IMAGINING SELVES: THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION, FILM NARRATIVES AND ADULT EDUCATION

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Educational Studies)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
October 1997

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The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date _OCT. 14, 1997_

DE-6 (2/88)

Abstract

In today's world of communication technology, film and television more than ever inform and persuade us about our world through a wealth of images. The purpose of this study is to explore "the various way that film narratives function to construct the social reality that constitutes the lived world of social actors" (Mumby, 1993:5). The thesis argues that film narratives and video productions are historical social/political artifacts incorporating important social and political issues through the use of ideology, rhetoric and genre in the "politics of representation."

The study examines a number of theoretical positions proposed by adult educators in relation to five poststructural perspectives chosen for this research. The analysis begins with a Lacanian interpretation of subjectivity in the complexities of female bonding with the Other, then follows with Foucault's concepts of knowledge and power, Derrida's perspective on differance, Baudrillard's thesis on "simulacra" and closes with Lyotard's philosophy on the "postmodern condition." The study argues that objects of knowledge are locally and historically specific, and that they become available for human understanding only within certain "language games," "paradigms" and "discursive formations." Following the lead of these French thinkers, the study investigates the central role language plays in the process of socialization while questioning simultaneously, the ideological processes forming our subjectivities. Also the study challenges the foundational basis for historical knowledge and the existing state of cultural power, one that structures identities of Self and Other within societal forms of domination and exploitation.

The research concludes with reasons why a postmodern position extends

the imaginary spaces for cultural narratives and offers alternative models for adult education. These positions are "necessary illusions" grounded upon our understanding of cultural identities, and focus upon a new engagement of adult education through a "politics of difference." The thesis attempts to help adult learners comprehend their own cultural situation through an explicit understanding of how narrative discourses operate within the "politics of representation" on two levels: one, as a communication phenomenon that pedagogically and culturally constructs human identities through role-playing, and two, as a social phenomenon that both reinforces and challenges the social order.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the members of my research committee, Tom Sork, Carl Leggo, Ted Aoki, and Elvi Whittaker, for their untiring patience and guidance in sharing with me different educational perspectives over the years. I am also very appreciative of their many insightful comments and constructive criticisms of my work as we worked together to bring this thesis to completion. Most important was their contribution of many important ideas and concepts through their individual classes that helped me understand the complexity of the "postmodern condition" and what I felt was important in understanding the multiple thematic frameworks they endorsed.

I also would like to thank Kjell Rubenson, Roger Boshier and Dan Pratt for their invaluable contributions to my understanding of Adult Education as practiced at UBC. Special thanks goes to Jeannie Young and to a number of colleagues, Jennifer Warren, Kathleen Kennedy, Mark Bullen, and Marilyn Low among many more, with whom I shared moments of doubt, confusion, learning and inspiration. To my wife, Mary, our son Michael, and our daughters, Sophie and Calli, for their constant love, support and encouragement that helped me through this incredible educational adventure.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

As part of the 19th century industrial revolution, the technology of photography and its later development into motion pictures opened new frontiers for the study of modern culture. With the birth of the cinema, the early pioneers of motion pictures realized the power of this new technology. Film images not only gave spectators a subjective perceptual experience of viewing a "reality," but it also provided a film experience that gave meaning and expression to ways of seeing and interpreting a cultural discourse. When accompanied by written statements about historical events and personalities, motion pictures, as an art form, reconstructed the "actualities of lived experience." Slowly, motion pictures became a major commercial industry in the early 1900s as Edwin S. Porter and D. W. Griffith transformed them into dramatic film narratives. By 1915, following the nickelodeon age of growth and experimentation, full-length feature films as *Birth of a Nation,* directed by D. W. Griffith, received public and critical acclaim for their narrative power. Thus, a powerful historic reconstruction of the American Civil War was brought to "life" by the technology of motion pictures. The film also communicated a controversial political discourse on the issue of racism that polarized the country. Further, it posed challenges for a modern industrial society as to the meaning of "imagining selves" represented in its own history.

Griffith's melodramatic narrative depicted the stress of war on human relationships torn apart by this historic battle between the States. However, his version of the war aroused violent public reactions in the Northern cities of the United States. The Boston branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and numerous public figures of the

time challenged Griffith's demeaning portrayal of Afro-Americans and his racist thoughts on the evils of miscegenation. They argued that the film presented the Ku Klux Klan as white emancipators of Southern honor; and that Griffith, as director, grounded his film with biblical messages advocating a colonialist evangelical mission. Civil action groups called for censorship of the film in every city it was exhibited. Finally, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1916 responded to this controversy. The court ruled that motion pictures were industrial products outside the guarantees to freedom of speech. Thus, many state censorship boards could prevent its distribution and screening (Mast, 1982, p. 123).

Framework for the Research

What is at issue here? In any historical dramatization of the past, as in films like *Birth of a Nation*, do today's audiences question whether a film's narrative functions as educative or as propaganda within a cultural context? Do personal encounters with film narratives, whether at home on VCRs or at the local cinema, appear to change viewer's perceptions of the world and, more importantly, of themselves? How do such films appear to question or become "subversive of existing values, institutions, mores and taboos?" (Vogel, 1974, p. 9). If the cinema, as Vogel argues, "is a place of magic where psychological and environmental factors combine to create an openness to wonder and suggestion, then, what rational defences can a person employ against the power of these images?" (p. 9). Moreover, since film narratives structure the world in special cinematic ways, how do they express values, beliefs and attitudes to influence viewer interaction emotionally through the imagining of themselves in relationship with others?

Adult educators in the United States and Canada recognize the

importance of motion pictures as a formidable tool for both the training and indoctrination of citizens, young and old alike. In Canada, the National Film Board (NFB) was founded in 1939 by John Grierson (1889-1972), a talented documentary filmmaker from England. He persuaded the government of Canada that the film medium was a powerful source of information for social control and mass education. Forsyth Hardy, in *Grierson on Documentary* (1971), writes that Grierson conceived the film medium as capable of many forms and functions, but he looked "on cinema as a pulpit, and used it as a propaganist" (p. 16). In using documentary films, Grierson clearly understood the blending of the entertainment value of cinema with its educative and advertising potential since "it gives generous access to the public. It is capable of direct description, simple analysis and commanding conclusion, and may, by its tempo'd and imagistic powers, be made easily persuasive" (p. 16). Following Grierson's leadership, the NFB produced many short documentary films to be exhibited throughout Canada during the Second World War and after, "both for military training and propaganda" in order to promote cultural awareness of the country and to use films to aid instruction (Selman and Dampier, 1991, p. 148). In the 1960s the NFB produced its Challenge for Change documentary programs to increase awareness of contemporary social problems in Canada, focusing on urban decay, poverty and unemployment.

Outside the educative purposes of documentary films, the political power of fictional film narratives is only now being studied as a reflection of popular culture and for its impact upon adult education. For example, Briton and Plumb (1992), in *RoboEd: Re–Imaging Adult Education*, argue that a lively debate is growing within adult education surrounding the development of new electronic communication technologies. In particular, they argue that the visual media of television and cinema, as part of the mass media, construct

images "that permeate all existing social spaces." As part of the late modern mode of communication, also identified as the "postmodern condition," they claim that the proliferation of images replaces words, and these *simulacra*, "are market-driven to eradicate differences and maximize consumption" (p. 39).

Briton and Plumb advance a thesis that regards *RoboCop* as a metaphor for the modern practice of adult education. They assert that the film duplicates "the technical imperatives of effectiveness, efficiency and quantifiability to determine the worth of education programs" (p. 40). The authors also stress that such technicized forms of education lack a "critical" or "reflexive" perspective. In its place, they argue for a critical pedagogy that includes the moral and emotional factors that influence performance. For adult educators, critical pedagogy is thus viewed as "a form of cultural politics, a discourse that draws its meaning from the social, cultural and economic context in which it operates" (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991, p. 187).

With the new developments in video technology and VCRs, films on videotape can now be studied like textbooks to encourage discussion and to stimulate imagination. Film narratives have the power to help adult learners reflect about how they think of themselves and act. Films also allow us to imagine ourselves as others, to understand how others see us, and to project others as ourselves in various social and political situations. As both an art form and a conveyer of information, narrative films illustrate the manifold ways media culture introduces a variety of different perspectives on cultural identity and how, in response to these socio/political constructs, articulate and appropriate them for our own purposes. Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to explore "the various ways film narratives function to construct the social reality that constitutes the lived world of social actors" (Mumby, 1993, p. 5) The thesis argues that film narratives and video productions distributed over

television (TV) are historical socio/political artifacts incorporating important issues relating to the construction of subjectivities through the use of ideology, rhetoric and genre as part of the "politics of representation." Five different film narratives have been chosen to pursue a reading of five poststructural perspectives within a given socio-historical context. These perspectives connect readings on the relationship between self and other through an analysis of language, psychoanalysis, anthropology, postmodern culture and paralogy.

Assumptions of the Research

The underlying assumption in this research is that film narratives are politically committed and involved in a cultural politics of representation. Jean Baudrillard (1981) characterizes this new culture saturated with images as a "postmodern" society. Our contemporary world has become an image culture of "instant replay." Film narratives, through the advent of VCRs and video technology, have become a major source of information and expression about our world in "imagining ourselves." Our social identities and the roles of "others" are played out in a diverse "ocean of images" that illustrate conflicting cultural positions on race, class, gender and power. Film narratives also allow us to reevaluate the past, capture the present, or project into a future world that imaginatively extends our abilities to function as human beings. By the very way films manipulate time and space, these cinematic images move into our imagination in a similar pattern to the way we mentally record images of the actual world (Munsterberg (1915). Thus, it is a major assumption of this study that contemporary film narratives have a dual capacity. First, they are a means of symbolizing events that situate the viewer in different space/time perspectives. Second, they also become "experiences of experience," giving expression to different cultural identities or representations of the "other."

This research assumes that adult education exists in Western society to perpetuate itself through the transmission of knowledge, facilitating an understanding of our cultural traditions. This study will argue that film narratives provide adult educators with significant educational opportunities to conduct critical readings of "images of reality." They are instruments that can yield new insights and ways of seeing by the critical analysis of the "politics of representation." Further, the study generates an understanding of the construction of images of "self and other" leading to implications for adult education. It is the underlying assumption of the researcher, as an adult educator, that film narratives can expand the cognitive abilities of adult learners toward greater understandings of subject positioning found in modern cultures. They also can "develop new frameworks of experience that encourage sensitivity and open-mindedness toward different value systems and beliefs in a democratic world" (Miller and Seller, 1990, p. 111).

The Crisis in Representation and the Politics of Difference

The narrative analysis and interpretation to be used in this study arises in response to the "crisis of representation" (Jameson, 1984, p. vii). This crisis emerges from the challenge to the positivist paradigm by Jean-Francois Lyotard in his book, *The Postmodern Condition* (1984). Lyotard argues that science does not simply consist of a neutral body of knowledge claims about the world but rather "produces a discourse of legitimation with respect to its own status, a discourse called philosophy" (p. xxiii). Lyotard defines the *postmodern* as "an incredulity toward metanarratives" (p. xxiv). He also conceives of postmodern knowledge as paralogical: that is, as searching for and creating instabilities in the dominant perspectives of the world through "the pragmatics of language particles." In this way, "it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces

our ability to tolerate the incommensurable" (p. xxv).

Narrative theory becomes a part of the postmodern voice that orientates itself through "little narratives" *(petit recits)* as an alternative way of making knowledge claims about ourselves and the social world we live in. Accordingly, Lyotard conceives of "a postmodern sensibility" as one which continually critiques any foundational conception of knowledge. Hence, narrative theory recognizes the open–ended nature of knowledge claims. It examines the shifting terrain of meaning that makes up the social/political world and acknowledges the difficulty of making any universal claims concerning the nature of the human condition. It also acknowledges that as researchers and theorists we are never neutral observers of behavior because of the role we play in the construction of the social reality in any narrative, large or small (Mumby, 1993, p. 3).

The inter–relationship between narrative and knowledge claims is stated by the postmodern ethnographer Stephen Tyler:

> Because post–modern ethnography privileges "discourse" over "text," it foregrounds dialogue as opposed to monologue, and emphasizes the cooperative and collaborative nature of the ethnographic situation in contrast to the ideology of the transcendental observer. In fact, it rejects the ideology of "observer–observed," there being nothing observed and no–one who is the observer. There is instead the mutual, dialogical production of a discourse, of a story of sorts. (1986, p. 126)

A fundamental question is raised as to what becomes of the authorial voice and "the various ways narratives function to construct the social reality that constitutes the lived world of social actors" (Mumby, 1993, p. 5).

Within this formation of a "dialogical production of discourse" emerges a "politics of difference," where the Western post–colonial world attempts to break free of the Western discourses based upon race, class, and gender. For Lyotard, different postmodern discourses are located in micro or local

narratives. This discourse is concerned as much with process as with ends (Westwood, 1991, p. 49). What is crucial for adult educators is that these local narratives have basic, core connections to global concerns.

In an interview with Jonathan Rutherford for an article called *The Third Space* (1990), Homi Bhabha stated his reasons for examining the politics of difference, hybridity and displacement:

> My purpose in talking about cultural difference rather than cultural diversity is to acknowledge that this kind of liberal relativist perspective is inadequate in itself and doesn't generally recognize the universalist and normative stance from which it constructs its cultural and political judgements. With the concept of difference, which has its theoretical history in poststructural thinking, psychoanalysis (where difference is very resonant), post–Althusserian Marxism, and the exemplary work of Fanon, what I was attempting to do was to begin to see how the notion of the West itself or Western culture, its liberalism and relativism --- these very potent mythologies of 'progress' --- also contain a cutting edge, a limit. With the notion of cultural difference, I try to place myself in the position of liminality, in that productive space of the construction of culture as difference, in the spirit of alterity or otherness. (p. 209)

For adult education, the poststructural discourse on the concept of difference is multifaceted, interlaced with contradictions, yet it raises important questions about social relations and possibilities for social visions in a contemporary electronic world. The research proposes reasons why a postmodern position, associated with Derrida, Foucault, Lacan, and others, extends notions of cultural narratives and offers alternative models for adult education. These positions are, of necessity, grounded upon our understanding of cultural politics that focuses on a new engagement of adult education through a "politics of difference." Throughout the research, it is noted how a multiplicity of intertextual strategies are used to promote a play of irony, multiple identities and contradiction in order to undermine or "deconstruct" the possibility for any "always already given" interpretation of cultural identity, one that is generated in discourses on adult education and the mass media.

The goal of the research is to explore the pedagogical dimensions of film narratives within the "politics of representation." The researcher traces the implications of a critical pedagogy as it informs adult education in response to the problems created by the mythic structures hidden in an "informational" late capitalist society. The concept of narrative discourse will be located on two levels: (1) "as a communication phenomenon that culturally constructs human identitites and role–playing and, (2) as a social phenomenon that reinforces or challenges the social order" (Mumby, 1993, p. 2).

The study is grounded upon an interplay between popular culture, symbolic representations and practice of pedagogy as part of a "culture of difference." The research study provides proposals for developing new forms of adult education that expand the cognitive capacities of adult learners in reading and understanding the rhetoric of media images from film/video narratives and television that now saturate our culture. These proposals emerge from a re-thinking of film narratives as forms of cultural indoctrination and instruction where people are open and submissive to cultural narratives which allow others to impose a form of social reasoning for them. The analysis ranges within the context of five discourses: the psychoanalytic discourse on self as other; the ironic discourse on the technologies of self as other; the parodic discourse of inventing the self as other; the fantastic discourse on mythic images of self; and the romantic discourse in search of self. The thesis concludes with a discourse on film narratives as "necessary illusions" which provide explanations for how film narratives function metonymically for persons responding to the critical "crisis of representation" in an Age of the Image -- of Instant Replay and Reproduction.

