

## JOURNALS

### JOURNALS PART I

### JOURNALS PART II

### JOURNALS PART III

These journal entries include short responses on 52 films and cartoons spanning all genres and eras in cinema.

## FILM JOURNALS:

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## FILM JOURNALS: PART I

Gertie the Dinosaur is impressive to watch, in my view because it presents groundbreaking mirroring images of the entertainment industry of the day. The cartoon's dinosaur was given a dog-like character, which sits plays and rolls over if you ask it to. In addition the dinosaur's character was reflective of the slapstick comedy which made Charlie Chaplin famous during the era. Gertie the Dinosaur reflected the exaggeration which society needed to find an attraction to cinema, of which animation was a genre within.

The slap stick comedic moments were made evident when the elephant is thrown into the water and when the dinosaur drinks all the water in the lake. The cartoon in essence is the first attempt to combine real life and animation as an illusion is

created illustrating Windsor McCay's entrance into the film. He talks to the animated film while the dinosaur answers back and then actually disappears and enters the film. The effect made us laugh in the nineties so one could only imagine the effect it had on audiences of the day. The point is not that we laughed at something that amazed audiences one hundred years ago, but the point lies in the fact that this outdated film still managed to get a response from us today. In fact all of the cartoons manage to get our response which illustrates their longevity.

This cartoon was appealing to me because it featured talent that put the human factor to the forefront, which proved to be as entertaining as the special effect extravaganzas of our modern day. It was impressive for us to watch, imagine the effect it had on some living in the early twentieth century Steamboat Willie, for its part, goes beyond slapstick comedy and uses absurdity to make us laugh. It would be interesting to know how animal activists felt about the brutal use of animals as instruments in this particular cartoon. Assuming that most animal activists have not seen these cartoons I wonder how they would react in the present day.

The focus on detail was made evident when the hook picks up the cartoon character and gently lifts it's dress with delicacy. That's not to mention the way the boat parks it's behind as though it was given a human personality trait. The body parks as though it's lazy. This cartoon was appealing to me however because of its musical complicity combined with absurdity. I am both a music fanatic as well as a fan of absurdity. I also found the concept of drawing the characters with circle shapes very interesting because it is something that even a film student would not think of off hand. To me a cartoon is a category within film, which through its viewing allows a person to let their imagination roam wild. Simultaneously cartoons in essence ignite the child in all of us, which is most appealing to me.

The Ugly Ducking is very much a musical with the grace of Fred Astaire. The movements are timed and performed to this story line in the same fashion as the integrated Hollywood Musical. The grace was apparent throughout the cartoon but got my attention when the mother swan entered the scene with her long wings, which provided shelter over the baby swans, while they simultaneously swung through the air to the music. This being said the whole scene of rejection of the ugly duck also demonstrated grace because of the harmless images of the baby who was faced with this rejection. The animator was clever enough to include a scene, which sees the baby being rejected by a wooden dummy, and highlighted the imagination of the animation in this film. I think it is imaginative because it adds another layer of depth within animation's fiction by establishing a relationship, of rejection, between the wooden duck and the infant.

This animated cartoon impressed me at many different levels but my fascination is drawn to two elements; the human qualities, (wooden duck and baby duck), are given to animals and the dance like movements which flow throughout the film in this everyday life scene in the animal's world.

Sinkin in the Bathtub features, what makes audiences laugh the most, hurt gags. I guess the reason why they make us laugh occurs because we can relate to the pain that characters go through. In addition we can also relate to the idiotic situation, which lead to the character's pain. So therefore the combination of both of the above makes us laugh. We could parallel this phenomenon to Chaplin's success by noticing how his appeal came from the slapstick falls. In addition to the hurt gags, the short features an array of examples on how one goes about bringing life to inanimate objects.

We can notice a variety of characters being attached to a bathtub and a car. They are given a human quality, which is comical because we can relate to their humanness while at the same time we can appreciate and laugh at objects, which come to life. Similarly we can also relate to Bosco's separation into smaller Bosco's regardless of how ludicrous it looks. The world of animation has the ability to make the impossible believable even if it's impossible and people accept this as a world of fantasy within reality. Finally I like the idea of attaching musical value to everything whether living or not. Everything seems to transform itself into a musical instrument or making sounds, which trace the music perfectly i.e. someone can spit, jump, or even tip toe to the music.

The Skeleton Dance was brilliant in its use of skeletons' bones as they were re-arranged to form instruments or make sounds. Again its similar to the above discussion only more refined. It was very appealing to me because the short's central theme was based on dance. It kind of made me reminisce as I played a bit part in a production of Tom Sawyer in my high school where a number was staged looking very much like the short.

There was some mention in class about how the background shadows were nicer, but to me the magic of animation is not found in how nicely the backgrounds or figures are drawn out but rather in how imaginative the scenarios and ideas are organized. My best example occurs when the skeletons merge and become one reflecting what occurs in the music. It could be said that the skeleton's individually represent various instruments in the music while when the skeletons merge they tend to represent the symphonic whole of the music. Something else about the

music struck me, which will be discussed with more detail in the essay, which involves the legitimacy of whether there is such a thing as cartoon music.

Cartoon music essentially involves an orchestra, as in any other style of music, but emphasizes the percussionist to create the special sounds. In essence cartoon music has the percussionists as lead whereas Benny Goodman may have a clarinet while Glenn Miller has a trombone as lead. For example a repeating base created by the Tuba creating the deep base effect creates the sounds of the skeleton's walk. All the sounds of cartoons are created in this fashion and all one has to do is listen to figure out where the sounds often originate from the sounds come from familiar instruments.

Plane Crazy features a fun device, which makes the animated, short more comical called stretch and squash. I like to refer to it as a subcategory in the self-reflexive device because it serves the purpose of revealing the abnormalities of animation. It makes us realize, especially in today's world of special effects, how you are watching a cartoon. In addition the vulgarity in reference to the cow's utter caused quite a stir with audiences as this body part was eliminated from animation.

