A FILM APPROACH TO ENGLISH
FOR THE SLOW LEARNER

APPROVED:

E. C. Ballard
Major Professor

E. S. Clifton
Director of the Department of English

Robert B. Tomlison
Dean of the Graduate School

The subject of this thesis is concerned with the organization of a course of study for slow learners in the English class using both full-length and short films to stimulate their discussion and writing.

The sources of material for this thesis are books written by authorities in the field of film—David Mallery, J. M. L. Peters, and others. Also included are articles from professional journals and periodicals such as the *English Journal* and *Media and Methods* dealing with the use of film in the classroom. Some of these articles are by people like David A. Sohn and John L. Debes, who believe students can be taught to express themselves through the use of visual aids. Finally included as a source are the films themselves, most of which are currently being viewed.

The first chapter of this thesis, entitled "Use of Films to Overcome Attitudinal Problems," points out the fact that slow learners do have attitudinal problems—lack of confidence caused by past failures, lack of interest, and lack of motivation—and that films, because they are nonverbal and interesting, can help overcome these problems. The chapter also shows that when these problems are overcome,
the slow learners are able to respond with enthusiastic discussion and writing.

The second chapter, "Use of Films to Build Skills of Communication," deals with reasons for film discussion and gives types of writing, both verbal and nonverbal, that can be stimulated by viewing and discussing films.

"Use of Specific Films," the third chapter, contains annotations of films arranged in units built around three approaches to film study—the cross-media approach, the genre approach, and the theme approach. With each unit is a detailed guide containing questions about each film for discussion and suggestions of projects or topics for writing.

The conclusion reached in the thesis is that films offer the teacher of slow learners a great deal of opportunity to change attitudes and stimulate discussion and writing.
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Patricia R. Mengwasser, B. S.
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CHAPTER I

USE OF FILMS TO OVERCOME ATTITUDINAL PROBLEMS

During the last forty years, much attention has been given to the education of the slow learners—the approximate twenty per cent of the national school population (8, p. 1280) who have an intelligence quotient of seventy-five to ninety, or score between the fifth and twenty-fifth percentile on repeated valid tests of intelligence (12, p. 21). Careful studies have been made of methods of selecting and identifying the slow learners (6); their physical, social, and emotional characteristics have been carefully tabulated (11). Curriculum modifications or adaptations, from kindergarten throughout the grades and on through the secondary school, have resulted. Programs have been planned for the slow learner to "satisfy his needs, make possible gratifying achievement, and adjust him to our society" (7, p. 12). Yet although all this attention is given to their education, most slow learners abhor English classes. Students believe the English teacher is a "red-inked ogre slashing out misspellings, commas, whole words, phrases, even sentences—feelings as well" (15, p. 75). They show their dislike by being truant. Some students just never come to English class even though they come to school. They roam the campus or sit in the cafeteria drinking cokes. If they do come to class, slow
learners further vent their feelings by delaying the progress of lessons by "living it up" in the classroom. If they are not vocal in their protests, they show their indifference by pretending to sleep through class or by looking at motorcycle magazines. Many slow learners have this "anti-school, anti-teacher," anti-English attitude (16, p. 10). And because of their attitude, the teachers call them, among other things, "unmotivated," "apathetic," "disinterested," "undisciplined."

What is the answer to this attitudinal problem? What can motivate and interest these slow learners, thereby changing their feelings about English? Research shows that teaching with films will solve much of the problem. After using films with her class, Gay Menges noted not as much resistance to the English class, less apathy and dullness, and fewer absences and discipline cases (21, p. 1029). John L. Debes, in an article written for Educational Screen and Audiovisual Guide, reports that one educator from a school for difficult boys said that "young men who chose every opportunity to be truant even when in school began to attend classes; boys who chose not to write, wrote; boys who chose not to talk, talked" (5, p. 34). Another man commenting on the change in attitude tells of a ninth-grade class with a reading range of from 2.5 to 5.3 with the median at 4.0 who were sleepy, restless, and noisy at the beginning of teaching the material through films. Ten weeks later he reports of the same class:
The boys were more attentive. They frequently initiated learning. They listened and responded to more elements in the film, and to each other. They seemed to enjoy the class situation. They acted as if they expected to learn. They worked till the bell ended class. They demonstrated pride in their ability to express in writing what they had learned (17, p. 90).

Prank Manchel even credits film with radically changing the students' "long-run views concerning education and the community" (19, p. 207). Ned Hoopes notes that apathetic, passive students, who seldom contributed to previous class discussions, suddenly became active participants "revealing perceptive and original insights" after using film in the classroom (19, p. 12).

Part of the attitudinal problem that these slow learners possess according to James F. McCambell is that these slow learners have had frustrations that for years made it impossible for them to achieve. To remove these frustrations, the teacher "must present tasks with which the students can achieve success" (20, p. 31). Wayne Otto, in his article "A Guide to Helping Pupils with Learning Problems," feels that most slow learners have been "caught up by the snowballing effect of failure-frustration-failure. Success is the antidote for failure" (22, p. 93). They have not had success in English classes much of the time because the materials presented were in written form which many of the slow learners could not read, and they felt that the teacher and/or their classmates had all the "right" answers. The study of film overcomes these two causes of failure.
Testimony is overwhelming that films can help the students with reading problems achieve success in English. David Sohn, co-author of the *Stop, Look, and Write* series, says, "At present it is easier for a student to watch a film than it is for him to read a book. The verbal language barrier does not have to be hurdled, which is an important argument for using films with poor readers and intellectually deficient students" (25). In another article, Sohn, becoming more emphatic about film use, calls film a great "leveler" of people, for the verbal and nonverbal can enjoy it without understanding printed symbols or having excellent reading skills. The slow learners, the nonverbal, can "see and hear, even if they cannot read well" (26). Roger Damio concurs, stating that "the new media... are lots more effective in today's classrooms. Youngsters who won't or can't perceive in one medium are very likely to respond in another" (4, p. 39). The authors of *A-V Instruction: Material and Methods* agree further when they say that films can overcome "important intellectual barriers to learning" because films "don't depend on reading skills" (1, pp. 168-169).

Films can also overcome the feeling of failure and lack of confidence caused by the students' feeling that their answers are never right. Because students feel that they can "read" a movie as well as their classmates, they feel they have a chance to say something as worthwhile as anyone else has. William Kuhns writes in *Themes: Short Films for*
Discussions, "There are no right or wrong answers about seeing a film. Each person can have his own convictions, his own opinion about what happened and how it happened. There is no textbook to say which opinion is right and which is wrong" (13, p. 8). Going further with this idea of the students expecting to be wrong, Putsch compares the school climate to that of the home—one in which the teacher, like the parent, has all the right answers and the children few or none, and this climate defeats the child. "In film discussions, however, every student response will reflect some particle of truth. In that sense, there are no wrong answers" (23, p. 16). In another article, Putsch underscores his conviction when he states that in film discussion, "There are no right responses. There are only honest perceptions, responses, and opinions" (16, p. 8).

The lack of interest in the class which is also part of the attitude problem of slow learners can be overcome by the use of films. Students are interested in films. The Alfred Politz Research, Inc., in a study, discovered that 52.6 percent of those who see movies once a week are between ten and nineteen years old (25). Father John Culkin stated in "The Motion Picture, A Rationale for Film Study" that by the time an average American student is graduated from high school today, he has watched more than 15,000 hours of television and has seen more than 500 movies (3, pp. 18-19). Development of interest is one of the great values of visual aids.
Daniel Knowlton and Warren Tilton, using motion pictures in teaching history, made a study of the interest factor of motion pictures. Measuring student interest by classroom discussion in two classes, one using film and one not, among other things they found that in the class using films more recitations were made as a result of the teacher’s questions, a larger percentage of the class recited, more remarks were volunteered not as a result of the teacher’s questioning, more questions were asked, and fewer contributions came into the discussion as a result of outside interests (9, p. 120).

A final part of the slow learners' problem of poor attitude that films might overcome is motivation. Slow learners have little innate desire to excel scholastically or intellectually (16, p. 6). Because of this lack of desire, the slow learners are not readily motivated to discuss or write in the classroom. Sometimes, as has been noted previously, they are reluctant to participate because they are afraid to fail again (24, p. 18), but many times they are not motivated to participate because of the presentation of materials. A. H. Lass and Frank A. Smerling point out that slow learners are motivated by concrete experience and are responsive to concrete and dramatic presentations (16, p. 8). Films which are both concrete and dramatic motivate these slow learners. One teacher engaged in a film workshop reports that using films to stimulate writing works. "It [the use of films] can promote a great deal of writing" (26). Putsch,
commenting on films stimulating discussions, says students are "highly motivated" (23, p. 16). Ramon Cortines found when experimenting with films with slow learners that the films "are terrific motivators for our students when it comes to writing essay questions" (2, p. 95). Oftentimes the abstract concepts of a book can be seen much more easily and quickly through an analysis of a television show which treats the same theme yet is concrete (10, p. 14).