CHAPTER TWO

ILLUSIONS OF REALITY - POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter I discuss the emergence of motion pictures as a modernist invention to visually represent both inner and outer realities of our world. Theories of cinematic representations are connected to ways of seeing and constructing this social world as it moves into a postmodern perspective. In this mode of production and reproduction of images, the sense of self and other become situated in a space between the imaginary self and a constructed, mythic world engaged in articulations and appropriations of the myriad ways identities are constructed. From the framework of "a third space," in relation to conceptions of postmodern politics, I advance my research questions on the discourses of poststructuralism and its implications for adult education.

The Cinematization of Contemporary Life

Today, we are surrounded by a wealth of images produced through film/video/television, informing and persuading us about our "imaginary selves" in multiple forms of representation. In this new world of electronic image transmission, both information and indoctrination become directly linked to a range of pedagogical activities occurring beyond the classroom. The co–presence of illusionist constructs integrated with actual events constantly produce explanations (exegesis) about the world out there. We also know that every film narrative makes a connection between the "reality" of the image (mimesis) and the cultural constructs of our society. Therefore, each narrative (diegesis) contains a framework for "constructing reality" based upon actual happenings/events. The implication of this situation hopefully forces the viewer/spectator/learner to realize that illusions are part of our reality. This

becomes the political condition of our lives, as Bertolt Brecht, the German playwright and essayist, declared during the 1920s (Wright, 1989, p. 21).

Until the 1960s, little was written about films that related motion pictures to broader cultural or historical contexts. Yet, reconsideration of the medium as a valid and respectable subject for research has been confirmed by the sociological writings of Norman K. Denzin. In *Images of Postmodern Society* (1993), Denzin distinguishes three features of "the cinematization of contemporary life" upon which our visual culture is grounded:

1. "Reality" is now a staged, social production.

2. The "real" is now judged against its staged cinematic-video counterpart (Baudrillard, 1983a, p. 152).

3. The postmodern society thus "becomes a cinematic, dramaturgical production transformed by representations of the 'real' through the images and meanings that flow from cinema and TV." Therefore, the metaphor of art as ideology not only mirrors life, it structures and reproduces it. Denzin concludes that "the postmodern society is a dramaturgical society" (Denzin, 1993, p. 23).

As part of this research study, it is important to identify the ideological frameworks governing the communication and exchange of ideas and identities presented in these film narratives. Such "unmasking" or deconstruction of these ideas and identities reflects the basic assumption that most "cultural constructs" operate in the society by assigning pre-determined social discourses over time. As stated by Bill Nichols, "Ideology uses the fabrications of images and the processes of representation to persuade us that how things are is how they ought to be and that the place provided for us is the place we ought to have" (Nichols, 1981, p. 1).

A contemporary example of this social practice is found in the film *Being*

There (1979), based on Jerzy Kosinski's novel of the same name. The leading character, played by Peter Sellers, is called Chance. This imaginary character is unique since he learns about the outside world and the "other" people through watching television. His "real" world involves his tending to his employer's interior garden and his actions are confined to his room and his job of nurturing the garden. The narrative is a satirical modern retelling of Plato's myth of the Cave. Images are projected by firelight onto a wall inside a darkened cave to become the "reality" for prisoners trapped in this Cave. Metaphorically, the retelling of this myth by Kosinski exchanges projected firelight images to the TV screen. This screen becomes the "reality" of the "other" for Chance to <u>network</u> with other screens, ad infinitum.

The "cinematization of contemporary life," as Denzin states, occurs when Chance is forced to vacate the security of the house and its garden when his benefactor dies. As in the cave metaphor, Chance is "dazzled" by the sunlight as he walks into the outside world, but he is not completely blinded. As Kosinski (1970) states in his book, "So far, everything outside the gate resembled what he had seen on TV; the images were burned in his mind. He had the feeling that he had seen it all" (p. 24). In this way *Being There* becomes a modern allegory about the death of God, the "imaginary self" projected by the TV screen and the "politics of representation" as part of the "necessary illusions" required by every narrative created for a social and political order.

A Psychological Theory on Cinematic Representation

The ability of cinema to photograph and represent the basic movement of objects and people as well as project the feelings and emotions of characters depicted in narrative films led to the formulation of the first written film treatise on the nature of the silent photoplay. The book was entitled *The Film:*

A Psychological Study. It was written by Hugo Munsterberg, a Harvard professor of Philosophy and Psychology in 1916.

Munsterberg was specifically interested in the relationship between the spectator's perception of projected images as illusionistic representations of physical reality and the effect these "illusions of reality" had upon the spectators. He proposed a conception for cinematic representations defined from the psychological perspective of the spectator. Munsterberg claimed a process called the phi–phenomenon through which the human mind gave these visual representations a mental reality and a coherence paralleling the natural functioning of the human mind.

Munsterberg identified four mental activities that were engaged by the film spectator in watching a film that related psychologically to the way the human mind processes external stimuli irregardless of the fact that the film image was two–dimensional, in black and white and projected onto a screen containing a framing device. First was Attention – by which the spectator could focus upon the object. This was accomplished by camera placement, and camera movement creating the pan and the close–up. Second and third were Memory and Imagination – these two activities permit the spectator to translate the compression and manipulation of time, the concept of rhythm, the plausibility of the flashback and the representation of dreams through montage effects and mise–en–scene. Fourth was Emotion – the central aim of the photoplay was to evoke reactions by the spectator to the vicarious experiences viewed in the film as a whole – such experiences transcend the appearances of the material world and help the spectator reach towards a satisfying aesthetic experience (Munsterberg, 1915/1970, pp. 30-56).

Munsterberg summed up the psychological conditions at work in the photoplay by writing: "The photoplay tells us a human story by overcoming the

forms of the outer world, namely space, time and causality, and by adjusting the events to the forms of the inner world, namely attention, memory and imagination, and emotion. (These events) reach complete isolation from the practical world through the perfect unity of plot and pictorial appearance" (pp. 74, 82). However, Munsterberg's short study did not consider the relevance of the historical material used by producers nor the effects this content had upon the spectator in the silent photoplays of this time.

Today, film history covers a broad survey of films and filmakers, from its first exhibition in 1895 of a photographic technology that recorded moving images of actual events to its rapid growth and development into longer film narratives. At first, pioneer filmmakers, such as Edwin S. Porter and D. W. Griffith, borrowed stage practices from the melodramatic Victorian theatre before they realized their own cinematic techniques of imaginative story-telling. It is by no coincidence that Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1900 and Georges Melies science-fiction fantasy, *A Trip to the Moon*, became an international wonder in 1902. By 1915, Griffith had developed the art of the cinema as a major cultural product in competition with European filmmakers before the First World War. Silent films advanced after this war in Europe and Asia. In France film makers appropriated expressionist and surrealist innovations into new forms of narrative structures "that were clothed in the forms of our own consciousness" (Munsterberg, op cit, p. 95).

Presently, film history follows a variety of narrative techniques that combine features of the documentary film footage, usually as black and white flashbacks within the fictional happenings of the present. This popular mode of film production was brought into vogue in the late 1950s by French New Wave directors, spearheaded by Alain Resnais, Francois Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard. They were inspired by the work of Roberto Rossellini and the Italian

neo-realist production techniques of on-location shooting, use of non-professional actors and introduced low budget, independent films that went counter to the studio productions of the major French producers. These films deconstructed the Hollywood stereotypes to demonstrate how dominant Western patriarchy constructed subjectivities. The major devices employed in these New Wave narratives were irony, parody and pastiche.

The French New Wave and Jean-Luc Godard

The importance of the French New Wave (*nouvelle vague*), a radical film movement of the 1960s, was to Francois Truffaut, and other writers turned filmmakers, simply how "to make a first film with a reasonable personal theme before you were 35" (Hillier,1986:28). Yet, the filmmaking concern of this talented group of French film critics, notably Francois Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Claude Chabrol, Eric Rohmer and Jacques Rivette, was to introduce a new style of filmmaking to replace the sterile commercial work of French "literary adaptation." They became film directors in order to examine through cinema the relationship between one's own identity and the role assigned by society. They followed two basic tenets emerging from their mentor, Andre Bazin, and the *Cahiers du Cinema.* One was the use of the long take, and a *mise-en-scene* that respected the unity of time and place. The second tenet related to the use of the camera as an instrument for personal expression of a "lived experience." This tenet was encouraged by an improvisational approach to acting, writing and directing. They used hand-held cameras, on-location shooting, and small crews. Thus, universal themes on life, love and identity received a personal interpretation as a dialectical play between representation of self in the cinema and real life – thus building a tension between the "necessary illusions" of the film and its reality in the space of ambiguity.

Jean–Luc Godard and Francois Truffaut practiced a *cinema des auteurs* calling attention to itself as cinema through the process of its own making. Thus, New Wave cinema became self–reflexive of filmmaking, itself, unmasking the process of its own apparatus. Therefore, these two leading directors advocated a freewheeling, improvised style of writing/directing their own films that displayed the cinematic tricks of filmmaking. They reveled in appropriating cinematic techniques from the silent films of the 1920s and the sound films of the 1930s. Godard's cinematic anti–heroes rebel against conventions set up by popular culture and consumerism by going against the grain in mock gangster style. Cinematically, Godard translated such acting and deconstruction through a deliberate break away from the norms of narrative cinema. Truffaut's characters rebel against the forces of love that both overwhelm and inhibit a person's free will. The goal of his film experiments dealt with the question of identity and authenticity, the coming together of an inner subjective consciousness within a social–political reality.

It is this conscious intellectual striving by Godard and Truffaut, who not only borrowed film techniques from American B–movies but also drew upon the modernist narrative tendencies of James Joyce, Bertolt Brecht and William Faulkner that extended the experimental forms of the novel in filmmaking. They also explored the value of cinema as an art form and its role in education and communications. Along with these two young directors, Chabrol, Rohmer and Rivette also used a self–reflexive style to establish their role as *auteurs.* These directors and script–writers established various narrative strategies to explore the moral and social values in a changing existential world of contingency and ambiguity. Their films depict an existential world where the personal experiences of life seemingly are alienated by the depersonalizing forces of modern society. Their films also set out to unmask these forces and

liberate people from such oppressive tyrannies. It is within this perspective and context that various film narratives are analyzed, interpreted and compared using the critical framework of Brechtian dramatic principles.

Bertolt Brecht and His Concept of Narrative Theatre

Bertolt Brecht was a German dramatist and poet who developed an Epic or narrative theatre during the late 1920s in Berlin. His theatre used anti–illusionistic devices to break down the Aristotelian theatre of illusion based upon the theory of catharsis, an empathic identification by the spectator with the stage actor. This response purged the audience of their emotions of fear and pity created by the drama. Such dramas easily hypnotized the audience; they became uncritical of the staged actions. These powerful empathic responses depended upon stage illusion and served as mental foodstuffs, quickly enjoyed and consumed by the viewer, then forgotten (Willett, 1968, p. 172).

Brecht claimed that the function of theatre should be to challenge the audience. Theatre should both communicate and entertain. A theatre is a symbolic place where the audience should be made to think, to question and to become politically conscious of the contradictions behind the events taking place on stage. To insure that critical detachment was achieved by his dramas, Brecht wrote plays to advance his theory of *Verfremdung,* translated as "alienation" or "estrangement" and called the V–effect. It does not mean alienating the spectator in the sense of making him or her hostile to the play. *Verfrumdung,* according to Wright, "is a mode of critical seeing that goes on within a process by which man (sic) identifies his objects. It also sets up a series of social, political and ideological interruptions that remind us that all representations are not given but produced" (Wright, 1989, p.19).

In 1948, after years in exile from Nazi Germany, Brecht returned to East Berlin where he became director/producer of the state-supported Berliner Ensemble. Here he directed his own plays, notably those written while he was in the United States. During this period, Brecht decided to replace the term "epic" with the term "dialectical" to further his association with Marxist ideology. He produced and directed three major plays that became world famous. They are *Mother Courage* (1941), *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (1943) and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1955). In each drama, Brecht's stagecraft uses a "dialectical" theatre form to discourage audience identification with the characters yet leads to an intellectual reflection on the political situation.

For each of these plays, Brecht "developed a variety of effects to present his themes and motifs: songs, inserted texts, self-reference, and the self-presentation of characters. These effects were all designed to promote a new way of seeing, a new attitude to be shared between the stage and the audiences. Brecht's dramas aimed at transforming "fear" and "pity" into a "desire for knowledge" and a "readiness to help" (Wright, 1989. p. 33). Brecht's theatrical techniques kept the audiences constantly aware that they were being presented with a report of past events. As historical reconstructions the plays openly declared the stage as just a stage and not a place to be mistaken for the real world itself. The main function of the enactment was to produce living illustrations that could foster a critical attitude in the audience in hopes of changing the powerful social, economic and historic forces operating upon their lives.

For Brecht, the art of the drama was to place familiar things, attitudes and situations "into a new fresh and unfamiliar perspective so that the spectator is brought to look critically at what has been taken for granted" (Willett, 1968, p. 177). Brecht points out that when the "natural" is made to

look surprising or creates wonderment, the audience then can discover the relationships that exist between people and realize that society is alterable. Brecht sought to demonstrate how his characters can develop and grow out of a social function. As that social function changes, so does the individual. The idea he explores in his dramas is that nothing is fixed, that there is no absolute role or identity created that is unchangeable. His characters, through their actions and experiences, are in the act of becoming in association with changes in their growth into new social and political relationships.

In this context, Jean–Luc Godard, in his assimilation of Brechtian theatre, became the foremost experimenter of this narrative form for the cinema. He constantly reminds us we are watching a "filmed reality" – one that shares resemblances to actual life but is a constructed reality. Through the use of jump–cuts, elliptical editing, and the elimination of transitional scenes, Godard violates the invisible editing techniques developed by directors in the conventions of the "seamless" classical Hollywood style of editing.

In its place he deliberately creates a self–reflexive cinema, one that calls attention to itself as a process about filming. This process of cinema, which appears to have temporal and spatial continuity through editing is, in reality, a very discontinuous process. In a radical departure from the narrative films of the past, Godardian films become a series of cinematic essays deconstructing the modern-day cultural myths that control socio-political relationships.

In the early New Wave films of Godard and Truffaut, the thematic content revolves around two diverging narratives. On the one hand, the central character is always trying to celebrate life to its limit, shedding the social role assigned to him or her, especially in Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player* (1960) and *Jules and Jim* (1961) and in Godard's *Breathless* (1959) and *Vivre Sa Vie/ My Life to Live* (1962). Yet, on the other hand, the films are driven by uncertainty

and mistrust, eventually leading to a fascination with the darker side of life. In all these films, the inner political traumas confronted by these characters uncover the absurdist constructs of modernity that control their lives.

Further, as in Brechtian theatre, the New Wave films of Godard and Truffaut always pose the question: How will a certain person act in a specified set of circumstances and conditions? Godard, like Brecht, reverses the older psychological drama which focuses upon a character caught in a suspenseful Aristotelian plot with a narrative drama which concentrates upon a character caught in a particular situation, where chance or contingency often occurs. By showing a series of episodes, each detailing a different set of circumstances, the writer/director places familiar characters into new or unfamiliar territory through a dialectical situation by contrasting episodes.

