities. In fact, I believe that art, is, and could be the saving grace of our civilization.

Ralph: I would say film is the art of our time.

Pierre: I believe film has possibilities; art has possibilities, possibilities that don't as yet exist. And I believe that for student's this is potentially an incredible thing. In an academic setting, students are basically told what they must do. While in Art, we give them some tools to work with and suddenly they have possibilities that have not been given to them. They can get it from themselves, and that's why art is very important in our schools; extremely important.

We are living in a world of images, of representation; everything is (a given) there. And the problem, students face today, is finding their own images; they are surrounded by (extrinsic) images, and in a sense, cannot find their own (intrinsic) ones.

The difficulty for students is to discover, to find their own voice, because, it's like – what can I invent? Everything has been invented.

Ralph: But then again, nothing is new; everything is representational; everything, for the most part has been invented before, in a sense; there is nothing new, wouldn't you say?

Pierre: But then, since film is a thinking machine, young people have a chance to kind of think of their own way; film is about selection, choice; putting things together – for my students, I see it as being a very complex thing. It's a collaborative venture, but still, quite a complex experience, a complex task.

Ralph: You say that film is a 'thinking machine'. Would you say, then, that there is cognition in the Arts?

Pierre: Absolutely. In fact, they always say in books that 'reality is constructed' but the students actually realize this intuitively by making their own films. That is why I suggested before that film is a world of possibilities because this [filmic] world did not exist before them. They put it on the screen and it's there to be seen.

Also, when my students work on a film they work together; two or three of them on a project, so in that sense, it is a collaborative thing. So they have to negotiate on things together.

For me, I am interested in film as a hobby; in 1986, I made a documentary with the NFB (National Film Board) about Millairdville and its trade union movement. After the film was made, the NFB asked me if I would move to Montreal and make films there and I said no. I stayed in Vancouver and opened up a new venture on Cambie Street, called the *Kino Café*, and then I decided to go into teaching.

For me, film is worthy of an academic credit.

Ralph: Would you say film is a cognitive, collaborative and constructivist medium?

Pierre: Absolutely. And so, when the kids get together to edit a film, they have to work, as I said, on a collaborative basis; 'What do we put next? Why should we put it here? It's amazing, but the process of thinking on this collaborative level is similar to analyzing a text. That is what intelligence is all about. It is making a connection and links.

Ralph: As a teacher, how do you see popular culture introduced into a curriculum?

Pierre: I see it as the study of film. I have to say you have to be cautious about that, but I think it is a good thing. However, you have to approach popular culture as a study in icons. Why did *Pulp Fiction* become such an icon? One must choose their icon as meaningful to the society in which they live. I mean, why did we study Shakespeare, because he was an icon, meaningful to his era... *Star Wars* is our icon today, but icons don't last very long. They are short lived. *Pulp Fiction* lasted perhaps five years. Youth today do not know the film *Pulp Fiction*.

So for me, I think popular culture has a place in the curriculum, but the teachers have to be well trained in this culture. Basically, when one studies a film, it is much like studying a novel. It can be limiting.

Ralph: I suppose you can say it was like when we were students and studied Eisenstein or Podovkin.

Pierre: I think we can learn from that, but you have to choose certain parts of the film; you know now I never show a whole film, very rarely, except my icon film, is Jean Luc Goddard's '*Breathless*'.

Ralph: Why?

Pierre: Why? Because I think in that film, all other films are there. There is everything in that film. It is so modern. It is very fresh to my students and they all want to see it. Remember, this film was made sometime in the 1960's. So obviously there is something in that film.

Ralph: It's timeless.

Pierre: It's timeless. And its very fresh in it's use of camera techniques, it's use of cutting techniques, I mean it is the same way directors are making films today, like Tarantino's Pulp Fiction, non-linear editing, the use of slow motion, everything.

Ralph: He was way ahead of his time.

Pierre: Because he broke down the narrative. He broke it down in different ways. He told a story in a different fashion, in a non-linear way. I think Goddard was able to realize that film had the potential to be much like the human mind; to film in a non-linear way, much like the mind can think in a non continuity fashion. We don't live our lives in a continuity way. Things happen, things break down, etc.

Ralph: Much like Pulp Fiction, in that it was filmed in a non-linear narrative way.

Pierre: Absolutely.

Ralph: Lucas' Star Wars was written almost as an autobiographical tale. Darth Vader (Dark Father in Dutch) was, in essence, Lucas' father, a very strict personality. Do you see a connection with your students when they make a film as a reflective process?

Pierre: In a concrete environment, students have a hard time connecting things with their own lives (making meaning from things) so film is an opportunity for students to make a film that does not necessarily connect with their own lives, because it is the psychology of the times. You know, when you are 16 or 17, you're not as reflective with your life as you are when you are 20 or even 30. In essence, they are just in the process of discovering their own identity, so it is difficult when you are in a vulnerable age, to use film to discuss your own personal life. But I try to push them to make films that are autobiographical, in a way. But it is a very difficult thing to do, to entice students to use film as a reflective medium because they are not as mature. And this for me has been a kind of a challenge to push them towards their own culture.

So now my strategy is to ask them to talk about their culture, rather than from a personal point of view. So from this perspective, it is much easier. They can now talk about their own pop culture perspective. All their

friends, including themselves, have a cell phone, I-Pods, etc. Now I ask them, what does it mean to have an I-Pod, cell phone etc. Why do they all want to have an I-Pod, what does it really mean for them? Is it a drug? Is Apple a drug dealer? because now, I-Pod is the culture of their times. Once the kids leave the classroom to go anywhere, they immediately put on their headphones and listen to their I-Pod tunes. So I wanted to bring that aspect of their culture to their attention ask them to produce a film with that theme in mind. Now the students can use film as a weapon to dig deep inside themselves and to question their values. It does, essentially, make them think so much harder than just doing research from a literary perspective and writing a paper.