My interest rest in the Hays Code and how its laws dealt with such images in cinema/animated film. The treatment was brutal especially considering that Mickey Mouse was hanging on these utters from a plane. However the comical aspects served to lighten the effect when the utter gushes milk every time Mickey tried to hold on to them. On another note we also notice the inclusion of point of view shots which suggests that cartoonists were beginning to think about animation along formal lines. In essence cartoonists were beginning to realize that you could make a cartoon aesthetically look like a Hitchcock film if you wanted to, using the same devices filmmakers use. The use of these devices will be discussed in the next installment of the journals.

The Frank Film, something else! It was a new experience for me because I had never seen a collage with such rigor. Perhaps the two most noticeable aspects of the film were the collage and sound track which it seems were designed to force the viewer to concentrate and think about what they heard and saw. The collage bombarded the audience with images, which in essence forced them to concentrate to get a glimpse of everything that was shown. In theory one would say that too much images will confuse the viewers, however in this case, the opposite occurred whereby the abundance of images just forced us to think about them a lot more. Curiously however the bombardment of images gives life to this piece of animation especially considering that probably all of the images are recognizable to most

people. Therefore the abundance of image that are easily recognizable to us provides a vehicle by which people are forced to think about the animated film.

In addition to the images, the soundtrack was also very interesting and surprisingly easy to follow. It appears to be impossible on the surface but once the viewers begin concentrating on the images this concentration thus makes the soundtrack fairly easy to follow. Although there are two different soundtracks going at once there are designed in such a manner that the conversations begin one after the other giving the audience just enough time to hear what the first conversation is saying enabling them to transfer to the second conversation. It is almost as though the audience knows enough about one conversation, which allows them to finish what the first voice is saying, before it ends its sentence in order to catch the beginning of the second conversation on time.

The final comment on this film concerns the images in themselves, which are actually borrowed from a variety of other sources to compose this new work. We could almost nickname it the work of copyright laws. In essence the film, is using images from other sources thus taking them out of their original context, and then created another work by juxtaposing them with other images in a different light. In essence it follows the Russian tradition of film making after the First World War. The Russians were blockaded from the rest of the world during the revolution and therefore could not import film stock so they used films that were already made and re-edited them and made new films. This is why Russian filmmakers are the fathers of montage and this film may have been influenced by this concept in its collage of images originating from different sources.

Ragtime Bear is especially appealing to me because it features ragtime melodies, which establishes the mood in this film. The whole plot is centered on an old man who refuses to hear ragtime music while his son and the bear try desperately to play the instrument at all costs. Now if one thinks of it a bear that plays the banjo is pretty corny as a concept. However the blind clumsy man who lives with constant danger never knowing when he's in danger is the strongest narrative element in this film.

More recently a real life film was made on Mr. Magoo whereby there was an interest group outcry because of the negative connotation that was attached to the people who are blind. The silliness attaches itself to Magoo because despite himself he gets into trouble and is delivered from this trouble when people try to help him and get themselves into trouble. In addition Mr. Magoo presents an example of one of the

first attempts to make cartoons which focus their attention on humans, as opposed to animals, which makes it more true to life than other cartoons.

Returning to Magoo's clumsiness, is perhaps what makes the animated film look the most natural simply because we, at some point in our lives, have been in a situation which was at both troubling and absurd that all we could do is laugh at the stupidity. Therefore because Magoo is a person and not an animal it makes his character more believable than an animal despite the bear's distinctively human character traits. I think that this aspect of Ragtime Bear is at the core of what the animated film has achieved in Magoo's history.

Yellow Submarine is a weird animated film to look at because of its psychedelic flavor. The colors, flatness, and odd-looking human figures combine to illustrate the life and times in the sixties. Even when the submarine lands, it looks awkward because its round shape appears to be landing on another round shape, thus illustrating the flatness. Everything seems rounded which leads the viewer to wonder why everything in the animated film doesn't just roll and fall off. The flatness of things eliminates the three-dimensionality of the images, which provides this illusion as though everything will fall off.

Furthermore the film provides a song about numbers and time which talk about aging and the process of time. The images seem to flash us in an abstract format in that they are all thrown in the air while the audience is expected to decipher the meaning by assembling and re-arranging the images in our minds. The best way to illustrate this is the found in the device, which creates these images, the computer. The computer was alien to most people in the sixties, which makes it hard for people to comprehend how these images were created. The computer in-itself is abstract when we think of nature, which explains why it best illustrates the images, which shuffle along during this part of the film.

Finally the women and dancing which appear throughout "Lucy in the Sky with diamonds" is an homage to the women which graced the early years of Hollywood. The film includes sequences involving dance, and an homage to Busby Berkley who was instrumental in making abstract formations come to life through music and dance. Firstly the women which we see in this part of the film are often over weight, or chubby which illustrates the women that danced in Hollywood musicals prior to Berkley's arrival in film. Berkley believed that his women had to be fit and slim. On the other hand we do see one woman in particular, through out the film, who is incredibly attractive which symbolizes the changes and glamour which came along with females like, Rita Hayward, Vera Ellen, Ann Miller, and Cyd Charisse. Finally we

see quite a bit of dancing which illustrates and provides an homage to early Hollywood musicals. In fact we see a clip of Astaire and Rogers from the "Cheek to Cheek" Number in Top Hat as they did one of their final lifts the musical film. I believe that it was probably copied because it was exactly identical to the dance sequence from the film, as well as the fact that the couple suspiciously resembled Astaire and Rogers in exact precision. Therefore these three aspects illustrate how "Lucy in the Sky with diamonds" was in fact an homage to women, and dance. In leaving this film the emphasis on diamonds within the images and song further support the fact that the sequence was illustrating Hollywood's past glory especially in an era in the late sixties when Hollywood was almost dead and had lost its appeal.

