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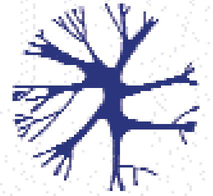

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IN THIS ISSUE

Religion and Film

Part II: Theology and Pedagogy

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Table of Contents

[The first part of this essay, addressing Film and Religion: History and Criticism, appeared in *Communication Research Trends*, Volume 23, Number 4, December 2004.]

4. Theology and Film 3
A. Overviews 5
B. Narrative Theology 6
C. Mythic Religion 7
D. The Fantastic 9
E. Transcendence in Film 10
F. Downward Transcendence and the Demonic . . 12

5. Film Pedagogy and Application 15
A. Educational Uses of Religion and Film 15
B. Catechism Uses of Religion and Film 16
C. Homiletic Uses of Film 17
D. Devotional Uses of Film 18

6. Conclusion 20

References 22

Selective Religious Filmography 37

Book Reviews 40

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Religion and Film

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Communication Research Trends published Part I (History and Criticism) of Professor Lindvall's review of studies on Religion and Film as Volume 23, No. 4 (December 2004). This issue publishes the rest of his review. For the convenience of the readers of *Communication Research Trends*, the combined reference lists for Part I and Part II follow the text in this issue, together with a filmography assembled by Professor Lindvall.

In order to assist the reader, we reprint here part of the Introduction to the overall review essay. —Ed.

This review, however, is intended to survey the English language literature on film and religion and to corral various research trends into suitable academic categories. (For a remarkable review of relevant literature in other languages, see May, 1997a, and Hasenberg, 1992.) Rather than looking at the critical posture or interpretative mode of the writings, I will be examining the works according to a set of scholarly and pedagogical research motives. In the larger framework, I am less concerned with theological positions or critical attitudes toward film, than I am with what methods of research or postures of intent have been appropriated and practiced by various scholars engaged in the commingled disciplines of religion and film studies, and which ones are emerging as the most heuristic (or merely fashionable) at this time. However, my debt is great as I borrow heavily from the aforementioned authors in organizing appropriate categories.

Like the sorting hat of Hogswart, my own taxonomy places works in what I deem suitable categories of scholarly approaches. One of the earliest established publications, Reverend Herbert Jump's 1911 pamphlet, *The Religious Possibilities of the Motion Picture*, provides a sort of prologue for historical based studies of religion and film, under the research heading of Film History and Religion—such studies accommodate the dominant issue of film censorship.

A second, larger and broader, category of Film Criticism encompasses various religious approaches to understanding (and then rejecting, engaging, or appropriating) film as significant modes of human communication. Subsumed under this rubric are representational studies (from Jesus films and Christ figures to various portrayals of religious character and rituals) and more recent trends in inter-textual, cultural studies approaches to religion and film and to audience analysis, ethnographic, and reception studies.

A third section examines the more conceptual strand of Theology and Film Theory. Finally, I have added a review of presentations of Pedagogical and Pragmatic Applications of film and religion. As a caveat, or more aptly a confession, I admit that these categories are quite elastic, slippery, and overlapping. Arguments, and good ones at that, could be made for situating a text in alternative groupings. Some of my favorite texts received less than deserved coverage, but the avalanche of materials was simply too overwhelming to give fair and full treatment to all these deserving and notable works. And to those whose works I have overlooked and completely missed, I offer a word of apology, "oops."

4. Theology and Film

French film theorist Andre Bazin focuses much of his attention on the ontology of the cinematographic image (1971, 1996). This Roman Catholic critic compares film to the art of embalming the dead, to the Egyptian religious practice of trying to preserve life by representing it. Philosophical explanations of an epistemology of film develop from the Reformed tradition of scholars like Plantinga (Plantinga & Smith, 1999; Carroll, 1990) who brings the cognitive-affective theory of film spectatorship into the forefront of an inquisition on the nature of film. How do a spectator's rational mental activities underlie his or her affective responses to film? Even as philosophers like Litch (2002) deem it worthy to reflect on film, religious scholars and theologians move beyond viewing film as "harmless entertainment" to analyzing films as visual discourse with theological significance

(Maltby, 1983). The emotional relationships of spectators and films are based on basic cognitive competencies, that one understands the images even in one's responses to them. For example, films like *The Night of the Living Dead* elicit fear and disgust; comedies evoke laughter; tear-jerking melodramas, tears; thrillers, anxiety. How films manipulate such responses and how spectators identify with film characters (as in *Groundhog Day*) is the interest of the cognitivists as much as of the psychoanalytic critics. The empathy induced by close-ups (in Bergman's works or in *Blade Runner*) raises issues of the ontology of the film image itself, leading as well to questions of epistemology, of how we recognize, know, read, and interpret such images.

Philosophy does not reside far from its sister theology. Mortimer Adler (1937) builds a religious perspective of film upon a Greek philosophical foundation of cinematic aesthetics. Plato's Allegory of the Cave opens up an analogy for looking at illusionary (and poetic) images in the dark that suggests general principles for looking at films. Herein, Adler offers an image of the artist as a seducer, an inspired but potentially corrupting agent who is dialectically challenged by the politician, ergo censor. From Plato and Aristotle (wherein Adler finds a prototype of entertainment education where art objects are educative and able to either corrupt or cultivate moral virtues), Adler establishes a transition to the revealed wisdom of Christianity on the nature and place of the art of the movies. As the poet was a rival to the philosopher in Greek thought, now the filmmaker becomes the rival to the priest.

A great divergence of Christian thought that shapes responses to film is in the doctrine of original sin. Herein St. Augustine and Pascal, as much as St. Paul, provide conceptions of the human in relation to the arts. Augustinian thought affords both a rejection of the arts and a transformation of them. In reading the literature of Virgil's *Aeneid* as a competitor for the affections of the audience in his youth, Augustine wept for Dido rather than for his own sins. However, in the *De Doctrina Christiana* Augustine develops a theology of Christian humanism, that wherever one finds the gold and silver (and silver nitrate) of the Egyptians, one is called to claim it for godly use. Contextualizing film within the tradition of the church's relation to the arts in general and the drama in particular, Adler and theologians like Jacques Maritain grant that "art teaches men the pleasures of the spirit," which encourages *eutrapelia*, a proper and ordinate pleasure of play and recreation. Such theological consideration is eloquently explored in Brown (2000). Likewise, Nichols (1980) provides an incomparable foundation in art and film.

Worthwhile readings on the theological nature of communication media exist in Soukup (1996), particularly in reprinted essays by Ong (1996) and Goethals (1996). Similar to Warren (1997), the essays situate the nature and functions of film within a larger context of mediated communication and the Church. Inquiries range from how film orchestrates the construction of the self, how the hegemony of corporate media dictates representations, how the church adopted iconic and aniconic aesthetics, to how media have altered theology, moral formation, ecclesiology, and homiletics.

Advocates of the Catholic imagination (discussed in Part I) delve into the realm of religious aesthetics. For John May, such an approach allows true autonomous interpretation and has become the most challenging area of inquiry in the 1990s. Scholarly studies are called to move beyond morality, cataloguing explicit religious themes and elements and identifying humanistic themes, into the religious significance of film itself. Primary in this approach is Martin (1981); this study looks at the image itself and its orientation (see also Martin, 1974). The idea that the image has profound impact upon one's religious sense of reality and related concepts (i.e., film as imaginative construct, story, and religious consciousness) should be examined. While the unique assortment of camera images available (e.g., panoramas, slow motion, time-lapsed, etc.) enables us to see more and more deeply with a radical sense of consciousness, what is needed is to recover a holistic, integrated understanding of the stream of images and how an experience of these images in narrative form leads to worldviews. Stories provide ordered, cohesive structures assigned to images and constructs and contribute to, and even challenge, one's sense of reality. For Martin, this religious consciousness is the sense of relatedness that the human has with others, rooted in a common whole. Martin defines five basic models affecting consciousness coming through structures of symbolic reflection, that is, narratives informed by underlying constructs (ideology): supernatural, process, romantic, secular, and depth. He assigns each to, respectively, Calvin/Aquinas with a higher sense of order; Whitehead/Teilhard de Chardin with fluctuating process of life; Schelieremacher/Coleridge with a romantic return to nature; Bonhoeffer/Cox with secular isolation and existential decisions; and Freud/Jung/Campbell, with depth psychology exploring the inner spaces of authentic existence. An altered sense of wonder, awe, and awareness comes to viewers through images. As image-making is a

primary human activity, it behooves scholars to understand the various imaginative constructs, models, and paradigms of human understanding that are constructed through experiences with graven imagery. For human knowing, even worldviews, find vitality in deep-rooted cultural images and myths (cf. Wilder, 1976). From films that create lasting images and build imaginary constructs, Martin argues, our reality is shaped by ingested stories. Martin calls for film criticism and religious studies, particularly with film and the audience, as films do have influence on spectators' spiritual lives.

In a recent brilliant little volume, *Cinema and Sentiment*, Marsh (2004) accepts film's challenge to theology. Latching on to two fundamental questions—namely, What do films do to people? and What do people do with films?—Marsh seeks to study the contemporary theological significance of popular film in developing value and belief systems. His functional approach aptly tends to the binary analogues of audiences/congregations and entertainment/worship, to reception theory, and to the affective dimensions of watching films. Of particular interest is his liberating case study of *The Shawshank Redemption*, extending Kermode's (2003) critical work into a richly textured and nuanced, but lucid analysis of the film's insights and shortcomings as a parable of salvation. Rather than dwell upon hints and cues that could direct cinematic pilgrims to theology, finding shining treasures along the path, he redirects our steps into a cognitive psychology, sociology, and theology of film-going and film-watching, seeking to discover how the illusions of films affect us emotionally and how Christians in particular might develop film-watching as a theological habit or spiritual disciple. And, as such, Marsh re-centers the film experience back with the viewers.

A. Overviews

Harvard theologian Harvey G. Cox, who seems to harken back to the time of the very invention of cinema, asked in 1962 what role film plays in forming the modern mind, including the religious mind. Art, for Cox, illuminates the mysteries of human existence. Theologians thus need to be testing the spirits and discerning the signs of the times, need to attend to phenomenon of cinema as part of the consciousness industry (*Bewusstseinsindustrie*), that forms social, personal, and religious identities. Cox's contemporary during this era seen as a crisis of communication, Malcolm Boyd, would declare that "All films are theological" (1954, p. 1456; see also Boyd, 1957a, 1957b). He argues that films fulfill either explicit or implicit communication of the Christian faith (e.g., *A Man Called Peter* and *Umberto D*, respectively) and would take on more significance and salience as the century closed.

Reflections upon the theological significance of moving images appear in many of the preceding works, however more implicitly than directly. Rule (1977) offers his own reflections on religious dimensions in film, in which he rues the dearth of studies on religion and film in English (as opposed to a wealth of material in French, German, Spanish, and Italian); however, writing in the late 1970s, he notes the development of a veritable cottage industry in publication on religion and film. In light of the material nature of film itself, Rule seeks to define religion sociologically through Robert Bellah's "set of symbolic forms and acts which relate man to the ultimate conditions of his existence." Religion is the missing dimension of contemporary life—during the era of modernity—which could help explore the cracks and crannies of the human predicament, culminating with an inquiry into whether we are seeing a true image of the living God on screens or simply graven images.

Lyden (1997) continues that controversial concern by asking whether movies help spectators to transcend to the sacred, whether they are merely vehicles that contribute to the status quo religion of popular culture, or whether they are tools that reinforce harmful ideologies that enslave us. He concludes in the affirmative for all, yet averring that none holds the ultimate fundamental meaning. Arguing from a Lutheran perspective, he proposes that religious scholars see movies as portraying types of mythic truth and meaning for our lives, allowing us to find order (or construct it) in the chaos around us. While films provide narratives that define good and evil, they also uphold stereotypes and power structures, reinforcing embedded racist, sexist, and class-conscious ideologies. For Lyden, films can simultaneously support and subvert established power structures, legitimately conserving and questioning society's values. For example, he suggests that the western film "mediates the contradiction between civilization and savagery in American society. That is, we approve of violence in our need to keep order" (p. 152).

In one of the more potentially provocative texts to emerge out of the academy, Lyden (2003) proposes that a study of film as religion can illumine our understanding of the various functions that cinema plays in constructing a religious world, replete with overarching myths, rituals, and social values that influence the ways in which we live our lives. From an interest in interdisciplinary studies, from cultural studies to sociology and myth studies,

Lyden looks at understanding film as performing a religious function—the underlying worldviews and ethics upon which people make choices and govern their lives. Films offer an entry into an ideally constructed world, an invitation to participate vicariously in catharsis, rituals of sacrifice, restoration of injustice, etc. He applies his method to study of film genres and individual films, not to uncover hidden meanings (by the scholar trained in abstruse methods of analysis), but to point to the ways "people's beliefs, values, and feelings are affected by films" (pp. 246-47). In other words, he reads the responses of viewers to film. As art films offer religious (Gnostic) secrets to an elite *intelligensia*, so popular films engage the ordinary viewer. Film is not to be viewed as a mere dialogue partner to theology, but as existing as an independent, even competing, religious signifier. One envisions more of a confrontation between the Hebrew faith interacting with the adherents of Baal or Moloch. Rather than contextualizing a dialogic encounter of St. Paul on Mars Hill, it is Moses versus the Pharoah's magicians or Elijah at Mt. Carmel, in a battle for the religious imaginations of spectators.

In a theological dialogue with film, Hatt (1990) invents a creative pluralism of perspectives by blending liberation theology with Constantin Costa-Gavras' *Missing*, opening the existential theology of Kierkegaard with Woody Allen's *Annie Hall*, and articulating the hermeneutical theology of Paul Ricoeur (i.e., generation of meaning through living metaphor, grounded in resemblance) as it is brought into dialogue with Sydney Pollack's *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* See also the interesting comparison of Kierkegaaard and the General from *Babette's Feast* in Schular (1997). Finally, Mitchell (2005) expertly addresses the theological, historical, aesthetic, and critical agendas in his illuminating overview of the field. His reflections move beyond evaluating the directorial theology of filmmakers like Mel Gibson into enriching future possibilities, especially in terms of studying paradigms of active spectatorship and challenging the conceptual notion of films functioning as points of transcendence or revelation.