It would seem that by fulfilling the slow learners' needs for success, interest, and motivation, the use of film in their English class can bring about a change in the slow learners' attitude. This change in their attitude would make easier the English teacher's trying to teach them the language skills they need in discussion and writing.

There have been no studies made to prove that language skills in discussion and writing will improve solely by using films in the classroom, but a number of teachers have spoken of increased language skills, not just increased interest or motivation, or liveliness. Oftentimes, a film will stimulate slow students to discuss complex ideas. Richard A. Lacey reports that after a class of slow learners had discussed "Dream of the Wild Horses," a film that is often called a visual poem, all of the teachers agreed that the discussion had been the best all year. They said the students had "contributed thoughtful generalizations supported with evidence from the film." One teacher said, "If you didn't know, you'd
never guess they were non-academic kids" (14, p. 38). Manchel talks of his students participating enthusiastically in discussions involving technique, point of view, characterization, setting, language, space, motion, structure, audience, theme, special effects, and style (19, p. 207)—topics that a teacher does not usually get any discussion about from a slow class, especially enthusiastic discussion. Others say that their students turn in some of their best work when writing about the films (2, p. 95). Other teachers have noted a faster, surer sense of language in their students and an improved capacity for ordering ideas (5, p. 3). One English teacher speaks of the way the showing and discussion of "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" motivated some "remarkably astute expository writing on the value of life, on why man kills, and on control of life and death in the hands of human beings" (18, p. 17).

Through the use of film, it is hoped that the slow learners' attitude will change and that they will respond to the powerful aesthetic experience of the film by reacting dynamically with discussion and responding creatively with essays, poems, and short stories or nonverbally with collages, film stories, visuals to illustrate poems or stories, or even movies.

In summary, then, this first chapter shows that films add a teaching dimension that no other addition will supply. The second part of this thesis will deal with reasons for film
discussion and give types of writing, both verbal and non-verbal, stimulated by viewing and discussing films. The third part of this thesis will be for the help of the teacher who might wish to use this film approach for changing the slow learners' attitude toward English and stimulating their discussion and writing. This part will contain annotations of films arranged in units, units that experience has shown to pertain to the modern slow learners in the secondary school. With each unit will be a detailed guide containing questions for discussion and suggestions of projects or topics for writing.
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CHAPTER II

USE OF FILMS TO BUILD SKILLS OF COMMUNICATION

As has been shown earlier, slow learners can be motivated to discuss films and to write either about their discussions of these films or about the mood evoked by the films. These slow learners need, however, to be directed in a specific way in both discussing and writing about the films.

The discussion of film with the slow learner has a fourfold purpose. The first purpose is to let the students share their response to the artistry and message of the film. Putsch says that one person's sharing his perceptions and insights will increase the range and facility of another person's perceptions (10, p. 53). To let the students share responses, the film should be shown and the students allowed to react. John Snyder suggests to the teacher: "Let the students talk about what they saw; let them react to each other and to you" (13, p. 32). Part of the artistry as well as the message of the film is transmitted by the technique of the filmmaker. But this filmmaking technique does not have to be learned in full by the slow learner. Jim Kitses and Ann Mercer reject the full study of technique as such because they say they have found that young people know how film works:
Although many young people may be ignorant of what the technique of editing involves, they do know how meaning can be communicated through juxtaposition of images. Their own movie going has made them sensitive to the power of music, lighting, acting, camera movement, costumes, and decor. Moreover students will have responded to the composition of an image, the expressive power of landscape (certainly in a Western), the way in which detail can be selected and given special significance. What does seem to be lacking in many of our students, however, is the full awareness that all of these elements can be woven together by a film-maker to express a particular point of view, a way of looking at the world which is different from any other man's (3, p. 103).

Probably for the slow learners it would be enough to call attention to the language or technique of the film, making them more aware of it, by some basic questions: When you walk into a crowded room, what do you generally look at first? How do your eyes move? What do you look for next? How do you feel when you are sitting at your desk and the teacher stands towering over you? Why? What is your impression of cars and people when you look down at them from a great height? How do dreary, confining days affect your mood? How do sunshine and outdoors affect your mood? What are some of the ways the passage of time can be shown on the screen? How could the filmmaker show that the main character of a film is ill, dizzy, or drunken? How could he show that a person is rushing through life? With these questions the class can discuss painlessly film language--focusing, shots; camera angles; effects of lighting and setting; dissolve, fade, superimposition; and objective and subjective shots as well as cuts and editing. This painless calling attention
to film language might also be aided by a series of four half-hour films about film technique entitled The Film Appreciation Series that show and talk about visual language, camera technique, film design and composition, and the unique art of the film medium. These color films, distributed by OFM Productions, are illustrated with clips from the best in feature films. Brian Firth agrees that the technique of films should not be a study in itself but that "the work will have to be done through discussion—that is through a sharing of, and reasoning about, responses" (3, pp. 98-99).

A second purpose of discussion of film for the slow learners is to allow these students to talk about their own problems through a fictional medium. Charles F. Grenier feels that after sharing a film it is important that a teacher listen to students discuss "their feelings, their thoughts, themselves." He further says that the teacher should "explore relationships that are relevant to the kids, to their own lives" (7, p. 33). William Sloan notes that showing a film such as "The Test," which involves cheating on a test and the townspeople's reaction to the teacher's method of handling the incident, is a good way to get immediately launched into a discussion of principles of ethics, right and wrong, good and bad behavior, and the responsibility of the school when right and wrong lead into other issues involving good citizenship (12, p. 47).
Not only are slow learners helped by this group therapy aspect of discussing films, they achieve a third purpose—a gain in valuable practice in oral expression with topics that can vitally concern them. This practice is valuable because, as Andrew Wilkinson says, oral expression is "not only important, but fundamental." He points out that psychologists have shown that the spoken language is the base "not only of the human ability to speak, not only of the human ability to communicate, but of the human ability to develop fully a personality and to develop cognitively." He further calls speech "a central factor in the development of the personality and closely related to human happiness and well being" (16, pp. 73-74).

A final purpose of discussion of films is to give slow learners the experiences and ideas about which to write. Students have more to write about having seen a film and discussed it in class (2, p. 10). Firth says, "From related experiences and the comparative discussions that will be provoked, individual written work can be initiated" (13, p. 107). A teacher might show a film dealing with a social problem, such as "Phoebe," which deals with a premarital pregnancy, that does not tell the ending. The film does not actually show what happened to the girl. It leaves her going toward the ocean; then she hesitates. The students will want to discuss this. They will through the discussion hear other views about the film and become stimulated and excited about
communicating their ideas. Agreeing with this view, Donna Geyer states, "When discussion is stopped, and he [the student] is not permitted to talk, but he is permitted to write, then he will grab the pencil and make it shriek angrily across the paper" (6, p. 905).

There is little doubt, therefore, that viewing films stimulates discussion. The question remains whether or not the more traditional form of communication—writing—also may be stimulated.

Various types of writing may be stimulated as a creative response to using films in the education of slow learners. These responses may be simple, such as the students' writing things they noticed in the film to be used later in discussions, or they may be creative writing, such as short stories or movie scripts. Firth suggests that the teacher require some written commentary or criticism relating specifically to the films seen or to the kinds of problems the films explore. He says the best examples of these could be kept in appropriately labelled folders, such as The Adolescent in Films, in the classroom. He feels that films the students see outside class in the theaters could be reviewed or discussed and a folder made of these also (3, p. 107). August Franz has his class communicate their ideas about each film in a movie journal—a notebook in which the students keep a record of each movie seen in class along with their comments on what about the film appealed to them or
disturbed them. If they wish, they may also comment on movies or television shows they have seen. The teacher collects the notebooks monthly to read them and to make comments (4, p. 1235). Robert G. Lambert uses a different approach. Just after the students see the film in class, he asks them to write for ten minutes, not only on what they saw but why they saw things as they did (8, p. 34). Perhaps this type of writing exercise would have to be used later in the course after the slow learners' attention has been called to film language or technique. But some classes will be perceptive enough to write of why they saw things as they did early in the course. The teacher will have to judge the use of this writing exercise in his own class situation. Peters suggests asking the students to keep "film diaries" containing descriptions of the different films and personal comments on them. Or the whole class could keep such a diary (9, p. 75). A more difficult task, but one within the grasp of the slow learner, would be for students to write short themes describing their thoughts and feeling resulting from watching films (1, p. 567). Hardy R. Finch reports that teachers are discovering that slow students, if they are encouraged, can handle many writing assignments. One such assignment is called the "state-of-mind" paper. This paper allows students to "express their thoughts, feelings, and convictions about ideas generated during class discussions" (2, p. 11). Most teachers agreed that the slow learner could write short
stories and poetry if motivated and encouraged to do so. They found the non-dialogue films to be most effective in stimulating the response of short stories and poetry (2, p. 11; 14, p. 46). Several people, notably Kirk Scheufele, have had success with students writing movie scripts. He first gave the students an example of a shooting script that he had found in a magazine. He then put them into groups of about five each and told them to write a workable script. After each group had turned in a script, the class chose one to rewrite and prepare as a working script to be made into a movie (11, p. 427). Beverly H. Gallup structured her class's script writing a little more rigidly. Instead of the teacher giving the class members carte blanche on their choice of subjects as did Schuefele, the students had to use situations from television, books they had read, or teacher-suggested ideas. She reports of her students' writing: "The belief that the basic skills student, or slow learner, has little imagination has not been supported in my experience" (5, pp. 622-623).