Peace on Earth was a very effective war animated film because of its stark contrasts of dark and color. At first the colors seem blown out of proportion but makes complete sense when analyzed carefully. One could start by simply saying that Europe was a very different place before and after the war in terms of peace and destruction. In fact the air and countryside was as dark as indicated by the images of the soldiers who are lurking, during times of war in Europe. Amongst these moods of somberness religion was a major theme because religious groups within the fighting nations of Europe were the first peoples to be persecuted despite the images of shelter which churches traditionally provided.

Furthermore the decision to use animals which are cuddly and soft was also accurate to illustrate the contrasts of the film. One could go as far as to mention that during times of war, despite being neutral, animals were caught in the middle of humanity's wars as their forests were raped with bombs and destroyed as they stood idly and helpless. Ironically the animals came out of the rubble and rebuilt their homes out of tools of destruction, such as helmets. They then crept out of the rubble as though they were indifferent and unknowing as to what had just happened.

Finally the images of the two last soldiers killing themselves off is entirely correct and reflective of the thinking during The Great World War I. World War I was synonymous with sayings like fools courage because war was actually glorified in the period leading up to the war and during the first six months because people thought their would be one or two battles and everybody would be back home by Christmas. Fools courage is illustrated by the soldier's idiotic decisions to run right into machine gun fire as many of them did in trench warfare. However the images of the two soldiers were correct because soldiers were known to fight to the death with existing stories of soldiers running out of bullets and then resorting to the knives on their rifles to continue the fight. Therefore the stark images which contrast each

other both visually and thematically. Peace on Earth simply reflected images of peace and war while contrasting them by juxtaposing them one beside the other.

Tulips Shall Always Grow also features themes that were reflexive of World War II, as effective and contrasting as Peace on Earth. Again this animated film features life before and after war but more importantly it illustrates a peaceful scene, as the puppets are totally un-aware of an imminent attack. We are projected into total warfare as the puppets are seducing themselves. The scene is reflexive of world two because the Germans employed something called lightening mechanized warfare which simply means you hit the enemy with everything you've got before they realize that they are at war. This is exactly what happened in the film as the camera's point of view illustrated the mechanized screwballs as they came rolling over a hill. Furthermore the emphasis on making the enemy look mechanized symbolized the German war machine which used mechanized tanks as the sphere head of its attack.

Another interesting scene illustrated how the whether got involved in making the screwballs rust and making the tanks sink into the mud. The exact same thing happened to Germany as the attack on Russia in 1941 encountered the same problem. Furthermore winter temperatures were record-breaking which caused many of the weapons and men to freeze. In addition the snow mixed in with thick mud caused the tanks to stay stuck which delayed the attack and saved Russia from falling. Is it coincidence that the temperatures got so cold that specific year, we'll never know but its nature's contribution to the allies' war effort and it ties into the scene in the animated film where the metal was rusting and sinking into the ground.

Finally the films title indicates that once the evil has been defeated good will always prevail. Correctly so, once war had stopped in Europe the major cities, especially Germany, were completely rebuilt within five years. In real life this process occurred comparatively as quickly as it did in the animated film as we saw the tulips growing immediately follows the screwballs' attack.

The final film to be discussed is lambeth walk because it laughs at the Germans when nothing is really funny about seeing so many Germans in the coordinated manner. People saw these newsreels between 1934-and 1939 and they laughed it off saying that Hitler looks like nothing more then a foreign cartoon character. However in 1939 and 1940 Hitler used those same images, which people were laughing at a couple of years earlier, to divide and conquer most of Europe by scaring entire populations into submission.



The film is sarcastic in that it uses cynicism to make us laugh. Maybe we should all try the German goose step sometime to see how much regimentation it takes to master the German march. The film mixes the march with music's rhythm through a clever use of montage. Its effective because the Germans are so well aligned and coordinated that we get a chance to see marches over and over again illustrating once again the precision of the German army. Interestingly enough the precision of the German army cost the allies 6 lives for every Germany life lost in the war. That's not to mention that the world needed the resources of the entire world in order the defeat Germany. It makes me wonder whether we should not study Germany's precision more closely so that we might be able to apply it towards good rather than evil.

Finally I wanted to add a thought on an extra film, Education for Death because it demonstrates how Germany trained its youth which is exactly the same way we train ours. The principle is simple in that it calls for the implantation of an ideology saying that we are better somehow. If we did not use this ideology then a lot of people would be persuaded to leave the United States for Iraq for example.

Therefore your citizens are brought up thinking we are better. One always wonders why foreign countries are always depicted on the news in times of trouble or chaos rather than success stories. If Africa was so much of a nice place to live in then once again we would all find some way to move there, however with the negative influx of information being fed to us everyday most people would rather stay here or on the sunny beaches of California. I think all this is to say that Education for Death depicts how one goes about implanting an ideology, regardless of whether it is positive or negative as is the case with Germany, to convince people that our nation and way of living is better. Furthermore the people are often responsible for such an ideology because we feed politicians with likes and dislikes which they build their platforms on – to a certain extent. Such was the case with Hitler as he came to power on the notion of restoring Germany's former glory which meant that he had to stabilize the economy and put many people back to work in the depression era. He did use Germany's stability for war but nonetheless he did restore the economy which people demanded thus getting him elected – to a certain extent.

The lecture and class on the war films most particularly touches on issues that reflect society at the time to a much greater extent than the previous classes as my BA in History has helped me with the mirroring information that was provided in this journal. Furthermore many of the film ideas were not original but were in fact taken from real life experiences and issues relating to the war. Finally I found the class very interesting because of my background in the history of warfare.

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## FILM JOURNALS: PART II

This journal was written with a historical background in mind. The first difference in this journal was that there has been an effort to research one article or book written for each film discussed in this journal. This in essence will help make this journal interesting for both you and me. The other notable difference is the role that my historical knowledge has made in the review of some of these films. Most particularly Birth of the Nation was discussed in two different journals, one representing its film contributions and secondly its role as a historical document. Furthermore Un Affaire Dreyfus was also discussed for its historical content as it played a much more important role in its influence in French history than it did in the context of film. Finally Entr'act has also been discussed in an extensive historical context. Therefore I have brought as much of my previous knowledge to make this journal more entertaining.