You can be sure, that at this age, it is hard for students to make a film, just to choose a subject. But they have to negotiate that with friends, they have to choose and I think for myself, as a teacher, even if they make a bad film, I don't care, because they went through a process. Just to finish a film was a success in itself. The students, by then had already gone through the motions; they learned what it meant to make difficult choices, millions of choices.

Pierre: I teach Grade 11s. In the film class they learn about sound, composition, the camera, etc...and then they work on a documentary, and then afterwards they work on short fiction films, and maybe, if time allows, a personal project at the end. In going through making these films, they not only learn the difficulty of making films but in the process, they mature. I find that my students really mature; I see kids coming in to work on a collaborative film and watch them fight over a cut; they have to find an argument to sell their cut and sometimes they get angry – so the experience is reflective of life; they are never as involved with their peers in a collaborative work as in making a film. I think this aspect is great because we are now living in a world where more and more, people are working together, where they have to engage in arguments, be critical, be respectful and respect other people's ideas. At 16 years of age, it isn't easy.

Pierre: There's diversity out there. Students see many teachers in the course of the day. In Social Studies, I can go wide open. I have to teach content, but the creativity is left up to me. In other words, if I teach Renaissance, and the students regurgitate back the fact that they understand, say, what a Renaissance man is, then I've done my job.

The problem is that kids today do not want to read, but it is still important that they learn to read. Someone once said 'words are the clothing of reality'. If you don't have words, your reality is naked. If you don't have the words, you cannot shape anything.

Ralph: When we speak, we often use metaphors to explain ourselves. As you know, a metaphor is a figure of speech in which an expression is used to refer to something else. So when I quote Eisner's (2002) notion that the image precedes consciousness, it is because I believe we see before we understand.

Pierre: Yes, of course. But I think, although you have a good point, you need to go further with this. The idea is that our mind thinks in images first, but obviously language is part of that. If I'm thinking, I'm not thinking in words first. An example would be a little boy coming home from school with a bad report card. What is he doing? Is he going to use words, or is he thinking 'what am I going to tell my father?' and he is making up a scenario in his head, saying things like 'I'm going to tell him this and I'm going to do better. He's talking, but he's **seeing**. And I think that is the connection between film and education. We must never forget that the reason why we are taken in by films today is because someone is thinking for us when we go and see a movie, and we like that.

If the mind is a thinking machine, and we think in images, so obviously there is a real relationship between film and the mind. So when the kids put images together, the same way he is thinking when he writes a text, this time he is getting much closer to the different levels of communication; visual, words, sounds, the mixing of all three levels.

The reason why I think film is such a big thing is that when the kids are making a film they are really thinking, on a very complex level.

At the end of the exercise of making films, I debrief my students and ask them what their experiences were in the making of these films. What did they learn? And I've been getting this sort of feedback in the last 10 years. That is why, for me, I really get a lot out of teaching film. I learn why it is that they like it. It is so very concrete. As I said before, it is something that did not exist before, it's like a moving drawing, it's a creation outside of themselves.

It's a funny thing, but every spring (in April or May) we have a showing of these student films in a theatre in town at the Pacific Cinematheque, and the more of themselves that they put onto the screen, the less they want to see it up there on the big screen for all to see. In other words, the deeper they explored themselves in these films, the way they felt, their own thinking, feelings, the more they put what they themselves thought about in their films, the harder it is for them. That is why I say it is a maturing exercise; you tell people, you are telling the whole world, what you are thinking.

For some Grade 11s, they are not able to involve themselves in this kind of thinking. It's too big. It's too mature.

Ralph: So are you saying they shouldn't be making these films?

Pierre: No, no, no, they just come and they realize, my God, this is too much thinking, too many decisions to be made.

But funnily enough if I were to give a film class to Grades 8 or 9 it would be an incredible thing.

Ralph: Why is that?

Pierre: Why? Because they don't have the self-consciousness that the older kids in Grades 11 and 12 do. At our school, we have a film editing program called Final Cut Pro, and these kids make their little 'goofy' films. Some of them are ridiculous little films but for them it's fun, they are doing their own thing; they are not so self-conscious as the older kids are.

In some ways, it is interesting for Grade 8 or 9 students, but unlike older kids, it is not as thoughtful. In other words they do not engage in as much thinking as the older students in the making of their little films. But having said that, it is very exciting for them to engage in the making of these films.

Ralph: Are you saying that it would be wise to introduce filmmaking at the grade 8 and 9 levels?

Pierre: Absolutely, because they would be less self-conscious, but the films would be at the level of their thinking. You can always tell they are student films, but technically, some of them are very good. The camera and editing equipment are far superior today than when we made films as film students.

Pierre: Having said this however, I think we are still in the dark ages when it comes to technology in the classroom. These kids are very versatile when it comes to computers. They want to use PowerPoint for their presentations; but we don't even have the appropriate projectors, every class should have a projector and we are not there. The school says everyone should be learning programs like PowerPoint in the schools and we are not there. And the kids are doing stuff at home that would blow your mind and yet at school they are slowed down by the absence of this type of equipment in the classroom.

Yet, in a weird twist, I believe sometimes, for these students, listening to a traditional lecture, doing assignments on paper, it's a good thing for them.

You cannot just push buttons, etc. At one point you have to reflect on what you are doing. You cannot just 'do'.

In a strange paradox, it's both a good thing and a bad thing. Yet, I still think that the school nowadays is still the most conservative institution. They have programs, but it is getting worse. They have provincial exams in Grade 10 now. The Grade 11 kids are freaking out already; stressed out. They see their future in front of their eyes and they say this is where my future is going. I see so many kids having nervous breakdowns, crying, because they think they will never enter university with the high standards one now needs to enter these institutions.

Ralph: One of the things that I would like to address is this notion of competition in the schools. Eisner addresses this idea as well.

