

SLIDE 2

Undeniably film images and video have a powerful and influential role in today's society. From recording our lives on the spot, to learning, the proliferation of visual media plays a massive role in culture, education and knowledge acquisition. But what are its roots?

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The Motion picture camera was invented in the 1890's and the first movies lasted less than one minute. The cameras were mounted on a tripod and fixed during the course of a shot. Subjects would move in and out of the screen however the camera had no ability to follow them. The first camera movements were recorded by mounting a camera to a moving vehicle.

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In 1897 Robert W. Paul built the first rotating camera to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. A crank handle was used to move the camera that was mounted on a vertical axis

SLIDE 5

The late 1890's to early 1900's saw many firsts which included the building of the first film studio, the first stop motion animation film, the building of a permanent movie theatre in Pittsburgh, and the first feature length multi-reel film that came out of Australia.

SLIDE 6

One may wonder why films gained such popularity in the first 11 years since its development, but the world was calling for something more, and **the culture demanded** the next step in the evolution of technology. In the early 1900's Cinema had moved from being a travelling show to permanent theatres. Early films were silent, so the elements of theatre were retained in order to entertain audiences for longer periods of time. Live orchestras accompanied the silent movies and sometimes narrators or speakers bridged the missing narrative that had been seen in traditional theatre.

By 1929 Hollywood was almost all talkie and luckily so – as the great depression of 1929 hit a devastating blow upon the United States, movies became the balm that soothed the masses. The escape offered on screen and the speed at which they were churned out, kept audiences enthralled. The 1920's still is the United States greatest era of output.

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By the time world war 2 hit, the desire for wartime propaganda created a renaissance in the film industry. A proliferation of patriotic movies hit the screens as men lined up to enlist and become off-screen heroes. Film had begun to wield its powerful influence over culture.

Newsreels (mostly propaganda) were shown before feature films as a way of synchronizing cultural thought and homogeneity. Patriotism was at an all-time high, as film influenced cultural identity. In this manner, film technology made art imitating life on big screen as films opened windows into culture and subsequently history.

Film was made for everyman, and encouraged the rise of the middle class. Previously the domain of theatre was- and still remains- the realm of the upper classes. One needed no previous knowledge of

the content in order to enjoy the simple narrative structure of a movie. The images, sounds and medium of transmission all encouraged passive reception.

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The changes in ways of thinking and knowing extended further in to the realm of **educational practices**. As film technique became more sophisticated it invited the audience to participate through analytical thought. Early directors like Alfred Hitchcock used reflexive techniques to make the audience analyze things such as camera angles. Film demanded an Interpretation that went beyond the text on pages and entreated the audience to actively participate in the experience through their own comprehension of events. The tradition of rote learning and textual authenticity were called in to question. The relevant and engaging medium of imparting knowledge could not be ignored by educators any more. However, its initial uses were one dimensional and uninspired, until the 21st century

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Now that film technology had entered the realm of education, it needed to be thoroughly understood in order to grasp the ways in which it **extended and modified the look and feel of reading and writing** as we knew it. film technology moved the text from the authors control to the directors control. A variety of strategies such as images, sounds and camera angles engaged the viewer in both verbal and non-verbal interpretation of events. Decoding and comprehension skills gained new depth as film required the viewer to read between the lines. The skills required to read the message was almost as important as the message itself.

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Student literacy skills were extended as they were required to interpret image content and oral content simultaneously. Evaluation analysis and synthesis skills based on the higher levels of Blooms taxonomy became a necessary part of literacy. Students were no longer just asked to analyze the content as they had in books- but film technology required analysis of also the medium of production.

Film encouraged involvement in content in ways that surpassed written text. It extended the narrative structure by going beyond the traditional literary devices . Students now had to understand the paratextual elements as well.

Soon viewers came to recognize directors names such as Hitchcock and more recently Scorsese in the way the Dickens and Bronte were once recognized as pioneers in the literary world.

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By developing and extending literacy, film technology also invited **new forms of knowledge and thought**.

The tool of media literacy has become one of the most important elements in knowledge acquisition for high school students. Film revealed that the truth was no longer relevant as it was thought to have been in text books. Film brought to light that the written word was just as unreliable as a moving image. Until this time, more than 200 years of print based culture had come to rely upon printed word as gospel, but film revealed it's unreliability by transposing it in to images. In this way, film confronted epistemology and simply reminded us that all text is also a recounted story.

Film uncovered the social, political and environmental contexts to name a few and literally created a wide angled lens from which we could view the whole picture. Students now had to consider the sub-text, the text and the context. Analysis of both content and form were required for in-depth understanding of a technology that articulated the human experience in a manufactured environment.

The inductive nature of film moved away from the deductive nature of written text and opened new doors to innovative thinking and practices.

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As a result of new forms of knowing and thinking, Film **brought about social and literary changes** in modern society. One such example is the modern day music video which comes from a long history that casts back to the days of silent movies.

In 1894 Illustrated songs were introduced. These live performances accompanied by hand coloured glass slides projected through stereopticons were the first mass consumption song videos that would later become the ever popular music videos of today.

The song narrative was illustrated on the glass slides, and used as way of enticing music lovers to purchase the music they heard.

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The first animation in 1899 lead to a huge cartoon and anime industry of today. The initial stop motion animation was picked up by Walt Disney who perfected the techniques. The anime industry has taken on a life on it's own in places like Japan and South Korea where it's influence is seen in fashion, identity and even beauty.

The influence of cartoons was further seen in the comic book and super hero narratives that still prevail today in the movie and literary world.

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Film has also **influenced literary changes in the classroom** and in many cases are used alongside a text book as a primary source of information. Films are themselves historical documents that record evidence of times and cultural practices. Film has taken history beyond the dusty covers of a text and debunked the idea of the constancy of history as even handed and virtuous. Film has invited theorists to look at text books critically in terms of the structure of historical narrative and modes of expression

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Film first began almost 150 years ago, and since there have been some changes in technology that have driven it further down a path of enlightenment. Overall, it can be argued, that early film was the root of new media as we know it today.

Resources

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