B. Narrative Theology

The shared narrative nature of theology and film is indirectly addressed in Kirkwood (1983), which explicates the communication strategies of parables. Kirkwood finds the motive of parable telling in provoking acts of self-confrontation, advising and guiding audiences rather than merely entertaining them. Narrative theology assumes a vision of the human as *homo narrans*, of the nature of human beings as storytellers. It sees the importance of narrative for understanding the journey of the self toward, or away from, God. Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm and Kort's (1988) study of story, text, and scripture provide avenues of explicating the religious dimensions of cinematic storytelling. Other questions persist as well: how does the narrative theology pioneered by Goldberg (1982) and Navone (1990) contribute to our understanding of film stories?

Film's unique aspect of being a visual story opens up for May (1982b) an alternative potential for religious interpretation. His critique of motion pictures as a purely secular and technological form pushes him to seek an appropriate hermeneutic, hunting down how best to interpret film narratives. As mentioned previously in Part I, he identifies three theoretical approaches, namely heteronomy, theonomy, and autonomy.

Heteronomy essentially means that the rules of interpretation are applied from outside the work of art, in which one examines art *qua* art but then applies the Christian faith (or Marxism or feminism) as superior criteria to literature or film. T.S. Eliot best articulates this norm for judging the greatness of artistic work, functioning as a method of "Christian discrimination." According to May, this approach centers on authorial (directorial) intention, explicit religious materials within the film, and thematic elements (e.g., grace, judgment, evil, transcendence, etc.) that form the basis of criticism.

Theonomy adheres to a happy and slippery posture of "Christian amiability," in which all literature and film are viewed as finite expressions of human concerns. More Procrustean in its method, it allows theologians like Paul Tillich an open quest for finding meaning in existence as a search for the ground of all Being through the style and forms of cinema.

May, however, wants to approach film as an art form and to find a visual analogue of religious and secular questions. This practice of Autonomy seeks to find the critical criteria from within the work itself, judging the work according to what it aspires to be. The concept is rooted in a notion of Puritan perseverance of "holding on hard to the huckleberry bushes." As Emerson and C.S. Lewis recommended, norms for judging achievement of a discipline must come from within that discipline. However, that does not mean that a secondary, heteronomous critique cannot follow.

From this triad of approaches, May then asks more theological questions regarding style and content. He raises questions of religious concern regarding one's relationship to the world, to others, to one's self, and to ultimate reality and nature of God (including the

problem of evil and salvation). These form conceptual laws to critique film in discovering its openness to religious issues, including whether its narrative is myth (i.e., it makes sense of all story and supplies solutions) or parable (i.e., it asks disturbing questions). For May, three basic religious questions center upon the myth of separation and return (man's relationship with the world), conflict and vindication (man's view of others), and integrity and transformation (man's view of himself). Each offers a story.

What these three interpretive approaches offer are ways to join and make sense of individual film narratives of faith within a grand narrative of divine action in the world. And narrative theological studies are crucial for religious film critics as they illuminate (and often make intelligible) religious convictions embedded in stories. The inner stories of faith can be caught through attention to the external plot trajectory and character development. Auerbach (1957) suggests that biblical narratives assume a vision of reality and challenge readers to enter into the world of the text to make sense of their own narrative. So narrative theology encourages viewers to follow film stories, to receive their directions, and to bring the reader/spectator into the world of the text.

Cunneen (1993) concludes that "serious study of religion in narrative film has been extremely limited" due to the paucity of scholarship as there is an inherent bias against popular culture. Religion scholars tend toward European films or elite classics. Theological criticism studies the "cathedrals" being built in the cinema, rather than the inns along the way. Narrative theology opens up the text to multiple meanings and supplementary interpretations, more than the mere finding isomorphic correspondences to allegory or identifying obscure Christ figures. One significance of narrative for Cunneen hinges on the notion that religious vision lay behind the images, not merely a checklist showing how films recapitulate or borrow or quote or resemble a religious tradition but how they communicate religious meanings such as "possibility of resurrection, the end of time, experience of grace, and the meaning of sacrifice." For Cunneen, we are witnessing the birth of a new subfield of religious studies in the narrative approaches. In Kort (1973) one experiences an encounter with otherness through atmosphere, character, plot, and tone or the presence of the author allowing the inclusion of personal and subjective belief. Narrative structure itself is religious, confronting reader/viewer with mundane experience and granting transcendent meanings. One example of finding a theological purpose as the driving force is Grimes (1995), an essay on *Psycho* versus *Blood Simple*, which finds a discourse of hope in the Hitchcock narrative.

One of the better transitions from narrative to mythic criticism is McConnell (1979). Following Northrup Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*, McConnell inventively looks at fictional film through the archetypal lenses of epic, romance, melodrama, and satire.

C. Mythic Religion

Religion in film often slips into the comfortable mode of myth. Since the success of the George Lucas films, Vogler (1998) (based on Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*) has become the Bible for narrative structure building blocks for character development and plot structuring in many successful Hollywood films. Essentially, however, it offers a package of the economic pragmatics of mythmaking, namely how to sell archetypal and religious heroes. Mammon and godmaking are mutually served. Biro (1982) leads the reader into mythology and cinema, suggesting a noble but primitive and secular mind of film. As theologians of culture set out to "claim film for religion," Biro argues that films march on to take "possession of human consciousness, to rule the total, bustling life of our conscience." She sees film's semiotic potential to satisfy our need for the transcendence offered by mythology, providing a sacral or magical interference, a new kind of techno-divination ritual play. For Rockett (1984), Biro fulfills the alchemist dream of supplying a materialistic interpretation of the magical universe. Mythology becomes the binding community force.

Lawrence and Jewett (2002) find in movies (and comics) an entire American monomyth, a ground for a secular civil religion. Individual, archetypal heroes (e.g., Young Mr. Lincoln, Rambo, Neo of Matrix, Disney characters, etc.), who take control of their own and their country's destinies in triumphant crusades against evil, support a pop fascism that is spiritually supported by American consumers of justice and hope through the righteous use of humanistic militarism. Like a couple of academic Hebrew prophets, the authors call for action rather than the pleasures of mere spectatorship. They do, however, recommend alternatives in the democratic melodies of religious films like *The Straight Story* and *Dead Man Walking*. Ezzell (1978) echoes their concern in his identification of America's soteriological understanding being transformed by films like *Rocky*, in which evil is relocated from salvation by an external source to the hero-redeemer himself. One thus does not save others as

much as one saves oneself. For Ezzell, the era of the ’60s and ’70s suggested a dim prospect of improving society and institutions, but offered amazing self-realization. The Creed of Apollo is defeated so that bums could find cinematic salvation in their own selves.

Using depth psychology to analyze the theatrical dreams of the tribal religions and to identify the mythic rituals performed by movies for spectators, Hill (1992) puts 17 films into therapy with a view toward gleaning a “cinemasophia,” a secular wisdom from unintentionally mythic (a.k.a. subconsciously numinous) films. The manifest religious myths of these latent films can be glimpsed through their illuminating shadows. For Hill, one can watch the religious battle of St. George and the Dragon in *It’s a Wonderful Life* or flee the “Terrible Mother from the Black Lagoon” in *The Graduate*. Such “religious” exercises enable one to get in touch with one’s primitive, magical selves. One can find unorthodox messiahs emerging out of the alchemy of cinema, subverting the violence of patriarchy, and recovering the need for the feminine principle. For Hill, films can serve as the main myths, prophetic oracles, and alternative morality plays of contemporary society, especially against the “Erection Society” that is destroying Mother Earth (pp. 310-311).

In speculating on the reasons film has all but assumed the role of religion in the popular mind, Bryant (1982) characterizes film as a sort of alchemy, a central ritual in our technological civilization. The magic of the cinema is in overcoming time and space and seeking immortality. As such, film transmutes and deifies the world. Cooke (1984) locates the magic origin of the theatrical performance in shamanic rituals. He looks at parallels between the tribal practitioner and the actor, as in John Travolta’s character in *Saturday Night Fever*. The shaman serves both as a member of the tribe and as a mystic visionary, dressing and posing for the sacred ritual of the disco/shamanic performance of the dance, even with dancers in a ecstatic group trance suggested by the fever of the title. At the end, the priest/shaman puts off his supernatural mask by giving up his status to return to the ordinary. The notion of film as pagan religion received some little attention from Solomon (1992) and Brasher (1996). Solomon looks at the “counter-civil religion” cult film, the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, as a popular religious experience, sharing ritualistic modes of participation with ancient pagan worship; while Brasher tests the religious function of the technological cyborg image in popular film.

Yet mythmaking extends beyond the religious realm, back into the political. Fore (1990) deconstructs the cultural wrapping of the Gospel and shows how a capitalist and violent mediated culture propagates its imperialism, exposing the economics and psychology of a monopolistic media. Plate (2003) continues and expands Fore’s work. He and a lively coterie of authors essay to conceptualize geo-religious film aesthetics and revitalize the study of international films that embody religious values and beliefs. As such, they push the usual boundaries of cinema/religion studies “beyond where they have rested too long” by drawing from colonialism, postcolonialism, gender, ethnicity, and anthropology, and analyzing cultural myths from the cult of the *Rocky Horror Picture Show* to the self-proclaimed religion of Jedi Knights and the true “Jewish way of thinking” in Woody Allen’s double narrative (myth and parable) *Shadows and Fog*. This multinational, global volume looks for religion in not only the content and form of film, but in its reception as well. The book analyzes the religious role of cinema in communal life, beyond the hegemony of Hollywood to places like Iran, Asia, Cuba, and Ghana, exploring the nature of “making” in filmmaking, culture making and mythmaking. Opening windows to many other worlds, the essays apply the secondary orality of Walter Ong to show how religion is “transmediated,” and put in new forms, becoming participatory, and inviting communal relations. By framing and projecting a confluence of religion and film as products of culture and producers/shapers of culture, the book exposes the role of such variables as ideology and power of the visual image. These alternative voices seek to move the conversation beyond the nexus of Christianity and Hollywood studies on film and religion. Lutgendorf (2003) offers a study of *Jai Santoshi Maa,* an Indian film, to suggest how one might re-mythologize cinema. Nathanson (2003) covers how religion is represented on film, in film, and through film, revealing how the medium alters religion through the representational process. Older storytelling forms into modern cinema. Meyer (2003) provides field research on “video-films” in Ghanaian Pentecostal Christianity to address how older storytelling forms are negotiated with the new technology, and to show how denominations compete to offer a unique religious product to their viewing publics. Jozajtis (2003) explores how the national identity of producers and consumers of film establishes religious cultural identities, even a reductive American civil religion as the New Israel, cultivated through Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation*. In summary, Plate and his colleagues set a

fresh direction in their visionary exploration of the cultural mythmaking impact of international film.

D. The Fantastic

Excursions into the mythic also involve fantasy and science fiction genres. Gabbard (1982) opens up the religious significance of the heavens in probing Robert Wise's *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Flannery-Dailey (2003) addresses themes of multiple layers of reality in contemporary cinema from *The Matrix* and *Momento* to *Minority Report* and *Mulholland Drive*, films she suggests question and undermine our sense of reality. Each film appropriates sources that suggest alternate realities, Buddhism, Hinduism, Neo-Manichean dualism, Gnosticism, and the Jewish Kabbalah. Spielberg's *A.I.*, for example, asks what it means to be a real boy, as David has a subconscious and dreams, and the film offers conflicting possibilities and interpretations of its endings. Likewise, Fielding (2003) argues that the Matrix films are best understood through a variety of religious traditions, including Christianity, Buddhism, Gnosticism, and Hinduism. Ford (2000) echoes this perspective of a syncretistic narrative of competing worldviews.

Most recently, Faller (2004) asks more philosophical than theological questions of the Wachowski brothers' Matrix series. Like Mortimer Adler's classic *Art and Prudence*, Faller starts with human thought, regarding *topoi* ranging from epistemology and phenomenology to free will and determinism. Political, social, and psychological issues are interwoven throughout, with questions on the types of people in the Matrix (tourists, cynics, and prisoners) and racial typologies to more general concerns of doubt, fear, disbelief, faith, and spirituality raised by the films. Faller asks the questions that enable the reader/viewer to interrogate and examine his or her life through the agency of the film trilogy, and in doing so, performs a therapeutic function in clarifying the religious signs along a cinematic journey. He exposes the prisons of the Matrix and offers glimpses of freedom, being offered the red pill or the blue pill. Faller sets forth a choice of paths, even as he defines the choice in clear, dramatic, and metaphysical terms. His work is but one of a plethora of texts probing the pluralistic religious syncretism of the film trilogy (LaVelle, 2000; Pugh, 2001; Irwin, 2002; Haber, 2003; Seay & Garrett, 2003; Yeffeth, 2003).

Gavett (1998) returns to the question of what it means to be human in reflecting on Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*. The issue is complicated by the fact that Replicants seem more human than humans. Connecting two distinct narratives from the book of *Genesis*, namely the story of the fallen Adam and Eve and the story of Jacob and his brother Esau, Gavett explores the nature of the "creation" of the Replicants by Eldin Tyrell's god figure who lives in his penthouse heaven atop a 700 story pyramid, and their "desire" to seek knowledge of their existence and their "Creator." Blade runners are the cherubim sent with flaming swords to retire these deprived and fallen creatures. For Gavett, the characters of Deckard and Batty are also Jacob and Esau, indicative of a sibling rivalry, and trying to find out what it means to be human and free.

Of the four last things, the judgment at the end of time draws a fearful fascination. Oswalt (2000) shows that as traditional religion has avoided any meaningful discussion of end of time, films have taken over. "Mainstream religion in America has become so secularized," Oswalt argues, and with the development of Hollywood's realistic special effects, artists can create these catastrophic visions. Hollywood films, such as *Waterworld*, *Independence Day*, *Armageddon*, and *Matrix*, view the end of the world through a distorted lens of religious apocalyptic renderings, even as they ignore some salient features of apocalyptic texts. These films reflect a change from religious to secular approaches, characterized in unique ways. First, they depict a muted fatalism, averting disaster through employing human ingenuity, scientific advance, and heroism. Second, the films look to and depend upon a human messiah who battles nature, machines, or aliens. Third, the divine element is removed, but not religious symbolism or language. The divine as Other is replaced by aliens, disease, meteors, and machines existing in binary opposition to humans. Fourth, science deals with eschatology and its proposed salvation via secular eschatological use of science and heroism. Keanu Reeves, Bruce Willis, and Kevin Costner become macho messiahs, using muscle and force and skill to save the world. A fine companion text is Wojcik (1997).