In order to understand the importance of films made by prominent figures like Edison and Lumieres one has to understand what they were trying to achieve and why. Also one has to be able to put themselves into their shoes to understand the "what" and why of the above question. My belief for this first journal stems from the fact that what filmmakers were trying to achieve was basically the same thing that the film is trying to achieve in the nineties. Their quest for filming life in its true form along with all of its repetitiveness is easy to understand because we are still concentrating on those same objectives today.

Early cinema was very similar whether Edison or Lumiere created it because as the filmmakers were trying to create a cinema they were trading off and stealing of ideas. The ideas were easily stolen because no copyright laws existed in that era. Therefore The ideas provided a steady flow of ideas from film maker to film maker which in essence helped the quick development of what has possibly been one of the fastest growing industries of all time. One of the most striking differences between Edison and Lumiere was their use of background. The Lumiere films were so much

more vivid with landscapes as opposed to Edison's films. This point however is highlighted by the fact that Edison filmed a lot of his features in a studio whereas Lumiere filmed his films on location. It is remarkable to see how cinema has come full circle beginning with the filming of it's scenes on location, resorted, then back to studio in the golden era 30s and 40s and returning to outdoor location shoots in the 50s.

It's hard to imagine ourselves seeing film for the first time as they did, especially considering the impact of film in the 1980s and 90s when film is a given. However it is only logical to see the types of films that were being presented both in it's every day representational formats and it's repetitiveness. In fact close analysis of what the spectators of early cinema were seeing and what we are seeing is very much the same. Edison and Lumieres, being the pioneers of film, were trying to represent life in its most natural form while its repetitiveness seems almost irrelevant. Life represented in its every day form with no complicated narrative will not need titles, which explains their lack of titles. We today are trying to re-enact true life as much as possible as television episodes like cops, unsolved mysteries etc. In film the same is true with films like *The Bear*, *Dances with wolves* etc. Furthermore Edison and Lumiere's camera work of seeing action move toward and past the camera also suggests very simply that life goes on. Therefore as Edison and Lumiere were striving to achieve presenting every day life in it's most natural context, we too, today strive for the same thing especially if one accounts the influence of television and it's emphasis of showing "live shows", life in it's most natural of forms. Furthermore Lumiere and Edison's repetitiveness is still true today as trends, whether in film or television, create the demand for the same things over and over again, i.e. one alien film opens, such as mars attacks, and then a whole bunch of films are released with the same content.

The early Brighton films demonstrate changes in the fields of shots, camera placement, and editing and it's special effects. We see how film was evolving and maintaining its "primitiveness". The first changes came in the form of camera placement, which the phantom ride demonstrated. The camera would be placed on the front of the train, which simulated the effect of camera movement. That particular film called the Phantom Ride also made use of blackness to replace the editing of scenes. Oddly enough film producers of the day wanted to hide editing as much as possible because they believed that their editing held to be hidden. In fact the films we saw demonstrated that editing was used as a substitution as opposed to continuity. Filmmakers of the day seemed to think that a film had to be produced by one shot and that editing was to be hidden at all costs. Cinema tried to increasingly present something as opposed to just filming everyday events as with Edison and the Lumieres brothers. This development eventually led to the making of religious story, which plunged cinema into features. However the most essential development was Brighton's idea of presenting a story.

Perhaps the final noticeable changes that one could have noticed were the appearance and increase in point of view shots. The development of point of view shots allowed the filmmaker to show the audience what the actor was seeing regardless of where or what he was looking at. Examples from the films are the views from a magnifying glass, a peeping tom that looks through a keyhole, and a man looking through a telescope. However flaws did exist and the most obvious one was that the shots did not respect where the actor was located. These shots nonetheless must have been a marvel to watch for audiences of the day. Therefore the major developments in the Brighton School provided film with point of view shots, a simplistic demonstration of moving camera, and finally the use of editing in terms of a substitution as opposed to continuity.

Early film was a time when shadows and lighting were still being painted on walls in addition to creating depth of field. A Trip to the Moon demonstrates that dissolves were increasingly used. Still on the question of special effects was the camera movement, which consisted of moving it, backward or forward to create the illusion of a zoom. Explosions did their part in making people disappear. However explosions were especially used to hide the editing as cuts were often performed during these explosions.

However there were important transitions in the period in terms of sets. The Palace Of The Arabian Nights demonstrates this example very well as many of its sets had moving parts and were used to create depth of field as well as providing a shift in the importance of elaborate sets. In fact directors who used elaborated sets lost their shirts and most of their fortunes because such sets were so expensive to make for the capabilities of the film industry at the time. One such example was Melies who almost disappeared and dropped out of the film industry in the 1910s.

Perhaps another aspect of film that was making its entrance in the first decade of film was dissolves. Dissolves were yet another example of how editing could be hidden to support early filmmaker's ideology of the time. Dissolves could be used instead of editing and without knowing it early filmmakers were creating another way of achieving continuity. The other two noticeable changes were the increasing use of black spaces and explosions in the Melies films. These two devices were used to replace editing and were combined with the use of dissolves. These effects were especially noticeable in A Trip to the Moon and The Palace Of Arabian Nights. Last but not least finally animation was making its appearance of which Cohl was a big part of as he was the first to use animation drawing all of his sketches on his own. Animation was already being felt in real life film as Police with the Long Arm experimented and made good use of animation to create effects.

Melies was the odd ball in the young film industry of the time. Melies was from a different background most notably theater. In fact you could look at films and instinctively say whether it was a Melies film or not. His main goal was to recreate special effects or theater tricks. Therefore his films presented the usual like A Trip to the Moon. A Trip to the Moon in fact supports some of the sources, which his imagination fed off of like comic strips and science fiction. While all this is mentioned one must not forget that Melies also produced westerns, believe it or not. Westerns for Melies might sound awkward for the tricks he was interested in creating however a parallel example from our era could be cited where westerns are still being produced in an era of high technology. One could go further and look at the example of Star Wars, which uses the same devices as a western in an era of high technology.