Since one of the basic reasons for this film approach to English is to alter the slow learners' attitude toward English, it might be that if they had to write all the time they would again be "turned off" despite the interest and motivation generated by the films. Nonverbal responses may be solicited from these students occasionally to keep them involved. These nonverbal responses are not straying from
the realm of the English teacher. They are communication. In his article "English Through the Senses," Lloyd C. Welling says,

Most teachers readily admit the importance of teaching students how to think and how to express themselves. Unfortunately, many teachers stop there. They value only verbal thought and the written and spoken word. But man communicates in many nonverbal ways (15, p. 61).

As an example of nonverbal communication, after the students have seen the film entitled "The Hole," which makes a powerful statement about the danger of sudden nuclear destruction, the teacher could ask them to make a collage, either individually or as a group, that would make a similar statement about war. Students have seen the film "The Red Balloon" and drawn pictures, abstract or traditional, that showed the mood of the film or registered their reaction to it. Again, a short film— one like "Barbara" that focuses on personal identity, can stimulate an autobiographical collage. Although Welling worked with personality collages not in connection with film, some of his ideas could carry over into the area of film. He asked his students to work out the following questions in terms of visual images and colors: "What is your greatest fear? What do you consider the most valuable things in life? What makes you laugh? If your temperament were equivalent to a color (or texture), what would that color (or texture) be?"

One of his students decided he had a split personality and because of this he chose purple as his color. His collage was divided between red and blue (the components of purple),
the blue side containing all the calm and peaceful things of his life; the red side containing all the destructive and violent (15, p. 65). Too, students may be asked to tell stories in a nonverbal manner. Kodak produces Photo Story Discovery Sets which are inexpensive sets of still photographs in both black and white and color that can be arranged in a sequence to tell a story visually. The students can take their own photographs for a visual story too. Sequences such as A Day at School, The Drag Race, or Detention Hall can be developed.

The film, therefore, offers the teacher a great deal of opportunity to change attitudes and stimulate discussion and writing. The last chapter offers examples of specific implementation of the methods that have been discussed.
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CHAPTER III

USE OF SPECIFIC FILMS

Students' discussion and writing can be stimulated through the use of films. These films, though, need to be arranged in some meaningful order. For the slow students the order that will mean most will be the arrangement in units. These units can be used to approach the study of films in many ways, but for the slow learners the approaches discussed in detail in this chapter--cross media, genre, and thematic--are probably the most successful because of the students' interests and capabilities.

Cross-Media Approach

The cross-media approach to film study, the comparison and contrast of what one medium can do with what another can or cannot, may develop by two methods. One method involves the study of media based on the same story or novel and the second the study of different stories or novels incorporating similar themes. In the first method the teacher and student might read a novel or short story, see a film adaptation of it, and then compare and contrast the two--analyzing the similarities and differences in technique, idea, and total experience in a filmmaker's adapting a short story and a novel. In the second method, a motion picture might be the
core of the unit with a newspaper feature article or essay and a short story added for comparison and contrast, but the three media are not adaptations of the same work.

Because this film study is for the slow learner, there are some particulars the teacher will have to observe to make the cross-media approach successful. The teacher using the cross-media approach probably should read the written material aloud because many of the students are nonverbal. Laura Greene in "This Worked with a Low-Ability Group" reports, "They [the slow learners] seem to receive ideas better in the aural-oral approach than in silent reading" (8, p. 273). Too, trying to read this material would give them a feeling of failure—a feeling that the use of films is trying to overcome. Laura Greene, in the same article, attests to the fact that slow learners, even though they are poor readers, are good listeners. She calls them "the most appreciative group I ever read to" (8, p. 273). Also, the teacher should show the film first with a brief introduction and then read the story to allow the film to act as motivation for the discussion and writing that will follow. Too, the film should be shown again after the story has been read to refresh the students' memories before the discussion and writing.

A short story and its film adaptation that have been found successful by the writer for this first method mentioned for the cross-media approach are Ambrose Bierce's
short story "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and Robert Enrico's adaptation of the story with the same title. Although these are two comparatively short forms, they both contain beauty and truth. Ambrose Bierce's story can be discussed as a short story on several levels: an exciting action story set in the Civil War, an example of O'Henry's surprise ending, an empathetic portrait of a man yearning for life, and a statement about war, that condition where deaths take place merely as "occurrences." Enrico's adaptation, which received the Grand Prize at the 1962 Cannes Film Festival and the 1964 Academy Award for the "Best Live Action Short Subject," can be discussed on the same levels as well as on the visual and audio elements that add an extra dimension to the story.

The story and film both involve a Confederate soldier who is about to be hanged at Owl Creek Bridge situated somewhere in northern Alabama, but the story is somewhat different from the film. The soldier, Peyton Farquhar, who is the main character in the story, is both attractive and sympathetic to the reader even though he is to be hanged as a deserter. Farquhar, a Southern gentleman, miraculously escapes hanging when the rope breaks and he runs, dodging bullets and his pursuing captors. As he runs he realizes the beauty and joy of life because he has just overcome death. He finally reaches his large plantation house and sees his wife there. As he is about to embrace his wife, he feels a blow on the
back of his neck, and then there is only silence and darkness. The end of the story tells that Peyton Farquhar is dead, hanged from Owl Creek Bridge.

The film has very little dialogue. It only suggests that the soldier may be a deserter. The sound and the camera basically tell the story of the soldier's discovering the value of life. The opening of the film establishes the horrors of war by picturing the officer's aloof face, the indifferent soldiers, the instrument of execution, and the anxious victim. A folk song, "I Want to Be a Livin' Man," accompanies the joy of his seemingly escaping hanging and being alive. He notices that the leaves are covered with dew drops; he sees insects flitting across branches; he discovers the grass. The ending of the story is rendered visually effective by Enrico. As the soldier approaches his plantation home, he rushes toward his wife, and a life that will give him another chance to enjoy it. As he runs, the director of the film uses three telephoto, identical shots of the soldier running toward his wife to make the anticipation of the audience greater. Just as they meet, drums roll, and the camera goes back to his hanging at Owl Creek Bridge, leaving the shocked viewer to realize that the escape had just been a fantasy.

The questions to begin discussion, handled by comparison and contrast between the short story and the film, should provide an appreciation and understanding of both media:
What is the setting? Why is the man being executed? The film and the story are both making a statement about war. Why are they entitled "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"? In the short story who is telling the story? In the film what is telling the story? Is the point of view consistent throughout the story? The film? Would the story be just as effective if it were told from another point of view? How does the author treat the element of "time" in the story? Recall instances of how the director uses the element of time in the film. What clues in the story prepare the reader for the ending? What clues in the film act as a foreshadowing of what finally happens? What are the various visual and audio elements that might let the audience know that it is experiencing a fantasy, not a reality? Taking into account both forms, the film and the short story, which details convey the essential traits of the main character and the soldiers? Which details are important either for their emotional impact or their communication of ideas? Tell the point which makes clear the central idea of the story. Recall the sequence which seems to convey the central idea of the film. What is the mood of the story? The film? How is the mood created in the film? With what final feeling is the audience left in the last long shot of the bridge?

There are other stories, novels, and plays which have been adapted to film that could be used for this same cross-media approach. The teacher might wish to work with Twelve
Angry Men, Light in the Forest, The Old Man and the Sea, or To Kill a Mockingbird—all of which are within the capabilities and interests of the slow learners.

The second method of the cross-media approach is built around a theme found in more than one medium. For the slow learners, a particularly apt theme might be dignity or pride. These students do not believe the teacher when he talks of these abstractions of human dignity and inner pride. They believe the concrete external symbols—a car of their own, nice clothes, a job with status—are things to be proud of. The teacher cannot tell them that individuals can emerge with their integrity intact and can, in fact, elicit respect and compassion. The students have to arrive at these truths themselves. And they can arrive at these truths by studying the feature film Requiem for a Heavyweight and the short story "Flowers for Algernon," by Daniel Keyes, which has been expanded into a television show, "The Two Worlds of Charly Gordon"; further expanded in a full-length novel, Charly; and finally made into a feature film also entitled Charly. As with the first method of the cross-media approach, the students again need to see the film first and have the short story read aloud to them. Because of the length of Requiem for a Heavyweight (85 minutes), it should be seen only once. Students can handle a two-day, two-part viewing of a film, since they are used to seeing television show continuations a week apart.
Requiem for a Heavyweight, written by Rod Serling, was the first ninety-minute presentation in television history. Both the television show and the motion picture later produced by David Susskind are an indictment of the corrupt prizefighting racket. The movie is packed with effective film techniques which help to dramatize its important insight into the human condition (6, p. 223). In the opening scenes of the film, the audience is made to identify with the main character, the fighter Mountain Rivera, by seeing the world through his eyes (7, p. 40). The audience at first does not see the fighter but sees everything in a lurching, stumbling way. It sees the fighter for the first time as he looks at himself in a mirror.