Godard also allows the non-literary elements – the decor, the sound effects and the music, and the *mise–en–scene* to retain their autonomy. In this manner they enter into a dialectical relationship with characters of each episode. Godard uses these non-literary elements to their full extent as he demonstrates in *Breathless, Vivre Sa Vie* and *Weekend.* As cinematic techniques, the jump cuts, slow fades and wipes combine with extra–cinematic features such as the use of titles, newspaper headlines, interviews and voice–overs to interrupt the flow of the action and thus break the illusion of reality. In many cases, Godard used different sound effects either from a music score or actual sounds coming into the scene as part of the environment, to comment upon or contradict the mood of the scene.

The Postmodern Condition and the Politics of Representation

Part of the postmodern condition consists of a range of stories and novels that function as cultural myths about the continuous technological

transformations of our world. These contemporary myths, like previous myths of old, were "dreamed up" to provide us with explanations of our "scientific progress" and its impact on ourselves and others. As narratives, "reality" and "experience" undergo imagistic transformations. As systems of discourse, these narratives "reproduce" and "replicate" the hidden social and political constructions of power. They become unseen hegemonic forces of "late capitalism" controlling and privileging one set of vested interests against competing forces (Gramsci 1971). Some narratives attempt to challenge and contradict existing myths of cultural power. Other voices struggle for equal representation and distribution within this new cultural phenomenon. Thus, what now has become called "a postmodern condition" is one that mirrors a consumer-dominated capitalist society characterized by two features: (1) "the transformation of reality into images" through a network of communications media of television and computers, and (2) simultaneously, "time is fragmented into a series of perpetual presents" (Jameson, 1988, p. 28).

Many scholars including Fredric Jameson (1988), Hal Foster (1983), Linda Hutcheon (1989), and E. Ann Kaplan (1988) agree that postmodernism represents a cultural "rupture" with the modern discourse, indicating a new discourse that moves beyond and away from it. The break from modernism is considered similar to the transitional period in the 19th century when modernism broke away from Victorian Romanticism which ironically inspired the modern. Postmodernism occurs at the "moment" when modernism has fulfilled its mandate with the transition from a mechanical age to an information age dominated by sophisticated electronic technologies moving Western society into a postmodern condition.

The rise of postmodern discourse can be located in the aftermath of the Second World War after the "dark and sinister" "other" side of science and

materialism was confirmed by the use of the atomic bomb. In the post–war years of the 1950s and 1960s, the Cold War broke apart the dreams of the modernist discourse as the struggle for world power continued. Postmodernism is the child of modernism, but did not awaken to this power struggle of terror until the late 1960s when television and other media brought home the absurdity of the Vietnam conflict and illustrated how modern weapons of war and technology were tragically employed in that overseas conflict.

The world–wide reaction to this "imperialist" war precipitated the abortive May,1968 student and workers revolts in Europe and the United States. Serious questions arose about the nature of power politics and the use of science to create such sophisticated hi–tech weaponry. The prevailing educational and governmental institutions and their hegemonic theories went under attack. Western philosophical thought and the dialectical theories of Hegel, Kant, and Marx were "deconstructed," rupturing these "totalizing theories" on class, race, and gender. Further, debate about the control of the media and the rise of popular culture also was contested. Transformations in corporate structures signaled a change in market strategies and the rise of multi–national companies based upon new communication technologies.

Some Interpretations of Postmodernism

Over the past twenty years, postmodernism has mirrored these changes in a variety of critical perspectives. A dominant perspective of poststructual theories is its *antifoundational* "opposition to standard and inherited ways of thinking in all provinces of knowledge and values" (Abrams, 1993, p. 259).

In his introduction to *Postmodernism – Philosophy and the Arts* (1990), Hugh J. Silverman offers this definition of the term "postmodernism:"

> Postmodernism does not open up new fields of artistic, philosophical, cultural or even institutional activities. Its very significance is to marginalize, de–limit, dis–seminate, and de–center the primary (and

often secondary) works of modernist and premodernist cultural inscriptions... but above all it offers a reinscription of those very texts and traditions by examining the respects in which they set limits to their own enterprises, in which they incorporate other texts and traditions in a juxtapositional and intertextual relation to themselves. (p. 1)

In his explanation of postmodernist thinking, Silverman claims that such thinking consists of 're-thinking – finding the *places of difference* within texts and institutions, examining the inscriptions of indecidability, noting the dispersal of signification, identity and centered unity across a plurivalent texture of epistemological and metaphysical knowledge production." Silverman further states that the advent of postmodernism brings about the closure of modernist hegemony. Thus, he notes that "postmodernism enframes modernism without identity or unity. It is fragmented, discontinuous, multiple and dispersed. Where modernism asserts centering, focusing, continuity – once the break with tradition has occurred -- postmodernism decenters, enframes, discontinues, and fragments the prevalence of modernist ideals" (p.5).

For E. Ann Kaplan, the term "postmodern" has been interpreted by feminist and literary scholars as a shift towards a discourse that involves searching for "a liberatory new position that would free women from the constraints and confines of oppressive binary oppositions" (Kaplan,1988, p. 5), notably the male/female binary opposition. In this discourse, the term postmodern takes on a "utopian" formation based upon the work of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Derridian deconstruction and feminism. In "utopian" postmodernism, the discourse provides strategies to decenter the subject, remove hierarchical orderings, and allow for a variety of different spectator positionings.

In relation to modern architecture, Charles Jencks (1986) defines postmodernism as a departure from modernism where new technology and

techniques were paired with older traditional styles and forms producing a "double coding." Unlike revivalists of historical styles, this new architectural model shares with other postmodernist artworks "one major contradictory characteristic: they are all overtly historical and unavoidably political, precisely because they are formally parodic" (Hutcheon, 1988:23). Jencks claims that "the creators keep something of a Modern sensibility ... whether this is irony, parody, displacement, complexity, eclecticism, realism or any number of contemporary tactics and goals" (Jencks, 1986:14). In today's social world, this hybrid architecture was "to keep a trace of their common departure thus perpetuating a recognition of past history within the modernist discourse" (ibid, p.16).

A similar description of the "double coding" in postmodern fiction works to counteract the political constructions of power and representation. Linda Hutcheon (1989) in her book, *The Politics of Postmodernism*, describes the properties of fictional representations clashing with cause–and–effect models of traditional narrative in a manner similar to critical pedagogy. Instead of agreeing with these narrative conventions, postmodern fiction attempts to "de–doxify" or confront a common belief that any sense of a realist (late modern) perspective exists; thus signalling the postmodern use and abuse of the "seamlessness of the join between the natural with the cultural, the world and the text, thereby making us aware of the irreducible ideological nature of every representation" (p. 53). Hutcheon further states that "postmodern fiction does not disconnect itself from history or the world" Postmodern fiction challenges "the conventionality and unacknowledged ideology of the assumption of seamlessness and asks its readers to question the processes by which we represent our selves and our world to ourselves" (ibid., p. 53).

Like adult educators who seek to have adult learners pose questions,

postmodern representation "asks its readers to question the processes by which we represent ourselves and our world to ourselves and to become aware of the means by which we make *sense* of and *construct* order out of experience in our particular culture" (Hutcheon, 1989, pp. 53–54). "We only have access to the past today through its traces – its documents, its testimony of its witnesses, and other archival material. In other words we only have representations of the past from which to construct our narratives or explanations" (p. 58).

Thus, Hutcheon implies that cultures invest in narratives to such an extent because "our access to the world of experience – past or present – is always mediated by the powers and limits of our representations of it" (p.54). And, if we assume such narrative representations are "trans–historical or trans–cultural" we avoid facing how our concepts of ourselves and others are so constituted by hidden references to master narratives.

Postmodernist discourses are notable for the use of parody and pastiche. Parody is a form of mimetic imitation in literature and art designed to criticize an original work of art through "ironic inversion." It is one mode of coming to terms with the legacy of the "past that paradoxically brings about a direct confrontation with ... a world of signification external to itself... to the political and the historical" (Hutcheon, 1989, p. 22). Pastiche refers to "the appropriation or borrowing of motifs, images, and phrases more or less unchanged from the work of other authors" (Fowler, 1973, p. 173).

Postmodernism concerned with parody and its "politics of representation" because parodic discourses can critically question the nature and formation of subjectivity, as well as the humanist assumptions of a coherent and autonomous "self." A double position becomes available to locate and dislocate the concept of a subject. Through an engagement in critical analyses of the experiences of self, adult learners can realize cultural constructs are alterable.

The politics of postmodern fiction, and especially of postmodern film narratives adapted from them, help describe a new sense of discourse, "that the 'commonsensical' and the 'self-evident' are what have the privilege of unnoticed power, and that this power produces instruments of control" (Bove, 1990, p. 54). As adult educators, once we begin to question how this process occurs we can also "study how representation legitimizes and privileges certain kinds of knowledge – including historical knowledge" (p. 54). Postmodern critiques thus can help adult learners not only interpret such representations within a pluralistic society, but informed adult learners can generate new identities for themselves while simultaneously resisting repressive forms of hidden social power found within the dominant modernist culture.

Filming as Thinking

How does Heidegger's thinking help us get a greater understanding of the postmodern era of filming? "The phrase 'postmodern culture' will refer to the socio-historic diversity of the late capitalist world as well as to the imaginative realm of difference in which filming may take place." (Wurzer and Silverman, 1990, pp. 174–5). "To expose filming within a zone of thinking leads to a non–logocentric, yet critically imagistic reading of the postmodern interplay between thinking and imagination – that is between the conceptualization of self and the projection of self through poetry (art), between the theory and practice of ideation" (p. 175). Heidegger claims that the call for a new mode of thinking in our own age is due to a modern person's obsession with technical prediction, economic profit and political control. Seduced by the production and consumption of humans themselves, we have forgotten about the nature of Being in the first place. A meditative or poetic thinking as a response to Being, according to Heidegger, would put our idea of Being into question again.

Today, filming may be constituted as a process of thinking which affirms *ecriture*. As one of the conceptual frameworks for this research project, filming becomes a form of visual writing, a visual ethnography that is neither a science nor an art form. Like the Joycean stream–of consciousness, the mind can move like a camera through the dynamization of space and the spatialization of time where an imaginative process re–constructs and re–writes the narrative of identity and accepts the uncanny of life itself. In discussing the nature of television and the public sphere, Peter Dahlgren (1995), emphasizes the importance of the imaginary process in this way:

> The imaginary occupies a space between the actual and the non-existent; it is prospective, contestable, yet informs social practices and discourse. The imaginary, in a sense, keeps meaning from becoming rigidified; it acts as a potential counterpoint to the reification of sense-making (and social relations). To go beyond Habermas' position: the imaginary helps the lifeworld to resist colonization by systems logic. (p. 133)

From my point-of-view as a researcher we face a great danger as adult educators in relating mostly to the model or simulacra, allowing such illusions and maps to define and even replace reality. This acceptance of the map for the territory permits the special effects of the simulacra to manipulate and transform reality. What is difficult for an adult educator to remember is that our life and its realities are ever-changing as Heraclitus, the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, so wisely pointed out to us. Nothing is permanently fixed. There are models, yes, but they are signs of the "real" thing, not the real thing. There are no teleological ends in sight.

Yet if filming is a process of thinking about ourselves in the space of the imaginary, can this be accomplished in the absence of myth or models of reality? Thus in the Baudrillardian world of "replicants" and "virtual realities" can we differentiate between the "self" and the "other?" Nietzsche may be the link between Baudrillard and nihilism which, in a sense, is what Baudrillard is

talking about: the absence of illusion, and for Bataille the absence of myth, therefore the absence of reality. If reality is not created by its opposite, then how can the subject take the object as the "other?" His logical reasoning follows that of Nietzsche's atheism and Marx's earlier turn toward science with the pronouncement that "God is dead." This coming to fore of science, rationality and the certainty of the Enlightenment led to the ideals of progress in the 20th century. Such discourses tried to replace human values (morality) that are housed in the beliefs and structures of an Absolute. With the release of the Absolute from the House of God, human beings find that there is nothing they can rely upon, "nothing of any value other than the meanings given to it in an endless process" (Blanchot, 1987, p. 36).

Nietzsche realized, in his philosophical wanderings, that his analysis of the withdrawal from some ideal of absolute meaning did not mean the presence of a nihilistic world. On the contrary, it turned out to be the only true path to follow, the path of going beyond the concepts of good and evil, of approaching the principle of a "new beginning," one in which man (sic) now must create the world and give it meaning. From the start Nietzsche saw that this moment of change in the history of human beings suddenly presented the opportunity for them to renew their horizons into a "boundless space of knowledge." "At last the horizon seems open once more ...every hazard is again permitted to the discerner; and the sea, *our* sea, again lies open before us... There is yet another new world to be discovered -- and more than one. On board ship, philosophers!" (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 289).

It may sound familiar today, closer to science fiction. Well, perhaps it is. However I am thankful that Nietzsche, in his enthusiasm, was able to recognize that the horizon of humankind is opened by knowledge. "All is permitted," he exclaimed when struck by the awesome technological discoveries

by humans through the manifestations of the natural sciences. That is why he proclaims his faith in physics. "Science becomes the counterpart of nihilism - for science can only be nihilistic; it is the meaning of a world deprived of meaning... a knowledge that ultimately has ignorance as its foundation" (Blanchot, 1987, p. 37). Consequently, science can only be nihilistic, that is without values, for it does not interpret the world according to a human being's will, but transforms it. Here the negative power of science makes certain forms of knowledge not only dangerous to humankind but the humane world of human beings can be destroyed as well.

The Research Question

The connection of postmodern culture with the development of science fiction, cybernetics and high–tech machines demonstrates the way technology is transforming our perceptions of ourselves and our "reality." Film director Francis Ford Coppola remarks that we are caught in an uneasy confrontation with ourselves. We live in a complex world where we cannot deny our past heritage or forget our current technocratic and social realities of the present. The danger in the confrontation between past and present resides in the fact that there is no over–all master plan or ideology to carry us into the future. Our reality is created by our technology as it transforms time, memory and self–identity. Through science fiction we are systematically replacing the "real" with the "hyperreal" of images and representations that easily "stand in" for the actual reality (McCaffery, 1991, p. 7).

This constant double coding of the subject by our technology challenges the basis for historical knowledge while questioning simultaneously the ideological process in the formation of the subject. It foreshadows the constant battle in the existing state of cultural power. In one sense, the conflicts that

exist within postmodern culture become a narrative discourse like any other --- a kind of myth which represents a state of being constantly changing, a self that is decentred, unstable, but where there is a conscious search for wholeness and integration of one's personality.

Within this "postmodern condition" the research question is: How do contemporary film narratives as "discourses of power" shape and construct cultural identities of "self" and "other"? Secondly, what implications do these representations of "self" and "other" have for adult education? If film narratives are embedded within discourses on the politics of representation and are directly related to cultural institutions, how do they disseminate the effects of their formative power upon social persons within this environment?

Other research questions arise in the analysis of poststructural discourses which replace questions of methodology or interpretation. These questions trace the historical systems of institutions that have developed discourses of power/knowledge through the use of mythic folklore and language. So, when we ask the primary question of how the subject is constructed within such discourses and, for this study the discourses of film narratives in relation to adult education, we need to focus on the politics of representation, ideology, and culture. All discourses then can be understood as the means by which language acts to constitute human beings in our present Western society.