However before we lose the focus of Melies. Melies was also considered the first author because he had complete control over his works and is quite lucky to have been making films just before the studio system took over. Shortly after his successful run in cinema, the studio system put an end to authorship until it's brief comeback in the sixties. Authorship will probably never come back because film in the 1980s and 1990s in an era where financing is a big issue. Therefore there are more restrictions than ever as the main goal is making a return on their investment. According to research Melies was filming on a street corner when his camera jammed and when he went to view his film he saw that the few seconds that had elapsed. This gave him the idea of creating discontinuity in time thus making different people and objects disappear from view.

The final thought on Melies is his touch of presenting something that was not magical but very daring in 1903. You see to a film student the Affaire Dreyfus is nothing spectacular but to a History student who can place the Affaire Dreyfus into context, it means a big deal. The Affaire Dreyfus was a very controversial issue in France at that time. The Dreyfus Affaire essentially divided French society for the rest of the century. It had some especially rash effects in World War II as it was used by the Vichy regime as an excuse for persecuting the Jews and turning them over to Germany. Therefore it was all of the above, that is Melies daringness, innovativeness, and creativity in terms of authorship which makes it a film worth talking about.

The Great Train Robbery was perhaps the greatest film of its day and still manages to impress modern film historians. The film attempts to use every technique of the day to present drama as opposed to everyday actions. The film features special effects in two different aspects; the first was the cut where the robber threw the

dummy off of the train and the second is the added color in the shooting sequences, dance scene, and when the little girl rescues the train station attendant. However another special effect is the filming of the train which passes outside of the station while the action takes place inside. The train is obviously not real but filmed which therefore is considered a special effect for that era.

The camera angles are simple however they are also often placed in an angle in order to capture everybody and thing in the image. They are placed in such a fashion because the sets are mostly composed of outdoor sets and therefore there are no limitations in the space and the amount of image that one can capture. The acting was primitive however as all of the actions are exaggerated in the theatrical sense. Some of these examples are found in the little girl's reaction as she prays for the attendant, when the luggage person on the train lifts his hands up, and finally one of the passengers who decides to take a run for it and exaggerates his fall when he is shot.

Another interesting element in *The Great Train Robbery* was its continuity of time. I think the continuity of time was very good with the exception of one scene. The bank robbers hold up the station and then tie up the attendant with rope that just happens to be hanging on the wall. Then the robbers take the train and rob everybody on it and make their way to the woods where they have pre-planned horses waiting for them. While the robbers are on the run the girl rescues the attendant and while the girl is rescuing the attendant the law officers are having a party. Keeping in mind that all this occurs while the robbers are escaping through the woods. The only displacement of time and discontinuity occurs when the police leave the police station and then the next cut shows them at a couple of hundred feet away from the robbers. That in my estimation is the only place where the timing is awkward and perhaps the only mistake in the film. Finally one must not forget the closing shot which addresses the audience for one of the first time. It is one of the most popular shots in all of film history.

In the years leading up to *The Great Train Robbery*, film's most important principles were being established. Perhaps the greatest improvements came in the fields of inter-cutting, re-framing, and in establishing a good sense of time in between inter-cutting.

Inter-cutting is especially important because it establishes a continuity in the film which in turn allows the film maker to tell several stories or different events at the same time. The Runaway horse is perhaps a good example of an early film demonstrating the continuity of time between cuts. The sense of time is completely lost between the scene where the police leave the station to the scene which immediately follows where they end up being a couple hundred feet away from the

robbers. Perhaps an even better example is *Life of an American Fireman*, which showed the inside action as firemen rescued the people outside. Then after that action is completed the reverse or outside point of view of the inside action was shown which destroys the sense of time. Time, as well as reverse angles or point of view shots, have always had a problem in presenting the correct time and or angle from which we are shown the shot. The problems arose in establishing a relationship between how we see the world and how the camera sees the world. The solution is found in establishing a point of realism between the two. The other important innovation was re-framing, which permitted filmmakers to depict objects and or people of great importance by using close up shots. Re-framing mostly popularized by Griffith and was called analytical editing which was a device used to capture details in the process of telling a story. Similarly cutting into close ups were also soon adapted to include emotional responses.

However there were some more noticeable films and changes that occurred up to roughly 1908. The sets were still painted as *Life of an American Policeman* demonstrates. Narration was also used between shots to help in the continuity of story. Fade in and outs were increased in their usage. Finally characters still had a tendency to over react as Uncle Josh at the *Moving Picture* clearly demonstrated. This film however had historians asking a new kind of question which looked at how the audience reacted to this film.

*Birth of the Nation* must be discussed in terms of its portrayal of history and the negative and positive positions that it holds. The context of the film in history is important because *Birth of the Nation* was perhaps not as popular in its film sense but rather in it's portrayal of history.

Griffith's film was shot forty seven years after the end of the civil war in 1865 which was still in people's minds just as *World War II* is very much in our minds in 1997. This is accentuated by the fact that the civil war was not fought to free the slaves but rather for economic reason. The north did not have access to all this free labor and therefore could not continually compete with the south. Therefore since the civil war was not fought for the civil rights of blacks, racism was still very much a part of the American lifestyle when *Birth of the Nation* was released. This is where the controversy erupted. The NAACP, which represented Afro-American rights was formed in 1912 and was an active participant in opposing *Birth of the Nation's* message.

In the second half of his film Griffith reconstructed history by portraying blacks as the villains, whites as the victims, and finally the KKK, of all people, as the heroes.

His whole methodology about how the KKK came into being was reconstructed. The problem with the film was perhaps not the film itself but the interpreters of the film, that is the people seeing the film in theatres, actually believed every word and in some cases Birth Of The Nation was actually used as text book facts to teach history. The first half of film was factually true the second half's fiction was negated by the civil war which, as stated above, was very much still in people's minds.