So, too, in a more irreverent and flip manner, Lindvall and Bounds (1999) visit the "apocalyptic imagination in popular film" to see how Arnold Schwarzenegger saves the world, if not California (see also Strug, 1995). For a lively popular view of a cinema of the end of the world, one should also consult Newman (2000), which connects Mary Shelley and Roger Corman in this broad popular perspective.

Ruppersburg (1987) identifies "the alien messiah." As a cultural phenomenon the alien messiah was a pervasive figure in the 1980s. Films looked beyond human-

ity for salvation to save humanity from the technology that threatens human life, with messiahs from other worlds appearing. Rejecting the modern limits of science, films embraced the supernatural, with these alien saviors usually appearing in two stages: a demonstration of the vulnerability of humanity and a rescue by the sublime and benevolent alien, as in *Starman*. Kozloff (1981) finds in Superman an allegorical figure that stands in as an otherworldly deity and savior who comes incognito (i.e., Clark Kent) to earth to save its people from destruction. Spielberg's *E.T.* best illustrates the myth of the suffering messiah, who identifies with the weak of the world, a human boy from a divorced family. The alien dies, is resurrected, and finally ascends back into the heavens from whence it came. Negative or dark messiahs are sent to destroy goodness, as in *The Terminator*, but even they are converted before the sequel. Finally, an unseen messiah comes in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, never actually appearing, and only known through the monolith that marks its presence. It offers an ambiguous redemption as it obliterates human identity and reconstitutes it in new forms.

Rushing (1985) focuses her attention on the concept of rhetorical transcendence in Spielberg's blockbuster fantasy, *E.T.* Using Kenneth Burke's notion of the perennial philosophy, Rushing traces the film's evolving state from technological patriarchal tendencies to nurturing matriarchy of cosmic reunion with the extraterrestrial. Where technology and its complicit fragmentation sacrifices transcendent wholeness, E.T. fulfills its latent potential of such an ideal. (For similar approaches to other science fiction, see Porter & McLaren, 1999; Kramer, Cassidy, & Schwartz, 2001; Rushing & Frentz, 1995). Tomasulo (2001) also delineates a "gospel" in *E.T.* as an overt representation of Christian iconography and ideology. He finds the Biblical parallels to be undeniably self-evident. Both Christ and E.T. are extra-terrestrials; they appear with humility; spread good will; are pursued, captured, and die at the hands of authorities; and return from the dead and ascend into a heavenly home, leaving disciples behind. Tomasulo (1982) then deconstructs the myth and civil religion of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. In his quest, Indiana Jones exports the hegemonic power and money of America and promulgates a national secular myth around the world. The adventurer's success is directed toward the political sphere, justifying and reflecting the damaged social fabric of America, and demonstrating, at least for Western audiences, the symbolic triumph of the technology of weapons over the primitive sword. As such, Tomasulo argues that the movie projects Frederic Jameson's transnational allegory, that film enhances and cements the status quo of American civil religion.

Fantasy and religion are also addressed within a genre of films made during World War II known as *film blanc*. Valenti (1978) addresses issues of mortality and poignant visits to a heavenly twilight world beyond the wartime exigencies of suffering and death. Film critic Andrew Sarris (1979) explores Hollywood's version of the afterlife, playing with the liminal realm between life and death, as in *Heaven Can Wait* and *Our Town.* Capra's late classic is analyzed as well in Valenti (1981), an essay that points to patterns of fantasy and action that have close parallels to traditional Biblical narratives, from the initial invocation of God the Father to the final concrete evidence of the angel's successful mission. In a lighter, fluffier vein, the author of *The Gospel According to Peanuts*, Robert Short (1983) addresses what he sees as vivacious parallels to Gospel themes and parables in the most popular fantasy and science fiction films of the 1970s—ranging from *E.T.*, *Star Wars, Superman*, to *2001: A Space Odyssey*. For more on these themes, see Allan (1975), Hurley (1983), and Ruppersburg (1987), the latter who identifies the alien messiah in these popular films. Markey (1982) investigated Nietzschean themes of the ancient religious rituals of birth and rebirth in fantasy films, as in *Star Trek* and *Altered States*.

The expected publication of numerous volumes on the Tolkien/Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (or the forthcoming film versions of *Chronicles of Narnia*) has not yet exploded, but Wood (2003a, 2003b) has offered two reflections and Dalton (2003) leads readers through a faith journey within the worlds of *The Lord of the Rings*, as well as Harry Potter and *Star Wars*. Nevertheless, I believe that there will be a renaissance of publishing based not only on Todorov's *The Fantastic*, but also on the insightful writings of George MacDonald, G.K. Chesterton, J.R.R. Tolkien, and C.S. Lewis on fantasy and religion in film. That all must wait for another issue of this good journal.

E. Transcendence in Film

Another very fertile research trend in religion and film is the fuller awareness of transcendental styles. In the seminal work on transcendental style in cinema, Schrader (1972) looks at how the use of temporal technological means of camera angles, dialogue, editing, conveying the ordinary, disparity, and stasis serves as stylistic marks of divinity in films, seeking to express that which lies beyond usual perception. Schrader's detailed

and intimate study of three directors from varied religious traditions (Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer) underscores how Art seeks to capture the Holy, trying to bring the spectator as close as possible to the ineffable and unknowable. Trying to unveil a spiritual truth and make it known by objectively setting objects and images side by side, Schrader takes up the challenge that, as Jacques Maritain wrote: "There is no style *reserved* to religious art, there is no *religious technique*" (qtd. in Schrader, 1972, p. 151). Schrader's (often self-contradictory) distinction of style in true (vs. ersatz) religious cinema is that which expresses the encounter with absolute otherness, achieved through techniques of primitive art, Byzantine icons, Zen painting. From Jacques Maritain, he borrows the idea of style as sparse means that shed abundant (or Freud's non-religious "oceanic feeling") means to evoke stasis. But abundance is also present in the Italian High Renaissance, with Raphael's Transfiguration, close to Biblical epic films and dramatic feelings. Schrader, however, brilliantly demonstrates that one cinematic style most attuned to high religious art, to capturing the transcendent, is that marked by sparse means of expressing the everyday, conflict, and stasis.

Following Schrader's model, Offenbacher (1985) explores how the same three directors, Bresson, Ozu, and Dreyer, depict transcendence in their films and attempt to transmit such experience to audiences. Offenbacher also defines Transcendence as "going beyond"—an aesthetic stage of separation from the natural world or an elevation beyond its borders. The author describes French Catholic Jansenist Bresson as depicting the presence of God in ordinary life and inviting spectators to understand with their hearts, by intuition, not by mere intellect. By watching mere parts of a story, the director calls the audience to "divine" what is happening. Using the expressionless faces of non-professional actors, Bresson believed that if we stare long enough at faces we will see the mystery of God's image. Zen Buddhist Yasujiro Ozu made no distinction between sacred and secular in the everyday, but used a technique of emptiness (*mu*) and silence as means for increasing tension. Carl Dreyer's concern with inner, not outer, life sought to reveal secrets that by their very nature border on the mysterious, and so technically incorporated slower rhythms and close-ups of the human face in an attempt to evoke the sublime.

Fraser (1988) tests Schrader's own writing and directing in employing transcendent style as a template for examining the narrative form of *American Gigolo*, but finds a pastiche of styles, sparse and abundant, in his work. Schrader would argue that he does not need to apply his own critical formula for transcendental style as a creative artist. Nichols (1981) looks at the argument of Schrader's plagiarism of Bresson's *Pickpocket* to which Schrader responded that criticism has to do with cadavers; filmmaking with fetuses. Thus, such an analysis connects two uncommon processes of creation and criticism. Desser (1985) also draws out the apparent transcendental style in *Tender Mercies*, by applying specific cinematic forms of Schrader's spiritual aesthetic to Bruce Beresford's 1983 film that deals with overtly religious (Southern Baptist) content. Though Schrader denies having a transcendental style, opting for a psychological realism, Hamilton (2004) discerns spiritual markers of seeking lost sheep from a reluctant redeemer in Schrader's *Bringing Out the Dead*. Subtle religious traces within other films require astute, even imaginative, critics to make them manifest. Content and Kreidor (2001) find in *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* an "unmistakable strain of genuine, hard-assed, 'ol'-timey' Christianity running through the core of this film story. No other recent film has taken as seriously the presence of a merciful and sustaining God in the minds of the people—saved, sinners, and skeptics alike" (p. 48).

In juxtaposing the interplay of scene and narrative, Engell (1995, 1993) delves more deeply into spiritual potential in film. He focuses on "Otherness" as a "concept in accounting for religious or spiritual communication," namely as a means of how film communicates a sense of spirituality. Again the classic, and indispensable, concepts of Rudolph Otto, *mysterium*, *tremendum*, and *fascinans*, are put into play in helping to ground such a concept as Otherness. Engnell uses *mysterium* as the Other never represented by normal cognitive routines, categories, or tangible, filmable elements, but so magnified that it cannot be ignored; the Other demands a response. *Tremendum* encompasses the fear and dread triggered by the Other's mysterious power and vastness, where one encounters the huge expanse and awesome depth of the Other. Finally, *fascinans* astounds one by the compelling beauty of the Other, an infinite attractiveness that encourages all who see to draw close, look, taste, and worship. The frame in the darkened room commands our attention; as we cannot escape its draw or appeal, its images are both magnified and magnetic to the human senses. "Sparse" restricts the use of cinematic palate and "abundant" takes full advantage of all technological resources. Engell argues that the absence of special effects increases the chance of Otherness to creep into the cinematic story. As such, a film like

Tender Mercies offers up the power of the sung word as a way to find meaning and definition in our lives. Otherness as communicated through scene and narrative may however, as in *Places in the Heart*, startle us with its unexpected ending.

Johnston (2000c) expands the varieties of transcendental styles, in what he calls A and B (from the Holy to the human). The first informs and reveals, showing the human parable of the natural and supernatural realms while the second tries to capture a sacramental mode of communication, in which God discloses Himself to humans, through encounters with others, experiences, events, and even objects. The world is pregnant with grace and the ways of God. Lindvall, Williams, and Terry (1996) also seek to balance the austerity and asceticism of Schrader's style with what they call "spectacular transcendence," with attention on an alternative abundant means of exuberance and energy as found in Pentecostal and African-American worship styles. For the authors, *Hallelujah* and *The Long Walk Home* express the holy through the abundant means of music and joy, charisma, and renewal aspects of justice and community (see also Howard, 1996). Jones (1992) is less enthusiastic about *Sister Act,* seeing in the diverse musical styles skirmishes in liturgy as a metaphor for the conflict between modernity and the Church.

Nolletti (1994) calls Paul Zinneman's 1959 *The Nun's Story* the best American film ever made on religious life. The style of "spirituality" within the film uses what Nolleti sees as an impersonal stance. Citing Dudley Andrew's "delimitation of means," with a concentration and repetition of dialogue, religious icons, and close-ups, Zinneman conveys an aura of the sacred. Convent singing and prayers, iconic elements of habits and crosses, give a rich sense of austerity and solemnity. For example, in the outward manifestations of an internal and spiritual walk, young Gabrielle goes into a monastic order, leaving her father as the door closes behind her. Another door opens and she sees a long corridor with a large crucifix at the end of the room, which symbolizes her new life. Nolleti applies Jacques Maritain's "sparse means" *and* "abundant means," with the latter signifying what Kierkegaard categorizes as the aesthetic stage of life, concerned with physical goods and sensual feelings. Zinnemann films abundance in broad sweeping camera movements, panoramic shots, bright gorgeous colors, and the focused activity of Sister Luke in an African hospital versus the sparseness of mundane work in the hospital. Stasis is achieved at end of the film as Sister Luke leaves the monastic life, being framed in a door, with the question of whether she is turning her back on the church or taking her faith out into the world.

In an issue devoted to the religious imagination, *IMAGE* (1998) examines the convergence of contemporary film and concepts of transcendence and spirituality. Issue editor Ron Austin had earlier hosted a conversation (1998) that includes the mature renowned mind of screenwriter Horton Foote; wise, hoary, old professors (i.e., John R. May) looking at the close encounter of films and religion after a century; a fragmented symposium on films that affected artists, authors, and actors' spiritual lives (e.g., Kathleen Norris—*Old Yeller* and *Ponette*; Ed Asner—*Four Feathers*); poets waxing eloquently on films like *La Strada*; confessions of Catholic film critic, Richard Alleva; and J. A. Hanson on the films of Nicholas St. John (e.g., *The Addiction*). The journal indeed offers a full range of emotive experiences and weighty insights into the religious imagination in contemporary film. Austin (2001) extends his reflections as a screenwriter facing the modern challenge to be in the modern world but not of it, and trying to understand how revelation works through aesthetic encounters, hoping to gain a perception of a formal unity that points beyond itself where "beauty will redeem the world."

Working from a host of critical models of transcendence in film, Newman (2002) capably challenges various modes of illusory transcendence (which he essentially views as creative modes of immanence) and argues, cogently, for reconstituting a redemptive model that incorporates biblical orthodoxy. In doing so, he reminds readers of the darker realms of supernatural worlds beyond this natural one.