Pierre: It's all about surveillance. Foucault talks about this. In a sense, we do not need cameras in our society anymore. People perform surveillance on each other and themselves; so the kids get ready and prepare themselves for the exam – in other words, they control themselves through these rules and regulations. So these exams are a type of surveillance. If you want the kids to study, tell them they are going to have an exam.

I believe that, as a teacher, if I don't 'teach to test', they will not be prepared for the test and they will get a bad mark and I am also accountable and therefore, I become a part of the system. So because I, too, am accountable, I have to be careful, because I have to ensure that I am teaching the student what they will need to know for the exam.

Now that we have provincial exams in Grade 11, I have to change my way of teaching. I feel like I am a surgeon. Yes sir, no sir. I have to go through the curriculum, chapter by chapter, it is 25 percent of the mark.

Ralph: It is estimated that kids spend 14,000 hours in school before they graduate.

Pierre: You know, the problem is that we need to teach them basic skills.

Ralph: So they can read and write, that's good.

Pierre: It's also about knowing who you are. What are your strengths, what are your weaknesses? On the other hand, in our society today, there is a strong pressure to acquiesce to a vocation or career. The mantra seems to be 'What are you going to do now'? What are you going to do now'?

It is important, for me, to know that my students will become good thinkers, being able to know their strengths and weaknesses learn a sense of ethics and morality.

- Ralph:** So would you say film has a place in all of this?
- Pierre:** You know, I've been very lucky. At my school, the administrators want me to teach six to eight classes in film. But I think, as an elective, film is a wonderful educative tool, as you would say. In fact, out of the 16 students in my film class, I would say 12 of them are some of the best students in the school, highly academic.
- Ralph:** Is it because they are highly academic that they are good film students or is it because of their participation in this film class that they are highly academic.
- Pierre:** They want the film experience. They know me as a Film Instructor. These kids are really involved in after school activities, in all kinds of things... I am privileged to work with these students.
- You know, right now the future of cinema is in the bringing to an end the notion of time. It's the idea of how you tell a story where you are not stuck by time, but rather through thoughts. You know the old concept of movement is, in a way, linked to time. It's linear. When someone makes a film, they follow the notion of time. You are being filmed here, then there, then you film at home – it's all very linear and follows the trajectory of time. So film narrative is linked to time. Pulp Fiction was one of the first films that broke with this 'linear' concept of filming in 'time'. Time has been a straightjacket for filmmakers.
- Ralph:** Yes, especially for the narrative, because it has a beginning, middle and an end; it is very predictable.
- Pierre:** And everybody in the last 10-15 years has been trying to push the limits of the language in film, films like 'Memento' and others. Filmmakers are now making very cognitive editorial choices where the cuts are not necessarily linear. It leaves one wondering 'why was this [film] cut in this way'? I think that China is at the forefront of what I call 'nouveau' cinema today. They are doing amazing things with film.
- There's another film, I found at Blockbuster, a Chinese film, called 'Comme Une Image' (Like an Image). It is a subtitled film and the first one I have ever seen that uses cell phones as a main character in the film. I mean, cell phones are everywhere. They are part of life, but the way it is used is so very bright. It won the best scriptwriting award at the Cannes film festival in 2004. I thought, as a French film, it was a Woody Allen / Francois Truffaut type of film, with a lot of life. A family oriented film. You know the concept of film as the mirror of society.
- Ralph:** Yes

Pierre: I don't buy into that any more. I think films are not mirrors. They are what they are. Obviously, we live in a reality that we decide whether it is a mirror or not. As concrete as a concept is, I would say film is a reflection of something, but I do not believe it is a mirror, as you say.

In fact, if you look at Hollywood movies, they try to create a mirror of their American culture, or society, if you will. Films are mostly propaganda, not a mirror. They are trying to tell you that this [film] is reality, but it isn't. It's a construction of something, but not mirrors.

Ralph: I once heard the notion that 'All films are documentaries'. Can you speak to that?

Pierre: I believe that, because we are still filming people acting.

Ralph: It reminds me of Robert Flaherty's 'Nanook of the North', where Flaherty was, in effect, 'staging' Nanook's documentary 'look' in order to capture the 'realism' of the events of his life in the arctic.

Pierre: It's still a guy 'faking it'.

Ralph: Exactly.

Pierre: Sometimes, in a movie, when the script isn't working, there are parts when the actors improvise, and you notice it, it happens, and the spell is broken. You can see through those moments, the spell is broken. You can see through the illusion.

I really believe that the American psyche has been made up from Hollywood films. It's not books, but films. Americans believe their own myths. They believe their history through their depictions of it through their films

Ralph: I once heard that history was written by those who win wars.

Pierre: Absolutely. That is why when the Americans entered Iraq, their mentality was such that they were the 'Cowboys' and they were going to kill all the 'Indians'. Vietnam was very similar in scope.

Ralph: I suppose there is something to be said about the notion that truth is stranger than fiction. Ironically, Santayana said that if you don't learn from history, you're doomed to repeat it.

Pierre: And they just keep repeating it. As I said before, it's because they believe in their myths. They're saving the planet, basically. Also their sense of history is very narrow. Domination of culture is based upon history. Who

knows, the Chinese might be the next great filmmakers. After all, capitalism has no nationality.

Art is about possibilities. I've been teaching about 12 years now and I was thinking of developing a curriculum about the understanding of the mind and images and activities that deal with filmmaking, by breaking down the filmmaking process: first, straight composition, movement, the use of sound, and building a soundtrack by the use of layers.

I always tell student teachers that you have to teach in your own style. You teach who you are.

Ralph: Palmer, in a book entitled, 'The Courage to Teach' talks about this very point. It's quite relevant.

Pierre: Exactly. You cannot take my stuff [lessons] and teach it. Forget that. Don't play games with the kids. They are pretty sharp. They'll know. It is also more interesting for the kids because you are giving them what you can master. You cannot teach what you do not know.