Further, the study critically examines how power operates in film discourses, and how such discourses of power control people within a social group. Also, critical attention must be focused on the power that accrues within the media itself to create visual representations of self and other and why. It is at this crossroads that adult education interfaces with the effects of narrative discourses on helping adult learners reflect critically about who they

are, and how they become situated in this culture as adults. What roles can they choose to perform or not and what are the political effects and consequences of such actions between themselves and "others." Within any cultural construct questions develop that necessitate alternative readings of a critical pedagogy for adult learners, one that offers a space for challenging the cultural assumptions governing their social roles and actions; such readings that explore the possibilities for creating new identities, and in the process, choosing to resist any repressive social construct of "self" and "other."

In the next chapter I focus on the research methods employed to interpret the primary data for this thesis. Further, I introduce commentary on the nature of the filmic material to explicate Brechtian theories on cinema. Each film narrative that I have selected presents a different poststructural perspective on the ways cultural myths reconstruct an "imaginary self" for viewer identification with the "other." A major concept of a "third space," as presented by Homi Bhabha, becomes an important conceptual framework for this thesis. This concept demonstrates the interrelationships of different poststructural perspectives in which analysis will foreground those tensions that exist between the modern conceptions on how personal identity is formed as an interaction between "self" and society and the postmodern conception of the "self" as a subject fragmented into "multiple" identities dependent upon the person's position within divergent historical and cultural systems. Located within these narrative spaces, the notion of cultural hybridity suggests a multiplicity of social roles that displace the totalizing myths of modernity on an essential and unified identity. While acknowledging the space of ambiguity, these poststructural discourses open up possibilities for new social and political identifications for adult learners and educators.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS AND PERSPECTIVES

The older theories of visual representation open to film history have been set up as a "matching" of an image to produce an "illusion" of reality to contain features that characterized its nature. This is known as the resemblance theory of representation. Up to the end of the 19th century, with the advent of the motion picture, the mimetic accuracy of the photograph replaced the illusionism of past art works. However, in today's world of visual representation, this desire to replicate natural images has been challenged by Nelson Goodman, Norman Bryson and others who believe that visual representation has more to do with the construction, presentation and dissemination of cultural values than with the duplication of objects of perception (Moxey, 1992, p. 30).

Goodman argues that what is important about visual representation is its status as part of a certain type of cultural artifact or art. If we free visual representation of objects from the notion of mimesis, what alternative theory can stand in its place? In this instance, semiotics, or the theory of signs, can situate visual representation as a system of communication that conceives of images as part of a system of historically and culturally produced signs that the author/artist makes use of in a meaningful construction of signification. It is through the construction of cultural or art objects such as film narratives that the cultural object can articulate and disseminate values of the particular society of which the person is a part (Moxey, 1992, p. 31).

This is the postmodern perspective adult educators are now confronting. It is the electronic revolution that has interpellated the age of mass media in which the information technologies have simulated an ambiguity between

illusion and reality, and between self and other. Blurring these boundaries, films and videos now recreate past experiences and "realize" memories, dreams, and desires providing a postmodern world with new sensory experiences, "*simulacra*," with their own spatial and temporal coordinates, creating an epoch of pervasive "hyperreality." Jean Baudrillard, in his *Mirror of Production* (1988), suggests it is impossible for a person to distinquish between what is "real" from the "image of the real", what he defines as the *simulacra* which:

> . . . set themselves up as expressing an "objective reality." They become signs: signifiers of a 'real' signified. And although at the best of times these concepts have been practised as concepts without taking themselves for reality, they have nonetheless subsequently fallen into the *imaginary of the sign*, or the *sphere of the truth.* They are no longer in the sphere of interpretation but enter that of *repressive simulation.* (p. 114)

Metaphors and Metonyms as Signs in Filmic Representation

In the history of film, two metaphors were employed to explain filmic representation. In a phenomenological manner, Andre Bazin, a French film critic, advanced the notion that the screen was a transparent "window" on the world. He implied that a reading of the *mise-en-scene* would give the spectator an accurate depiction of the events occurring in screen time and space. This metaphor of a "window" was augmented by the Russian formalists, especially Eisenstein, who saw the screen as a "frame" which constructed both effects and meaning. Classical film theory took advantage of both these metaphors and claimed that the cinema was a window and a frame. In this manner, the filmic or mimetic qualities of cinema as well as the narrative or diegetic functions could be treated in cinematic constructions.

In the 1960s, a new metonymy (one that also has been called a metaphor) was advanced developing out of psychoanalysis and the writings of Jacques Lacan. From this metonymy, the screen was termed a "mirror." Now,

new relations came into existence that enabled a consideration of different rapport with a spectator. In returning to the psychic function of filmic representation as theoretically advanced by Hugo Musterberg (1915), narratives became a relationship between cinematic fantasies (or phantasies) and an "imaginary" identification with the viewer. From this new psychic positioning of the viewer, interest abounded in the manner in which narratives moved from an actual or implied moment of equilibrium to a different, terminal equilibrium (Todorov, 1977, p. 88). Narratives are seen as structures for the interpretation of life rather than as life itself. Always, the plot is triggered by an action or perception that opens a gap, a "lack," in Lacanian terms, that, in turn, causes the imbalance between perception and event. Then a series of remedial actions ensue to overcome this gap or lack. Character relations shift in attempts to reestablish a new balance. Dream or imaginary images are themselves only representatives of "real" forces that produced them. Thus a storyteller's narrative constructs a representation of a representation.

Jacques Lacan develops a "desire" of the text which directly involves viewer identification in exploring the ways a film creates detours and obstacles. This strategy sustains viewer attention and helps attain psychic resolution. A film narrative is akin to a fun–house attraction where strategies and procedures are unknowingly constructed in advance of the spectator to take one through a "dark passage." With this concept in mind, the semiotic definitions of visual representations can be entertained in this study where the "play of differences" within the linguistic system are capable of producing a space for ambiguity, a tensionality between more than one interpretation.

Brechtian Techniques and Film Narratives

There are four subjects re-evaluated through Brechtian dramatic

techniques that become particularly important in the structuring of film narratives: montage, *cinema–direct*, naturalism and psychoanalysis (Lellis, 1982:91). The revival of montage editing as the fundamental structuring element in contemporary cinema helps explain the contrasts between theories of filmmaking. Bazin's phenomenological theory asserts that film is a window-on-the world. For him, montage editing should be used sparingly so that the long take by the camera unfolds the *mise–en–scene* to allow for a continuity of time and space. This form of editing favors illusionism. On the other hand, Eisenstein favors montage editing. He asserts that each camera shot can be juxtaposed with other shots which, when placed next to each other, produce a shock effect of attraction. Such montage editing suggests to the audience the relationship of one's identity to the social processes within the context of a historical reality. It is argued by Eisenstein that attentiveness to this style of montage editing can defeat the power of illusionism and achieve a distancing effect, one that can arouse the capacity of the audience to overcome their passiveness to the narrative (Lellis, 1982, p. 92).

The introduction of *cinema-direct* in the late 1960s is related to the reappearance of montage editing in international cinema (also known as *Third Cinema)*, as far as it reveals how the camera intervenes in the production of "realistic" representations. *Cinema-direct* evolves from a style of filmmaking used in documentaries called *cinema-verite*. With the introduction of lightweight cameras, the style was developed by Jean Rouch to describe film techniques in which the filmmaker would not interfere in manipulating what the camera recorded of a particular happening. Today it is comparable to television Electronic News Gathering of such happenings – called E.N.G. This fact of revealing the method of recording live action is comparable to Brechtian theatre where any given social action is unmasked through the processes of

filmmaking itself. The success of *cinema-direct* occurs in film narratives when "the idea of inscribing the process of producing a film into the film narrative itself" reveals that "the reality of the film is inseparable from its being photographed" (Lellis, 1982:96). The use of nonprofessional performers or the actual people involved in the event, and direct sound, especially the recording of dialogue and sound effects, leads to the third subject, "naturalism."

As a style of representation, "naturalism" contrasts with "realism" since naturalism relates to the notion that what is "real" to the audience is always a social and political reality, as far as group identification and interpersonal action can occur. However the use of naturalism, in the coding of social themes as they appear to the social majority, allows for stereotyping the "other," who exists marginally outside this social majority. In Brechtian terms, film narratives that present such conventionalized forms of social alienation defeat the notion of unmasking the social representation of the individual within a social realm.

The social coding of the identity of marginal individuals existing outside the social norms leads to the renewed interest in Freudian psychoanalysis, through the writings of Jacques Lacan. His post–Freudian school of psychoanalysis complements and extends Brechtian technique of the V–effect through the notion of three important concepts – passivity, identification and representation. A passive spectator appears through the film medium when an "imaginary self" is constructed based upon specular images. This notion of the "mirror stage," as proposed by Lacan, is the point when the child forms a conception of the "I" of himself or herself. "It is an 'imaginary constitution', a condition whose existence is based on images" (Lellis, 1982, p. 100).

In a similar way, the tradition of Western linear perspective places the spectator in a comparable stage of identification with the camera lens. This

visual system then operates upon the spectator in constituting the sense of perception for the person to "reflect" upon the "impression of reality" obtained through those moving images. This secondary identification with the camera follows after the primary identification by the spectator with the characters in the film. Classical film representation thus creates an imaginary sense of self and reality by masking or effacing the film process itself.

Thus, it is argued by some filmmakers that film representations have the power to reflect the sense of self and reality found with perceptual experiences. Still, it is necessary for the spectator to become aware of the symbolic order wherein film codes operate and influence understanding. If these are unmasked throughout the film narrative, the spectator will have the opportunity to deliberate on the social, political and historical relevance of the narrative. Within this context, this study analyzes film narratives through a Brechtian framework to understand their power in shaping and constituting identity of self and other in the construction of "imaginary selves."

From this discourse analysis, implications for adult education are advanced. Adult education, in its broadest terms, is defined in this thesis as a life-long social activity of helping adults think reflectively and critically on the assumptions and beliefs that form the political and cultural structures within a given society. By an active engagement of questioning such cultural structures, adult learners function as participants in the democratic process. (Selman and Dampier, 1991, p. 24).

The Primary Data for the Research

The primary data for the research are five full-length film narratives made during the past thirty years. They were selected as representative of different yet multiple discourses. In particular, filmic images of "self" and

"other" are analyzed through an intertextual reading of each film narrative. Each film is considered by the researcher as an "historiographic film" which blurs the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction, and addresses our relation to the historical past as its cultural referent. They address questions of history and a set of contemporary "issues and arguments, such as (1) narrative, rhetoric, and meaning, (2) content and validity, (3) ethics, ideology and politics, and (4) institutions, disciplines and their consequences" (Nichols, 1994, p. x). As Nichols states, once selection and arrangement occur, as in film narratives, "all the issues of truth, objectivity, authenticity, power, knowledge and control that make the interpretive arena so vital and contentious arise" (p xi). Here the connection with the "floating signifier" or metonym is placed in question and remains capable of standing for whatever is chosen by the film director. Accordingly, the research draws upon the concepts of the following French post–structuralists: Jacques Lacan on psychoanalysis, the "self" and "displacement," Michel Foucault on "regimes of truth" and "genealogy," Jacques Derrida on "the metaphysics of presence" and "differance," Jean Baudrillard on "hyperreality" and his sense of "simulacra", and Jean-Francois Lyotard on the "postmodern condition" and "dissensus."

The poststructural thought of Baudrillard, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan and Lyotard offers new and imaginative cultural theories which de–center and dis-place the modern conception of the individual subject and identity. These new perspectives trace these dislocations through a series of discourses about the nature of modern knowledge. These writers/thinkers come from different disciplines. They offer bold, explanatory perspectives and compelling arguments on questions of consciousness and the unconscious, of subjectivity, of intentionality, of feedback or resistance integral to culture. These perspectives have had significant impact upon human discourse and practice to indicate the

shifting relationship between meaning and context, between subjectivities and their social relations to power within a computerized, post-industrial society.

These poststructural perspectives involve "the production of meaning and values, models and standards as aspects of the belief systems that a given social order uses to win the consent of those whose consciousness, identity and desire it regulates" (Nichols, 1985, p. 8). Poststructural thought addresses questions of text as discourse, semiotic codes and subject positionings. The basic assumption is the notion that the "subject becomes a fiction that facilitates acquiescence to the determinations of language and the unconscious, and, through them, the social order -- the Western capitalist, patriarchal society in this case" (p. 8). These perspectives indicate the "series of ruptures" in the modernist conception of liberal humanism, its scientific revolutions, and the Enlightenment which centered on the image of Man (*sic*), freed from dogma and intolerance. A rational being endowed with the faculties and capacities to investigate, unravel and master the mysteries of Nature. "The main effect has been the final de–centering of the Cartesian subject" (Hall, 1994, p. 120).

Criteria for Selection of the Film Narratives

The criteria used to select the film narratives are based upon the poststructural perspectives that theorize new movements in power, agency, difference and resistance. Each film narrative included in this research study is analyzed as a historical document that:

1. Periodizes and constructs a historical world of the "other" allowing viewers to witness how subjectivities were constructed in the past and how such subjectivities are radically challenged in the present.

2. Circulates political images as cultural "already givens" which then are manipulated in the film narrative in various ways to situate the viewer within a dominant power discourse or "regime of truth."

3. Produces TV images and information as systems of knowledge that illustrate the effects of a "metaphysics of presence" that maintains the social/political relationships of mythic control.

4. Describes a "postmodern" world in which scientific narratives on social identity and practice engage in ambiguity and indeterminacy thus calling for a re-interpretation of modernist beliefs, values and practices.

5. Engages the imaginative fantasies of the viewer through an identification with the central protagonists to help unmask multiple narratives of power and control.

Analytical Approach and Method

The researcher's approach to this material was to analyze how the film narrative is organized and constructed as "discourses of power" that culturally define the "self" and "other." Within an historical and political context the basic existential experiences of race, gender, sexuality, violence, death and freedom will be compared between "imaginary events" depicted in the cinematic discourse as it differs from the "real." The analysis treats each film narrative as *text*, as units of discourse, and will attempt to reveal or unmask the different systems or cinematic codes that bring them into intelligibility and unification (Heath, 1981, p. 131). Each film narrative in this study is subjected to a four–point analysis to consider its form, content, character and context.

1. How does the film tell a story? The use of montage or *mise-en-scene*, using camera position and movement, light and sound.

2. How does the film reveal character? The use of flashbacks, point–of–view, settings, costumes, body language.

3. How does the film depict physical reality? What style is employed by the director? Is it realist or surreal or a combination of both?

4. How does the film inform, persuade or indoctrinate the viewer? Does the film provide reportage, education or propaganda?

Further, the analysis focuses upon the way the director constructs the film narrative based on a person's social identity. This identity is shown to evolve from a series of flashbacks that recover fragments from the past that are relevant to the present crisis or dilemma. The analysis also explicates why these past events predetermine the future course of action for the major characters in the film. Moreover, within each film narrative, the excavation of the past also is analyzed both as a memory and a confrontation for future actions of the central character. The analysis also reveals how the dramatic conflicts of the past precipitate contemporary conflicts. These conflicts will produce one or more sequences in which the central character is depicted facing a mirror-image and perceiving a character other than her/his own self. The analysis will focus on how this mirror image, or shadow, becomes an encounter between the conscious self and the other or unconscious self.

The Use of Collage Within the Poststructural Framework

Part of the poststructural framework for the study is based upon the postmodernist use of the notion of collage/bricolage which resists a causal explication of the past but shows the interrelationships of different fragments and perspectives of one's identity within each film narrative. The collage effect allows for the distinct mode of representation of each film and argues for a variety of definitions for the identity of the self/other. Collage is derived from the work of Picasso and Braque in the 1910s and later used by the Dadaists and Surrealists of the 1920s and 1930s to create a juxtaposition of fragments of reality as machine-made textures, images and materials. In effect, the "assemblages" thus de-constructed modernist claims to uniformity and totality. In the neo-dada age of the 1960s, Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns heralded the use of 3–D constructions and paintings as collages using

photographic images mixed with objects from popular culture. Both artists attempted "to bridge the gap" between "art" and "non-art" leaving the identity of the object in its relation to established codes of identification in a space of ambiguity -- a space of indeterminacy and uncertainty -- a third space.