F. Downward Transcendence and the Demonic

Fantasy genres afford a broad range of mythological and religious inquiry into film. The works of Rudolph Otto, Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, and others opened up a Pandora's box of evils and dangers contained within the frames of film. In his discussion of cinematic theodicy, Duhourq (1970) outlines various ways in which moral evil had been presented in the films of the 1960s. Forshey (1980) tackles Greeley's 1976 *New York Times* pronouncement, "Why Hollywood Never Asks the God Question," that basically argued that, unlike the Europeans, American cinema has failed to produce any truly religious film. In spite of different aesthetics and different psyches, Forshey claims a lively reciprocity between American popular culture and religion. The collective American psyche, however, is char-

acterized in popular film by the notion of a private spirituality, by a desire for nationalistic righteousness, by the reinforcement of American cultural values, and by a distrust of empiricism. Mostly, a reactionary stance against science and empiricism can be seen in horror films, where evil beyond comprehension and explanation dwells in *The Exorcist* or *The Omen.*

May (1982b) also challenges Greeley's assertion that Hollywood never asks the God question by pointing to an American tradition of conjuring up, as if in pure mischief, the "demon question." American cinema, especially in the 1970s, relished in dabbling in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, of revealing the evil within the human soul and within immoral society and its corrupt institutions. For May, the primary evil dwells among the personal demons inherent in each man's heart, which are then projected through a proleptic analogue into "man's continuing perversity into a catastrophic future of crisis" or an apocalyptic cinema—consisting of thrillers like *Jaws*, *The Exorcist*, and the *Omen* trilogy. Institutional and societal evil appear in *The Deer Hunter*, *Midnight Express*, *Badlands*, *Easy Rider*, and *Dr. Strangelove*, with combined, transitional evil haunting the screens of *The Godfather* and *Mean Streets*. And, for May, a film like Robert Altman's *Nashville*, which examines quieter evils of mediocrity and indifference and vanity at the Grand Ol' Opry, operates on personal and social levels.

Transcendence, as Rockett (1988) points out astutely, does not necessarily mean a transcendence of ascent. It also includes a downward, demonic transcendence. Thus the problem of theodicy rears its difficult presence. One cannot dismiss the existence of supernatural evil as a mere cinematic convention, but as something that permeates the whole, as the sons and daughters of Calvin point out, suggesting the total depravity that mars and bends the best of images. Even in limiting his study to a cinema of cruelty, Rockett expands our understanding of transcendence and offers remarkably clear and reasonable categories for assessing the ambiguous and often fuzzy concept of transcendence. Established upon the supernatural foundation of Rudolph Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*, Rockett aims at connecting transcendence to the supernatural more than the merely psychological. With Aldous Huxley, he differentiates among varieties of transcendental experience by direction: upward transcendence, downward transcendence, and lateral transcendence. The last most directly connects to Biro's (1982) more political and secular modes of recognizing one's unity with the whole of humanity. Such lateral transcendence does take one out of oneself and one's world, but only in sideways, social, and immanent ways. To connect with another's sufferings, to practice a model of sacrifice for one another, to give selfless love, all these are hints and clues of an upward transcendence, but remain earthbound. If there is no Wholly Other, no matter the depth of experience, the "transcendence" remains lateral and secular, a sort of material religious consciousness. However, Rockett plumbs the darker depths in his study. Like Nietzsche looking into the abyss (and seeing that the abyss stares back!), Rockett sees in Antonin Arnaud's Theatre of Cruelty a human fascination that bleeds into the genre of graphic horror films in which one surrenders to a living whirlwind and is devoured in darkness. The author believes that the core of truth lies beyond any psycho-spiritual, sexual politics in realms of horror. Humans crave a reality in which the supernatural is palpable, and if one cannot find such awesome encounters with a good God via ascending transcendence, one might at least descend into Hell to realize the terrible mysteries of the universe. One's appetite for life beyond the mundane may well lead, via horror films, to a personal encounter with evil, much like Bergman's crusader in *The Seventh Seal* looked into the eyes of a "witch" to find the devil so he could be assured of the reality of God. In films ranging from *The Exorcist* to *Nightmare on Elm Street*, and citing thinkers ranging from Edmund Burke to Stephen King, Rockett finds evidence of viewers' quests to experience the fantastic, ineffable, and sublime, even if it resides in the depths of demonic dread and *umheimlich*. This route to transcendence plummets downward into terror before it can see the light and goodness of an ascent to the Holy.

Aichele and Pippin (1997) offer an edited investigation of the Bible as Fantastic literature. From an earlier 1992 discussion in *Semeia*, the editors extend their fascination with the fantastic to stories outside the realm of everyday experience, where fear and wonder reign. As Todorov situated a liminal state of interruption between the rational and the supernatural, so sacred horror teeters between the uncanny and the marvelous. Of particular worth are Donaldson (1997) on *Blade Runner* and *Thelma and Louise*, an essay in which she parallels the myth of the second Creation story to show how director Ridley Scott appropriated transgression of boundaries as a narrative arc, and Kreitzer (1997) on crucifixion imagery and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*.

Lieb (1998) interprets a tendency toward techno-transcendence in various alien movies. For Lieb, films, as visualizations of Ezekiel's prophecies, prophesy a worship of technology of the ineffable, namely "those who

construct and reconstruct Ezekiel's *visio Dei* as machine are the avatars of *techne*, the new riders of the chariot." His very funny and ironic tone convincingly connects end time movies, *merkabah*, Pat Robertson, Louis Farrakhan, aliens, and Ezekiel's prophesies of "dung balls." Enough said. In more familiar territory, Pilkington (1996) launches a quest for God in *Star Trek V* and only finds the god within, with the skeptical pilgrims of space discovering an immanent divinity in the human heart.

Anker (1989) delves into the popular potent nightmares from Hollywood, like *Halloween* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, but deals more directly with issues of pandering to children through the films' violence, sexuality, and downright meanness. Stone (2001) looks more deeply at how horror films function as both threat and catharsis, and how they exploit (and subvert) quasi- and pseudo-religious iconography and themes in confronting viewers with a sense of fear of death, the supernatural, and theodicy.

Beal (2002) finds various hauntings in the monstrous side of religious imagination that endure through the technology of cinema. Historical monsters that de-*monstrate* the consequences of ignoring the warnings and portents from Goya's sleep of reason emerge from cinematic nightmares. From Job's awesome view of Leviathan to the overweening excess of Dr. Frankenstein, the screening of monsters of *Nosferatu*, *Dracula*, and the Moloch of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* continues into apocalyptic themes and rituals of blood sacrifice in films like *Hellraisers*. One dreads, but watches the cinematic *Monstrum Tremendum*. (See also Rushing and Frentz, 1989, on the Frankenstein myth and Kermode, 1998, on the making of the BBC documentary, *The Fear of God*.)

To these works one must add Jones (2000). Coming from a vigorous Catholic apologetic tradition, Jones masterfully exegetes Hollywood's horror film genre that he finds grounded in the sexual decadence of the French revolution and the tradition of the Gothic. Jones follows a bloody trail from the Age of Reason through the reign of Terror that leads to gore-infested contemporary horror films. What is remarkable is that the repressed "other" for Jones is not the denied sexual urge, but the moral law, wherein "horror is a product of a guilty conscience that will not admit its own wrongdoing" (p. 86). From Murnau's *Nosferatu* to Cronenberg's *The Brood*, Jones rips away the flesh of the films' surfaces to expose diseased hearts.

Scheutz (1975) extracts images of good and evil from *The Exorcist* and theorizes that the tension of the opposing images can best be explained by a yin and yang paradigm. Scheutz believes that such a model helps explain the film's intense impact on audiences as sufficient ambiguous stimuli allow personal meanings to emerge. Frentz and Farrell (1975) scrutinize *The Exorcist* within the historical context of contemporary American life. The film stood as a watershed social moment of American social change, one that brought about a conversion of America's consciousness with a simultaneous disillusionment with Positivism and reaffirmation of transcendent Christian faith as the most viable means of coping with the problems of contemporary life and evil. The authors playfully point to the irony of using technology to convey the spiritual realm. Medhurst (1978) approaches the horrific images of *The Exorcist* with less fear and trembling as he proposes the concept of rhetorical ambiguity (the *modus operandi* of the director to involve audiences in closing gaps of uncertainty) to suggest the film's theme that "mankind has a choice to make," that humans must consciously choose the good and then act on that choice.

Cinematic evil, more than goodness, fascinates films critics. Dietrich (1991) analyzes Hollywood's portrayal of the scientist as savior or as evildoer. He asserts that the authoritative science figure assumes the spiritual authority and mantle of the church into a priesthood of physics. Using the ideas of modern physicists like Fritjof Capra, he suggests that science has taken over answering religious questions, presiding over a paradigm shift, and "blessing" the passage of the human mind on its way back to the center of the universe. The prince of darkness has now become a scientific prince of light (see also Gardner, 1999). In another example of horrific representation, McBride (1990) sees in *Dracula* a stereotypic Semitic shyster vampire.

Fry (1991) sees an impressive victory of the forces of evil as new formula in Alan Parker's *Angel Heart*. Satan is a sort of heroic figure in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, but in *Rosemary's Baby* and two of the three *Omen* films the Devil comes out a winner. Based on William Hjortsberg's novel *Falling Angel*, Fry examines the Satanic and occult symbols in the movie and notes key differences in novel and film. The devil in *Angel Heart* is a gentleman and holds a superior moral position to his human servant, Harry Angel, simply wanting a contract honored.

Finally, what is essentially an index of films about the devil, Schreck (2001) offers an illustrated, often graphic, guide to the devil in cinema from days of the magic lantern and George Melies through the

1960s' sympathy for the devil to the eclipse of his diabolical powers at *fin-de-siecle* and the millennial cycle of end-time films. The doctrinal issue of theodicy is much better handled in Carroll (1990) rather than any exploitative chronology as such.

5. Film Pedagogy and Application

A. Educational Uses of Religion and Film

Using various critical methodologies, various scholars have provided models for understanding how films reflect and affect the cultural milieu of which they are an integral part. As such, films become documents and artifacts for teaching about religious values and worldviews; they implicitly, and often explicitly, mirror attitudes and values within society. According to Blake (1991c) films speak for themselves, with no need of imposing moral or religious messages. Blake's own journey with film, however, signals a diachronic development from movies being merely a sort of secular and sociological prophecy to inhering a spirituality of their own. In an early work on film aesthetics, Blake (1968) identifies church interest in realms of ethical and educational understanding, with a need to make its message more relevant and palatable. He recommends a new visual rhetoric for the modern man of faith, seeking Tillich's "ultimate concern," and using *redaktionsgeschichte* to discover layers of significant meaning. Citing Bazin's observation that "the cinema has always been interested in God," he recommends those works that demand theological interpretation, such as *The Passion of Joan of Arc* and *A Man for All Seasons*. However, for Blake the movies move from being a mere peepshow to a site of prayer and spirituality (1970, 2002).

A work by the film critic for *Commonweal*, Tom O'Brien, also deals with film values (1990), exhibiting a kaleidoscope of shifting contemporary values regarding environment, work, patriotism, education, and culminating in how religion has been portrayed, with an astute essay on the regnant spirit of irony and reductionism in film. The multilingual bi-monthly publication edited by the World Catholic Association for Communication, *Cine&Media*, highlights articles such as Malone (2001a) on screen emotion. And, of course, *Media Development* remains a substantial staple of ideas regarding religion and media, such as in Noone (1987) on the media's destruction of the sacred or Arthur (1998) reflecting on theological trends in film criticism.

Sponsored by the National Council of Churches, Schramm (1957), a now classic work, set a foundation for other religious educators who contribute worthy texts to the field, such as Kuhns (1968). McCaffrey (1967, 1968) provides guides to film for religious education. Culkin (1963) recommends the study of films according to their own nature and functions in his early study for the National Catholic Educational Association. Sullivan (1967) takes up D.W. Griffith's notion of movies as an international language. In her book, Sullivan looks at Art as Revelation, musing that perhaps God "speaks as loudly through his secular prophets who use the media of their own culture" (p. 9).

One of the more prolific and practical leaders in incorporating film into the Roman Catholic Church is Rose Pacatte, FSP. Along with her translation of historical studies of San Paolo Film and Father James Alberione, apostle of the cinema (1994; see also Rolfo, 1987), she has published numerous other helps. She and Peter Malone have published two volumes of a "movie lectionary" (2001, 2002). With each lectionary reading, they supply the synopsis of a suitable film, commentary, dialogue with the Gospel, notes on key scenes, themes for reflection and conversation, and a concluding prayer. Movies from *Shadowlands* to *Pleasantville* are attached to the Scriptural readings of the church calendar, provoking lively discussion. Pacatte (2000) approaches films a different way by providing a guide to organizing film festivals as a practical media education opportunity. Various booklets and videos from National Conference of Catholic Bishops/United States Catholic Conference (USCC/NCCB, 1998) add illuminating material in dealing with excessive violence and sex in the media. In addition, church figures like Los Angeles's Cardinal Roger M. Mahoney and Peter Malone, the president of the international Catholic organization for film and media, provide introductory guides (Mahoney, 1992; Malone, 2001b). Henry Herx, the long-time reviewer for the U.S. Catholic Conference, offers a collection of film reviews and evaluations first published by the NCCB (Herx, 1999).

In Jackson's second volume of *Communication for Churchmen* (1969), focusing on television, radio,

and film, Culkin (1969) provides an eclectic commentary on film and the church, citing Walt Whitman ("To have great poets, there must be great audiences") as a summons to develop mature viewing audiences. Culkin introduces readers to the then-emerging thought of Marshall McLuhan and recommends converting commercial theaters as sites for discussion. (The recent publication of McLuhan's religious reflections, 2002, makes such a recommendation even more compelling.) Culkin proceeds to provide a case study of a personal breakthrough film experience of Fellini's *La Strada* (1955) and a teaching unit of films dealing with perspectives on war, as seen through short provocative animated and documentary films.

Jones (1967) seeks to translate grace, faith, agape, forgiveness, and justification into cinematic terms. The proclamation of images was viewed as an invitation to dialogue, where films speak in parables. In a guide for planning and executing film discussion groups, his short history of the church and screen is accompanied by film criticism (e.g., *The Hustler*); a discussion of the psychology of viewership, vicarious identification, and empathy; and recommendations on using short films like animator John Hubley's *The Hole* and Forsberg's *The Parable* from the Protestant Pavillion at the 1964 World's Fair. Wister (1996) recommends the use of feature films (e.g., *Quo Vadis*, *A Man for All Seasons*) for teaching church history.