Seanna McPherson's Interview – January 13th, 2006

- Ralph** Science suspects Art. What's your take on that?
- Seanna** Artists are not taken seriously because of their methodology. the reality is that if you really want to make art you have to have a process and an intention and some kind of theory.
- When I look at my son, the way he is learning language is by recreating because what he does is ask questions, to pose a question to make a connection, as a 2 year old, the acquisition of language is a re-creation, it's mimetic.
- Ralph** I think what I love about film is that film allows us to be childlike, it allows us to see and reveal things to us that are, in effect, new to us.
- Seanna** In academia, you shouldn't try to be interesting as much as understood.
- Ralph** Exactly. Rather than being interesting, one should be interested. Seanna, what is it that you do at Capilano College?
- Seanna** Can I start with the transition into it and how the whole thing works?
- Ralph** Sure.
- Seanna** I worked as an Assistant Director for twenty years on all the big productions and I also went to film school at SFU and after film school, of course, everyone applies for grants. So I was there from 1986-1990, and in those years, I also started working as an AD. I also, at the same time, developed my own filmmaking career and so I developed as an Independent, making short films. Some of those short films were terrible, but many of them were very good as well. I also worked as a producer / writer / director on various things with the same cohort that I went to school with at SFU, and some of those films were good enough to be accepted into the festival circuit and I was accepted into the film center on the producer's lab and started developing features and went on to develop other documentaries. I had a great desire to work as an Independent but I was never really ready to completely sacrifice my life to the feature, so consequently, at this time, I am in development with a feature, in a big documentary (\$700,000) and the feature is budgeted at \$2,000,000.
- But in between all of this, I got an opportunity to start teaching at Capilano College and the teaching gig is just, I have to say, beautiful. The thing that I love about it is that when I was looking to attend film schools I had already done an undergraduate degree, and I was looking for getting

into production and the only two schools (universities) in the country at the time were Concordia (Montreal) and SFU (Burnaby), and possibly York (Toronto), and that's it. I could have gone to SAIT (Calgary) but my parents wouldn't pay for it.

So my parents paid for my schooling at SFU and I loved the fact that I was learning theory but I also got my hands on the gear, which is what I wanted. Now, of course, film schools throughout the country have exploded (on the scene). That is what I love about teaching at Capilano College is that the emphasis (of the film program) is on production, which is also where my background is and I feel that as a filmmaker, there needs to be a theoretical basis underneath it all, but what I really got from the film center is that what is missing in our country is understanding story, understanding how to develop story and getting those 'chops' and what does it take (to make a film) from a producers perspective and that is what we are missing in this city (Vancouver), that's what we are missing in the country. In fact the only producer is Roger Frappe is the only 'auteur' producer. That's pretty much it.

That's why Quebec cinema is so fantastic but in Vancouver, I can honestly say, because I know them, you know, and none of them has got those 'chops', therefore we have Praxis but where are we going to learn story development. And story development is cultural development. I mean there are other kinds of filmmaking. There's documentary filmmaking, there is experimental filmmaking, but story is an essential way that we communicate across cultures and internationally;

Ralph Yeah, exactly, narratives.

Seanna Narratives.

Ralph And we have lost that.

Seanna And we have been so infiltrated in this city by service production. Vancouver is a great place to make films, it is a great place to make money to pay your mortgage, but I don't know, as an independent (filmmaker) I found it a great struggle to live in this city and I was wooed when I was in the film center and they are like, stay here, and you know all these little production companies that make all these wonderful films and I kick myself sometimes for not staying there because those guys are doing it. We do not have the distributors here, we don't have the broadcasters, and we don't have that kind of 'ethos' here. So I am a kind of evangelical here, aren't I, but my sermon from the mount is that what I love about Cap College is that that is our focus. So we have production, and we all have at least 15-20 years in the business so we have got a lot of

experience, and everyone has some independent background but story is the center of it all.

We are now going into a four year program, and I am developing the fourth year and that is what I am doing my own writing about, but you know, our students today, like doing our applications for the Los Angeles, Sydney and Toronto World Wide Film Festivals in the midst of eight projects and another eight projects in second year, and another eight projects in third year, and I've got them coming into my office delivering something to me. And, meanwhile, I've got both phones ringing, and I've got production boards on the wall and you know, it's insane. You've got to be crazy.

But I'll tell you what. I've done this, I know how this business works and you have to build credibility as storytellers internationally.

Ralph You have to, in essence, take risks.

Seanna Win awards. In telling good stories, you speak to people's hearts, you tell that story you get it out there and people will want to see more from you and that is the kind of community that I want to create.

The way that technology is changing, we are dinosaurs if we do not accept digital, period. And story can still be the center of it but we have to be able to embrace technology and say who cares about format.

Ralph I was thinking that the reason we have computer viruses, worms, if you will, is that there are people out there who are techno luddites. In other words, they do not like what is going on with respect to these changes, and I liken these 'neo-luddites' to the traditional format the educational system is hanging on to, and I think the teaching profession can be viewed within that perspective.

We are, in education, afraid to embrace new technology, and ironically, that students are all about technology; the iPod, MP3's, music, film, dance, etc. So kids are tuned in to these popular culture formats and then they go to school and they have to sit there and accept these traditional forms of representation that Eisner talks about, which, essentially bores them to tears. And so we need to make these changes quickly or we will, I think, miss the 'window of opportunity' in reaching these kids.

Seanna The kids that I'm teaching, this is the disconnect, they think visually, but they have no idea how much hard work it is to actually make a film and my biggest struggle is to transform them from consumers into producers, and to be a producer it takes leadership. You do this by listening to the director and hear his vision and then take as much charge as you can. The

world will change if people take charge. That's where I feel that filmmaking transcends filmmaking.

Film is not an industry it is a metaphor. If you want to learn how to work and you want to learn how to work with people and you want to learn how to make positive changes in the world, I'd say, you know, get on set because nobody works harder for more meaningless, or rather you need to create the meaning as you go along. I mean if you can create that meaning and find that focus. It's different and transformative.