The concept of collage/bricolage allows for a composite framework to envisage the poststructural interpretation of the subject as an effect of mediated images, language, desire and the unconscious. The movement into this new conceptual space occurs in the abandonment of any singular modern totality of reason, spirit, world-view or centered subject towards the metonymies of self/other, power/knowledge presence/absence, fact/fiction and illusion/reality. This shift to the discontinuities and "ruptures" of the modernist project becomes the site for the research into the politics of representation and the implications for adult learners and adult education.

In the analysis of the five different film narratives, it is necessary to stress the iconic basis of cinematic codes in which different literary genres are developed and exploited as art forms. When translated into film discourses, these five major genres are designated as the following: *the psychoanalytic, ironic, parodic, fantastic* and *romantic*. I analyze each film narrative following one of the five modes of interpretation: Lacanian discourse on the self and other, desire and lack, and displacement, (Lacan); disciplinary power and "regimes of truth," (Foucault); "metaphysics of presence," deconstruction and differance, (Derrida); "hyperreality" in science fiction on images, replicants or simulacra, (Baudrillard); and "incredulity towards metanarratives" in the discourse on the postmodern condition, (Lyotard). These five modes of interpretive analysis will form a heterogeneous composite of different but multiple identities that interlock in a poststructural framework for this research. Each film narrative serves as an example of contemporary cultural

identity, shaped by the visual language of cinema. Most of the film narratives were produced in the 1970s and 1980s in the United States and Europe. Each film narrative represents a serious effort by a different film director and writer to give voice to persons imagining themselves in new but fragmented social and political movements. As part of the *politics of representation,* some attempt to cross the boundaries of older cultural, social and political paradigms.

Five Research Perspectives

Each poststructual perspective for this research challenges the foundational basis for historical knowledge while questioning simultaneously, the ideological processes in the formation of our subjectivities. Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, Baudrillard and Lyotard direct their own writings as an investigation into the central role language plays in the process of socialization of subjects. This contemporary French thought foreshadows the constant battle in the existing state of cultural power, one that structures the identities of self within societal forms of domination and exploitation. In this sense, the conflicts that exist within postmodern culture are re-presented in contemporary film narratives. These film narratives help unmask the contradictions between individual subjectivities and their social realities. As discourses of social and political relations, they are constructions of "lived experiences" that have entered the realm of popular culture and adult learning. Within the "politics of representation," these films attempt to resolve the contradictions of self in a conscious search for integration within the social fabric. Yet there is always a dramaturgical contestation by a constantly changing self, a person who is decentred and unstable, a "floating signifier" whose consciousness is quietly structured by language and culture. These characters succeed in creating new identities for themselves in opposition to the stated cultural norms.

The Psychoanalytic Discourse – Self and Other

The first area of film research is directly related to the new social movement called Feminism. As a conceptual framework for de–centering the sociological subject of woman, some feminist writers have used Lacanian psychoanalysis to explore the issue of how we are formed and produced as gendered subjects. In other words, feminism uncovers how cultural politics processes the identity and subjectivity of men and women, sons and daughters, and mothers and fathers. The importance of an independent, "imagined self" is registered as a political challenge in those life histories of talented women caught within oppressive patriarchal systems of Western culture. For this film analysis *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1991) directed by Jon Avnet was selected. The film becomes a re–telling of the "double" roles played out by these women as part of a *psychoanalytic discourse. Fried Green Tomatoes* features a present–day raconteur (Ninny), a guest in a nursing home, recounting to a younger woman, Evelyn, the story of Ruth and Idgie during the Great Depression. Using a dialogic process of narrative in relating the story to Evelyn, Ninny helps Evelyn realize her own potential as a woman who then chooses to take control of her own life as Idgie did in the past. Discarding her housewife chores, she learns to share the wonders and joys of life with others, as Ninny did for her.

The Ironic Discourse - Technologies of Self

Historical research of the critical writings of Michel Foucault addresses the second major area of analysis – *the ironic* or Faustian concept of power. Foucault's interpretive–analytic criticism demonstrates how "the genealogy of the modern subject" de–centers identity. Foucault claims a new type of power and control came into existence in Europe at the end of the 19th century that Foucault designates as "disciplinary power." It is concerned with the

regulation and surveillance of the human species and the governance of the individual and the body. It is sited in the new institutions of the modern world, from schools and hospitals to workshops and prisons, infiltrating and shaping what is said and done. Its purpose is to produce human beings as "docile bodies" through the power of administrative regimes and the expertise of the professional (Hall, 1994:123). The *ironic discourse* illustrates how power relationships based upon "regimes of truth" are historically reconstructed in the Hungarian–German film *Mephisto* (1981), directed by Istvan Szabo.

By employing Foucault's writing of history or "genealogy", the rise of fascism in Germany in the 1930s, as depicted in *Mephisto,* illustrates how a "disciplinary regime ...brought individuality into the field of observation through a vast meticulous documentary apparatus" (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 122). Throughout this film narrative, the historical developments are analyzed and understood from the perspective of a talented German actor who becomes seduced by a Faustian plot and the "rituals of power." The actor helps validate the Nazis (National Socialist Party) with his popular appeal ironically supporting the military coup in Germany during the early 1930s. Paradoxically, through its narrative, the spectator uncovers how such "disciplinary power" operates on the "self" and its narcissistic importance to the masks worn by this actor, hence his concern for a fixed and stable social "identity" as the leading German actor in the narrative discourse of the Third Reich.

The Parodic Discourse - Inventing the Self

In the third area of research, I examine the de–centering of identity through the philosophical writings of Jacques Derrida. In his commentaries on the "metaphysics of presence" he argues that we can only produce meanings by positioning ourselves with the rules of language, borrowing from the

linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure. The parodic discourse examines how the differences between speech and writing and the play of language speaks to us as "systems of meaning" found pre-existing in our culture. Language then is social; through it we inherit a vast range of meanings about ourselves and others already embedded in our cultural heritage. These meanings become conventionalized or stereotypical of place, character and action in such genres as situation comedies, Westerns and romances. There is an analogy, therefore, between language and identity where meaning arises in the relations of similarities and differences which words and actions have with other words and actions within a cultural coding. Derrida uses the term "logocentrism" as an attempt by language to provide identity, certainty and truth. Like genre formulas in film and literature, representation or identity of oneself in social and symbolic interaction are apparently fixed and stable. However, Derrida informs us that the use of language creates paradoxes between the word and the event because the meanings of words or "signifiers" are unstable. Meaning is constantly disrupted by difference and slides into ambiguities, subverting our attempts to create stable or fixed representations.

The *parodic discourse* explores how meanings are culturally bound and become rigid through the repetitive process of image production in the media of advertisements, video and cinema. Here I explore how "imaginary selves" come into existence as part of the presence of an absence that controls the representation of one's image or identity of being for others.

The film chosen for this research that exemplifies this parodic pattern of discourse is *Being There* (1979), directed by Hal Ashby. *Being There* is an adaptation of a novella by Jerzy Kosinski. The central character is called Chance, and personifies the anti-hero who one day must leave his garden. His education has depended primarily on watching television. Once outside, he

soon is confronted by political questions about the state of the nation. His answers are simple, but they are regarded as insightful and penetrating, to the surprise of everyone who knows Chance, the gardener. The outcome is tense as he rises to political power through his appropriation of a new identity.

The Fantastic Discourse – Mythic Images

The fourth major area of research is the science–fiction genre. This occurs in the poststructuralist arguments of Louis Althusser, Jean Baudrillard and other writers based upon their re–readings of Karl Marx and historical materialism in the wake of poststructuralist thought. These neo–Marxists argue that a Marxist emphasis on economic determinism undervalues the role ideology plays in maintaining economic systems such as capitalism. Althusser suggests that all social and economic relations are "overdetermined" within the capitalist system, and must continue to "reproduce" its relations of production. This is accomplished mainly through Ideological State Apparatuses in many public institutions and mass media. Althusser has found a poststructuralist ally in Jean Baudrillard whose book on this social/political condition is titled *The Mirror of Production.* It concerns the "ecstasy of electronic communication," and the book is close to the surreal fantasies of Bataille and Bunuel in which they allude to the postmodern moment as the *simulacrum* which conceals the truth of the "real." It is a site where mythic images and signs fashioned by the cinematographic apparatus simulate a dream-effect where representation of the "self" cannot be separated from a spectator's perception of the "other." Thus, the age of "hyper-reality" is created; where memories of the past act as a paralysis for future action. This dream–like state or phantasy, where "imagined selves" are produced to play human roles, is designated as the *fantastic discourse.* Many film narratives detail images of the "real" in the realm of

science fiction such as *Alien* (1979) and *Blade Runner* (1982), both directed by Ridley Scott. *Blade Runner* is adapted from Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*. The setting is in a futuristic Los Angeles of 2019. The main action occurs when a detective returns to duty as a "blade runner" to hunt down androids. *Stalker* (1980), directed by Andrei Tarkovsky, is a psychological thriller that takes place in the forbidden Zone – a territory off limits to anyone trapped in a police state. Two men, a writer and a professor, are drawn, inexplicably, into the Zone by the Stalker towards a Room inside the Zone. Once they are inside the confines of the Room the "uncanny" occurs. Suddenly, the imaginative powers of the "self " are energized, and the men psychically release their mental repressions. *Solaris* (1972) is another fantasy that emphasizes a similar situation where again, three men, isolated in a small space station, are confronted with the "uncanny " as a benign form of alien intelligence. Tarkovsky follows an underlying concept of his early film, *Andrey Rublyov* (1966). In both films the narrative follows the central character's return to the beginning. Both characters have learned life from inside a disciplary code of conduct. Yet when each character is thrust into the harsh realities of an outside world, they are "confronted by a reality that is as unfamiliar and unexpected as it is appalling... They are ill-equipped to handle this confrontation with life" (Tarkovsky, 1996, p. 89).

The Romantic Discourse - Lacking Identities

The fifth important area of this research is the romantic discourse founded upon psychoanalytical perspectives. This critical interpretation is based upon Freud's "discovery" of the unconscious in which he theorizes that our sexuality, identities and the structure of our desires are formed by psychic and symbolic processes of the unconscious. They function according to a

"paralogical" sequencing of non–linear thought that plays havoc with traditional rational concepts of received knowledge. In place of fixed and unified identities, multiple centers for symbolic representation are experienced by the individual. Current psychoanalytical theory, as modified by Jacques Lacan's re–formulation of Freud's discovery of the unconscious, utilizes the linguistic formulation of the arbitrary or "floating" signifier from Saussure. Lacan's stages of identity formation occur when the "self" comes into the gaze or look of the "other" thus bringing about the child's entry into our symbolic world of culture and sexual difference. But it is fraught with contradictory and unresolved feelings, leaving the "self" split as to its own personal identity.

The *romantic discourse* entertains the possibilities of "imagining selves" with others in social interaction. When film narratives construct a person's identity upon the encounter of the unconscious self with the "other" they are usually called "romantic love stories." In this category, I analyze Theo Angelopoulos' film *Landscape in the Mist* (1988), a postmodern romance that entertains the possibilities for multiple perspectives on one's identity. This film features two children, a young boy and his older sister, as the central protagonists setting forth for Germany in search of their father. They believe he lives across the border. The children are held captive by this idea which the narrative treats partly as a myth and partly as a mystery. The film is basically a "road movie" giving the director the opportunity to present various aspects of contemporary Greek life encountered by the children. Together with the other characters in the film, the director juxtaposes the reality of a harsh Greek landscape as a magical, surreal environment surrounding the dreams and desires of the children and adults alike.

Angelopoulos uses a *direct-cinema* style in filmmaking as used in Third Cinema. Sequences are shot using long continuous camera takes of the

action. At times he keeps the camera fixed in one position while directing his mise–en–scene. When the actors move, his camera pans with them whenever necessary. By closely following the action within the same space, he allows the actors to play out the scene without changing the spectator's point of–view. This cinematic technique forces the spectator to become aware of the physical landscape and how it interacts with the characters and the themes of his films.

Angelopoulos follows the film theory of Andre Bazin, the French film critic of the French New Wave. In using the long–take he practices a *cinema verite* which expresses itself through the ability of the camera to record physical reality. In other words, the purpose of this cinema is to make visible the drama inherent in nature itself. The artistic vision of the director is then derived from the selections he makes of this "outer" reality and not from the manipulation of reality through montage. Following Bazin's suggestions, Angelopoulos attempts to achieve an objective reality, one which is free to modify our preconceived notions carried by a cultural perspective. As spectators, this director attempts to make us critically conscious of such perspectives and that "we are always aware that this reality transcends our designs on it." However, there are montage effects that work metonymically to order reality in the mind of the spectator. More important is the manipulation of multiple narratives occurring within the same time/space frame of the narrative. It is these multiple narratives at play in this drama that defy easy identification and explication.

Implications for Adult Education

In the following chapters, I provide an analysis of each perspective from a cinematic viewpoint, then from the vantage point of one of the five discourses, starting with Lacan and ending with Lyotard. Each chapter closes with

obvervations and implications for adult education. Throughout the thesis I stress the "gap" or space of ambiguity that has slowly appeared between modern society and its cultural and educational forms and what has begun to be called the postmodern. What, I ask, are the characteristic features of this critical anti-foundational culture? Moreover, what is significant in those poststructural discourses that intellectually question traditional hierarchies, transgress high culture, blur boundaries of authority and challenge the dominant modernist discourses about the way the Western world has been structured since the Enlightenment? What changes are now underway to reorganize and restructure capitalism and the global economy within a new model of production called Post-Fordism? And can the cultural diversity of a global economy survive the fragmentation, de-centering, and inequalities of opportunities created by an "unconscious civilization" called "late capitalism?"

In the classes I teach at the University of British Columbia on a history of motion pictures, the use of a "critical pedagogy" has helped me explore the historical context out of which cultural values and attitudes are represented within particular narrative films produced in Europe and the United States. Perceiving such representation from the perspective of an art historian, Erwin Panofsky writes that motion pictures are grounded in folk-beliefs or myths that, "more than any other single force, mold the opinions, the taste, the language, the dress, the behavior, and even the physical appearance of more than 60 percent of the population on the earth" (Panofsky, 1959, p. 17). Film narratives or "motion pictures" thus, are understood as "symbolic structures of action" where the complex relations among narrative, power and culture are given significance and meaning. Only now are the dynamics of this cultural practice beginning to be understood within the social and political formations of adult education.

A critical study into the specific social and political values embedded within these film narratives can reveal the manifold functions these narrative films play in our culture. Jean–Francois Lyotard (1984) states in *The Postmodern Condition* how the pragmatics of narrative knowledge "allows the society in which they are told, on the one hand, to define its criteria of competence and, on the other, to evaluate according to those criteria what is performed or can be performed within it" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 20).

Other adult educators like Freire, Shor, and Sullivan approach the problem of the socio-cultural domination of modernist narrative from a critical pedagogy perspective. They advocate an opposition to such mythic narrative structures through engaging adult students in challenging such formulations through literacy and "problem-posing." However, they are paradoxically trapped by the very hegemony they hope to displace or change because they work within the system by taking a binary, either/or, position to bring about social equity and change. The dynamic interplay of the cultural story contained within a vision for a better future still takes on a *universal* essentialist cultural ethos. This "insider" approach promotes either collusion with, or resistence to those who control the forces of production and relations of power and knowledge.