Mountain Rivera has fought for seventeen years under one manager and remembers no other way of life. Uneducated, barely intelligible because of injuries to his vocal cords sustained over the years, ugly and scarred, he can record no accomplishments other than that he was once ranked fifth in the heavyweight class and in 111 bouts he never took a dive. Proud of these achievements, he has a dignity that sharply contrasts with the parasites around him. Even though Mountain pathetically fails in his effort to find a new life, he still retains dignity and pride.

The short story "Flowers for Algernon" records in diary form the impressions of Charlie Gordon, a self-sufficient mentally retarded man, who is a human guinea pig in a
scientific experiment using surgery and enzyme injections to increase his intelligence to astronomical levels. This story first appeared in a science fiction magazine, but when it was published in Literary Cavalcade, a magazine published for school use, it became a short story that almost all English teachers wanted to use. It has been tried at all levels in high school and has worked everywhere (10, p. 29). Charlie Gordon's pride, integrity, and dignity, even in his lowly position as a janitor in a bakery shop, parallel and reinforce these human qualities as exemplified by Mountain Rivera in Requiem for a Heavyweight.

The questions for discussion revolve around the content and film technique of Requiem for a Heavyweight and the content of "Flowers for Algernon"—both the content of the story by itself and the content in comparison to Requiem for a Heavyweight.

Questions such as the following might be used to discuss the content of Requiem for a Heavyweight in the context of inner pride and human dignity: What is the relationship among Maish, Army, and Mountain Rivera? How does each one view the situation? How complex are the motivations and characterizations? Is Mountain's feeling that he owes everything to Maish justified? Compare Mountain with anyone skilled in only one limited area who can no longer function in that occupation. What are the effects of technological advances and automation on able-bodied men? Discuss the sense of pride,
dignity, integrity that emanates from this semi-literate, battered, unintelligible hulk of a man. Why is this positive emotional response to him so strong? How is Mountain used by the parasites of the fight circle? In what way does Grace Miller also use him? How does Mountain's lack of ability to communicate effectively render him more vulnerable than he might have been? Discuss the students' reactions to wrestling. Compare their responses with Mountain's. Why is there such an abhorrence of wrestling in Mountain?

To encourage class discussion of the film technique, the teacher could use the following questions: What is the purpose of the opening shot? What is the effect of having well-known fighters watching the television screen in the "graveyard" bar? What is the effect of the subjective point of view in the opening sequence? What is the effect of seeing Muhammed Ali (Cassius Clay) as Mountain's opponent in this, Mountain's last fight? When is Mountain first seen? Why is this particularly effective dramatically? The dwarfs in the wrestling match were shot from what camera angle? What was the director's purpose in shooting them from this angle?

"Flowers for Algernon," too, should be discussed with the emphasis on pride and dignity. To facilitate this end and to compare the short story with the film, the teacher might ask these questions: In what ways is Charlie Gordon's pride like Mountain Rivera's? In what ways are Drs. Strauss and Nemur using Charlie? Considering the alternatives, do you
think they were justified? Do you feel that the discoveries and plans of science conceived in the name of "progress" always benefit mankind? Compare Grace Miller with Miss Kinnian. Were their motives similar or different? Compare Charlie's attitude toward Algernon with Mountain's attitude toward the graveyard habitués. Discuss Charlie Gordon's retention of his dignity and integrity at the end of the story. Compare Charlie with Mountain at the end of their respective stories. Discuss the structure of the story. Since the subjective point of view enhances its dramatic impact, would "Flowers for Algernon" be equally effective as a motion picture? (At this point, those students who have seen the movie Charly could have some very effective statements to contribute.) What are the advantages and limitations of the film medium? the print medium? Why is Requiem for a Heavyweight particularly effective as a film and "Flowers for Algernon" so evocative as literature?

After the students have discussed both Requiem for a Heavyweight and "Flowers for Algernon," they should have enough ideas to write on many subjects—what gives a man dignity even though he may be a "has-been" like Mountain Rivera? how far should dignity be carried as in the case of Rivera's feelings toward Maish? how frequently do we all use people as Mountain was used—sometimes deliberately, sometimes subconsciously? what should or should not be done in research? was it right for Charlie to be used as an
experimental guinea pig? why do we ridicule someone who is retarded or different? The students could again respond nonverbally with a series of photographs depicting the dignity of people in menial positions or the pride of someone who has done a job well. They could also find pictures telling the brutality of the boxing world. Too, they might find ways to picture Charlie Gordon's world before his mind-expanding experience and after--pictures or paintings of his possessions, his view of the world, or his feelings toward people. The teacher after a while will be able to depend on the students for ideas for nonverbal communication, because, as Debes reports, "Once kids work with the visual medium for any length of time, they begin to look for new ways to say things visually" (4, p. 27).

Either method employed in the cross-media approach to film study--using the same story in different media and comparing and contrasting the two or using different media to explore a basic theme--can stimulate students' discussion and writing. But these can also be stimulated by another approach, the genre or type approach.

Genre Approach

The genre approach to film study, the viewing of films as types--western, musical, comedy, horror, gangster, historical, or espionage--gives the student the opportunity to study the conventions and variations of the genre presented,
as well as theme, content, and incidental film technique.

Of the genres mentioned, the two that seem most appropriate for slow learners are the western and the comedy. The western genre is a successful type to study with slow learners because the western usually uses a maximum of action and movement and a minimum of dialogue. It is also successful because of its simplicity. There are only a few basic plots with a set of stock characters involved (6, p. 51). The comedy genre is one that most students enjoy. In 1965, the British Broadcasting Company found through a survey that seventy-nine per cent of the sixteen to nineteen year olds preferred comedies over other types of films (9, p. 49).

The films for study of the western genre—The Virginian, Shane, High Noon, and Cat Ballou—have been chosen for two main reasons. First, many experts recognize these movies as outstanding and significant; and second, teachers have had successes in using these films with students. If these films were shown in the order mentioned, first The Virginian, next Shane, then High Noon, and finally, Cat Ballou, and if the students used their prior movie-viewing experience, they would be able to discuss the conventions of the western and the variations given to it. These conventions of the western should be determined by the students without the teacher's lecturing about them. The students should also be able to discuss the content of each film and the theme, taking into account the film techniques which led them to decide the theme.
The Virginian, the film that should be shown first, uses many of the conventions of the western genre. In it is the hero, a relaxed, virtuous fellow who is usually on his melancholy way somewhere else. This hero has a white hat, a good horse, a fast gun, a clean shave, and a good woman who does not understand his actions or his code. Although, or maybe because, she is cultured and civilized, she does not get the hero. He drifts on. In The Virginian is also the convention of the villain, a man dressed in black, with whom the hero must solve the issue of right and wrong in a climactic gunfight in which the hero and right triumph. The bad woman is in The Virginian as in other westerns. This woman, usually a dance-hall girl or a prostitute, understands the hero but rarely gets him either. Finally there is the convention of the innocent friend or protégé of the hero—an Indian, a young child, a younger brother, or an old man—who serves as a foil for the hero, admiring his skill and heroism but not understanding his doubts (6, p. 52).

Although The Virginian, starring Gary Cooper, is a museum piece, produced in 1929, it was the first big talking western, and it does contain the conventions of the genre that the students can discover and discuss together. Then they can also discuss the usual plots of westerns:

1.) the good sheriff, 2.) the reformed gunfighter, 3.) the hero searching for a lost enemy or loved one, 4.) the group against the wilderness, perhaps seeking gold or treasure, 5.) the cavalry vs. the Indians, or 6.) the cattlemen vs. the farmers or settlers" (6, p. 52).
The teacher then could ask whether knowing the plot and the conventions beforehand ruins the enjoyment of the western movie. After studying the plots of western movies and the conventions of the western genre found in *The Virginian*, the students should be told to look for these in the other western films they are going to view and to notice, too, the variations on these plots and conventions. How are the stories or characters changed? Are they given new depth? Has the director used fresh techniques in gunfights, chases, or battles?