In the cultural engagement strategies of Francis Schaeffer, Godawa (2002) sets forth worthwhile movies as incarnate sermons, which demand a discernment regarding the rhetorical motives and worldviews underlying the discourse. While self-promoting (continually referring readers to "visit my website…"), the book does essay to extract existential, postmodern, and sundry philosophical positions from film texts. As a talented screenwriter (*To End All Wars*), Godawa grounds his lively and informed discussion on the art of storytelling, addressing structure, technique, and various other tricks of the trade as means to articulating a worldview through film.

Fraser and Neal (2000) navigate their responses to film between the Charbydis of cultural corruption and the Scylla of harmless entertainment, charting a straight course among perilous waters. Beginning with film aesthetics and techniques, the authors explore the generic formulae and patterns that elicit affective responses to films and thematic issues such as children and film and "liturgical patterns in film," drawn from Fraser's prior work on sacramental images in film. The book offers an immensely practical educational guide from a Lutheran perspective.

The religious perspective is frequently communicated in terms of ethical demands or pragmatic moral impact. Margaret Miles (1996) seeks to answer the question how we should live by offering reflections on cinema, such as *Forrest Gump* and *A Long Walk Home*, from a host of theological teachers and filmmakers. Other scholars have focused their attention on entertainment/education, on how media help to direct one's attitudes and behaviors. In particular, Roman Catholic Gary Edgerton directs an issue of the *Journal of Popular Film and Television* (1993) to probe those ethical issues beyond mere contempt or celebration. Brown and Singhal (1993) look at such ethical considerations in their discussion of prosocial messages in media.

B. Catechism Uses of Religion and Film

Many writers appropriate films as texts that signal potential religious values in order to use them as means for inspiring, uplifting, and challenging viewers in their spiritual journeys. Several works seek to enliven the historic faith of the church by comparing themes of films to the classic doctrines of the church.

Both theological and pastoral, Stone (2000) juxtaposes the Apostles' Creed with pertinent movies, suggesting discussion questions and practical applications. Building on the notion that films are signs of the times, Stone places these visual artifacts around the scaffolding of the Christian confession of belief. For example, against the opening creedal statement of "I believe," he lays Robert Zemeckis' popular science fiction film, *Contact* as an inquiry into an experience of faith resting on the secular foundation of modernity. Against the cornerstone doctrine that Christ "will come again to judge the living and the dead," he creatively sets the 1990 film *Flatliners*. Other more predictable matches are set forth: belief in the holy Catholic Church in Roland Joffe's *The Mission*, the forgiveness of sins in Tim Robbins' *Dead Man Walking*, and the Communion of Saints in Gabriel Axel's *Babette's Feast*. In addition, Stone wrestles with the relationship of violence and religion in four ways: religion aiding victims; religion supportive or leading to violence; religion rejecting violence; and religion juxtaposed to violence.

May (2001) seeks explicitly to nourish faith by enabling readers and viewers to "grasp" the meaning of the Apostles' Creed through fictional film and literature. Following Flannery O'Connor's call to feed one's faith by reading, he locates spiritual meaning in literature and the celluloid parables of the screen, arguing passionately for an understanding of how fiction profoundly affects us. For May, the Word of God can then

penetrate one's innermost being and imagination, inhabiting and baptizing our reading and viewing. May divides his study into the Trinitarian creedal affirmations of Father (Creator), the Son (Savior) and the Holy Spirit (Lifegiver), tapping into themes of belonging, shared dominion, stewardship, the hindrance of sin and its depleting structures, and ordinate responses of wonder and gratitude. In the second part, he addresses representations of Jesus, the redemptive value of suffering, self-sacrifice of death, liberation, and the parables of Judgment and grace. Finally, he meditates upon the creedal themes of the communion of the saints, forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. His prudent practice of discernment is balanced, warning that not all films are nourishing—some are downright deleterious to one's spiritual health—so that the perennial task is one of cultural education and aesthetic discrimination.

Writing from the Anglican tradition, Cunningham (2002) also contributes intertextual insights, placing the Apostles' Creed as a framework for cross-examining theological narratives emerging out of film and literature. After providing brief historical background to the various creedal themes, his study extends to items as diverse as Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* and Sister Helen Prejean's *Dead Man Walking*. Contending that art engages the human imagination more fully than a philosophical text or creed, Cunningham vivifies the core communal doctrines of the Christian faith. Grounded in the *heilsgeschichte* of the Christian story itself, he nurtures dramatic storytelling to embody truth, showing how Christianity is an incarnational narrative religion. His purpose is significantly pastoral in helping Christians to "understand, embrace, cherish, and practice their faith" in daily life through the windows of popular cultural texts. From the Church of England, Maher (2002) seeks to build bridges to evangelize, share faith, and promote ethical behaviors through film, and therefore offers more practical ways to use film within the local church.

Younger (1991) uses Niebuhr's five categories and Tillich's four levels of relations between religion and art to outline a syllabus for the use of "contemporary films as a source of insight, illustration, and methodology for preaching." McCutcheon (1998) goes further in the discussion of teaching theology and religion through film by attempting to see not only the sacred in its celluloid manifestation, but also to see the mechanisms of social formation inherent in religious systems and society's films. He tackles the challenge of teaching "the insider/outsider problem" through films like *Forrest Gump*, *The Life of Brian*, and *Pulp Fiction*. So, too, Conrad Oswalt (1998) uses movies for and in teaching through his theological, mythological, and ideological foci.

Andriacco (2001) deals with preaching the word in an image culture and enabling the parish to deal with media literacy. He recommends using media (*Big*, *Hook*, etc.) in the contexts of developing Christian formation or even practicing a discipline of a Lenten media fast. Finally, Pungente and Williams (2004) apply the spiritual disciplines of Ignatius of Loyola to encourage spiritual growth and discernment within the world of movies through intentional prayer and contemplation. Looking at the often dark landscapes of contemporary films, the authors locate horizons of consciousness that address the holy imagination of the viewer. The great saint whose own readings both of the lives of holy martyrs and of worldly romances of chivalric adventures led him to discernment serves as a disciplined model for us less ascetic voyeurs. Through "Four Weeks" of discovering God's love and sharing in His victory over death and destruction, the authors capably guide the reader through such well-ordered exercises as "Walking with God" in the watching of *The Lord of the Rings*, all of which culminates in what one hopes will be a Transforming Life.

C. Homiletic Uses of Film

John Dart (2003) succinctly poses the question in *The Christian Century,* "Can Hollywood teach and inspire?" The answer, of course for this periodical, is in the affirmative. Dart offers a fresh and fulfilling overview of professors and seminaries that have done the task admirably, namely Robert Jewett, Margaret Miles, and Rob Johnston, and Fuller Theological Seminary, which publishes its own study guides for films like *Gods and Generals*. Craig Brian Larson, editor of PreachingToday.com, has produced two volumes to provide practical homiletic tools (Larson & Zahn, 2003; Larson & Quicke, 2004). Illustrations culled from numerous popular films, and indexed according to Scriptural references, are handy homiletic helps for the humdrum and mundane preacher.

Richardson (1992) tests a New Testament model for communicating biblical and theological concepts into cultures foreign to a Western Judeo-Christian worldview. In asking how the Gospel can be communicated as culturally right and fitting, he sets forth principles for interpreting and utilizing film in church work. Richardson sees the Gospel as fulfilling and surpassing

some exemplar or redemptive analogy within various cultures. To the Jews who practice lamb sacrifice, Jesus is presented as the Lamb of God; to Nicodemus, the teacher of the Law, Jesus is presented as the brazen serpent. Culturally, his method adheres to a fulfilled indigenous concept, finding redemptive analogies within the culture and then relating it to Christ. He argues that:

> When outsiders obliterate distinctives [of culture], something dies within the hearts of the people. But the Gospel preserves these concepts. Converts among such tribes then find, along with their personal redemption, that they become resistant to apathy, the great destroyer of indigenous peoples overcome by culture shock. (p. 59)

Even with a primary concern with teaching methodologies, Boyer (2002) is more explicit as he matches specific films to biblical books. *Being There* and *Willow* are placed on the template of the Gospel of *Matthew*, where the "somewhat"-like-Jesus Chauncey Gardiner speaks in parables (actually in reverse—he speaks about gardening and others interpret him economically/politically) and with *Willow* championing little people against stronger enemies. *The Mission* is connected to *Acts*, *Witness* to *Luke*, and *Pale Rider* and *Waterworld* to *Revelation.* Boyer adds a curious, but very fertile juxtaposition between the "vineyard" metaphors of the Gospels and *Walk in the Clouds.*

Presented as a very funny and insightful diary, Higgins (2003) chattily confesses the role of movies in personal salvation. Higgins takes us along to the movies, in an irreverent and sassy postmodern trip through hundreds of films, and actually hears sermons. Between the blurry line of harsh reality and the transcendent, Higgins chooses to sort through his ideas about movies by organizing his thoughts into chapters on big themes such as Justice, God (with *The Big Lebowski* as a Christ figure), Community, Brokenness, Outsiders, Death, Fear, and so on. In each chapter he presents a relatively detailed critique of two or three movies he thinks best explore the subject at hand. What follows varies from chapter to chapter, but it generally involves lists of additional suggested movies and his musings, and how films communicate, like Kierkegaard, indirectly. In a similar vein, Walsh (2003) weaves together key films that impacted his life, beginning with *Mutiny on the Bounty* and rushing on with funny, poignant, and unabated enthusiasm to share how films were the revelatory texts that directed, shaped, and made sense of his journey into adulthood. One particular wallop is feeling the sheer unexpected, and seemingly arbitrary, precariousness of existence as revealed through his viewing of *Don't Look Now*.

What many of these works included in this review often neglect or assume is the authority or inspiration (or even the existence) of the Sacred Text itself. Not so Robert K. Johnston's inspired contribution *Useless Beauty* (2004), that teases out a dialogue between contemporary films like *Magnolia* and *Run Lola Run*, the films of Shyamalan (e.g., *Signs*) and Payne (e.g., *Election*), and the Hebrew Wisdom literature of *Ecclesiastes*. This work is an exemplary model for anyone seriously addressing both film *and* biblical theology.

D. Devotional Uses of Film

In a reversal of the critical tradition of *The New Yorker*'s Pauline Kael, Barsotti and Johnston (2004) "found it" more than "lost it" at the movies: they find God. Their fecund cross-fertilized work carefully and wisely guides others to look and see where the clues and traces of the divine are located. Cawkwell (2004) offers a filmgoer's guide to God, as manifest in the reception of grace and forgiveness in various European and American films (e.g., *Babette's Feast* and *Night of the Hunter*), while keying in on directors like Bresson, Dreyer, Tarkovsky, and Rosellini. John J. and Mark Stibbe (2002) focus on spiritual messages in film, looking at eight cinematic themes that illuminate biblical truths. They travel on the ship of dreams (*Titanic*) and through time and eternity (*Cast Away*) to locate insights that help in one's spiritual journey. The most fascinating bit deals with a "search of father," in which they wrap the real life of actress Angelina Jolie and her real-life father John Voight, co-starring in *Lara Croft, Tomb Raider*, in a intersecting axis of life and art.

In a curious twist, Gire (2000) emphasizes hearing God in the unlikeliest of places. The focus on hearing over seeing still results in a search for finding earthly stories with heavenly meanings and seeking to discern God's voice in modern movie parables. After opening meditations on issues like the influence of the movies themselves on a viewing public, Gire selects specific films from *Bambi* to *Hoop Dreams* to set an almost poetic milieu for personal reflection. Gire puts the transitory and truly secular nature of the Hollywood dream into an eternal perspective, as he rolls out the names of filmmakers who died one year and observes how few are actually remembered. Patterson (1994) attempts to separate the gold from the dross, addressing the impact of the DVD/video player as the guest who took over the house, in his film guide for home users. In seeking to prepare families for what is on the screen,

Baehr (2003) publishes monthly recommendations for best films both for families and for mature audiences in his conservative *Movieguide*. His work has extended into awarding the prestigious Templeton Foundation Epiphany Awards for best family entertainment.

Other treatments offer a more therapeutic gospel, of bringing meaning and healing to viewers. Hickey (1998) explores the "dynamics of resilience," finding films that foster resiliency and model persons of character, clarity, candor, integrity, and dignity that could heighten self-awareness. In his use of films in counseling, Hickey basically calls his fellow counselors to know their clients and the films that are most germane and useful. Vaux (1999) aims at meaning, generating major themes and lessons from important films. Seeking to inculcate values through stories, she provides substantial lesson plans on such topics as alienation (*Blade Runner* and *Solaris*), vocation (*Diary of a Country Priest* and *Wall Street*), purity of heart (*Forrest Gump* and *La Strada*), and celebration (*Babette's Feast* and *Daughters of the Dust*). In the latter part of this work, she carefully unwraps the ambiguous moral and theological problems within *The English Patient* to deal with and point to biblical insights, particularly in a larger context of suffering, purgatory, and redemption.

Some works often veer off into new spiritualities as well. As an example, Sinetar (1993) tries to bring spiritual growth through new age meditations on movies, searching for mystical messages that bring optimal wholeness. The work, however, is more attuned to psychologist Abraham Maslow and pop Zen enlightenment than with any biblical prophet or theological significance. From *What Dreams May Come* to *Pleasantville*, Forest (2000) gives alternative readings to popular films. One should also not ignore ecumenical attempts to celebrate all spirituality as Anthony and Johnson (1989), who provide a collection of famous people (from Steve Allen to Lou Ferrigno) talking about their spirituality and other such celebrity testimonials.

For family use, Schulze and Schulze (1995) offers a handy set of film synopses and recommendations for discriminating viewers. Taylor (2001) finds God in the movies. Along with Scott (2001), these works scour for God's fingerprints, spikes of dread and grace, and clues of cinematic epiphanies in films, and then detect how to interpret and evaluate them. For youth workers who seek to liven up presentations with film clips that illustrate their message or provide probing questions for youth, Fields and James (1999) publish a guide to "teachable movie moments."

Dr. Edward McNulty, an exemplary devotional leader, film reviewer, and organizer of his own shoestring monthly publication *Visual Parables*, provides helpful materials. McNulty (1999) offers a discussion guide for using films in the church, collecting a symbolic number of 40 films, from *Amadeus* to *The Year of Living Dangerously*. McNulty (2001) sketches 31 devotionals that address spiritual issues in less familiar films. For example, Dr. McNulty preaches on the grace to "see" and of seeing in *Smoke*, on an urban Good Samaritan in *Grand Canyon*, and on the Wounded Healer in *The Spitfire Grill*. In his treatments, he includes scriptures, prayer, reflections, provocative questions, and even a hymn, in a mostly grace-oriented series of reviews.