Another approach is also to pose problems and ask questions, but it does not attempt the populist proposals that Freire and others suggest. This approach studies the cultural practices of a society from "outside" the culture and envisages other narrative structures and voices that would displace the dominant structure. In *The location of culture* (1994) Homi Bhabha advances the concept of a "politics of difference" by creating what he terms "a third space," a space for translation where hybridization is constructed. The formation of any narrative thus contains both the cultural story and the transformation of the story simultaneously. This strategy emphasizes alterity and "otherness" in a

desire by the "self" for the "other." It emphasizes the linguistic notion of metonymy or displacement rather than metaphor as its dominant trope.

Still, some adult educators remain primarily engaged with the writings of Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. In his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (1970) he developed the idea of problem–posing as a pedagogical tool to "re–perceive knowledge and power, and in doing so, he redefined their relationship to learning and authority, to education and to expertise" (Shor, 1992, p. 35). As an altruistic neo-Marxist, Freire employs the concept of *conscientization* which "refers to the process in which men and women, as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio–cultural reality which shapes their lives and their capacity to transform that reality" (Freire, 1972, p. 56). Freire's educational method is to "problematize" the lived reality of the people rather than impose another "reality" upon ones already held by the adult learners. The success of this transformation builds upon the adult learner's ability to pose problems concerning the natural, cultural and historical reality in which s/he is embedded and to undertake to become 'subjects' of their own destiny.

A critical examination of power relationships can reveal to students how their own cultural discourses as "lived experiences" supply the images, visions, stories and ideals against which all individuals are expected to live out their lives. This cultural conditioning by the educational system disguises relations of power and privilege through mass media, popular culture and other public institutions such as schools and churches. Critical pedagogy actively strives to reach a collective action that can create a foundation for empowerment and challenge the dominant culture's methods of structuring meanings and representations. (Pedagogy refers to those ideas and activities that facilitate and promote the acquisition of *Paidea* – culture, education and knowledge combined. See Adler (1982), *The Paidea Proposal: An Educational Manifesto.*)

In Freire's perspective, knowledge is a conceptual tool constructed by the adult learner through the process of language in order to acquire new forms of knowledge. However, Freire is well aware of the dangers of indoctrination and manipulation present in all forms of education. The danger is especially acute in the representation of various forms of political education where power and knowledge are located within the dominant ideology. Part of the "revolutionary" pedagogy Freire advocates includes an open dialogue amongst members to bring about discussion of problems created by the language used to bring about oppression in people's lives. His insistence on literacy training consists of discussion of words and phrases such as poverty, property, value of work, wages and the power of government in order to develop a learner's ability to connect *language with consciousness*. The goal of this educational process, he stresses, is that learning becomes a dynamic interactive group debate that "emphasizes the relational interdependency of agent and world, activity, meaning, cognition, learning and knowing" (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 50).

Other educators such as Henry Giroux (1994), Roger Simon (1989), and Peter McLaren (1993) argue for a "border pedagogy" attempting to "blur" the boundaries of modernist metanarratives. As disciples of the pedagogy of Paulo Freire, they are advocating a "critical pedagogy" to identify and deconstruct the subtle ways "moving image media," exhibited in films and on television, produce an "expanding power of representations, texts, and images in producing (cultural) identities and shaping relationship between self and society in an increasingly commodified world" (Giroux, 1991, p. 3).

The critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire is refocused into complementary theories on adult education by Jack Mezirow (1983), a retired professor from Columbia University's Teacher's College. In his writings on transformative perspectives, he formulates questions regarding an education for adult learners

based upon three factors: (1) an awareness of the way cultural symbols impact upon lifeworlds, (2) a consciousness involving a sense of self, and (3) a critical reflection upon the distorted premises that sustain the assumptions of the social world. Again, it is the initial confrontation of the adult learner with an awareness of social/political power structures that "raises the level of consciousness."

Once the adult learner reaches the level of consciousness of one's own situation, a decision is made to shift the vision of reality through a special environment such as a culture circle, a T-group or any group where one can mediate between old and new perspectives. Change in adult behavior occurs with the application of the new perspectives within a social context. Once new insight is gained or there is a gradual revelatory awareness of the meaning behind the new perspective, a transformative experience is said to have occurred – a leap of faith – a creative leap or a contextual shift into a new lifeworld. This reframing or heightened awareness by the adult learner leads to a personal commitment to the new perspective involving the development of new skills, understandings and behaviors. However, Peter Berger, a symbolic interactionist, claims that "both in practice and in theoretical thought, human life gains the greatest part of its richness from . . . any experience of stepping outside the taken-for-granted reality of everyday life, any openness to the mystery that surrounds us on all sides" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 37).

Commenting upon this issue, Henry Giroux states in his foreword to David Trend's book *Cultural Pedagogy* (1992):

> the new work on pedagogy instead views the practice as a form of
> political and cultural production deeply implicated in the construction
> of knowledge, subjectivities and social relations . . . Increasingly,
> the link between education and cultural work has been viewed in
> light of recent developments in feminism, cultural studies,
> deconstruction, postcolonialism, and the new historicism. (p. vii)

Giroux also recognizes the "gap" between these recent developments in cultural studies and poststructuralism. However, he is concerned that more is required by educators to link those studies with some meaningful pedagogy.

> Unfortunately, while the conception of cultural pedagogy as the systematic production of knowledge, identities, and values has moved out of its ghettoization within the established discourses of schooling, the new discourse on pedagogy has not been able to develop a theory of articulation that links the work of cultural workers in a variety of public spheres. What is the relationship then, between pedagogical practice and cultural production which links education in the broader sense to the relevancies shared by diverse cultural workers? (Giroux, cited in Trend, 1992, p viii).

When I consider the cultural approach taken by Homi Bhabha in his writings on cultural production and representation, I see questions being asked by adult learners that envisage other possibilities for adult education that may have greater emancipatory effects resulting from problem-posing that emerges from multiple narratives which are different and sometimes contradictory.

Instead of returning to a space of "cultural binaryism," entertained by critical pedagogy, Bhabha suggests that both the adult learner and adult educator entertain a "third space" where more than one cultural narrative maintains dominance or precedence thus eluding "the politics of polarity"--- here the "floating world of signifiers" from English, Chinese, or other languages produce an absence of signifieds. A space where presence and absence exist simultaneously. This space of ambivalence -- this space of lack becomes a generative space where the tension between the two political frames of reference drives a desire to fill the void. This desire emphasizes "a process of political articulation and political negotiation across a whole range of contradictory social sites" (Bhabha,1990, p. 220). Here a cultural hybridity arises in this in-between space which taps into a translation of what is actually happening in the world a "third space" in which there is a hybrid moment of political change. A new area of meaning and representation forms

from the imaginary and symbolic through a "conflictual identification" with the object of otherness, a psychoanalytical process of identifying with and through another object, with the differences of the "Other."

In the interview, *The Third Space*, conducted by Jonathan Rutherford, Bhabha is asked to explain his notions of the terms translation and hybridity. In response, Bhabha replies that translation is a form of cultural translation "both as representation and reproduction" in so far as "all cultures are in the process of hybridity." Thus we can speak of translation as "an activity of displacement within the linguistic sign, thus as a motif or trope which is:

> a way of imitating, but in a mischievous, displacing sense ---
> imitating an original in such a way that the priority of the
> original is not reinforced but by the very fact it can be simulated,
> copied, transferred, transformed, made into a simulacrum . . .
> through that displacement or liminality opens up the possibility
> of articulating *different*, even incommensurable cultural practices
> and priorities, (pp. 210-211)

Bhabha uses the notion of hybridity as the "third space" which he claims allows the position of cultural difference and translation to emerge.

> This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up
> new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are
> inadequately understood through received wisdom. (p. 211)

In response to the question - "Is the Third Space an identity as such?."
Bhabha replies:

> Not identity as such but identification (in the psychological sense).
> Identification is a process of identifying with and through another
> object, an object of otherness, at which point the agency of
> identification -- the subject -- is itself always ambivalent, because
> of the intervention of that otherness. (p. 211)

Here I think we can go back to Bhabha's distinction between what is called cultural diversity and cultural difference. In cultural diversity, he cites two problems that arise in the encouragement of cultural diversity by the host country which allows its endorsement for a multicultural education policy.

In the creation of cultural diversity, Bhabha states that "a transparent norm is constituted, a norm given by the host country or dominant culture, which says that these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid." In other words culture diversity attempts to *contain* cultural difference through a universalist and normative position that "masks ethnocentric norms, values and interests" (p. 208).

Furthermore, while multicultural educational policy is derived from the concept of cultural diversity, this notion is inadequate in dealing with the changing nature of a growing population composed of cultural differences of all kinds, from sexual orientations to cultural histories, igniting various forms of racism. This leads to an attempt to harness or control the articulation of cultural difference through interests that propagate cultural diversity.

However, the symbol-forming activity of every culture is part of a "politics of representation" that attempts "to prove an originary, holistic, organic identity" (p. 210). Here Bhabha appropriates Lacanian insight into the formation of self and other in the process of alienation. Again, the theory of language employed by Lacan sets up the difference between the Imaginary and the Symbolic that brings the subject into being with the recognition of the Other, breaking apart the narcissistic belief in a whole self. Bhabha, in recognizing how the concept of difference emerges from poststructuralist thinkers like Lacan and Foucault, understands that differences within cultures cannot be contained within a consensus. Bhabha claims that "it is actually very difficult, even impossible and counterproductive, to try and fit together different forms of culture and to pretend that they can easily coexist" (p. 209). He states his concerns about this postmodern condition when he acknowledges that modernist conception of the public sphere is changing. "So we really do need the notion of a politics which is based on unequal, uneven, multiple and

potentially antagonistic, political identities," (p. 208) rather than "try to fit together different forms of culture and to pretend that they can easily coexist" (p. 209).

From this Bhabha develops the notion of cultural translation (borrowed from Walter Benjamin) that moves into us into The Third Space, allowing for "the possibility of producing a culture which both articulates difference and lives with it (such differences) only to be established on the basis of a non-sovereigning notion of self" (p. 212). (Unlike the establishment of "the 'class' matrix where 'cultural difference' has been normalized and homogenized)" (p. 213). Instead, Bhabha uses the notion of hybridity to underscore how this space "displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom. The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning" (p. 213) which has significant implications for adult education.

Closing Remarks

In the following chapters I will argue that the five film narratives analyzed in this thesis are part of a poststructural discourse which decenters the subject in various film narratives. Each film narrative is based upon past historical politics of a dominant ideology, and like the unconscious, emerges in the relationship between modern images and the formation of cultural identities. But I urge the reader always to keep in mind that films and television today are part of our "postmodern condition" that "double codes" information and blurs the distinction between reality and the "necessary illusion" of that reality. From my perspective, the main problem for adult learners and educators is to be able to discern how the "real" is part of the

"imaginary" in the operations of power and forms of knowledge. As Layder restates Foucault, "power mechanisms operate independently of people. This is quite in line with his insistence that the subject is 'dead' and should therefore be decentered. People (subjects) are simply the conduits through which power operates whilst also being produced by that power" (Layder, 1994, p. 102).

Foucault's notion that "regimes of truth" still permeate social discourse and modern practices will be readily seen in the five film narratives chosen for this research study. Foucault has not shifted away from the formative effects of power on subjectivities and "now sees the individual as a creative agent hopefully able to overcome socially imposed limitations and to attain self-mastery" (Layder, 1994, p. 103). A sense of individual choice is implicit. Yet however hopeful Foucault is on the development of "technologies of the self," he continues his focus on his earlier emphasis on the ways the cultural domination of the human subject is maintained through unequal relationships within multiple fields of power. He does offer us a vision of a decentered society as he deconstructs the Marxist notion of the "modes of production." He also alerts us to the diversity of local narratives that have been neglected in conventional histories and theories. Writing like a Euripidean critic for the present postmodern age, Foucault is reluctant to endorse or advocate any over-arching prescriptive theory on power. Instead, following the ambiguities of life traced in the classical Greek plays of Euripides, he displaces the "tragic hero" from the modernist narrative of the 20th century and calls for the disavowal and rejection of power politics that forces the subjugation and suppression of each and every person.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PSYCHOANALYTICAL DISCOURSE - SELF/OTHER

The interfacing of postmodern culture with high-tech communication machines demonstrates the way technology is transforming our perceptions of ourselves and our "reality." Through film and video narratives our "imaginary selves" are systematically replacing the "real" with the "hyperreal" of images and representations that easily "stand in" for an "actual reality" (McCaffery, 1991, p. 7). This constant double coding of the subject by our technology challenges the basis for historical knowledge while questioning simultaneously the ideological process in the formation of the subject and the "Other." It foreshadows the constant battle in the existing state of cultural power. In one sense, the conflicts that exist within postmodern culture become a narrative discourse like any other -- a kind of myth which represents a state of being constantly changing a "self" that is decentred and unstable, but where there is a conscious search through psychoanalysis for wholeness and integration with one's personality and life style.

For adult learners, the danger resides in the confrontation between the traditions of the past and an ever-changing present because of the fact that a breakdown has occurred with traditional ways of knowing. Within the postmodern condition human beings appear to be confused by the many ambiguities that challenge the processes of "self-actualization." The norms that implied that a person was free to develop career objectives and life styles have become problematic in a postmodern society. Also the belief that one can become self-responsible as a person, accountable for one's actions, has met with anxiety, self-doubt and uncertainties -- obstacles that defer such master plans or strategies to help carry them into future "realities." For the

realities created by our technology not only decenter, discontinue and fragment our modernist ideals of freedom and choice but such technology transforms time, memory and self-identity as well.

So when we ask how the subject is produced or constructed by language within any educational or psychoanalytical discourse in a study of film narratives and adult education, we turn to questions on the politics of representation, the impact of ideology, and performative acts in narrative discourses. For all discourses contain power relations within them. They are primarily understood as the means by which language acts to constitute rational human beings in our present society.

Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis, Surrealism and Semiotics

I will start off with the role signification plays in a rebus or puzzle seeking answers through language games in constituting self and other. Also, I will pose these questions: How did "surrealism" as developed in France by Andre Breton during the 1920s and 1930s influence the psychoanalytical discourses of Jacques Lacan and his re-reading of Freud? Why did word play and the introduction of automatic writing by surrealist artists lead to a radical non-correspondence between the visual image and the object it represents? Further, how do the writings of Jacques Lacan re-interpret Freud's model of the unconscious as being structured by language? Also, how do the concepts of the "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic" challenge the formation of the human subject and its sexuality as posited by Ego psychologists, who have directly influenced theories of learning in adult education? Lastly, how do these concepts involving the relationship of women to their own identities, past and present, teach us how to find a space in which to create new identities, choose careers of interest and resist patriarchal domination, abuse and oppression?

To answer these questions I will analyze Fanny Flagg's novel and film, *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1991) from a Lacanian psychoanalytical perspective.

Thus, this chapter begins by examining how Freudian psychoanalysis was directly involved in the surrealist agenda as a systematic exploration of the relation between the unconscious, language and signification (Macey, 1988, p. 55). Jacques Lacan -- with Andre Breton, Marcel Duchamp, Rene Magritte and other French artists, writers and psychiatrists -- was nurtured in this movement which merged anthropology, psychoanalysis and literary theory into a discovery of the mythical power relationships of kinship and the role of the Other. I will begin with a brief introduction into the concepts espoused by Dada and Surrealism. Then, I will explain Lacan's re-formulation of the Freudian unconscious that suggests that human nature is governed and controlled by hidden psychic structures. With the emergence of the human subject in the "mirror phase" I will explore the importance of his concepts on the "Imaginary," the "Symbolic" and the "Real." Lacan identifies how these underlying psychic orders shape human consciousness and "split" a person's identity through a common cultural language used both to signify and interpret the inner and outer worlds of phenomena.