Almost every teacher who uses films in the classroom chooses *Shane* as one for study. Adapted from Jack Schaefer's novel, it is a film of artistic merit and an Academy Award winner. This film fits in well with the study of western plots and conventions. Using the traditional "reformed gunfighter" plot, the director George Stevens builds his film on the conventions of the mysterious gunfighter Shane who arrives from out of the horizon to help the homesteaders against the cattle boss, of the devoted boy, of the professional killer dressed in black, of the triumph of right by violence, and finally of the disappearance of the gunfighter at the end. The movie, even though it sounds banal and trite, has a "beauty of technique" (6, p. 54) that overcomes the weaknesses of the script. Stevens glorifies the western form by combining sight and sound, some excellent color photography, and several outstanding performances, especially that of Alan Ladd as Shane, to make an exceptional film.
After noting the western conventions and plot, the students could be led to discuss content and film technique. To facilitate this discussion, the teacher might use "A Film Discussion Guide of Shane," distributed by Films Incorporated, or questions and ideas like the following: Why is the audience allowed to see Shane through the eyes of the family and not through the eyes of someone like a sheriff who had vowed to capture the gunfighter? Why are there thunder clouds overhead and a storm threatening when the villain murders a man? Why is Shane reluctant to kill Wilson, the villain? There is a rivalry between Shane and Joe Starret, the father of Joey. What is the cause of this rivalry? Could the character of the boy in Shane be removed without harming the picture? Why? Compare the hero, villain, and leading female character in Shane to one that you have seen recently on television or at a theater.

So that the students will not think they have to write or produce something after viewing each film, it would be a good idea to leave writing or nonverbal projects until after seeing the next two films, High Noon and Cat Ballou.

High Noon, like Shane, is an Academy Award winner. Also like Shane, it is based on one of the western plots, this time, the "good sheriff." Gary Cooper plays the part of Will Kane, a lawman who stands alone against evil. Like Shane too, High Noon has the classic villain. High Noon does have two conventions that Shane does not—the good and bad women.
A great difference between the two films is that High Noon has a social message. When the townspeople do not support the marshall when he needs them to help fight the villain Frank Miller, who is arriving on the noon train, and when they are corrupted by fear, the film does comment significantly on the meaning of democracy and social responsibility. "The real evil of the picture is not . . . the badmen but rather the effect of fear and compromise in a community." The marshall is alone but not by choice as in the classic western genre. In the first part of the film he is married and appears to have the good will of the townspeople. "High Noon tells why the marshall is alone and in so doing shows that far from being a classic of the western form, it is a story of a fear-ridden community, in short, a kind of social drama in western clothes" (12, p. 101).

Discussion of this film may go in many directions. The teacher might first want to motivate class discussion of the basic conflict of the story by asking: Who is the hero of the film and who is the antagonist? Is it Frank Miller or the town of Hadleyville? Since images and time play an important role in this film, discussion should focus on these. The director Fred Zinneman has made constant use of clocks and references to the time in order to build suspense. The audience sees clocks in the stores, the homes, and the hotel. Marshall Kane repeatedly asks what time it is. The shadows of the buildings lengthen, also reminding the audience of the
passage of time. The teacher might ask, then, these questions relating to images and time: How many different ways did the director show the passage of time? How often were clocks used? Did this seem overdone? Dimitri Tiomkin's musical score of this film won an academy award. Did the musical score heighten the mood of the film? Was the ballad "Do Not Forsake Me, O My Darling" essential to the mood? Why? Finally, in connection with the movie as a type, the teacher could ask questions like the following: What are some of the conventions that made this film a genuine western? What were some of the conventions in the film that made it different from most westerns? What is the marshall's crucial choice, and why is it so opposed by the townspeople, who all seem to be rather good people? Does this conflict reflect a problem in modern society?

The last film shown in the western genre is Cat Ballou, a spoof of the western fiction film. Probably after seeing this film the students will just need to discuss what classic western conventions it changes and what conventions it adheres to. The plot of Cat Ballou traces the familiar conventions of the genre, including the traditional revenge theme. Miss Catherine Ballou, a virginal schoolmarm heroine, returns from her eastern finishing school in time to see her father defending his property against the railroad men. Sir Harry Percival, head of the monied interests of the railroad in the east, has hired Strawn, a villainous gunfighter whose nose was bitten
off in a fight, to help the railroad men. Catherine Ballou has no choice but to help her family. In order to do this, she turns into a tomboy and forms her own gang—a loving cattle rustler, his preacher-outlaw uncle, and the villain's unemployed and alcoholic twin brother, Kid Shelleen. When Catherine's father is killed and the corrupt sheriff refuses to help catch the killers, Cat leads her gang in a train robbery. After escaping from the posse, Cat's gang takes refuge in the outlaw fortress, Hole-in-the-Wall. The gang is horrified when Strawn comes to demand that the money they took from the train be returned in twenty-four hours. This demand necessitates a show-down between Kid Shelleen and Strawn that Kid Shelleen wins. Cat then avenges her father's death and marries the amorous cattle rustler, thereby ending the film.

At this time the students could write about ideas that have been smoldering in their minds for the last four movies. They might want to write on the realism and believability of the films, on the problem of the individual against the crowd, on the nature of man, on responsibility, on what learning western plots and conventions has done to their enjoyment of western films, or on what makes Cat Ballou comical. A nonverbal production that some students might want to attempt is a silent eight-millimeter western movie using the western conventions. Slow learners can make these movies. People who have worked with these student filmmakers say that the films
may not be masterpieces but they usually bring excitement and sustained interest to the classroom (14, p. 431). Most teachers experienced with student movie making suggest that the students use the eight-millimeter camera rather than the sixteen-millimeter because many families have the cameras and because the film costs less. Peters says that if students cannot produce actual films because of the prohibitive cost, the students can shoot a series of still photographs that can be turned into a filmstrip and projected (13, p. 72).

The films mentioned for the western genre are only a few of the many that could be used. Other western films equally significant and outstanding are Bad Day at Black Rock; The Ox Bow Incident; Seven Samurai, from which The Magnificent Seven was made; Northwest Passage; My Darling Clementine; or Lonely Are the Brave.

The comedy genre can be studied as was the western, noting the comic conventions and variations on the conventions, the content, and the themes of the films presented. The students can study how the film characters and directors visually exploit the absurd, the impossible, the fantastic, and the ordinary by using the gag, the chase, tricks, props, characterization, and editing. They can study also the content and the themes of the films that contain messages in the guise of comedy—messages denouncing totalitarian authority or the rat race in which man lives, or any number of other messages. In this unit there is no formal writing,
only notetaking on what makes films funny and what messages they contain. The emphasis of the unit is on discussion so that the students can enjoy the films.

The two-part series called *The Golden Age of Comedy* and *When Comedy Was King* has been selected as the first movie of the unit because it best shows the conventions of visual comedy. This series contains scenes, situations, and characters drawn from everyday American life with good-natured but pointed satire on common foibles and social problems. Each of the eighty-minute films in the series is a compiled review of the early film comics—including The Keystone Cops, Charlie Chaplin, Fatty Arbuckle, Buster Keaton, Ben Turpin, Harry Langdon, and Laurel and Hardy. To help the teacher, each film is broken into forty-minute segments that can fit into the normal scheduling of most classes, and each film has narration that identifies the comics and briefly explains their great moments. The discussion of this series, which Tom Andrews calls "a most useful tool in a study of comedy" (1, p. 50), should be on why the series is funny with the students mentioning the visual slapstick routines—the prat-falls, the flying pies, the careening cars; the absurd situations in which the comedians found themselves; the characterizations; the unexpected events; and the editing. The discussion should also focus on the message of the series. The early screen comics satirized those people who took themselves too seriously. Contemporary society and personal pretensions were slapped around as often as the comics were.
For the rest of the unit on the comedy genre, contemporary short films are used. These short films do have advantages for the teacher. They are less expensive than feature films. A short film rents from approximately three dollars to fifteen dollars while a feature film rents from twenty-five dollars on up. Another advantage of short films is that because of their length, they can be shown, discussed, and shown again within the time limit of a normal class period.

One such short film that Anderson suggests for inclusion in a unit on comedy is "Le Poulet" or "The Chicken," a fifteen-minute film that Anderson says is funny because there is emphasis placed on the unexpected; there is visual irony in the story with a little boy knowing something that his parents do not know; and there is an example of "authority being slighted" (1, p. 49). The story of "Le Poulet" is a simple one: A small boy, knowing that his father believes only roosters should be destined for the stew pot because hens lay eggs, carefully places an egg under his pet rooster every day. His father and mother are convinced that the pet is a hen until one morning they are awakened by the pet rooster's crow. But the story does have a happy ending. The discussion of this film should center around what makes it funny. The students might wish to talk of film technique also because the story "Le Poulet" is filmed with "excellent photography, [and] whimsy in both cinema and musical aspects" (6, p. 181).
Another short film that Anderson says he has used successfully in class is a four-minute, award-winning parody entitled "The Critic." This film can be viewed as a clever cartoon or an incisive comment on people and their interpretations of life. The film consists of shapes, patterns, and colors with a narrator, a self-appointed critic, commenting on what he sees. The critic finds the film incomprehensible and annoying, and is always making remarks about the images: "A cockroach! I didn't pay two dollars to come to the movies to see a cockroach." The critic makes what he can out of the shapes and patterns on the screen, and his comments are funny. At one place he thinks he recognizes the merging of two blobs as "the sex life of two things." Because Anderson says that teacher and students often disagree about what is being ridiculed in "The Critic," probably the following is a good question for beginning a discussion: What is the film all about? Then the urge that most people have to foist their opinions on others could be discussed: Is the old man's behavior unique? Finally the class could discuss what things made the film funny, such as the old man's unexpected comments.