While essentially a critical text reflecting on a central mystery and metaphor of film, i.e., *light*, Anker (2004) offers a literate conversation that provokes both thought and an odd piety in 19 films ranging from the darkness of *Chinatown* to the shining light of *Tender Mercies* and *Places in the Heart*. Similarly, Detweiler and Taylor (2003) move beyond looking and actually find God in their expansive, postmodern, and witty study of popular culture (including music, advertising, and celebrity—all themes that intersect with theology and film and have been too little studied).

The juvenile-oriented publication, *Reel to Real: Making the Most of Movies with Youth*, innovatively tries to connect youth ministries with movies as teaching moments, such as in its "Classic Horror Extravaganza," an entertaining pedagogical tool that suggests showing the films during sleepovers and then making mummies out of toilet paper (United Methodist Board of Publications, 1999a, pp. 17-24). The series of *Weekend at the Movies* put out by the United Methodist Board of Publications (1999b) offers retreat learning syllabi with a combination of movies planned around a unifying theme, discussion questions, "fun activities," and relevant Scriptures. MacDonald (1992) foregrounds the macho heroes, romantic love films, the fun nightmares of Freddy Krueger, and various celluloid saints and sinners in his informal, chatty book on how to be your own film critic. Such series are overshadowed by the substantial, provocative, and international journals such as *Cine & Media* published by SIGNIS [The World Catholic Association for Communication] and the enduring and consistently noteworthy *Media Development*.

Finally, a brief note must be made on alternative media regarding film and religion. More videos and DVDs have become available while Internet sites seem to proliferate. The Los Angeles based Center for Media Literacy

distributes a video kit with lesson plans entitled *Catholic Connections to Media Literacy*. Michael Medved has a provocative *Hollywood vs. Religion* video, amply illustrating the film industry's bias against the Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant faiths with apt and engrossing film clips. Philip Yancey's *The Jesus I Never Knew* combines clips from the Jesus films (including a exceptional glimpse at the wild BBC production *The Son of Man*) to provide a broad and informative survey that would be a useful visual companion to any of the texts on the Jesus films (see also Yancy, 1995). Even one segment of the *Hollywood Chronicles* deals with religion and offers a rare segment on Aimee Semple McPherson envisioning the religious potential of film for ministry. The pinnacle of worthwhile visual products, however, is Bill Romanowski's three part video/DVD series on *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture*. Romanowski translates many of the key issues and themes of this review into his grand and rapid overview of Hollywood and Christianity (see also Romanowski, 2001a).

While the enduring stability of Web sites remains quite irregular, flux being the order of the day, several have persisted, at least up to the submission of this manuscript. For preaching and ministry, Marc Newman's site (http://www.movieministry.com) offers helpful practical insights. For news items, trends, and articles intersecting these two realms, Dan Andriacco listed several pages of sites, such as http://www.hollywoodjesus.com, http://www.Thefilmforum.com, http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/Internet/film.html, http://www.faithnfilm.com, and Gordon Matties' absorbing conversations about the movies at http://www.unf.edu/classes/saints/saintsinmovies.html.

Part of the field's enormous potential, however, is to be found in the electronic pages of online *The Journal of Religion and Film* (http://www.unomaha.edu/~wwwjrf/), out of the University of Nebraska, Omaha. Its articles are already too numerous to record here, but editor William L. Blizek demands rigor, relevance, and exceptional refereed quality in the articles. Such immediate access also promotes a lively conversation and debate among readers. Such access enhances immediacy and relevancy.

6. Conclusion

The pivotal work of Hoover and Clark (2002) points to the fact that contemporary religious discourse and praxis occurs in the secular context of media culture. The authors host a conversation among media experts and religious historians to address distinctions between sacred and profane practices in media, with essays on such topics as the use of popular culture by the Salvation Army during its genesis as an evangelistic movement. What the conversation indicates, however, is that two specialized cultures exist that address each other over linguistic and philosophical boundaries. H. P. Snow's two cultures are now reframed as Film and Religion. One finds that until recently most film academics were unfamiliar with or uninterested in theological incursions into their fields of discourse. Political, psychoanalytic, cultural studies, and even historical research in film studies generally ignored the voices of religion, except as voices calling for moral censorship as in the Roman Catholic Legion of Decency or the Protestant demonstrations and boycotts against Scorsese's *Last Temptation of Christ*. As we have seen, exceptions to this marginalization did occurs in analyses of the religious visions of individual directors shaped by particular religious roots and influences and in the emerging field of mythic criticism. It appears that a renaissance of the religious will explode with the success of Peter Jackson's adaptation of J. R. R. Tolkien's trilogy and the prospect of Andrew Adamson's productions of Lewis's Narnian chronicles.

But even dealing with the obvious, however covert, religious significance of such works, religious film scholarship now extends beyond the narrow line of inquiry in which one construes as religious only those films marked by specifically religious characteristics such as the biblical spectacular. We have also progressed beyond the elitist agenda of treating only highbrow European and art house films as the canon of the religious. Now even lowbrow genres like the horror film and independent orphan films join the temple of relevant religious texts. As we noted, Deacy (2001) overcomes the pride and prejudice of dominant theological approaches to film studies in that he descends into the world of *film noir* (pp. 36- 68). There exist popular theologies abounding in such popular rhetorical products, many of which are not ostensibly religious.

In assessing the research trends in these two distinct fields, one gladly rejoices in finding those scholars already bridging the differences. This is being done in part by cultural immersions, by scholars of the two disciplines not only visiting one another but also speaking in the tongues of their neighbor and to their concerns. Most of this missionary work is seemingly being done by the religious scholars, whose habits and traditions lead them to foreign lands to become Wycliffe translators of cinematic communication, rather than film scholars tripping over the boundaries of religion.

Yet as we have seen, the borderlines between theology and cinema have gradually been erased. Beyond a preoccupation with identifying cinematic analogues for biblical characters or concerns, one finds the most productive fields emerging in the realm of hermeneutics, in the interpretive task of understanding biblical themes in the welter of film images. Another emerging trend, connected to Clifford Geertz's conception of visual culture as a web of significance spun by humans—and consequently entangled in it—is the place of reception, of how spectators are viewing films, of how they appropriate them, of how they use them to construct their views of a religious reality, and of how spectators are themselves constructed by those same images. Film is, as Lyden (2003) argues cogently, an alternative religion, with its myths, rituals, and advisory ways of believing, valuing, and living. Film, like all religions, fulfills religious concerns and needs, and it is for our time, a religion made secular, visual, kinetic, and mass mediated.

Plate (1998) still encourages the quest to grapple with a religious visuality of film. He rightly argues that religion and film scholarship has generally borrowed the methodologies of theology, religious studies, and /or literary studies, and ignored the importance of film studies and the medium of film itself. At present, both seem to be leaning toward adapting the language of cultural studies. In other words, it remains cross-disciplinary, simply borrowing rather than fully engaging with other fields of inquiry. Plate rightly directs researchers to trends in religious visuality, seen in the thoughts of scholars like Kaja Silverman and W.J.T. Mitchell, as well as James Elkins and Barbara Stafford, interdisciplinary arenas in which visual rhetoric, an ethics of vision, the modality of the body, pictorial turns, image/text relations, and iconophobia offer challenging theoretical concepts that bear on our topic.

This survey of literature, stretching from the theological to the devotional, strikes one as indicating an energetic health of the field. Not only are religious scholars proposing their ideal dialogue with film, but film scholars are now also realizing the cultural significance of addressing religious questions. Some dialogic studies have descended into intertextual analyses, where seemingly no one text is privileged over another, although one finds the author's own subjectivity and cultural biases actually predominating. The ironic and self-reflexive postmodern voice tends to deconstruct everything outside itself. While the contrast of various texts has proven both provocative and heuristic, it needs the integrity of historical scholarship and of attending to the quiddity of facts and texts themselves. One always recognizes the personal tendencies of scholarship, but the challenge is to get outside the self and submit to the data at hand.

Alongside the contemporary trends in studies on narrative, myth, transcendence, genre criticism, gender, race, iconography, spectatorship, reception, and even a renewed interest in the biblical spectacular, the most promising arena that I see opening up is that of historiography. From larger issues like the work of the Protestant Film Commission to smaller studies of local film exhibition in churches and religious schools and of sectarian Roman Catholic and Protestant film production, the opportunities to understand the significance of film in the religious life are both immense and truly inviting. Other issues remain unmined as well. Film invites a fuller investigation of how the Christ figure actually functions in film. In particular, what specific identification processes occur and how do those images reconstruct the biblical constructs?

While the era of overt confrontation and damnation of the movies seems well over, (although one can never be too sure of the cycles of relations), dialogue and religious aesthetics dominate. Yet for devoted scholars of theology, aesthetics will never be enough. In the mid-19th century, Kierkegaard (1988) limned three stages on life's journey, the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. His own concerns for illusion (and the prevailing amusement of shadowgraphs) made him wary of how idolatrous Christendom had become in the state-run Protestant Church. Kierkegaard reminds us that after enjoying the sensuality of the aesthetic stage, one must mature into ethical and religious levels, possibly moving beyond, to the point of being a knight of faith, or even returning to St. Thomas Aquinas's denunciation of all of his work: "It is but straw." Yet until any of us is struck with the Dumb Ox's vision, we may wrestle with the importance of the beautiful, the good, and the true, located in the liminal

states of film and religion, where both Catholic and Protestant imaginations tug at one another.

Perhaps one last marker of the changing tide can be seen in Harvey Cox's classic story of his meeting with Italian director Federico Fellini. Cox cautiously approached the creator of *La Dolce Vita* and *La Strada*. Ironically, as Cox relates the encounter, Fellini looked at the Harvard theologian, but did not really seem to notice him. Theologians find the culture of images, graven and otherwise, as fascinating and seductive as a cockatrice. Yet film studies has not until recently seemed interested. However, this analogy of film scholars' apparent lack of interest in the religious realm has since been radically changed, even as evidenced by Mel Gibson's blockbuster *The Passion of the Christ,* by such events as the annual City of Angels Film Festival that draws in such directors as Tom Shadyac, who not only listen with religious leaders but laugh with them as well, and by the plethora of texts and articles described herein. When one can eat and drink and think with one's strange neighbors, then one can discover and learn even more than one expected. Or one can find the cockatrice staring back at us like Nietzsche's dark abyss, and ready to seduce us all into its charming simulacra.

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Selective Religious Filmography

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The Angel Levine (Jan Kadar, 1970)
Angels and Insects (Philip Haas, 1995)
Angels with Dirty Faces (Michael Curtiz, 1938)
The Annunciation (András Jeles, 1993)
The Apostle (Robert Duvall, 1998)
L'Argent de Poche (François Truffaut, 1976)
At Play in the Fields of the Lord (Hector Babenco, 1991)
Au Hasard, Balthasar (Robert Bresson, 1966)
Au Revoir, les Enfants (Louis Malle, 1988)
Babette's Feast (Gabriel Axel, 1987)
Back to God's Country (David Hartford, 1919)
The Bad Lieutenant (Abel Ferrara, 1992)
Barabbas (Fleischer, 1962)
Battle Hymn (Douglas Sirk, 1957)
Beckett (Peter Glenville, 1964)
The Believer (Henry Bean, 2001)
The Bells of St. Mary (Leo McCarey, 1945)
Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ (Fred Niblo, 1925; William Wyler, 1959)
The Bible—In the Beginning (John Huston, 1966)
Il Bidone (Federico Fellini, 1955)
The Big Fisherman (Frank Borzage, 1959)
Big Mama's House (Raja Gosnell, 2000)
Black God, White Devil (Glauber Rocha, 1964)
Black Narcissus (Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger, 1947)
Black Robe (Bruce Beresford, 1991)
Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1982)
Blaise Pascal (Roberto Rosselini, 1971)
The Blasphemer (O. E. Gebel, 1921)
The Blood of Jesus (Spencer Williams, 1941)
Body and Soul (Oscar Micheaux, 1924)
Boys Town (Norman Taurog, 1938)
Breaking the Waves (Lars von Trier, 1996)
Bringing Out the Dead (Martin Scorsese, 1999)
Broadway Danny Rose (Woody Allen, 1984)
The Brother from Another Planet (John Sayles, 1984)
Brother Sun, Sister Moon (Franco Zefferelli, 1973)
The Burmese Harp (Kon Ichikawa, 1956)
Cabin in the Sky (Vincente Minnelli, 1941)
Cammina, Cammina (Ermanno Olmi, 1982)
Cape Fear (Martin Scorsese, 1991)
The Cardinal (Otto Preminger, 1963)
Ceddo (Ousmanne Sembene, 1977)
Central Station (Walter Salles, 1998)
Chariots of Fire (Hugh Hudson, 1981)
Chocolat (Claire Denis, 1988)
The Chosen (Jeremy Paul Kagan, 1982)
The Christian (Maurice Tourneur, 1923)
City of Angels (Brad Silbering, 1998)
City of Joy (Roland Joffe, 1992)
The Color Purple (Steven Spielberg, 1985)