Ralph Gene Youngblood wrote this book in 1970's called 'Expanded Cinema', where he suggested that film contributes to the 'dumbing' down of society and I think that is the essential argument with educators is such that they believe this dumbs down educational content. What do you have to say about this?

Seanna You know, I read that in your paper and I thought about that quite a bit actually because I'm a snob, I'm a book snob and I do believe that to read the book is better than to see the movie. You know if you read Robert McKee's book 'On Story', or read screenplays that you will understand more about screenplay or book than if you watch 100 screenplays. I think there is something to be learned from reading, and I am concerned again from looking at my students from a consumers point of view; you know one of my students said to me the other day after I recommended some books on directing said 'are there any movies' (lol), it's like the only way he can accept information as valid is through watching, which I think can be quite passive, because how critical can you be when you are (simply) watching. I think, ultimately, that there is a different way of understanding when you read. So, I don't know that I entirely agree with you on that one. Although, having said that, that's what I'm really excited about and that what I see is that visually literacy, meaning reading and writing so to speak, so that would also mean producing, writing, directing and producing are skills and critical visual learning, like being able to look at things visually and being able to understand them critically are essential skills at now, like as of 2006.

My son, who is two, will in 2020 have made 20 films, by the time he is 14, 15 or 16 years old and it isn't a matter of me teaching him but rather the culture that we live in.

Ralph As an instructor, what can you say about the place of visual learning in the educational system and how can we as educators foster its development?

Seanna I wonder, though I'm not sure, that the core of the problem is not so deep. I think, from my own perspective, a lot of people are wounded about learning and education, except for people who really excel which is

obviously a really small percentage of the population. I think most people, my students included, feel that education is a nasty, horrible place, and although we talk about numeracy and literacy as these high values, there's all this stuff we hear about how illiterate the culture is, and I honestly don't believe we really do a very good job.

Honestly. And I think that if we can have more compassion (in education) and I think that is what is great about visual learning is that it's an emotional connection, very much a human connection and that is why, I think, people like watching images and I think if you can create that moment in poetry or in any art form, in the image. Once you get that connection there is an intrinsic beauty to it.

We are never going to write Edwardian or Gothic novels again, like we are not going to have a renaissance of the Gothic novel.

Ralph So why are we studying Shakespeare?

Seanna I think we study Shakespeare, and I will defend it, because there is a moment on stage between two characters and I think the scripts were meant to be performed. There is a moment, a human moment that is real. I think there are so many evocative moments in Shakespeare, in his scripts. I still think there is a lot to be learned in terms of character and story and history from Shakespeare. I think that whatever helps us connect with each other and have empathy for the human race, and I think that a huge emphasis on writing and literacy and numeracy does not necessarily mean that we have a culture of scholars. That's not what we have. I think education is about training people to be in service, as you say.

Ralph Yes, I think so.

Seanna I think it is about creating factory workers.

Ralph I think what we are doing is recreating the industrial revolution in the 21st century technological world.

Seanna And this is the thing, though, we can easily miss this opportunity to fully re-educate our population.

Ralph Yeah. But how do we do that? Do we do that through film? Can we do that through teaching film?

Seanna I honestly believe so. I think that film should be taught at every level. I think it should start in Grade One.

Ralph Really? And how would we introduce that?

- Seanna** I think you start with a digital camera because it is an easy tool to use and you say 'go'. You know they're cheap. Whatever cheap technology you can get. And you say, of course with some guidance because they have to be able to physically hold the thing, 'shoot something' and you give them a container, you know like, 'shoot something out in the playground' and we are going to bring it back and we are going to load it into the desktop and we are going to cut it with music.
- Ralph** I was reading about Spielberg's new movie about the 1974 Olympics 'Munich' and he was saying that he made the film because those Israeli athletes that were murdered had never been properly honored and had completely been forgotten by the Olympic committees. What Spielberg is currently doing is that he is in the process of buying three hundred video cameras and distributing half of them, one hundred and fifty to the Palestinians and the other half to the Israelis and videotape themselves living their lives from day to day and at the end, exchanging all of the footage with their neighbors and possibly watch the footage together. What do you think about that idea?
- Seanna** Beautiful. I think that's great. Actually I saw a documentary that had a similar feel to it; kids made it. I can't remember who made it, but it was about the Palestinians and the Israelis as well. It was about these kids, and what they thought the others were. Beautiful.
- Seanna** My son, at two, is I would say, four years away from doing this stuff on his own on I-movie? He's so dexterous already on the mouse.
- Seanna** The reason I am a filmmaker is because I love stories. And it's about two things. It's a good story, well told. But I'm not the only person. I'm a human being. We all love stories, but this is what we do, we sit around the fire and we share stories, and we have lost that.
- Ralph** And where would you say we get that in today's culture?
- Seanna** Only through films. And the thing is everybody understands that episodic television is there to sell us something. It is not there to tell us a good story. The few anomalies that sneak through the cracks, we are delighted with: The Sopranos, West Wing, Six Feet Under...
- Ralph** Some cerebral stuff there.
- Seanna** Yeah, we are delighted when it's a good story well told. I try to make my students aware of, as well, and again, I think this is all a part of visual literacy. In fact, the news, the campaign, Israel, Palestine, or whatever, they are all stories. They are news stories. They are also deeper historical stories, but the deeper historical stories cannot be told in the

evening news, so therefore it's fractured, and I think that because it is fractured, it is important that we empower people, to be able to intercept with those stories.

One of my students is going to Rwanda this summer. He is working for a non-profit organization and he is trying to figure out the story to tell. And I've been in the business long enough to know that the story he needs to tell is the story of a 20-year-old Canadian boy who goes to Rwanda because he is working for a non-profit organization (lol).
That's it.

Ralph You write about what you know.