The next film, "Automania 2000," is a ten-minute animated film in color suggested by Frances Bock to be included in a film unit on comedy (6, p. 111). Called a "highly imaginative animated film" (6, p. 174), it is a slightly sarcastic attack, specifically, on the growing number of cars and in general on all kinds of modern goods. In "Automania
2000," as the cars get larger and larger, people feel the compulsive need to get more and more of these bigger cars. When the cars become stacked upon each other, the men trapped in them are fed via helicopter. The discontent felt by the underfed in the cars at the bottom leads to more cars. Finally the scientists produce the car that reproduces itself. Everything in the film is exaggerated, but it does make its point: it is probably never wise to produce anything beyond man's control, but wisdom has little to do with the issue. As a slam on the way Americans spend their money, "Automania 2000" could be used to motivate a discussion about America's affluent society. More specific areas could be discussed also: Why does the world become stacked with cars? Is there a truth in this cartoon? Or is it simply a fantasy, based on no real problem? Could the theme of this film be applied to other areas of modern life? If so, what areas?

Another short film suggested by Frances Bock is a fifteen-minute black and white film entitled "That's Me." The film tells of the interaction of a social worker and Juan, a happy Puerto Rican, who just sits on a bench in Central Park and plays his guitar. The social worker is concerned with Juan's seeming maladjustment to life in New York City. Juan has no job, he is not married, and he has no education. After their discussion about Juan's problems, it turns out that the social worker is really the unadjusted one and Juan
is well adjusted. He just does not accept American middle class standards.

Because of the technique of this film (the script was improvised by the actors) and because of the kind of question it raises (what makes a person adjusted), the normal discussion of the film might be discarded to allow students to act out similar situations: a hippie and his "straight" uncle who is trying to help him or a wild cyclist and a policeman who wants to straighten the cyclist's life out before it is ruined. After the small dramas have been acted out or if the students do not want to act, these questions might be used for discussion: What things does the social worker assume when he comes to talk to Juan? Do these assumptions apply to Juan? Why? Why is the film entitled "That's Me"?

The final film used for the comedy genre is "Time Piece," an eight-minute color film that ridicules man and the rat race in which he lives. It has many of the comic conventions that make it funny including the speeding up of the film and the accentuation of the absurd. But it is a disturbing film also. "Full of symbolism concerning time and conformity, the effect is first humorous, but further thought supports the film's serious intent" (16, p. 49).

The story of "Time Piece" is, in Sohn's words, "a life in a day of a man in a hospital bed which becomes a fantasy of comparisons that comment on modern life, often
satirically" (16, p. 49). A young man lies in a hospital bed. Suddenly images appear on the screen, centering around the man: he is on a pogo stick; he stamps papers with ridiculous words; he sees an assembly line producing rusty, empty cans. There is a one-dollar bill with the same man's head in Washington's place, and this head cries weakly, "Help!" His head appears instead of a roast pig on a platter. Again he cries, "Help!" Finally as his head pops out of the seat on a commode, he cries his last pitiful, "Help!" Then a woman calmly and impersonally flushes him down the drain. The image of a quickened clock appears throughout, helping the film make a comment on the tempo of modern society.

"Time Piece" should be shown several times before the teacher initiates discussion because of its fast pace that lets so much slip by the audience. Then he could go to the meaning of the film: What images struck you as being most essential to the film's meaning? What do you think the images were suggesting? Why is the film entitled "Time Piece"? Although it is not suggested that students write or produce anything for this unit on comedy, the writer has seen some interesting nonverbal reactions to this film "Time Piece." One was a découpage of several images of a man running after a pocketwatch with wings. Another was a collage of all types of watches and clocks that the student was able to find in magazines. The most original product, though, was a painted box literally covered with cutouts from magazines of all sorts
of the film's images. On the front of this box was placed the hands and face of a real clock with the clockworks inside the box. The student who made the box said he could have made the clock run, but he felt the box with the broken clock was more symbolic of the film's theme.

Thematic Approach

Films can be grouped together as units that develop a theme. Feature films and short films may be mixed in various combinations "to provide perspective on a theme, to present opposing viewpoints about a controversial issue, or to build layers of understanding about a topic" (15). Usually the choice of theme depends on what is of current interest to the students and on the types of films that are obtainable. The themes of interest to slow learners include among others drugs, war, traffic safety, alcoholism, and adolescence. If films on drugs and safety were available, they would be extremely useful. But at this time not many outstanding films are yet available dealing with these themes. Therefore, because of the availability of films and because of the interests of students, the two themes developed in this section concern war and adolescence.

One of the problems facing the contemporary world that is of interest to students and that can be explored through film is the problem of war. Both the boys and girls in the English class of slow learners are affected by war: the boys
will soon be drafted; the girls' boy friends often are already in the armed forces. Using contemporary films that are calculated to evoke thoughtful and critical response, the teacher can present the causes of war to these students with "The Hat: Is This War Necessary?" "The Hole," and "Neighbors" and its results with "Memorandum," "Night and Fog," and "The Soldier" (18, pp. 14-15). These films are essentially pacifistic in nature. But the teacher can lead the students through discussion to see that although war is horrible, other things, such as loss of freedom or honor, are just as bad or worse.

"The Hat: Is This War Necessary?" an eighteen-minute color cartoon by John and Faith Hubley, treats a familiar theme: the stupidity of letting one line decide so much of people's lives. Two guards have been assigned to patrol the two sides of a borderline; each one is extremely careful not to step a bit over the line, so much so that when one's hat falls on the other side of the line, he cannot retrieve it. The absurdity of the line is heightened when animals—a duck and later a chipmunk—leisurely cross freely over it. The guards cannot decide what to do about the hat. They cannot find a military regulation to cover the problem, but they can talk. Their talk dwells on the line which divides them, why it must exist, where the first lines came from, and why lines have stayed so long. Near the end of the cartoon, they discover they are much closer than they might have thought
and remove their hats and attempt to walk off together, only to race back to their positions in a moment. "The Hat: Is This War Necessary?" is rich in suggested meanings about the lines that divide men and nations.

Discussion of this cartoon can reveal more than was superficially apparent in the film. All the small things are worth discussing: the fish separated by a weed, the Egyptian making lines, the snow, the dead duck which falls over the line. The teacher can use the following questions to further stimulate discussion: What is the line? Does it have to be there? What does it stand for? Why all the references to animals? What is the constant idea that the two guards discuss? Do they come to any conclusions? What is suggested when both pull on hoods and shed their hats? What does this film say about the way in which people relate with one another?

Another cartoon by John and Faith Hubley, "The Hole," a fifteen-minute cartoon, is a look at the danger of nuclear disaster seen through the eyes of two construction workers. The two men, a Negro and a fat white man, are preparing the sewers for a building being raised. They discuss somewhat avidly the possibility and danger of an accidental nuclear explosion. The white man is nervous about accidents, whether accidental nuclear explosions or accidents on the job. But the Negro's philosophy is, "Accidents happen because people want them to happen." They are psychologically willed. As
the cartoon progresses, the "accident" seems to become more and more imminent, with the men picturing a mole haplessly chewing through the wires that would set off an alert and cause major powers to prepare to a nuclear attack. When finally a large piece of machinery is dropped from a crane, the two men rush up the ladder expecting to see (and for a moment believing they do see) the aftermath of the bomb dropped by mistake. The tone of the ending is, "Not yet..." There is still time.

Because of the rapidity of the film's dialogue and the film's seeming ambiguity in the first showing, "The Hole" should be seen two or three times to ensure a real understanding of the theme. After the showings, these questions can be used for discussion: Why are the two men working in a hole? Why is the cartoon entitled "The Hole"? As the worker makes the statement, "Accidents happen because people want them to happen," he flips through the newspaper for proof, and all he can see are pictures of missiles and rockets and headlines about bombs and the arms race. What does the worker mean by this? Is he right? What is the theme of the cartoon? Would this theme be more effective if it had been presented in a realistic manner? Why do the two workers first see the destruction caused by a nuclear bomb as they emerge from their hole after the crane has dropped the piece of machinery? What is the real evil exposed in this film?
The last film suggesting causes of war is "Neighbors," an eight-minute animated film by Norman McLaren that Sohn calls "one of the most powerful favorites among students" (17, p. 17). This film contains an interesting film technique as well as an evocative theme. Devised by McLaren, the technique applies the principles normally used in the photographing of animated and cartoon movies to the shooting of actors; that is, instead of placing drawings, cartoons, or puppets in front of the animation camera, we [the producers] place real human beings (2, p. 36).