In conclusion, however, the real fault lies in mankind, who created a medium called film and began expressing himself through that medium without understanding the true effects and influences that such a medium could have on people. This is perhaps still true today because most people are still vulnerable when they are introduced to information, which they know nothing about. One never knows whether the film is portraying the true meaning and whether the information is true to history or whether someone behind the film is just trying to sell another product.

The Birth of the Nation is considered to be the most important film in the development of cinema as film art. The original version was some three hours long and featured all of the most innovative film effects of the day. The film plays a lot with content including family relationships, political ideas in the era of the reconstruction and tells a story about two different families. There was no shooting script for this film believe it or not. It was all shot as Griffith went along. The film is a social document both in the way it was filmed and in the way it was received by audiences. The narrative holds the film together even though it is especially complex for a film of its time. Griffith uses two kinds of cutting in this film; he uses cutting on contrary movement and cutting in rhythm. He also cuts from different distances and angles whose mirrors depict some of the participant's different points of view. Griffith also makes use of irises and produces some of his most known shots. The iris was essentially used to shrink and increase the audience's focus of the image. Griffith also gets into the business of using symbolism to illustrate and foreshadow the images. One example is two dogs, which begin a fight and becomes a symbol for the coming of the war between the North and South. Griffith uses a lot of rhythm sequences, which add tensions to the film. It adds drama, as the audience wants to get ahead of the action that follows.

This film has a lot more to offer in terms of it's content than in it's style. The film as opposed to the early film we have seen so far makes a radical jump in its mode of telling a story. It clearly demonstrates that Griffith was a head of his time in filmmaking. It makes you wonder what Griffith could have done with a hundred million-dollar budgets in the context of the nineties. Griffith was and still is a genius in film making, as his films never cease to impress even the filmmakers of the day.



Rescued By Rover and The Girl and Her Trust are two films, which include the techniques of inter-cutting and analytical editing. The changes, once again other than the juxtaposition of the film selections from week to week, are stark and really stick out. Rescued by Rover is one film, which makes use of real elements such as three-dimensional sets. This does not sound all that impressive but for a film that was made in 1905 the change is significant because it meant that the director had to be innovative and invest a huge sum of money in order to be innovative. Furthermore the film made excessive use of continuity of editing. The editing used only the film that was necessary as opposed to showing every bit of action, as was the case before.

For example when the dog went down the path the first time some of the shots that were used when he went back that same path were deleted. This not only demonstrates innovation in film but also shows that the audience was coming of age as they began to understand the language of film. Understanding film in a two-way stream, first, filmmakers have to fully understand the mechanics of film and secondly the audience must learn either through their investigation or through the teachings of filmmakers themselves. The audience was also able to comprehend a film as having a mind of its own and that it could also have a goal. Rescued By Rover demonstrates the narrative as having a goal as opposed to just being an action which occurs for no specific reason.

The Girl and Her Trust demonstrates two other innovations most particularly, parallel editing and analytical editing which begins to focus more on details. The inter-cutting now began to fit the action and makes more sense of time and space. The emphasis was now on the character, which enabled the filmmaker to make more intellectual films, by saying more and giving more information with one shot. Another element, which I am taking for granted is that the audience composed of film students knows what the ending will be and who the main character is. In films like The Great train Robbery, or Life of an American Fireman no one knows who the main character is let alone identify with him in any way shape or form.

Another innovation through analytical editing is making the audience part of the story as we see close ups of objects or details giving us information that the character does not know. We also have off screen space as opposed to theatre's limited scope of space. We see shots and reverse shots and in terms of where the camera is placed the 12 foot line was demolished giving the camera the freedom it needed to innovate. During all of these different innovations the camera was gaining access to the freedom it needed.

Cabiria was undoubtedly one of the greatest achievements in Italian film history, surpassing any grand film that the United States had produced until the present in

1914. Its features were its grand sets that still amaze film historians today. What makes this Italian film so puzzling is the challenge of having to understand how anybody could think of making a film of this magnitude, especially for that era. The film in itself is not an impressive film to watch in terms of its camera movement. It is actually quite simplistic in the manner that it was shot. However what makes this film a marvel to historians, in addition to its sets, is the complicated narrative and historical content which this film presents. It is a film, which is set in the era of the Roman Empire and presents many subplots within the main story thus making the film difficult to follow.

The only noticeable camera movement in the film was slow tracking shots towards or away from the static shot. The technique was recognized but the film's achievements were not recognized in terms of its camera work, but rather in terms of its set design. One can go further and state that the film influenced a lot of lavish productions in the future as *Cabiria* proved that lavish productions could be made and still earn a profit. As some final thoughts, one must admit that the film was a spectacle to watch but at the same time very difficult to follow. I think that the length of the film coupled with very little sound along with a complicated story set in 300 B. C. makes it difficult to watch. One must consider that, for an audience in the nineties who is use to watching mega sound effects, it is difficult to read into images as opposed to participating to decipher them. It was their first glimpse at a production as that magnitude which made it impressive to them. Its similar to *The Great Train Robbery* when it came out in 1905 and left people flabbergasted and impressed because it was the first film of it's kind.

*Cabiria* served as a stepping stone to give other directors the green light to risk making productions such as this. Furthermore the special effects which look dismal to us today were quite difficult to produce back then. One must also not forget the amount of people that worked on the film just in terms of the people we see on screen. *Cabiria* is a stylistic film in terms of its set design but comes nowhere close to the innovations we saw in other films whether big or small. I guess it is because 1905 by which time all that was left to do was to improve the equipment that filmmakers were working with completed the invention of cinema.

*Battleship Potemkin* is a montage extravaganza which showcases montage in its earliest and perhaps best forms. I like the different types of montage and the different uses of montage that the film presented. Most particularly elements of rhythm, angles, music, and symbols were juxtaposed to highlight the film's theme, rebellion.