Conspiracy of Hearts (Ralph Thomas, 1960)
Constantine and the Cross (Lionello De Felice, 1960)
Contact (Robert Zemeckis, 1997)
Cool Hand Luke (Stuart Rosenberg, 1967)
Crimes and Misdemeanors (Woody Allen, 1989)
Curse of the Demon (Jacques Tourneur, 1958)
Dancer in the Dark (Lars von Trier, 2000)
Daughters of the Dust (Julie Dash, 1991)
David and Bathsheba (Henry King, 1951)
David and Goliath (Ferdinando Baldi, 1961)
The Day of the Locust (John Schlesinger, 1974)
Day of Wrath (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1943)
Dead Man Walking (Tim Robbins, 1995)
Decalogue (Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1999)
Demetrius and the Gladiators (Delmer Daves, 1954)
The Devils (Ken Russell, 1971)
The Devil's Advocate (Taylor Hackford, 1997)
The Devil's Disciple (Guy Hamilton, 1959)
Diary of A Country Priest (Robert Bresson, 1951)
Dirty Gertie from Harlem, USA (Spencer Williams, 1946)
The Disciple (William S. Hart, 1916)
The Displaced Person (Glen Jordan, 1976)
Doctor Faustus (Richard Burton & Nevill Coghill, 1967)
Dogma (Kevin Smith, 1999)
Early Summer (Yasujiro Ozu, 1951)
Easy Street (Charles Chaplin, 1917)
El Cid (Anthony Mann, 1961)
Eleni (Peter Yates, 1985)
The Elephant Man (David Lynch, 1980)
Elmer Gantry (Richard Brooks, 1960)
End of Days (Peter Hyams, 1999)
The End of the Affair (Neil Jordan, 1999)
Esther and the King (Raoul Walsh, 1960)
E.T. : The Extraterrestrial (Steven Spielberg, 1982)
Exodus (Otto Preminger, 1960)
Exorcist (William Friedkin, 1973)
The Exterminating Angel (Luis Bunuel, 1962)
Fabiola (Alessandro Blasetti, 1949)
Fanny and Alexander (Ingmar Bergman, 1983)
Faraway, So Close (Wim Wenders, 1993)
Father Brown (Robert Hamer, 1955)
Fear Not, Jacob (Radu Gabrea, 1981)
Femme du Boulanger aka Baker's Wife (Marcel Pagnol, 1933)
Fiddler on the Roof (Jewison, 1971)
Fighting Father Dunne (Ted Tetzlaff, 1948)
The Fisher King (Terry Gilliam, 1991)
The Five Heartbeats (Robert Townsend, 1991)
Flowers of St. Francis (Roberto Rossellini, 1950)
Footloose (Herbert Ross, 1984)
The Fourth Wise Man (Michael Ray Rhodes, 1985
Francesco (Lilana Cavani, 1989)
Friendly Persuasion (William Wyler, 1956)
From the Manger to the Cross (Sidney Olcott, 1912)
The Fugitive (John Ford, 1947)
Gabriel Over the White House (Gregory La Cava, 1933)
The Garden of Delights (Silvano Agosti, 1967)
The Gaucho (Richard Jones, 1927)
Ghandi (Richard Attenborough, 1982)
Glory (Edward Zwick, 1989)
Glory! Glory! (Lindsay Anderson, 1989)
Gods and Generals (Ronald Maxwell, 2003)
Godspell (David Greene, 1973)
God-Views (Joseph Johns, 1986)
Going My Way (Leo McCarey, 1944)
The Gospel According to St. Matthew (Pier Paola Pasolini, 1964)
Gospel of John (Philip Saville, 2003)
Le Grand Chemin (Jean Loup Hubert, 1988)
The Great Commandment (Irving Pichel, 1939)
The Greatest Story Ever Told (George Stevens, 1965)
The Green Mile (Frank Darabont, 1999)
Green Pastures (Marc Connelly, 1936)
A Guy Named Joe (Victor Fleming, 1943)
Hail, Mary (Jean Luc Godard, 1984)
Hallelujah (King Vidor, 1929)
The Handmaid's Tale (Volker Schlondorff, 1990)
Hannah and Her Sisters (Woody Allen, 1986)
Hardcore (Paul Schrader, 1978)
Hawaii (George Roy Hill, 1966)
Hawks and Sparrows (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1966)
He Who Must Die (Jules Dassin, 1957)
Headhunter (Francis Schaeffer, 1989)
Heart of Glass (Werner Herzog, 1976)
Heaven (Diane Keaton, 1987)
Heaven Can Wait (Ernst Lubitsch, 1943)
Heavens Above (John Boulting, 1963)
Hell's Hinges (William S. Hart, 1916)
Here Comes Mr. Jordan (Alexander Hall, 1941)
Hester Street (Joan Micklin Silver, 1974)
The Hiding Place (James F. Collier, 1975)
Hollywood versus Religion (Michael Medved)
Hoosiers (David Anspaugh, 1987)
Household Saints (Nancy Savoca, 1993)
How Green Was My Valley (John Ford, 1941)
In His Steps (Ken Anderson, 1964)
In the Name of the Pope-King (Luigi Magni, 1977)
In this House of Brede (George Schaefer, 1975)
Inherit the Wind (Stanley Kramer, 1960)
The Inn of Sixth Happiness (Mark Robson, 1958)
Intolerance (D. W. Griffith, 1917)
Iron Giant (Brad Bird, 1999)
It's a Wonderful Life (Frank Capra, 1946)
Jan Amos Comenius (Otakar Vavra, 1987)
Jean de Florette (Claude Berri, 1987)
Jesus (Peter Sykes & John Kirsh, 1979)
Jesus Christ Superstar (Norman Jewison, 1973)
Jesus of Montreal (Denis Arcand, 1989)
Jesus of Nazareth (Franco Zefferilli, 1977)
The Jew (Jom Tob Azuley, 1995)
Joan of Arc (Victor Fleming, 1949)
Jungle Fever (Spike Lee, 1991)
Keeping the Faith (Edward Norton, 2000)
Keys of the Kingdom (John M. Stahl, 1945)
The Kid (Charles Chaplin, 1921)
King David (Bruce Beresford, 1985)
The King of Kings (Cecil B. DeMille, 1927)
King of Kings (Nicholas Ray, 1961)

Koyaanisqasti (Godfrey Reggio, 1983)
Kundun (Martin Scorsese, 1997)
Lady Jane (Trevor Nunn, 1985)
Ladyhawke (Richard Donner, 1985)
The Last Supper (Tomas Gutierrez Alea, 1976)
The Last Supper (Stacy Title, 1988)
The Last Temptation of Christ (Martin Scorsese, 1988)
The Last Wave (Peter Weir, 1977)
Leap of Faith (Richard Pearce, 1992)
The Left Hand of God (Edward Dmytryk, 1955)
Legend of the Holy Drinker (Ermanno Olmi, 1988)
Life of Brian (Terry Jones, 1979)
The Life of Jesus, the Revolutionary (Robert Marcarelli, 1999)
Light of Day (Paul Schrader, 1987)
Light Sleeper (Paul Schrader, 1992)
Lilies of the Field (Ralph Nelson, 1963)
Little Buddha (Bernardo Bettolucci, 1993)
The Little Church around the Corner (William A. Seiter, 1930)
The Little Minister (Richard Wallace, 1934)
Little World of Don Camillo (Julien Duvivier, 1952)
Long Walk Home (Richard Pearce, 1990)
Lord of the Rings (Peter Jackson, 2002-2004)
Love and Faith (Kei Kumai, 1978)
Luther (Guy Green, 1973)
Luther (Eric Till, 2003)
Magnificent Obsession (John M. Stahl, 1935; Douglas Sirk, 1954)
Malcolm X (Spike Lee, 1992)
A Man Called Peter (Henry Koster, 1955)
A Man Escaped (Robert Bresson, 1956)
Man for All Seasons (Fred Zinnemann, 1966)
A Man Named John (Ermanno Olmi, 1965)
The Man Who Could Work Miracles (Lothar Mendes, 1936)
Manon Des Sources (Claude Berri, 1986)
Marjoe (Sarah Kernochan & Howard Smith, 1972)
Martin Luther: His Life and Time (Irving Pichel, 1953)
Mass Appeal (Glenn Jordan, 1984)
Matewan (John Sayles, 1987)
The Matrix trilogy (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 1999-2003)
The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc (Luc Besson, 1999)
Michael (Nora Ephron, 1996)
The Miracle (Roberto Rosselini, 1950)
Miracle in Milan (Vittorio deSica, 1951)
Miracle of Marcelino (Ladislao Vajda, 1956)
The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima (John Brahm, 1952)
The Miracle of the Bells (Irving Pichel, 1948)
The Miracle Woman (Frank Capra, 1931)
Miss Sadie Thompson (Chris Bernhardt, 1953)
The Mission (Roland Joffe, 1986)
The Missionary (Richard Loncraine, 1982)
Monsieur Vincent (Maurice Cloche, 1948)
Monty Python's Life of Brian (Terry Jones, 1979)
Mosquito Coast (Peter Weir, 1986)
Mouchette (Robert Bresson, 1960)
My Night At Maud's (Eric Rohmer, 1971)
The Name of the Rose (Jean Jacques Annaud, 1987)
The Navigator (Vincent Ward, 1989)
Nazarin (Luis Bunuel, 1958)
The Next Voice You Hear (William Wellman, 1950)
The Night of the Hunter (Charles Laughton, 1955)
Night of the Iguana (John Huston, 1964)
Nightmare on Elm Street (Wes Craven, 1984)
Norma Rae (Martin Ritt, 1978)
The Nun's Story (Fred Zinnemann, 1958)
Omega Code (Rob Macarelli, 2000)
The Omen (Richard Donner, 1976)
On the Night Stage (Reginald Barker, 1915)
Open City (Roma) (Roberto Rosellini, 1945)
Ordet (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1954)
Oginsaga (Kei Kumai, 1978)
On the Waterfront (Elia Kazan, 1954)
One Foot in Heaven (Irving Rapper, 1941)
The Ox (Sven Nykvist, 1992)
Pale Rider (Clint Eastwood, 1985)
Passion of Jeanne D'Arc (Carl Theodor Dreyer, 1928)
The Passover Plot (Michael Campus, 1976)
Pickpocket (Robert Bresson, 1959)
The Pilgrim (Charles Chaplin, 1923)
Places in the Heart (Robert Benton, 1984)
Pleasantville (Gary Ross, 1998)
Ponette (Jacques Doillon, 1996)
A Prayer for the Dying (Mike Hodges, 1987)
The Preacher's Wife (Penny Marshall, 1996)
The Priest of St. Pauli (Rolf Olsen, 1970)
Prince of Egypt (Brenda Chapman, 1998)
The Prodigal (Richard Thorpe, 1955)
Purgatory (Uli Edel, 1999)
The Quarrel (Eli Cohen, 2000)
A Question of Faith (Tim Disney, 2000)
Quo Vadis (Enrico Guazzoni, 1912; Mervyn LeRoy, 1951)
Rain (Lewis Milestone, 1932)
The Rapture (Michael Tolkin, 1991)
Rebel Storm (Francis Schaeffer, 1990)
Red Beard (Akira Kurosawa, 1965)
Regeneration (Raoul Walsh, 1915)
La Religieuse (Jacques Rivette, 1966)
Repentance (Tengiz Abuladze, 1987)
Resurrection (Daniel Petrie, 1980)
The Revolt of Job (Imre Gyongossy, 1984)
The Road (Federico Fellini, 1954)
Road to Perdition (Sam Mendes, 2002)
The Robe (Henry Koster, 1953)
Romero (John Duigan, 1989)
Rosemary's Baby (Roman Polanski, 1968)
Rudy (David Anspaugh, 1993)
Run Lola, Run (Tom Tykwer, 1998)
The Runner Stumbles (Stanley Kramer, 1979)
The Sacrifice (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1986)
Sadie Thompson (Raoul Walsh, 1928)
St. Benny the Dip (Edgar G. Ulmer, 1990)
Samson and Delilah (Cecil B. DeMille, 1949)
San Francisco (W. S. van Dyke, 1936)
Sante Fe (Andrew Shea, 1997)

Satan Met a Lady (William Dieterle, 1936)
Saving Grace (Robert M. Young, 1986)
Saving Private Ryan (Steven Spielberg, 1998)
Say Amen Somebody (George T. Nierenberg, 1982)
Scarlet Letter (Victor Sjostrom, 1926)
Schindler's List (Steven Spielberg, 1993)
Search for God, Grails, and Profits: The Nightmare Factory (James Forsher, 1991)
Sergeant York (Howard Hawks, 1941)
Se7en (David Fincher, 1995)
Seventh Heaven (Frank Borzage, 1927)
The Seventh Seal (Ingmar Bergman, 1957)
The Seventh Sign (Carl Schultz, 1988)
Shadowlands (Richard Attenborough, 1993)
Shadows (Tom Forman, 1920s)
Shane (George Stevens, 1953)
Shawshank Redemption (Frank Darabont, 1995)
Simon Birch (Mark Steven Johnson, 1998)
Sign of the Cross (Cecil B. DeMille, 1932)
Signs (M. Night Shambalya, 2002)
Simon of the Desert (Luis Bunuel, 1965)
Sins of Rachel Cade (Gordon Douglas, 1961)
Sins of the Children aka In His Steps (Karl Brown, 1936)
Sirens (John Duigan, 1994)
Sister Act (Emile Ardolino, 1992)
Sister Kenny (Dudley Nichols, 1946)
Sky Pilot (King Vidor, 1921)
Something Wicked this Way Comes (Jack Clayton, 1983)
Sondagsengler (The Other Side of Sunday) (Berit Nesheim, 1996)
Song of Bernadette (Henry King, 1943)
The Sound of Music (Robert Wise, 1965)
Sparrows (William Beaudine, 1926)
The Spitfire Grill (Lee David Zlotoff, 1996)
The Sorrows of Satan (D. W Griffith, 1926)
Stairway to Heaven (Michael Powell, 1946)
Starman (John Carpenter, 1984)
Stigmata (Rupert Wainwright, 1999)
La Strada (Federico Fellini, 1954)
Straight Story (David Lynch, 1999)
Strange Cargo (Frank Borzage, 1940)
Sullivan's Travels (Preston Sturges, 1941)
Sunrise (Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, 1927)
La Symphonie Pastoral (Jean Delannoy, 1976)
The Ten Commandments (Cecil B. DeMille, 1923; 1956)
Tender Mercies (Bruce Beresford, 1983)
Tess of the Storm Country (Mary Pickford, 1917)
Theodora Goes Wild (Richard Boleslawski, 1936)
Therese (Alain Cavalier, 1986)
They Live (John Carpenter, 1988)
The Third Miracle (Agnieszka Holland, 1999)
Till We Meet Again (Frank Borzage, 1944)
Time Bandits (Terry Gilliam, 1981)
To Sleep with Anger (Charles Burnett, 1990)
Tom and Viv (Brian Gilbert, 1994)
Tree of the Wooden Clogs (Ermanno Olmi, 1978)
Trip to Bountiful (Peter Masterson, 1985)
True Believer (Jospeh Ruben, 1989)
The Truman Show (Peter Weir, 1998)
Under the Sun of Satan (Maurice Pialat, 1987)
Unforgiven (Clint Eastwood, 1992)
Until the End of the World (Wim Wenders, 1991)
Virgin Spring (Ingmar Bergman, 1960)
Viridiana (Luis Bunuel, 1961)
A Walk to Remember (Adam Shankman, 2002)
The Wandering Jew (Goffredo Alessandrini, 1947)
What Dreams May Come (Vincent Ward, 1998)
Whistle Down the Wind (Bryan Forbes, 1961)
The White Sister (henry King, 1923)
The Wicker Man (Robin Hardy, 1973)
Wings of Desire (Wim Wenders, 1988)
Winter Light (Ingmar Bergman, 1963)
Wired to Kill (Francis Schaeffer, 1986)
Witness (Peter Weir, 1985)
Wise Blood (John Huston, 1979)
Woman and the World (Frank Lloyd & Eugene Moore, 1916)
The Word (William V. Mong, 1915)
Wrestling With God (Jerry L. Jackson, 1990)
X2 (Bryan Singer, 2003

Book Reviews

Brennen, Bonnie, and **Hanno Hardt** (Eds.). *Picturing the Past: Media, History, & Photography*. Urbana/ Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999. Pp. 263. ISBN 0-252-06769-X (pb.) $22.50.