This stop-action technique, that McLaren christened pixilation, allows very unusual things to happen to people; in this particular film, for example, a baby is used as a football in the quarrel between the neighbors and a man "ice skates" over a lawn. The story of "Neighbors," told entirely through visuals, describes the growth of dissension and war among men. Two neighbors, dressed alike except for their ties, are sitting on the grass in front of their houses, which are also quite similar. When a flower sprouts on the dividing line between their houses, the two men share it for a while by smelling it. But they do not share it for long. Greed for the sole ownership of the flower gets the best of the two men. Before long each man is claiming the flower as his. The argument leads one man to declare the flower is on his property. The other man asserts the flower is on his property. Soon the two are taking turns erecting fences to prove the flower is on each one's side. But the fences do
not work. At this point, the men begin fighting. They sword fight with sticks taken from the fences. This is not enough. They become virtual monsters, mauling one another, tearing each other's clothes, killing each other. At the end of the film, the two dead neighbors are buried, and on their graves sprout two flowers.

In order to help students identify the theme of this short film and understand McLaren's attitude toward war, the teacher can ask the following questions: In what ways are the two neighbors alike? In what ways are they different? What do you think the film is all about? What does the flower stand for? What are the different ways in which the men react to the flower and to each other's desire for it? Does the stop-action technique contribute much to the meaning of the film? How? What does the appearance of two flowers on the graves of the men suggest? McLaren made "Neighbors" in response to the Korean War. After viewing this film, what do you think his attitudes are about that war and other wars?

Viewing and discussing these three films should have given the students a wealth of ideas about which to write. "The Hats: Is This War Necessary?" suggested these: the possibility of disarmament, the lines that divide people, and national honor—a cause for war. Stimulated by "The Hole," students could write about the danger of an accidental nuclear war, the inevitability of a nuclear war, the possibility of psychologically-willed accidents, or how people can avert a
nuclear holocaust. "Neighbors" brought out the ideas of the absurdities over which people and nations fight, the cause of men becoming beasts, the causes of war. Suggested nonverbal communications include photographs taken from magazines and arranged in a sequence that visually depict the students' attitudes about war and photographs taken by the students that show the causes of war.

The second part of this thematic unit on war is built around the results of war. Contemporary films can deflate war and its aura of action, challenge, and heroics that some media have tended to glorify. The films suggested by Sohn to be used in this part of the unit, "Memorandum," "Night and Fog," and "The Soldier," become a bit heavy about their message—war is a hellish business—as do almost any other films concerning the results of war. It seems as though the producers and directors of these films feel that if students can see the results of war, thereby recognizing its horrors, then peace may hopefully supplant it.

"Memorandum" is a fifty-eight-minute black and white documentary film concerning the concentration camps during the Second World War and their human effects. The film follows a pattern of deepening probes into the nature of the camps. The present becomes focalized in the pilgrimage of a group of survivors from Bergen-Belsen, a concentration camp freed by the British in 1944. Bernard Laufer, a glasscutter from Toronto, is accompanied by his son. The comments of Laufer
and his son provide a foreground against which the reality of the camps can be judged with perspective and human involvement. The history of German persecution of the Jews in the 1930's is briefly chronicled, but the audience becomes aware that this is not simply "history"; this is a period in which Laufer lived, and these were events and feelings that he felt. The film raises questions in a subtle way—through evocative portrayals, not through the narrative. One Jew interviewed carries the charred scraps of human bones from a camp with him wherever he goes. The attempts of later investigators to find the names of the Germans responsible for the deaths are shown; but the work is almost impossible—who will ever know who murdered by memorandum?

"Memorandum" lends itself to discussion more than most documentaries because it appeals as much to the feelings as to the mind. The discussion could be built around these questions: What is implied or suggested in the title "Memorandum"? Why is there concentration on Bernard Laufer and not simply a documentary about the concentration camps? What are some of the more striking comparisons and contrasts between past and present revealed by the cutting back and forth from the pilgrimage to documentary footage of the camps? A monument is shown in one of the shots, bearing the words, "Earth conceal not the blood hid under thee." What is meant by this line? Does the film suggest that the blood has been concealed? What is the reaction of Laufer's son to
the camps? Do you think he understands what has happened there? Is he, or any of his generation, really able to understand? Even though these things happened to the Jews during this period, they are still a strong group. What does this fact suggest about pride and honor among peoples? What other groups have survived war and remained strong, keeping their love of their nation?

Another film exploring the results of war, again focusing on prison camps, is "Night and Fog." This thirty-one-minute film alternates between the present (shot in color) and the past (shot in black and white) while "visiting" Buchenwald, Treblinka, Auschwitz, and other extermination camps. This alternation is used to emphasize the theme of forgetfulness—that even though nature has forgotten what happened at these camps, men should not forget (18, p. 28). The film progresses through the history of the concentration camps beginning with the building of the camps, their early uses as sources of guinea pigs for medical crimes, and finally to mass extermination centers as Hitler decides to set up gas chambers. The camera follows the journey from the trains to the camp, the undressing for the "showers," and the final moments. The final few minutes of the film are extremely upsetting. Great piles of clothing, of women's hair, and of human skin are shown; later the cameras focus on the bodies that littered the camps in the last few months of the war. Bulldozers shove the bodies into open pits.
Shown briefly after these horrors are the trials, at which men involved in running the camps repeat, "I am not respon-
sible." The final scene, which is in color, shows spring
breaking. The final words of the narration leave the decisive
question directed to "... those of us who pretend to believe
that this all happened at a certain time and in a certain
place, and those who refuse to see, who do not hear the cry
to the end of time" (18, p. 28).

Because "Night and Fog" is so overpowering and disturbing,
discussion will probably start without any stimulation from
the teacher, but the following questions can be used as a
guide: What major impression did the film leave you with?
Could you state in one sentence its suggested message? Why
the use of both black and white and color? Why not every-
thing in either one? What is the crime presented in the film?
It is a crime against whom? Perpetrated by whom? What
parallels can be drawn between the film and the treatment of
Negroes and other persecuted groups in America? What is
meant by the closing statement? What are some of the devices
used by the director to get you personally involved in the
situation of the camps? Although these atrocities were
committed as a result of war, could more atrocities have
occurred if there were not an all-out war? What responsi-
bility do we have for helping smaller nations protect
themselves?
The final film dealing with the results of war is a four-minute black and white film entitled "The Soldier." The film shows a tired and scared soldier on the beach during combat. Hearing the seagulls' cries, he forgets the battle and goes into the water. When he gets out, he feeds a piece of chocolate to one of the gulls; but as he does, a shot rings out and kills him. His fall to the ground is delayed by slow motion, allowing the audience to see every twist of his body. As he falls, the narrator reads part of Psalm 4:11: "As the deer longs for running waters, so does my soul long for you, O my God. . . . Why are you sad, my soul, as your enemies mock you, saying, 'where is your God?' . . . trust in God, who saves me from shame, my own God." The film closes with night falling and the tide washing over his body.

Sohn (18, p. 28) suggests that the following questions be used to motivate the discussion of "The Soldier": Why did the director shoot the soldier's moment of death in a freeze shot and then shoot his dying fall in slow motion? What effect do these film techniques have on the emotional impact of the film? There is a strange sort of dignity and beauty connected with the soldier's death. Would a young man who died of an overdose of heroin, who "freaked-out" with LSD, or who died after being mutilated in a car accident have this same beauty and dignity? Why are the words of Psalm 4:1 used in the film? Whose words do they represent? Is this film essentially concerned with war, with death, or maybe more elemental and basic ideas?
The second unit in the thematic approach to film discussion is built on the theme of adolescence. Like the films concerning war, the films available concerning adolescence are biased, not against war as were the films concerning war, but against adults, authority, adult values, and school. The unit is a study of the adolescent, shown from the adolescent's point of view, reacting and not reacting to such problems as loneliness, alienation, the generation gap, delinquency, and individual responsibility—sometimes resolving these problems, oftentimes leaving them unresolved if not aggravating them. The four films present youth in situations and problems by which they are bewildered, confused, and made unable to act. At times they have caused these difficulties, but more often they are victims of outside forces or passive agents, and unable to take decisive action to correct the problem. Thus, the main characters are left in unresolved yet realistic situations which provoke animated discussion and forceful, convincing writing. The teacher using these films should remember that because these films are very slanted to the adolescents' view, the discussion needs to point out the subjectivity and further needs to include the reasons why the adolescents are caught in their problems and why the adults and the schools react the way they do.