The Influence of Dada and Surrealism on Lacan

The French and German artists working in Paris during the1920s took a serious yet paradoxical view of the new technological world. The aftermath of the First World War brought about a dynamic upside-down drive towards an anti-machine aesthetic waged vigorously by Dadaists in both Berlin and Paris. This nihilistic movement originated in Zurich in 1916 during the final days of the war and was led by a Swiss visual artist, Hans Arp, a German theatre director, Hugo Ball, and a French/Rumanian poet, Tristan Tzara. There are

two different ways to describe Dada. One way interprets Dada as an ideological indictment by these artists against the rationalism of the bourgeoisie and their faith in an industrial society. Dadaists claimed that the industrial society was directly responsible for feelings of hysteria and shock created by this Great World War. The broader meaning of Dada and Surrealism is found in "the realm of the irrational; it depends upon inspiration rather that rules, and it values the free play of the individual imagination rather than the codification of the ideals of society or history" (Chipp,1973, p. 366).

The Dadaists displayed their anger and frustration as artist/poets in two primary ways. First, some presented a violent and nihilistic attack on reason and rationality that supported this "degenerate" society. This attack was deliberately aimed at the inversion of sense into non-sense as it fought against the propaganda that supported the madness of the war. Other Dadaists took to performance art, using improvisational methods, games, masks and buffoonery to emphasize the presence of the irrational and the absurdity of the modern situation. Picabia, Duchamp and Man Ray led this attack by taking machine-made products and displaying how these 'bachelor machines' attempted sexual intercourse with the "Other" (Penley, 1989:57). Dada is related to the theatrical notion of Farce. Farce "employs highly exaggerated characters, puts them into improbable and ludicrous situations, and makes free use of sexual mix-ups, broad verbal humor, and horseplay" (Abrams, 1993:30).

The main contention of Farce is that the artist/poet can retaliate against the logic of reason used by his or her opponent through unrelated and unexpected improvisations and unrehearsed spontaneous happenings as found in the Italian *commedia dell'arte*. French film director Jean Renoir based his now classic film narrative, *Rules of the Game* (1939), on such *commedia dell'arte*

characters to bring comic episodes between lovers as a subversive element interrupting the play of desire. As a parodic device, the play-acting ironically inverts the artificial structures imposed upon the guests in *Rules of the Game* in various situations for farcical effects. Today Woody Allen uses farce in his situational comedies like *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985) and *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986).

Hence Dada's central force was a kind of mad humour derived from a cacophony of noise machines, free word associations, nonsense lectures and chance happenings uncontrolled by the logic of reason. Dada's intent was the direct inverse of the Futurists and Constructivists whose artists extolled technology and who believed in mechanization, revolution and war, and the rational and logical means, however brutal, to better the human condition.

When Duchamp selected material for his sculptures from ordinary mass produced objects after the scandal over his painting, *Nude Descending*, at the Armory Show of 1913 in New York, he deliberately chose them with indifference to their visual appeal or aesthetic values. They were selected in total disregard for good or bad taste, they avoided the acceptance of "art," of a repetition of something already valued. His first "readymades" were dislocations and displacements that shifted the object out of its normal contexts, thereby changing its identity and function. A bicycle wheel was mounted on a stool, a urinal was tipped on its back and called Fountain, and a hat rack was suspended from the ceiling. In each instance, Duchamp intervened in the normal perception of these objects, suggesting that "new identities and relationships" can be established to break away from the traditional bourgeois perceptions. These simple displacements of signifiers become the foundation of Freud's theoretical framework for his discovery of the unconscious and shows itself in dreams, jokes and slips of the tongue. Thus Duchamp and his

"readymades" are comparable to language's metonymic ability to convey multiple meanings. The work of Duchamp culminates in the most deliberately obscure painting of the 1920s, "The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even," executed on glass. This complex metaphor of a "love machine" is full of implicit sexual overtones as Duchamp brings his Dadaesque attack into the world of desire and the Freudian concept of the unconscious. Here the artistic world of Surrealism was born giving primary significance to the marvelous, the irrational and the accidental or chance coupling of man and woman or machine with machine (Chadwick, 1980, pp. 62-64). However Duchamp and other Dadaists showed from the very beginning of the Surrealist movement a seriousness of purpose in search of a new vision for art beyond their strategy to outrage their enemies. Their critical intent was to re-examine the premises, rules, logical bases and traditions which controlled the rational concepts and aesthetic notions of artworks within a modern Western culture.

In their introductory writings on the work of Jacques Lacan, Benvenuto and Kennedy (1986) write that "Lacan's connection to the Surrealist movement form(ed) an important key to understanding his early and subsequent career. It was the politics of Surrealism that overturned the role of reason in its Dadaist escapades. Artists challenged the nature of reality, and emphasized the omnipotence of dreams, while cultivating the concept of liberation, in art and life, through the power of the unconscious" (p. 33). In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Lacan explored Freudian notions of the unconscious, its relationship to conscious action and the role played by dreams through his association with Surrealist artists.

> From their reading of Freud, the surrealists realized that automatism, dream and myth all shared common characteristics: condensation, a displacement of the sense of time and space, and the importance of figurative language, a vast storehouse of images and memories where biological forces are transformed into symbolic forces structured and refracted by language. Freud had viewed dreams as the residues of daily

activity; myth as the collective heritage of centuries ... (and) shared a symbolism that derived from their common origin in childhood, whether individual or cultural. (Sarup, 1992, p. 20 from Freud's *Totem and Taboo)*

As Sarup (1993) states: "by shifting the biological-anatomical functioning of the body to a linguistic/symbolic one, Lacan displayed how culture constructed meaning for those anatomical parts of the subject" (p. 8). This re-formulation of Freud follows the displacement that Lacan recognized within the structure of language. It also reveals the poetical and subversive tendencies of the unconscious in dreams and in word-play of jokes, puns, and slips of the tongue most Dadaist and Surrealists employed in their artworks.

In discussing the term Surrealism, I am referring to a radical 1920s avant-garde movement developed in artworks, literature and film that emphasized the expression of "dream-like images" and "free-association" of visionary subjects that the artist's imagination projected as psychic states of mind. This development of thought processes, as the real function of the mind, was centered around a psychologist, Andre Breton, who also was a Marxist writer and editor of a Parisian review called *Literature* (1919-1924).

Breton formulated the nature of Surrealism in his First Manifesto of 1924 as follows:

> Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, verbally, in writing, or by other means, the real process of thought. Thought's dictation, in the absence of all control exercised by reason and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupation. (cited in Chipp, 1973, p. 412)

The central principle operating in Surrealism when applied to Lacanian psychoanalysis was its recourse to "chance occurrences" created through the use of "pure psychic automatism." (Perhaps it is not a coincidence that we now entertain the phrase "repetition automatism" in the same process.) In paintings the images more often were of a personal nature but carried certain psychological constants. Whatever the abstract nature of a "surreal" image or representation of an object within a group of signifiers, it always contained

irrational juxtapositions to other images that demonstrated a magical, irrational, hallucinatory dream-like quality in the "free association" of forms hence the use of the idea of "floating" signifiers. Surrealist approaches to painting and filmmaking were designed to capture how a visual language surfaced from the unconscious to allow the subject a visual ability to express and communicate through signifiers. As a consequence of such displacements of images along a signifying chain, the painting or film would appear to be ambiguous in establishing the logic or plausibility of a place and action.

One of the generative Surrealist artists of the day was Rene Magritte, whose poetry-in-paintings merge conventional objects realistically rendered with words to distinguish the image of the object from the object itself just as poetry does with the word, thus "splitting" the subject. Magritte also juxtaposes images of objects with logically unrelated words in *The Key of Dreams*, calling to mind a Duchampian technique of re-naming thus re-identifing the object as in his "readymades" (Rubin, 1968, p. 94). Also, Magritte achieves in his other early paintings the "dream image" illusionism of de Chirico where the juxtaposition of fragments of objects "that occupy the same pictorial space" but, nevertheless, "subvert the physical laws of time, space and gravity." Thus, "his paintings reverse our own expectations and experiences while enabling us simultaneously to creatively apprehend an entirely different world from the one we know" (Stoltzfus, 1991, p. 249).

In effect, we become aware that the unconventional world of dreams follows the spirit of Freud's earlier works on psychoanalysis but also parallels two creative styles in early cinema, that of realism, in the documentary work of Louis Lumiere, and the other in the magic fantasies of Georges Melies such as his *Trip to the Moon* (1902). A logic for film narratives emerged from these two tendencies, the historical and the imaginary, through the development of

innovative uses of montage editing and *mise-en-scene* camera work that allow the manipulation of space/time through flashbacks and dream sequences.

Jacques Lacan's Re-reading of the Freudian Unconscious

Another major thread of this chapter is the extent to which the work by Ferdinand de Saussure on language influenced the teachings of Lacan on his psychoanalytical practice through his re-reading of Freud's discovery of the unconscious. Lacan bases his re-interpretation of the unconscious through the Saussurean model of semiology, which was written in 1916 long after Freud wrote *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900. From the Lacanian perspective, the most formative feature behind human beings in the acquisition of their social and cultural constructs through the work of language (*langue*) and speech (*parole*) and to uncovering the workings of the unconscious through psychoanalysis.

Lacan followed the notions of Saussure that language is a system of signs made up of two components – a sound–image or *signifier* with a concept or *signified.* Saussure states that the bond between the two components making up a linguistic sign is <u>arbitrary</u>. He further states that any object whatsoever can become a sign, naturally or artificially, provided it is employed to communicate a message. Further, Saussure understood "in language there are only differences *without positive terms*" (p. 653). But he adds that "although both the signified and the signifier are purely differential and negative when considered separately, their combination is a positive fact." Thus, language is a system of relationships among comparable elements. Most important is the place that the signifying unit occupies in the linguistic system that determines its value. Moreover, Saussure stresses the point that "*Language is a form and not a substance*" (Saussure, 1965, p. 654).

Ferdinand de Saussure called his new linguistic theory of signs "semiology." Semiology means a science (*logos*) of signs (*semeia*). Saussure argued in his book, *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), that language should be analyzed in terms of its internal structures, as a formal system within itself, and not in terms of its content or what it refers to. This Saussurean model thus identifies the formal laws that structured speech or spoken language. His basic method, now called "structuralism," was comprised of binary pairs of opposites that informed structural analysis -- between *langue* and *parole*, signifier and signified, system and realization, paradigmatic and syntagmatic, synchrony and diachrony. The simplicity of this structural method was appropriated by other structuralist thinkers in different forms of discourse; first by Claude Levi–Strauss in his discourses on primitive myths, then by Jacques Lacan in his 1953 paper entitled "The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis," better known internationally as the Rome Discourse (Lacan, 1977, pp. 30-113).

Jacques Lacan was born in Paris in 1901 and died in 1981. He was the eldest son of a prosperous bourgeois family and he was raised as a Catholic in a well-known Jesuit school. He studied medicine then psychiatry before he became involved in Freudian psychoanalysis. His clinical studies in several psychiatric hospitals in Paris during the late 1920s brought him into psychoanalysis where his "theory of the speaking subject" advanced Freudian study of the unconscious as a linguistic science closely allied both with the semiology of Saussure and Levi-Strauss' structural anthropology.

Lacan's major work while he was associated with the Surrealists in Paris during the 1930s centered on his doctoral thesis: "Paranoid psychosis and its relation to the personality" (1932) which included a case study of a female psychotic whom he called Aimee. In his thesis, Lacan included Aimee's poems

and parts of her novels, whose literary quality became a *cause celebre* for the Surrealists when Lacan entered her work in the *Minotaure* (Sarup, 1992, p. 27).

After the delivery of his important paper in Rome in 1953, Lacan continued his attacks on the Ego Psychoanalysts in America, namely, Hartmann, Kris, Lowenstein and other practitioners. Lacan's radical theory of psychoanalysis was now seen as a linguistic science of the "speaking subject," and brought about tensions within the International Psychoanalytic Association. In 1963, Lacan was expelled because of his unorthodox practices and teaching methods, not to mention the growing attraction of his own weekly seminars started in 1953, based mainly upon his techniques developed from his re-readings of Freud. After his expulsion Lacan responded by opening his own school, *L'ecole Freudienne,* in which he continued to give his own seminars, but now it was open to an intellectual clientele of anthropologists, philosophers, literary critics and others besides psychiatrists. In 1966, his first book, containing transcripts of his lectures was published. It was called *Ecrits.*

However, it was Salvador Dali who showed the young Lacan his own "paranoic-critical method" to deliberately induce a hallucinatary state where images would arise for him which he later transferred into his own paintings. These visual hallucinations were rendered "with the clarity and precision of Dutch 17th century paintings to heighten the reality of the images" (Chadwick, 1980, p. 9).

Yet these images were without transition. They formed a montage, a surrealist *collage* of heterogeneous forms whose biomorphisms displayed double or multiple images within the dream landscape. Dali exploited the device of the "double image" based upon the notion of an imaginary image "hidden" within another image. But at a moment of perception, this image will be completely displaced by the other hidden image. It is through this method

that Dali believed a paranoid state could be induced in the spectator.

Lacan's early lectures make direct reference to Dali and his brand of illusionistic surrealism with belief that "If psycho-analysis is to be constituted as the science of the unconscious, one must set out from the notion that the unconscious is structured like a language" (Lacan, 1978. p. 203). This analogy allows Lacan to follow the hidden logic between the linguistic relation of the signifier to the signified (*langue/parole*) with a complementary psychological relationship of the unconscious to the conscious in the play of "arbitrary" signifiers and the formation of the ego or "self."

The insights of Lacan's writings and lectures on the role of the arbitrary sign, also known as a "floating signifier," can be applied to film narratives to examine the ways a cinematic rendering of "mythic" narratives can transform space/time co-ordinates into a viewer's space for the imagination "to spread out in all directions (and) spatialize the single self into many selves," thereby . . . overcoming *time* and the flux of history into a world of mystical presents" (Kearney, 1986, p. 152). Lacan's work testifies to the power of the "floating signifier" to act as a *sign* that rises above a determined meaning to point to a place where "ambiguity displaces authenticity in all things," as Benjamin noted (p. 152). Lacan takes Freud's generative analyses on the interpretation of dreams and argues that images in these dream fantasies should not be reduced to some fixed or identifiable *signified* through psychoanalysis.

Thus, Lacan's association with Dali and the Surrealist movement found his psychiatric writings on paranoia published in the first issue of the radical journal *Minotaure*, a deluxe art magazine. Picasso, whose artwork of the 1930s shared a number of features with the Surrealists, was invited by Breton to design the cover of this first issue,

> and produces a brilliant collage of a minotaur rampant on a field of paper doilies, tin foil, ribbon, and corrugated cardboard. (Picasso's) fascination with this ancient hybrid monster accorded with the growing

interest in French intellectual circles in the psychoanalytical interpretations of myth. The labyrinth --- the recesses of the mind --- contains at its center the Minotaur, symbol of irrational impulses. Theseus, slayer of the beast, thus symbolizes the conscious mind threading its way into its unknown regions and emerging again by virtue of intelligences, that is, self-knowledge --- a paradigmatic schema for the Surrealist drama, as indeed, for the process of psychoanalysis. (Rubin, 1968, p. 127)

The Formation of the I - The Mirror Phase

This relation with the "Other" is what Lacan calls "language; it is symbolic rather than imaginary." For Lacan the formation of the "self" occurs in the earliest period of child development, which he calls the "mirror phase." Between the ages of six and eighteen months, the child experiences its body as "fragmented," that is, in terms of biological insufficiency and lack of cohesion. In order to overcome this lack of unity, the child appropriates the mirror image as his own which replaces the incomplete Self with the Ideal I, the unified self or "imago." The mirror phase is a turning point that produces a totalizing image that has appeared from outside the body organizing and orienting the "self" (Gallop, 1985:79). This "imago" is therefore an imaginary projection in response to a real absence or "lack" that gives the child a sense of selfhood.