The music in the film is perhaps the most consistent factor as it provides suspense and highlights dramatic scenes. In Part I dramatic music is heard while waves of water splash against the shore which created tension from the outset of the film. We quickly are thrown into a series of low angles depicting the importance of the sailors in discussion, as seen from a long shot, which created ambiguity. The shot was ambiguous because the viewer would fail to understand whether the figures shown from a distance in a low angle were important. Another interesting sequence of shots was the scene where sailors were sleeping which is totally ambiguous. Also the shots constantly cross the 180 degree axis which confuses the spectator by distorting the relationship of the sailors to the camera.

We are then treated to an interesting history lesson during the scene where the rotten meat is inspected. The Japanese victory of 1905 is mentioned as sailors complain that even POW's in Japan are fed better than us. The Japanese had launched a war against Russia in 1905 where they completely destroyed the Russian's naval forces around the Siberian coast. What's interesting is that Japan was able to master modern warfare only a couple of years after sending its delegates, in the late nineteenth century, to different countries to learn about science and technology. This was necessary because Japan had always been an isolated power from the western world. The mention of this is important because Japan's victory in 1905 against Russia launched them on a militaristic trend, which led them to World War II. In the context of Russia the loss of the war caused peasants to rebel even more as they had lost the confidence in their leaders to lead the country.

The following shots illustrated a series of actions in rhythm when the sailors were performing their various chores such as oiling the canon and polishing the decks. We are then treated to symbols of imprisonment when the sailors were shot from a low angle through a grill on a stair top. Furthermore symbolism is reinforced by a captain's stare as he watched empty pots sway from side to side. This symbolism represented signs of defiance which were immediately followed by a sailor's act of breaking a dish when he notices the inscription of the our father on the actual plate he breaks. The shot is interesting because the sailor, through montage, takes two swings back on each side of his body to break the plate.

Perhaps the final note that one should mention is the emphasis on depicting the captains as individuals and then set them against mobs of sailors. It reinforces the imagery of might when people band together. Eisenstien fiddles with our perception, when all the sailors meet on the deck of the ship, as they were shot illustrating everybody on an angle. That's not to mention the issue of religion, as Moses seems to appear looking like anything but saintly. As the rebellion occurred

Eisenstein chose to focus his shots on close ups of objects that were being manipulated as opposed to filming the entire action. Finally the Odessa steps was another marvel to watch as a montage extravaganza occurred juxtaposing a mother and child, people running, guards marching, and a multiple demonstration of grieving faces. In fact the sequence of the soldiers are never personalized and their faces are never shown which distances the audience from the soldiers. The above short essay on Battleship Potemkin is a clear demonstration of Eisenstein's genius and why future filmmakers were so heavily influenced by him.

Nosferatu's biggest failure on my observation is the music. It is true that the distortion of the music does fit the distortion of the angles and distorted shapes in the film. However the music does not represent horror in any way, shape or form. The music rather sounds like the kind, which one would hear in the era of New Orleans bordering on jazz music. Furthermore at times the music sounds likes contemporary music which I have learned to despise. I agree I am a bit subjective but I did state an understanding of its style linking it to the form of the film. The music sounds especially out of place with the sped up motion of the characters in the film. Nonetheless this music sounds as though it was added. If this is the case then one should consult other films, which were made in the seventies, which very skillfully used music to convey horror. My three favorite horror films, which I believe depicted a true sense of horror were Halloween, Phantasm, and the music of the first and second Nightmares on Elm Street. One should consult the music of these films to find out what a skillful composer can do with suspenseful music. The horror films mentioned above were made in the era of films like, The Howling, Patrick, An American Werewolf in London, The Car, Scanners, etc... Some of these movies might bring back memories.

There was a spot in the film where I liked the music and that scene occurred when the main female character departs where we hear music that sounds like a melody from Venice. I like the music for this scene because of the set, which is made up of a grand house with a long stairway, looks like that of an aristocratic house in Venice. I must not forget to mention that I noticed there was very little camera movement in this film. As for Nosferatu, he looks totally distorted the first time we see him especially considering that he looks eight feet tall. The angles which surround him also look unrecognizable as well as the fact that one cannot recognized the shapes of houses as any we have seen in our living. In conclusion I would like to know what is the best horror Dracula film that was ever made. I frankly do not know but as for Nosferatu, which is in itself considered a masterpiece in does not fill the horror position very well. One would probably have to look up Dracula films in the sixties or seventies. Oh by the way I forgot to mention my best observation. I found that the use of the iris to fade in and out of scenes perfectly foreshadows Dracula's blood sucking mouth as it closed into its victim. I, from the start, saw the iris as a representation of a mouth.

Andre Bazin states that *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligary* is a failure because it has not stood the test of time. He states that the reasons rest in deformities in lighting and décor. There are claims that the film was subverted to the rise of Nazism in Germany. Yet this is another example of how context affects film and filmmaking. I found that the iris in *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligary* concentrated more on isolated or literally trapping people's heads rather than just using the iris as a fade in fade out. I also found that the iris was once again used as an instrument to foreshadow Dracula's actions. I still think the music is nuts for this film as well for the same reason as mentioned in the discussion on *Nosferatu*. I have to keep reminding myself that these films were made in the early twenties in Germany where the film industry was in many senses behind on its production, mainly brought on by World War I, and therefore the lack of camera movement is understandable. I also noticed that Dracula's attack was a lot more graphic in its detail than in the first Dracula film. We see the actions of attack, which makes the film more violent. I also found that the set was a lot less elaborated than *Nosferatu*. Furthermore the angles were just as oblique as the previous film. The sets look like they focus more on paintings and sets are painted as opposed to the previous Dracula film. In fact even the floors have painted abstract objects on them. In conclusion I cannot say that I liked this film anymore than the other Dracula, however I made an observation on myself. I find myself being a lot more critical of this film than of the others, which must signify that it brought out my emotions a lot more than the others.