Seanna Yeah. And you don't have to come with some objective perspective. You don't have to tell the story *about* the people, but because he has been infiltrated by the news, and by storytelling *objectivity*, you know that kind of storytelling. And because he hasn't seen a lot of experimental documentaries, he doesn't understand the language.

But I totally agree with you. I think *Star Wars* is also, also because those guys (Lucas, Coppola, Scorsese, etc.) were film school guys, and speaking of Joseph Campbell, that was, to me, the film. In 1977, I stood in line, and I stood in line for the next two films and that probably was the movie that hooked me into filmmaking, because, I think, it changed the world.

Ralph Star Wars was, for me, the film that hooked me into filmmaking because that was the film that made me understand implicitly, that film was art. However, critics blasphemed Lucas' film as 'fluff' or 'entertainment' rather than what it really was, as Joseph Campbell points out, a film that had meaning. I suppose that is why they have never erected a monument for a critic.

Seanna Nice. But I do think, if you look at the whole culture, I think academics come in, in a sense, and that critics come into play within that whole academic culture, but I do believe that whole field we are in, is a kind of storytelling field, and it is objectivity is about telling a story about something, I'll tell you a story about my view of that thing which is the critics voice, but it is a voice.

Ralph I agree with you. Critics have a place in society, much like everything, but it's like the story about the Native American parable. You should never judge a person until you walk a mile in their shoes, and if must judge them, you are a mile away and you have their shoes.

Seanna (lol)

- Ralph** The moral I suppose that one can take from this adage is that before a critic can judge the validity of film as an educational tool, they should be able to embrace film and understand it from a producer's or director's or from a scriptwriter's perspective. Because it's different. Literacy and numeracy is very different and conceivably, as artists, we are trying to create something in another medium, and as Eisner says, another Form of Representation, and critics are not embracing that notion. It's easy to criticize something you don't truthfully understand.
- Seanna** Well, even in the Art Education Program, film is not considered to be Art.
- Ralph** Really? What is it? Entertainment?
- Seanna** Yeah. You know when we talk about Art, there's dance, there's music, there's theatre, and that's as close as we get. Literature is not even considered Art, there's poetry. Poetry is the only written form of art. And there's Visual Art, and even in Contemporary Art, like Sculpture and Fine Art and Fine Art has its own subset. But that does not resonate with my experience of Art. I feel like there is Media Art, New Media, there's so many.
- Ralph** That is why I feel we need a curriculum based on Media Literacy. We need to incorporate that into our curriculum. Kids no longer are satisfied with just sitting in their seats at school, learning passively. They want to actively engage in producing things, from their own imagination.
- Seanna** It's brutal, but having said that, and returning to the notion of emotional intelligence, empathy and compassion. I gave my students an assignment, and it was not that difficult, but for 13 people to work together on a project of this complexity, it was so difficult for them emotionally and spiritually.
- To put things into context, the project consisted of giving the students approximately 10 pages of an already produced screenplay, the sides, and I tell them that they have to reduce that into a 5 minute shooting script, and you have two days to shoot and five days to post. You can use original music, you can rewrite the script, minimal two locations, cast it, the works. They have all been trained with these sets of skills; they get the camera PD150, they get the gear; it is a *** storm.
- Ralph** Why is it such an emotional challenge for these students?
- Seanna** I think it is extremely difficult for them to feel confident about the skills and the craft. I think that is the difficulty.
- Ralph** How old are these students?

Seanna The youngest is 17, the oldest is about 40.

Ralph So these students are not children.

Seanna No, no; the median age is probably 21. I had a guy in my office today, I think is 30, and he knows what he has to do but he doesn't realize how hard he has to push and he is not sure if pushing his crew will make him lose friends, and if he loses friends, will he be hated.

Ralph Is he the director?

Seanna He's the director. But the reality is, he wants to be liked, I don't want people to dislike me.

Ralph Would you say a director is a leader?

Seanna I've been trained so strictly that I have very strict ideas about it. The way I see it is it is like a field game. Everyone has to play their own position. That doesn't mean in the next game someone can't play a different position. I mean, I don't agree that everyone should always play the same position. For example if you are a soccer player, you'll need to know what it's like to score goals [even if, you are the goalie].

I think that is an important part of your development. I believe in the collaborative process, I think it is so valuable about it all. I don't believe in the auteur [process].

Ralph Do you believe, as Pierre from Van Tech High suggests, that film contributes to 'a process of maturity'?

Seanna It's maturity. You know, it's hard to relate to sometimes because of my own process of maturity. I know, for instance, my own triggers, I know exactly what they are so when those things happen, I realize that I am reacting to something and I realize whatever is coming up for me. I'm forty two. I've had a long time to live with myself. But some of the guys are still living at home and their mothers are making dinner for them and you know someone says you have to show up tomorrow at 9:00 and you have to run the meeting, and they waltz in at 9:30 and they forgot there was a meeting. It's like 'everyone is counting on you'. Well, they have never been counted on in their life, and I give them a list of things to do and it's like some parent who said clean up your room.

Ralph So the producer on the set is very much like the matriarch of the production?

Seanna Yeah, in a sense. The way I see it, the producer is the 'Father', the director is the 'Mother' and the film is the 'Child'. This is the metaphor I give them, and the creative force in the relationship needs to look after the story, and the producer needs to look after the family. And so, on a film, there are many 'sophisticated' relationships, and who, as a twenty-year-old has those kinds of relationships?

Today, I had a scenario, where the DP (Director of Photography) who wants this film to be his child, came into my office with a list of gear he wants, and won't let the director speak and he's stepping all over the place. I had to say to the producer on that show, 'you need to take charge' 'you need to support your child' and get that other guy (DP) out and tell him what his job is.

Ralph What is the hardest part of making a film?

Seanna That's it! This is what I love. I didn't make a fourth year film at film school and it was a huge loss for me. It was like I missed something in my life and now I'm developing the fourth year at Cap College. I'm going to turn that into the degree program that I never had.