The first film of the unit, "No Reason to Stay," is a twenty-eight-minute black and white film written by a high school dropout to tell why young people drop out of school.
The main character of the film, Christopher Wood, is nearing graduation and every day finds his school experience more repellent. It is not because he is dumb—just the opposite. He is reprimanded by a teacher for reading Dylan Thomas while the rest of the class reads "The Highwayman" and is made to put away Thomas and listen to the other poem. Christopher feels that school, parents, and even society are trying to force teen-agers to conform. He is constantly told "no diploma, no job"; but when he weighs this possibility against the arbitrary teachers and the rules, he decides to leave school. When he tells his girl friend his plans, she is able to make him stay a while longer. But he finally gets to the point he can no longer stand what he considers the narrow-minded school. He rushes out of class in order to see the busy counselor, who demeans him by asking him if he believes his problems are more important than anyone else's. When Christopher says he is leaving school, the counselor reacts by reaching for Christopher's file and arguing mildly—to no avail.

Christopher's decision and his final departure are not presented as an escape; the film gives no clue about his future. What does concern the film, what it treats, is just what the title suggests—Christopher, and thousands like him—have no real reason to stay. This film can be an effective one to use in the classroom, for there is truth to the film, truth that concerns the wrongness of what students
are doing daily. Because it does contain truth, then "No Reason to Stay" should not be discussed (or shown) if the teacher and the students cannot discuss it in total honesty. The following questions could be used to lead the discussion: What are the reasons that Christopher is given for staying? Are these insufficient? What other reasons could you give for his staying? Does Christopher Wood's situation reflect that of most young men in high schools? Why are they in this situation? Are Christopher's classes and teachers typical of high schools? Do you have teachers who are less arbitrary and classes that are more relevant? Is Christopher right or wrong? Where does the failure lie in the school that Christopher attends? Pinpoint reasons and suggested cures. What kind of school would offer Christopher and others like him "reason to stay"?

Because of its appeal to students and because of its young, sympathetic protagonist, Loneliness of a Long Distance Runner is the next film shown. Loneliness, a feature film directed by Tony Richardson, develops the theme of a young man "challenging his environment and seeking his place in the world." (6, p. 206). This film, like "No Reason to Stay," does bring up problems for adults. In Loneliness the young man revolts against authority--his family, the establishment, and the reformatory authorities. Many people do not like to face the problem of youth rebelling against authority and fear this film will encourage more rebellion.
To this fear, Sister M. Amanda Ely, O. P. answers:

Nonsense! A thorough discussion of the film reveals the reasons for the runner's rebellion. It demands an acknowledgement that the film is slanted, presenting a subjective view of authority as Colin sees it. The film certainly is not merely a statement of anti-establishmentarianism. Rather it dramatizes the necessity of sacrificing one's physical well-being to attain one's dignity as a person (5, p. 44).

The story of Loneliness of a Long Distance Runner is a first person narrative of Colin Smith, a young English boy who cannot reconcile himself to his father's death and to his mother's shopping sprees with the insurance money, as well as to her preoccupation with her dandy man. Colin commits a petty theft, his first offense, and is sentenced to a borstal (a reform school). While he is there, the warden of the school, who seems to believe that the cure for all problems is sports, lets Colin know that if he wins a special long distance running race against a neighboring public school, he will gain special favors. Colin enters, and as he runs, a series of flashbacks show his life before his entering the borstal. Finally he knows he must make up his mind whether to win and gain the warden's favor or to lose to show his rage against the hypocrites and stuffy do-gooders of the world. He loses the race. But he holds on to his dignity and integrity.

Discussion of Loneliness of a Long Distance Runner could center around these questions: What effect do the family quarrels and the turmoil shown have on you? Is Colin's view
of authority objective or subjective? How much do you see through his eyes? Is the jazz music appropriate for the film? Why? What is the main line of action in the film? How are flashbacks introduced? Why does the director use these flashbacks? What scenes are most vivid for you? Why do they stay with you? Why are contrasting scenes edited so that they are next to each other in the film? What is Colin searching for throughout the film? Why is it necessary for a person to know his self and his destination? Has Colin been made to stand for something universal, more than a runner in rebellion? What is the film saying through Colin?

Another film dealing with the theme of adolescence that provides "stimulation, reaction, emotion, involvement and last but not least discussion and query" (3, p. 41) is "Phoebe," a twenty-eight-minute black and white film about a paralyzing moral failure of our time—-the impersonality of our relations with one another. "Phoebe" attempts to communicate a state of mind rather than a story about a single idea. The mind in this case belongs to Phoebe, a highly temperamental girl of about sixteen who discovers one morning she is pregnant. The film slips in and out of the present, past, and future in a way that communicates Phoebe's feelings in a highly subjective sense. Her day is a simple but perplexing one. Her boy friend Paul has offered to take her to the beach. Because Paul seems to find it difficult to sympathize with her and share her feelings, Phoebe cannot
communicate with him. Throughout the day she tries to bring herself to tell Paul of her pregnancy, but she cannot. Recollections and imagined confrontations run through her mind all day. Phoebe's mood remains a dejected one. All the way home she continues to imagine the moment she cannot create. Once home, she tries to tell her mother, but the disinterested way her mother speaks to her once again discourages Phoebe. The climax of the film shows Phoebe impulsively calling Paul on the phone, telling him she is pregnant, and hanging up immediately.

The real crux of the film lies not in Phoebe's experience of pregnancy, but in her inability to communicate her problem to anyone. "Phoebe" is a film to be used with both boys and girls. The boys can analyze Paul and his failures; the girls, the failures and limitations of Phoebe and her mother. To motivate further discussion, these questions could be used: What is the central problem Phoebe experiences in the film? Is she an exceptional or ordinary girl? What was the reason for Phoebe's inability to communicate her pregnancy? Who was at fault in this communications breakdown? Do you think Paul was real? Was he basically an admirable, neutral, or unrespectable person? What were his major feelings? What were the critical differences between Paul and Phoebe presented in the movie? Are these differences pretty much universal? What do you think was meant by Phoebe's final means of communicating with Paul—over a
telephone so that he could not reply? What do you think of Phoebe and Paul after the film? What role does feeling play for Phoebe throughout the film? Are the relationships between Phoebe and her mother and between Phoebe and Paul real? Why do these relationships seem so devoid of personal interest? What reasons might Phoebe's mother have for her seeming lack of interest? What changes in the film would there be if we saw Phoebe from her mother's point of view?

Another short film with the theme of adolescence is "Nobody Waved Goodbye." This film, despite the rather overused idea of teenage rebellion and juvenile delinquency, does manage to say quite a bit about parent-teenager relationships and man's search for meaning. Don Owens, the director, made this film in Canada with professional actors working almost entirely by improvisation. "The result is often appallingly lifelike, sometimes grinding on the nerves, sometimes most touching, sometimes monotonous. But the final effect is impressive." (11, p. 44).

The film opens with the hero, Peter, talking to his girl friend, telling her of his values. Like so many young people today, he does not want to get in the rut his parents are in with a comfortable home, carpeting, gold fixtures in the bathroom, pressed pants, and good shoes. These opening lines state the conflict on which the film builds—an uneasiness about affluence that is common to many young people. Peter is at odds with society, confused and anxious, seeking
a set of personal values more meaningful than those of his parents. He is an eighteen-year-old from a good family with all the advantages of a comfortable suburban existence, but he is bored and restless. In an attempt to find a more meaningful existence, he rebels first by cutting school and arguing with his parents. In the end he is forced into stealing a car and some money to show his feelings, an act that propels him beyond simple juvenile delinquency.

This group of suggested questions to stimulate class discussion can help students find "Nobody Waved Goodbye" more meaningful. Throughout the film Peter rebels against what he considers the materialistic way of life around him and the phony values of adults. Can you find any justification for these views? Although Peter's mother has the best of intentions, she is partly to blame for his increasingly rebellious attitude. How does she alienate Peter? In what ways does Peter's father fail him? How does Peter, in turn, both alienate and fail his parents? Peter's chess opponent says, "Your move." What does this statement imply about freedom and responsibility of the individual? In what ways is Julie stronger than Peter? Explain what prompted Peter to take the demonstration car, the paperback, the change from parking lot customers, and finally the money from the cashbox and the car. What is ironic about his stealing these things? What do his thefts show about his true feelings about material goods? Do you feel the title of the film is well chosen?
What other title might you substitute for it? What is the title's significance?

After viewing and discussing these four films with the theme of adolescence, students should be ready to write on a variety of topics: human contact, growing up in an insensitive world, their responsibility to the world—their parents and society, the conflict between generations, self discovery and awareness, or student-teacher relationships. The students could put themselves in the place of one of the main characters of the films and write what they would do during the next few hours or days of their lives. The students, too, could explain why they identified with one of the main characters. It is at this point also that students can produce nonverbal projects—the "Who Am I?" collage mentioned earlier, a series of photographs showing their lives, pictures of their values, or paintings symbolizing the problem of lack of communication.
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