*The Passion of Joan D'arc* was shot in the era of confusion in Hollywood as sound was making its appearance and changing film over night. This was an era when many jobs were lost and many had to be created. This film however discusses the life of Joan of D'arc but only focuses on the last six hours of her life. It was not cinematic as the film used a succession of close ups to tell a story. This clashed with the traditional classical Hollywood Style of filmmaking, which was quickly becoming the norm for the era. It is an abstract film because we saw the entire film through the point of view of Joan D'arc. The film in essence uses a series of portraits, to create continuity and a dynamic quality. The acting was superb and was mainly based on Dreyer's casting.

The film was a synthesis of painting spanning from renaissance religious works to modern abstract compositions. The film examines the emotional feelings of Joan D'arc rather than her militant past. As stated above the film examines the last six hours of her life and consequently brings out the intimate details that would not have been possible had the film attempted to illustrate all of her life. The film is almost like a passion play and focuses on close ups to reveal the person's inner feelings. The film can be looked at as a showcase of photographic beauty. It's almost as if Dreyer took several thousand-head shots to create a film about Joan D'arc.

Furthermore Dreyer places these pictures on black and white background. This added another dimension to the presentation of the successive head shots as the audience began associating to the person's face with black or white contrasting the colors with good or bad. Dreyer also uses another method where he contrasts different actions from person to person. Dreyer contrasts movement in terms of slow and fast to illustrate a person's emotional being. Furthermore the film also contains the greatest mixtures of nationalities to have worked in film at that point. The mixture of nationalities is important because the film then comes to represent a collaborative work between many different styles of filmmaking.

Every so often one sees a film where by we get taken into the film not even understanding what the story of the film is about, *Un Chien Andalou* is an example of such a film. This film was a reaction against avant-garde film, and God knows how messed up an avant-garde film can be let alone a reaction against it. The film is a mix of light verses shadow effects and its rhythmic montage. The film is known as one of the first to be made on a poetical-moral plane. It rejected all notions of realism. In essence the goal of this film was to provoke reactions of attraction and repulsion which was succeeded. The film presents a series of scenes that only seems to be linked through a dream like state. There is no continuity in this film, which makes the narrative impossible to understand. It's the type of film that can be interpreted many different ways without necessarily having only one correct form of interpretation. The filmmaker attempted to make a film through surrealist juxtaposition. In fact many of these scenes are juxtaposed irrationally. One could just imagine the chaos in the film industry if this type of film achieved popularity amongst mainstream filmmaking.

As my curiosity itched, Surrealism stems from Freudian ideology, which sought to release the sub conscious mind without any control by reason of thought. That is a troubling concept for me because this thought would imply that anything goes. If there were no reason or logic then filmmakers would plunge into a world of chaos. Therefore how would a good film be judged from a bad one if no boundaries or rules existed to create a sense of order in the industry? I do not have a criticism on the actual film in itself because I still do not have a firm handle on what story line or message the film wants to convey. The film has an opposite effect to understanding, which will undermine its intent on conveying a message. I think that what a filmmaker must first do is educating the masses about reading film for film sake. The masses must be educated and thought about the language of film, which in the end result would benefit all. I think that educating the masses would help people in being less vulnerable and or naïve towards the subliminal messages that film and television tend to convey.

My procedure is simple I took the text, which I used in my French, history class called France in Modern Times: From the Enlightenment to the Present. By Gordon Wright. Then I proceeded to outline the main issues, which were prominent in France in 1924-1925, in the context when the film was made.

Foreign policy was focuses on enhancing relationship with either Britain or Germany because France foreshadowed another war and began looking for allies right after World War I

France was viewed as the aggressor and Germany the victim because its demands for reparations at the Versailles treaty were believed to be to harsh

Thus France looked for security in the 1920's by which they sought to keep Germany's power at a minimum through harsh terms in the Versailles treaty

The peace conference caused a lot of friction between the international community especially France and Britain

France was therefore divided over treating Germany with harshness or scaling down their demands in the 20s

Therefore France was divided and relied on foreign countries to enforce its foreign policy

Economy was based and many private small enterprises as opposed to large corporations

France lost an entire generation in the great war and was short of 2 million workers which forced it to immigrate workers into countries whom did not assimilate into French culture and did not produce the population growth that French needed to keep up with Germany and other nations.

Finally France was unable, by marching into the Rhineland, which Germany controlled, to force Germany to make bigger reparation payments which proved France to be unable to force its foreign policy onto other nations.

Entract was a film that definitely reflected the points mentioned above. The canon which rolls in and out of the film with two men jumping into the image in slow motion represented the division in France which saw half the population wanting to enforce harshness on Germany and the other half wanting to scale down reparations. The two men dressed in totally different outfits represented the two opposing forces. The indecision and inability of France to enforce its foreign policy by marching into the Rhineland explains the way the canon is shot from different angles. The next images prove the divisiveness of French society as we fade into a city up side down. The tremendous debate that the issue of France's foreign policy caused made political parties unstable and the puppets with heads, which inflate and deflate, reflect this debate. However the most apparent image was the boxing gloves which were superimposed over the city which portrayed the battles that took place in political life. The fire and the man scratching his head in another sign which indicates that France was looking for answers.

The ballerina is a symbol, which I can't figure out. We then see-blurred shots, which seem to be, shots of Les Champs Elysee, which is then followed by two men, playing chess. If chess, symbolizing a mind game, is not enough to convince a person of these links, we also see city traffic turning in circles which exactly foreshadowed what France was up to in the twenties. The water imagery turns out the fire that lighted up the back of the man's head. The water thus being a solution to the fire is a solution that France was unable to find and thus escapes my brief analysis. The juxtaposition and interchange of the hat, which floats in the air and the ballerina, is something that is still unknown at this moment. We continue to see the ballerina as her upper body is in total darkness. We then find out that the ballerina turns out to be a bearded man with glasses. We are then presented an upside down image of a face's eyes dissolved into water followed by another section of the face from another angle. My guess is that the ballerina which turns out to be a man may be the director's guess at who will be France's next ally which turns out to be wrong after the entire audience is deceived into thinking that the ballerina was a woman. I believe that this deception is the filmmaker's way of reflecting how French society was also deceptive of what was going on in the twenties. We could say the same by saying th