But, the hardest thing about making a film is everything. It is the hardest thing to do, because you have to do it with other people.

Ralph Is that why so few people do it, because it's hard?

Seanna Yeah. It's harder than sending people to the moon, I would swear by that!

Ralph I think people don't like doing anything that is potentially hard because it compromises their comfort level. Remember Kahlil Gibran, who said 'The lust for comfort murders the passions of the soul'. I think, in essence that by having to take responsibility and leadership for something, we compromise our comfort level. And I think that's possibly why film is a hard undertaking to achieve. I can understand why it is that a directors' job is hard.

And I think that is why so few people engage in 'critical thinking'.

Seanna Yeah, for the same reason.

Ralph I have a 13-year-old son who, in his Social Studies class, asks his teacher insightful questions about the lesson plans they are engaged in and his teacher chastises him in front of the class by saying, 'don't challenge me. I don't like to be challenged'. What message is this teacher sending to these students? I believe that rather than answering his question with a segue to their lesson plans. This teacher is instilling fear, fear of inquisitiveness.

It's the culture of fear that Parker Palmer speaks about in his book, 'The Courage to Teach'.

I believe children are brilliant, but the school system doesn't allow that brilliance to shine through. Our educational system is still hanging on to the Calvinists notion of education; inculcation, not imagination is the rule of thumb. It's just not working.

Seanna I've got colleagues who hate these types of teachers. And in hating them, trying to shut them down.

Ralph I think we need to teach kids to challenge notions of truth.

Seanna That's why I think the visual medium has more to offer us in a sense, than the written word; I think the written word is more elusive, and I think the image is more direct, in a sense, more, as you say 'truthful'. But it is closer to the way that we experience the world.

And I think that in that 'moment' whatever that 'moment' is that there is eternal wisdom. It's that connection that you are talking about, is the only thing that should be valued. Like whatever that could help us make a connection, with our hearts, with our souls. That is it! I mean I wouldn't be so excited about the medium if it weren't true. And I think it's true about music, too. And I think that is why everyone is downloading I-tunes so fast.

Ralph I love the fact that you use film, and teach it as well, using it as a metaphor for life.

Seanna That's the thing when you say what the most difficult thing about film is this: I have been to Hell! I have met Beelzebub. I have lived in darkness.

Ralph Is that because that was hard to make the films you wanted to make? Being creative is a hard thing?

Seanna Everything, every way you can go to Hell, I have gone. I have been to Hell.

Ralph You know what Churchill said about that? 'If you're going through Hell, keep going'.

Seanna Yeah, that's how I feel though, and I wouldn't be here doing this if it hadn't been so hard. And I tell you, my friend, it sent me to therapy. It feels like I have been to war. I have embarrassed myself I have said things that I wish I could take back.

Ralph So you can't help but mature through the process of filmmaking.

Seanna Because we live in a culture of infants, the quicker we mature, and any opportunity we have to mature, the better. And I beat the **** out of my students in the kindest possible way. I am absolutely happy to say to them that this is your chance to 'grow up'.

Ralph Are you trying in an overt way to make your students 'mature'?

Seanna I have to, because they have to do project # 2 and project #2 is exponentially more difficult. The students (in second year) are much more mature than they were in 1st year. When I shake their hand, they look you in the eye, when I ask them for something and it is on my desk twenty minutes later. I say to them, 'show up, pay attention tell the truth'.

Ralph How have computers changed the art of filmmaking?

Seanna I think it is a liability, in a sense, because it takes the story out of it. Students think they need a dolly, two minutes later they have it cut (edited), five minutes later they have the sound laid down, that would have taken us (linear) three months to do. When it used to take us longer, while we were going through post (production), we were also getting the music cleared or building the music track, or doing all these things that coincidentally take to get picture lock, but now they are getting picture lock in a week. And a week isn't enough time to get your music cleared. And so therefore, people are not getting their music cleared, or the compositions they are doing is some cheesy little thing. They're not bringing their orchestra in, and that's the thing – even for our short films, we would bring in [musicians], we would do compositions in the studio.

In a sense, that is what we have lost. One of the projects I gave them last year, a series of three small projects to do and by the third project the students are like, 'Okay, we'll do it'. I mean when I was in film school it was 'What can I do?'

I also find my students are literally on high speed. And that is not how stories are told. When we made films, it was a very methodical process, and you have look at it, and you have to revise it and think it through. That's what we lose from analogue. I mean, you set the cut up, you watch it on the Steenbeck, you watch the cut. Maybe that day you made two to three cuts; the next day, maybe another two to four cuts, not too many. Now, we are storing versions, like maybe you would do fifteen versions a day. You forget which version it is you are working on.

I ask them to re-cut something from last year because we didn't have the clearance on it cause we went through posting fast and they didn't get the

clearance from Warner's on a song and we can't distribute their film. And now the hard drives are wiped out. The files don't exist. We've got the DVD but we can't remix it. It's gone. A woman had her film finished, a beautiful thing, and she took it to Sharp Sound (a Post-production facility) to get the sound 'sweetened' up and to do another remix on it and all her files were on her hard drive. After the session, she went home, with the drive, she went upstairs to her apartment and when she came back downstairs, and someone had ripped it off. They took her knapsack with the drive in it. No one would ever steal your trim bin.

So, again, we have lost something. The biggest thing that we have lost is time. One of the things David Hawkney (sp) says is that with photography, there is no time involved. Well if you talk to these guys, they think photography takes way too long. You know, it's got to be digital, digital. But to me, that loss of time, I mean art is a temporal process. I think to take time to set this shot up so that it looks exactly like this, so that we settle into this moment and we find this place means that we don't get it all tonight.

It takes time.

Ralph What I hear you saying is that rather than compressing time, which is what I thought the digital format did, it actually makes you lose that time. Is that what you mean?

Seanna I think you are hurrying through a process, like, you know when you are writing a novel, you can't write it all in one night. Right? And this is one of the things these students struggle with.