Scholarly inquiry into the somewhat fuzzy notion of what has been called public or collective memory has been active for many years. For example, in 1925 Maurice Halbwachs published *The Collective Memory*, in which he maintained, among other claims, that multiple, independent recollections of an event were necessary in order to confirm a public memory's factual accuracy. Although never altogether forgotten, in recent decades collective-memory studies have experienced a vigorous renewed interest. Numerous articles, journals, and books on the topic have significantly expanded the original conversations. Spearheaded by such historians as David Thelen (*Memory and American History*, 1990) and John Bodnar (*Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*, 1992), memory scholarship has marbled its way into the disciplines of cultural studies, film studies, and, of course, journalism and communication studies—particularly in areas focusing on visual communication.

*Picturing the Pas*t is a collection of essays by media and journalism scholars that are loosely focused on the relationship between still photographs, collective memory, history, war, and journalism. Rather than getting bogged down in the dated and pointless debate

over the factual accuracy photographs claim to convey, the editors and contributors of *Picturing the Past* seem more interested in the broader, sociocultural uses that historical photographs may provide. In particular, these authors are fueled by "the difference photographs have made in the construction of a collective memory" as well as their potential "as contemporary journalistic documentation and historical evidence." Included essays explore, for instance, the struggle of early photography to be regarded as a legitimate form of documentation, the competitive tension between photographic culture and literary culture, the democratization of visual information that mass production of cameras enabled, and the resulting rise of what has been called "ocularcentrism" or the privileging of a "modern visual culture" in Western societies (p. 1-2).

That said, the essays in this collection are sure to be perceived by the informed reader as varying in both focus and quality. If readers have the patience to wade through the volume's occasional irrelevance, they will encounter some provocative theory. Unfortunately, in some essays the potential effectiveness of such theoretical insight is hampered by obfuscated writing. Also, the varied approaches to scholarship lend an air of disparity to the 10 essays gathered here. Understandably, because this review is written five years after publication, some of the studies included now seem dated and less significant, especially given the changes in photographic technology and its importance in presenting a post-9/11, mediated world (i.e., burning towers, tortured prisoners, charred bodies, American heroes, etc.).

Essays that transcend this insignificance, however, include Robert Craig's "Fact, Public Opinion, and Persuasion: The Rise of the Visual in Journalism and Advertising." Craig points out that people are not only born into societies with both a "ready-made" language and resulting worldview, but also a "ready-made visual field" that must be learned in order to function properly within those societies (p. 38). Further, he argues that the decline in rational, critical thought plaguing modern dialogues can be linked to the rise in advertising's increasingly irrational imagery—a consequence most detrimental to the societal visions of Enlightenment thinkers.

Another chapter worth noting here is Kevin Barnhurst and John Nerone's essay "The President Is Dead: American News Photography and the New Long Journalism." After a protracted analysis of news coverage of presidents who have died in office, they conclude with their real news: that the advent of photographs in 20th-century journalism displaced the traditional descriptive, story-telling text, resulting in a shift toward more extensive news analysis or what they call the "new long journalism."

Barbie Zelizer's "From the Image of Record to the Image of Memory: Holocaust Photography, Then and Now" is a rework of material she included in *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye* (1998). Nevertheless, it is one of the most significant pieces in this collection. Having focused on Holocaust photography for many years, Zelizer reflects on how such atrocity photography not only fosters particular kinds of memories but "shapes popular experience of other atrocities of the modern age" (p. 98). Compelling images of past atrocities made public in the contemporary, mediated world are primarily intended to serve contemporary political and social agendas.

Michael Griffin's "Great War Photographs: Constructing Myths of History and Photojournalism" provides insights into the evolution of war photography driven by advances in technology. His analysis of the staging of famous war photographs for rhetorical (and now mythical) purposes could inform and refine the research of those pursuing the onslaught of contemporary war photography.

Dona Schwartz's "Objective Representation: Photographs as Facts" covers well-trodden ground regarding the verisimilitude of so-called "objective" photography, but adds interest as she traces the technological evolution of the mass-reproduction of photographs in the press. After much initial skepticism, news photography earned its place as the "medium of fact" as it gradually replaced the art-inspired engravings in the early 20th century.

One of the most accessible chapters here is Monique Berlier's "Family of Man: Readings of an Exhibition." Berlier tracks the evolving reactions to photographer Edward Steichen's landmark New York Museum of Modern Art exhibition, which originally opened in January 1955. She notes Steichen's preferred reading of the exhibition, tracing its original critical acclaim as a statement of humanity's "essential oneness" to one of controversy and cultural hegemony (pp. 209, 228).

The book concludes with an essay by Hanno Hardt that echoes the opening essay written by Hardt and Bonnie Brennan. Both chapters speculate on the ability of 1930s newsroom photographs to serve as historical evidence of the sociopolitical culture of their day.

As I stated earlier, *Picturing the Past*, though not a landmark collection in and of itself, contains a few jewels of theoretical insight that 21st-century image

and collective-memory scholars may find helpful in explaining today's social and political uses for displaying old photographs. In our increasingly polemic, contemporary society, where historical pictures of Nazi disciplinarians demonize the current administration, where photos of Abu Ghraib's prison abuses recall Holocaust photographs, and where the selling of a war evokes heroic, mythical photographs of past wars, visual communication scholars have plenty to contemplate. For critics of such photographs, there is something to be learned in *Picturing the Past*, particularly if you are a persistent reader.

The volume contains photos, references, and index.

— J. Arne G'Schwind
Regis University

Buddenbaum, Judith M., and **Debra L. Mason**. (Eds.). *Readings on Religion as News.* Ames: Iowa State University Press, 2000. Pp. xx, 501. ISBN 0-8138-2926-7 (pb.). $34.99; 0-58520-010-6 (electronic) $36.95.

This reader presents a wealth of "news stories that illustrates both the role of religion in shaping public opinion and the role of the media in spreading religious beliefs and opinions through society and in shaping people's opinions about religion" (p. xiii). Religion and religious issues have become a kind of silent presence in the news; though many events and policy issues hinge on religion, most histories of journalism do not pay it much attention. Focused on journalism in the United States in order to keep the book a manageable length, the collection generally lets the news reporting speak for itself. And that reporting tells a story of the importance of religion throughout the history of the United States.

The book's 29 chapters fall into four major headings. The first, "Ideological Journalism in a New Jerusalem" presents 24 stories from an early period of the New England colonies through the end of the 18th century in more or less chronological order. The stories illustrate both the religious issues and the journalistic style of the period and include coverage of everything from a debate over inoculation to the Great Awakening.

The second part, "Personal Journalism for a Protestant America," moves the narrative from the presidency of Thomas Jefferson through World War II. The 10 chapters in this section chronicle the role of religion in the public sphere (missionary work, revivalism, faith and science) as well as some of the deeply divisive religious issues in American history (slavery, anti-Catholicism, the Mormon question). The third part, because it is contemporary, seems easier to grasp—"Detached Journalism in a Changing World." Here the stories address America of the second half of the 20th century and cover everything from the Kennedy presidency to the churches' social and anti-war activism to the electronic church.

The final section, "Coping with Diversity, Connecting to Readers," follows the attempts of contemporary corporate journalism to report on the culture wars (abortion, cloning, homosexuality), church and state issues, the growing plurality of religion in America (non-Christian groups, new age spirituality, millennial groups), and religious debates within Christianity (Biblical scholarship and interpretation, heresy charges, institutional identity).

Because they envision this book as a supplement to journalism history texts, the editors introduce each section and chapter briefly, sketching the historical situation and identifying one or two key issues. Used this way, the book is an excellent resource.

There is, unfortunately, no index. However, the detailed table of contents and the general chronological presentation of the material does help to locate texts.

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Santa Clara University

Gigliotti, Linda M. *HowMaster: The Writer's Guide to Beautiful Word Crafting*. Kandiyohi, MN: Filbert Publishing, 2003. Pp. 142. ISBN 1-932794-02-6 (pb.) $12.95.

This little how-to book's claim of having something to do with "beautiful word crafting" is a symptom of a malaise that pervades our New Media age: the distinction between expert and layman has been eroded by the propagation of communication technologies that offer instant and universal accessibility. Demonstrated competency is no longer a requirement for access to a mass audience. The hazy thoughts of call-in listeners compete for air time with the deliberations of Pulitzer Prize winners.

In book publishing, a network of agents, editors, and publishers once tossed back the minnows. But in today's world of self-publishing, small fish need not negotiate such cutthroat waters. This isn't necessarily a bad thing if the eschewal of traditional gatekeepers permits the liberation of fresh voices from non-traditional quarters. Sadly, however, this isn't the case with *The*

Writer's Guide to Beautiful Word Crafting. As a treatise on writing this shoddily written book is exasperating from top to bottom. What is the reader to make of the great number of typos, missing words and punctuation marks, redundant sentences, and passages that mar a book that emphasizes the necessity of proofreading and editing? Here is a sample:

> The essay format is [sic] comprises the introduction, which tells what you're going to say, the body, which says it, and the conclusion, which tells what you said. The pattern of each body paragraph follows that pattern too: [sic] (p.78)

Gigliotti devotes a section to "The Seven Deadly Sins of Writing." The first sin is the prepositional lead. "When you begin a sentence with a preposition the meaning is scattered. The foregoing sentence should read: Meaning is scattered when a sentence begins with a preposition" (p. 50). Is "when" a preposition? An adverb, yes; and in foregoing example, a conjunction. But why quibble over grammar? The issue is intelligibility. Yet the "scattered" sentence strikes one as clearer and more direct than the exemplar.

The sixth deadly sin is repetitiousness. "The reader is not stupid. Say it once except for specific needed emphasis and then don't keep reminding us or we'll remember you next time we need something to read" (p. 50). Sound advice. But why repeat the entire list of sins word-for-word 29 pages later under the heading, "The Seven Deadly Sins of Writing Revisited"? Or what is the reader to make of the book's perplexing final essay, the "Bonus Chapter: Essay Writing Explained," which is almost entirely cobbled word-for-word from passages contained in Chapters 3 and 4. And elsewhere—perhaps more venial than deadly—the not-so-stupid reader is told that "shorties [short stories] are brief and memorable" (p. 64). Questionable on both counts.

However, the major sins in *The Writer's Guide to Beautiful Word Crafting* are imprecision and awkwardness. The use of "in" rather than "into," " since" instead of "because," and "which" in place of "that," may seem minor transgressions, but throughout an entire book the cumulative effect erodes confidence in the author. As do the awkwardness and/or mixing of registers on display in these examples: "basic peopleness never changes" (p. 88); "Writing like any work requires training and practicum because nobody just grabs paper and pen and in four hours writes the Great North American novel and then best-sells it" (p. 14); "if you like to scare people mess with their horror cells" (p. 65).

Imprecision is a cardinal sin because it stems from a lack of thinking, and good writing is simply good thinking. The true craftsman contemplates the function and the aesthetic qualities of every word, every sentence. Obliquely, *The Writer's Guide to Beautiful Word Crafting*, forces the reader to ponder the qualities of good writing. George Orwell comes to mind. He identified two fundamental causes of bad writing, laziness and dishonesty. In other words, imprecision may stem from either ignorance or duplicity. Good writing, then, requires a certain type of industry, stamina, honesty, and care.

The premise of *The Writer's Guide to Beautiful Word Crafting* is that anybody can be a writer. The chief obstacle, what to write about, is easily surmounted, says Gigliotti:

> Ideas are everywhere, anywhere, anytime, and some of the best ones come straight out of our mouths. When you talk to yourself for instance, every time you say or want to say something to yourself, there's an idea seed. . . . And when the emerald green hummingbird you thought was forever gone because you hadn't seen it for a few years stops long enough to hover over the petunias at the same moment you happen to be at the window you have synchronicity and in my case a Haiku poem. (pp. 15-16)

Whether a how-to manual can teach anybody to write is an open question. However, it seems that the better guidebooks, those written with feeling and lucidity, demonstrate an ethos of honesty and industry that inspires the reader to contemplate the singularity of each word and the reasons underpinning grammatical convention and word usage. (Two books in this vein come to mind: the William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White classic, *The Elements of Style*; and *The Reader Over Your Shoulder*, by Robert Graves and Alan Hodge.)

In spite of all its faults, The Writer's Guide to Beautiful Word Crafting does contain several timeless pointers. "Write ideas down" (p. 19). Certainly a must; nothing is more fallible than human memory. And, Leo Tolstoy's secret, "I don't tell. I show." Or in Gigliotti's words (she doesn't credit Tolstoy): "Storytelling is a sneaky way of getting someone to agree with you and in order to do that you have to show, don't tell" (p. 45). However, it's a long shot that any reader would wade through so much flotsam to arrive at this bit, and once there, put much credibility in the author.

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