In one of the levels of maturity, and in the process of making films we have very official and formal meetings where we meet about one thing and they don't have the attention to actually sit and talk about one thing. They can't do it. I don't mean this in a judgmental way and I don't mean it in an evaluative way. I mean they know already that they are failing.

Ralph And failing is a maturation process?

Seanna I think so. I mean I think that is what made me mature, is going to hell. And they are in hell. I mean they are in hell like I always say it's like going to a third world country. They don't know where they are going and they have no idea how to get there. And they wish it was my fault.

Ralph Do you ascribe to the notion that everyone in school should take film? That film should be a compulsory course?

Seanna It's inevitable in our culture, and in schools. And we have seen it. Remember when we were struggling to go to film school in the eighties, and then it became acceptable and film schools flourished throughout the nineties? All these [students] had taken film in high school. It is only a matter of time that that will be pushed through in elementary [school(s)].

Call it whatever you want. You can call it art, you can call it process, you can call it filmmaking, I don't care. It's going to happen. But what I really want for my students is to get [university] degrees, so that they can go into high schools and elementary schools, at least a percentage of them, and I want them to teach. And I want them to teach story, and I want them to teach what really matters. My concern is that [film] will become more like a reproduction of a video game culture, not about stories and storytelling. That's entirely possible. I can't control everything, unfortunately. But if I could! (lol).

I feel, in a sense, that that is where the battle will be lost. You know what I mean, like in the content? You must see that with your kid. Of course he is exposed to all that stuff, right?

Ralph Yeah, totally, totally. I see my son as a thoughtful, intellectual young person who embraces concepts readily, and yet is being held back, in the school system, by being treated like a child.

I mean you're not going to prop your child up in front of the TV for the next few years watching Sesame Street, and then you will learn that these are puppets and you can manipulate them. What I hear you saying is that kids are learning to manipulate these 'puppets' now!

Seanna Exactly! And the thing is, that is the lie. That is the lie. And I really resent that lie. In fact, one thing I would like to say about film education is this. History should be taught backwards.

Ralph I agree. I think we should be born old and die young.

Seanna I absolutely agree. But I think that one of the things that make students snore is that now they have to go to their history class, and learn history again, from the beginning. But the way history is best understood is in reverse. For example, 'just before this', I mean if they can understand where [the film] Memento came from, because they are all freaks about that stuff, O.K. now you have to look at Steven Soderberg. OK, now where did Steven Soderberg start from? Before we do that, lets fill in all where independent [film] has come from, inside the last 10 years. Now they are interested.

That's appropriate to the material. Looking at things from a historical or linear perspective, from D.W. Griffith, or from the Lumiere Brothers, until now is the same arcane way of thinking as literacy.

Ralph That's what I love about film. When Tarantino directed 'Pulp Fiction' he changed the whole landscape of linear storytelling [from a filmic perspective]. Now you can tell a story out of sequence. I would think if you wrote a book in that manner, it would be quite confusing.

Seanna But then if you look at Tarantino, then you can look at Rashaman, then you can look at Vertov, at Eisenstein, and you can see how Tarantino was influenced. But if you look at it linearly, or vertically, I mean it just makes me want to sleep right now. Like 'first, there was this, then there was that'. Ugh!!! It doesn't make any sense at all, to these guys. I mean they don't care about Griffiths 'Birth of a Nation' Who cares about 'Birth of a Nation'. I mean it has a place as a tag end to a story, in reverse, but the real story is 'how did the world get like this'?

Ralph You deconstruct.

Seanna You deconstruct, but I think that is a more relevant way of looking at things. The same thing goes with story. I mean you start with Star Wars, which is where story, in Hollywood actually started. Just start with that. Start with *Star Wars*.

APPENDIX B

Digital Video Assignment Sheet & Evaluation Rubric

Student(s): _____ Period _____

Description of Project: _____

Approved by: _____ Start Date: _____ Completion Date: _____

Evaluation Rubric

Appropriateness - PASS _____ FAIL _____

- The feelings of others are respected, people are treated with dignity, language, music and visuals are appropriate for a middle school audience and the subject is appropriate for a middle school audience. Interview Evaluation Rubric (Excellent) 5...4...3...2...1... (Poor)

Subject

- is interesting 5...4...3...2...1
- is educational 5...4...3...2...1
- is relevant to middle school audience 5...4...3...2...1
- provides insight into person or topic 5...4...3...2...1
- is discussed thoroughly 5...4...3...2...1
- is entertaining 5...4...3...2...1

Concept Score _____ out of 30

Content

- Presents interesting information and/or reactions 5...4...3...2...1
- Presents guest and host well 5...4...3...2...1
- Language is used properly and effectively 5...4...3...2...1
- Images and/ or graphics relate well to content 5...4...3...2...1
- Student(s) behave professionally on camera 5...4...3...2...1
- Student(s) demonstrate thoughtful approach to subject 5...4...3...2...1

Content Score _____ out of 30

Technical Aspects

- Camera is stable, smooth movements and pans 5...4...3...2...1
- Subject is framed well, images are well composed 5...4...3...2...1
- Subject is lit and clearly visible 5...4...3...2...1
- Sound is clear and understandable 5...4...3...2...1
- Video is edited effectively, flows well 5...4...3...2...1
- Titles are used effectively 5...4...3...2...1
- Transitions are used effectively 5...4...3...2...1
- Project was completed in a timely manner 5...4...3...2...1

Technical Score _____ out of 40

Total Score _____

Project Grade _____

A+ = 100 - 96, A = 95 - 91, A- = 90 - 86, B+ = 85 - 81, B = 80 - 76, B- = 75 - 71

C+ = 70 - 66, C = 65 - 61, C- = 60 - 56, F = 55 or below and/ or failure of Appropriateness

Rubric Retrieved from <http://www.olejarz.com/arted/digitalvideo/interviewrubric.pdf> October 25th, 2006