An identification with this ideal "I" is the basis for narcissism, an autoerotic state of jubilation, whereby the child, perceiving its body in a reflected image outside itself produces what Lacan calls the unconscious world of the "imaginary" (Sarup, 1992, p. 36). However, this primary identification presents a significant problem for the child since the image is not the child itself but just an image -- thus a source of the illusions and deceits of the "Self." Therefore, Lacan stresses that the primary object of psychoanalysis is therefore to remind us that the "imago" of Self presupposes a dialectic of self-differentiation. The Self is, in reality, always different from itself in so far as it

is beholden to the recognition of the Other. The conscious Self is, in reality, split and divided, for it is constructed out of unconscious relations to the Other which it cleverly conceals from itself.

The I is (an)Other, states Lacan. This de-centering of the self allows the self to return to the repressed language of the unconscious. It permits the subject to rediscover that "absence" at the heart of (it)self is the desire for this Other. This is what Lacan means when he states that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other. It is a discourse which dispossesses us of our imaging sense of self-completeness initiated in the Mirror phase by the self-image.

By restating Freud's theories of the unconscious as analogous to the structure of language, Lacan identifies unconscious processes with the unstable or "floating" signifier. Dreams hide the unconscious signifiers in symbolic images that need to be deciphered. As described by Freud, these dream images undergo two basic processes; either they combine into several images, through condensation, or meaning shifts from one image to another, through displacement. Lacan, himself, speaks about "taking a tour with Freud" in the dreamwork in order "to show that 'distortion' or 'transposition' is the general precondition for the functioning of the dream and . . . following Saussure, as the sliding of the signified under the signifier" (Lacan, 1977, p. 160).

Lacan states in his essay "Agency of the letter in the unconscious," that there are two fundamental linguistic mechanisms at work in the dream:

> Verdichtung, or "condensation," is the structure of the superimposition of the signifiers, which metaphor takes as its field, and whose name, condensing itself in the word Dichtung, shows how the mechanism is connatural with poetry to the point that it envelops the traditional function proper to poetry.

> In the case of Verschiebung, or "displacement," the German term is closer to the idea of that veering off of signification that we see in metonymy, and which from its first appearance in Freud is represented as the most appropriate means used by the unconscious to foil censorship. (Lacan, 1977, p. 160)

In his correlation of the two linguistic terms with the semiological studies of Roman Jakobson, Lacan makes the connection of metaphor and metonymy with the structure of the dream-materials which require decoding through language in order to demystify and make intelligible the texts of dreams. Lacan states that a symptom is a metaphor while desire is a metonymy. Metonymy refers to the syntagmatic relation between one unconscious signifier and another. It brings different signifiers together in a relation of horizontal contiguity. Thus just as a sail is a metonymic sign for the ship, so too desire establishes a metonymic relation between one signifier and another which does not depend on likeness or any other semantic correspondence. There is no fixed or natural relationship between it and any given object. Desire can move freely among a range of possible signifiers. Metaphor, in contrast, operates according to the paradigmatic laws of association by similarity. It functions in terms of a vertical relation between signifiers whereby one signifier is selected from a range of similar signifiers. Displacement works metonymically while condensation works metaphorically.

In re-stating and re-interpreting the Freudian construction of the mythic Oedipus complex, Lacan's writings and lectures explore the relationship between the unconscious and human society. In following Freud, Lacan asserts that the pre-Oedipal or mirror phase of development ends with the acquisition of language when the child learns to speak the language of his/her own culture. This linguistic capability moves the child into the realm of the Symbolic and breaks the oneness with the mother. Lacan sees this moment of the "speaking self" as the introduction of the Self into society. Here the sense of Self is formed by the perception and language of others. The child thus is *spoken* through the language and culture he/she inherits from the mother. Someone else gives us our name or identity, and we learn through language

and the responses of others who we are.

At this Symbolic stage, the relationship between the child and society introduces the Freud's Oedipus complex where the primary conflict arises between satisfying personal desires and meeting societal demands. It takes on mythic significance in adult life as the drama between Dionysus and Apollo. In psychological terms it is recognized as symptoms of repression and oppression. Thus the Symbolic stage represents the beginnings of conscience, morality, law and all forms of authority. Lacan replaces the intervention of the father with the Name of the Father concept as the Law and the biological penis with the symbolic concept of the Phallus. Behind the notion of desire, repression and the formation of sexual identity, Lacan's method, as analyst, was to pay attention to the various slips of the tongue, omissions and equivocations that a speaker says instead of listening to what is said by the speaker. In listening to the structure of the speech act instead of the content, "free association" is thus promoted between one signifier and another. This juxtaposition disrupts the linear continuity of the conscious narrative (the "language of culture") to allow the reader or analyst to detect the hidden structures of the unconscious ("the language of desire") (Kearney, 1986, p. 277).

In Western countries, such as France, England and the United States, the dominant Freudian interpretation was that the unconscious was related to the libido and the biological functioning of human beings. Lacan's re-reading and re-interpretation of Freud developed from a return to the spirit of Freud's earlier works, namely three books which dealt with language and the unconscious which in turn stimulated Andre Breton and the Surrealists. They are *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *The Psychopathology of Everyday* (1901) and *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* (1902).

Thus Lacan's psychoanalytical theory is based upon the simultaneous

formation of the unconscious with that of self or consciousness through the symbolic order of language. He drew an analogy between the linguistic relation of langue/parole and the psychological relation of the unconscious with the conscious. In this manner he extended the notion of structuralism by adapting the Saussurean semiotic model to his version of psychoanalysis. In doing so, he makes us realize that the unconscious language of the Id (comparable to *langue)* takes priority over the conscious voice of the Ego since "it is structured like a language." That is his famous maxim (Kearney, 1986, p. 272). By using Saussure's model of structural linguistics as an analogy to Freudian insights into the unconscious, Lacan shows us that the unconscious possesses its own rationale, its own hidden logic, which structures the desires and fantasies of each person.

Once Lacan reached this conclusion, he stressed the role of language as it interfaced with the role of the unconscious. As the child develops the capacity for language, there is a qualitative change in his or her psychical structure as the person moves from the 'imaginary' into the 'symbolic' and becomes a subject. Thus, we are speaking subjects who never completely express what we want, since desire is in perpetual movement and can thus never find fulfillment. Lacan claimed in his public lectures, now transcribed as writings in *Ecrits* (1977), that the Freudian discovery is demonstrated by the logic of the unconscious through a picture puzzle called a rebus, which structures desires or wish-fulfillments into a language of dream images. This comes directly from Freud's writings of 1900 on the "Interpretation of Dreams."

The Freudian insight into the formation and structure of dreams as a pictorial rebus, an enigmatic representation of words by images suggesting syllables, brings into play Lacan's appreciation of puns, epigrams and conundrums which reveal unconscious associations, many of which we remain

consciously unaware. This linguistic play of slips of the tongue is in direct opposition to the traditional "rationalistic" logic of normal consciousness.

Lacan's Argument with Ego Psychologists

Lacan's re-interpretation of the Freudian unconscious in psychoanalysis becomes a combative campaign on his part against the prevalent behaviorist thinking found in American and English ego psychology. His theory thus has important implications for adult educators like Malcolm Knowles and Jack Mezirow who have appropriated concepts for self-directed adult learning from them and reduced Freudian discoveries of the unconscious into a narrow psychoanalysis of the Ego. Lacan is fundamentally antagonistic to this tradition of "soul management" by psychologists who strive to justify their practice of strengthening the individual's ego "to produce good citizens capable of performing their social and economic functions without confusion or contradiction" (Kearney, 1986, p. 272). Lacan's argues that his model of structural psychology gives priority to the unconscious forces of the Id over the conscious discourse of the individual Ego. Lacan thus reverses the orthodox view of the ego-psychologists such as Ernst Kris and Heinz Hartmann. He singled out for attack Heinz Hartman's book, *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation* (1952), which had enormous influence on the psychoanalytical movement in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. Hartmann encouraged the view that the basic problems and anxieties of the individual resulted from an inability to adapt to the complex conditions of his or her social surroundings. Yet for Lacan, even in spite of a hostile and negative social environment, psychoanalysis is not just a matter of behavioral adaptation to the alienation of self in an imaginary "reality" that a person calls into question. It becomes a symbolic relation between the person and his/her

projected fears or desires. The stress on adaptation to group norms by these ego-psychologists follows the dominant ideological views of sociologists like Talcott Parsons and the functionalism of system theories.

But Lacan was forceful in stressing that psychoanalysis should not be used for the purposes of social adjustment. It is not a technique that regulates the human subject and its adaptation to a social reality. Moreover, the humanistic tendency in psychology is at odds with the original insights of Freud. The task of psychoanalysis, according to Lacan, is to dismantle the reified "imago" of the ego, to free the subject from the imaginary fixation with itself in order that it may acknowledge its more fundamental relation of the Self to the Other.

These attacks on ego-psychologists are part of his first important paper delivered to the International Psychoanalytical Congress in Rome in 1953, "Function of speech and language in psycho-analysis," known as the Rome report. Lacan re-iterates what Freud teaches regarding the unconscious as structured as the discourse of the Other. Lacan included in his paper references to the purpose of desire to the Other. He states that:

> In short, nowhere does it appear more clearly that man's desire finds its meaning in the desire of the other, not so much because the other holds the key to the object desired, as because the first object of desire is to be recognized by the other. (Lacan, 1977, p. 58).

In the ideology of humanism, the human being is at the centre of his/her own history, and by extension into existentialism, exercising choice as a subject who has rational control over his/her own actions. In relation to psychoanalysis, ego psychologists see the patient (not analysand) "as someone who has lost control of a sense of a real or true self " (Mitchell, 1982. p. 4), and the analyst attempts to help the patient regain control and a sense of well being, able to adapt to the demands of the social environment.

This concept is translated for adult learners, who have sought out adult education to overcome some "disabling conflict," into "a transformational perspective" by Jack Mezirow (1995. p. 39). He builds a theory of communicative acts and psychotherapy in attempts to rationalize a learning theory using "humanistic" ego-centered paradigms into a practice for adult education. Mezirow states that "learning becomes possible because we interpret the meaning of each new sensory experience by imaginatively projecting images and value-laden symbolic models upon our sensory experience and, by metaphorical inference, construe meaning" (p. 39). Mezirow adds that "creating meaning refers to the process of construal by which we attribute coherence and significance to our experience in light of what we know" (p. 40). Nowhere does Mezirow adopt a position in relation to language or subjectivity, nor understand the political implications of assisting adult learners to act as "tranquilized" members in a modern society. For it appears to Mezirow that language is itself transparent, and "meaning perspectives" for any adult learner can be rationally transformed. The human subject in question is assumed to exist as an "individual" under the humanistic sway of rationalism.

Lacan's writings challenge this notion of the human subject in the mirror phase with the formation of the "I" in relationship to the "Other." "The identity that seems to be that of the subject is in fact a mirage arising when the subject forms an image of itself by identifying with others' perceptions of it" (Mitchell, 1982:5). Further, this human subject "is born into language and it is within the terms of language that the human subject is constructed" (p. 5). Most important to Lacan's argument is his concern that the meaning of any "linguistic unit" or signifier can only be established by reference to another signifier (Sarup, 1992, p. 83). Therefore, Lacan considers Mezirow and other ego psychologists working as adult educators more as ideologues than theorists.

They mistakenly conceive language only as an instrument for communication by rational human beings in control of what they mean by what they say. The Lacanian view of language differs from this approach because language has a figurative power as well as a literal sense. Thus there arises an undecidability in language which finds the "speaking subject" unable to decipher or master a language which constructs uncertainties and ambiguities to the person's own subjectivity.

The Psychoanalytical Discourse and Women in Film.

The first area of research directly relates to the representation of women in narrative films using Lacanian re-readings of Freud in relationship to language and other semiotic approaches (Cook and Johnson, 1985:246–7). There is a divergence of opinion in feminist critical studies. On the one hand, a mainly Anglo–American perspective attempts to recover and re-evaluate literary works of women as subjects of a minority culture. Within this critical perspective, the role of women and women's desires are depicted in literary works and contemporary Hollywood films. The major goal of this feminist criticism is to seek out the ruptures within the film narrative where the "repressed" female desire ruptures to challenge the patriarchal culture of a society that defines the "woman" by the roles she plays. On the other hand, a more aggressive French perspective, focused on language and textual codes, attempts to analyze and de–center the sociological subject of woman (Fowler, 1973, p. 92).

Basing her critiques upon Lacanian psychoanalysis and Derridean deconstruction, Julia Kristeva provides critiques of the contemporary patriarchal culture to expose the means through which linguistic strategies form and produce the feminine as a gendered subject. One aspect of her

feminist readings uncovers how cultural politics process the identity and subjectivity of men/women, sons/daughters, and mothers/fathers. The importance of an independent, imagined "self" is registered as a political challenge in these life histories. Most postmodern film narratives of the 1970s and after thus becomes a re-telling of Self and Other as they seek to subvert patriarchal authority. Instead of being reduced to silent acceptance of societal roles, the women depicted in these film narratives pursue a place for the "feminine imaginary." Their lived experiences become part of a *psychoanalytical discourse* within the "politics of representation" in Western society.

Throughout the history of cinema, a number of film narratives depict the tragic political struggles of women caught within such oppressive patriarchal systems. The important social and political challenge to this ideological system rests upon the questions of gender identification and sexual difference. As E. Ann Kaplan notes, there are two differing film narratives based upon the establishment of different subject positions for the spectator. The first type is called the maternal melodrama which is derived from the sentimental stage melodramas of the late 19th century that features a mother-son relationship and functions as a "*male Oedipal drama.*" This drama gains its impact for both male and female spectators due to the heroic sacrifices of the mother in regard to the male child (usually born out of wedlock) regaining his social status within the patriarchy. The other type is the "women's film" that focuses upon a mother-daughter relationship and functions as a resistance to the Oedipal positioning by the patriarchal culture (Kaplan, 1987. pp. 124-126).

As an example of a *psychological discourse*, I have chosen *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1991), directed by Jon Avnet – based upon the novel *Fried Green Tomatoes and the Whistle Stop Cafe* written by Fanny Flagg. I will analyze how this film narrative conflates both film constructs while dealing with the

fundamental theme of alienation represented in different perspectives on identity of "self" with "other," strategically leading the drama into what may be considered erroneously as an "identity" crisis. Themes of exile and return are common in such films. These narratives constantly reveal how separation and return are represented in different ways repeating the childhood experiences of the "fort/da" game that appears during the weaning or mirror phase of a child.

Usually separation occurs in time/space relationship similar to the absence of the specular image from the actual body. This absence or gap becomes a form of alienation in which one's memory helps us recover the past in the present, and reminds us of the person one seemed to be compared to what one is today. Such memories of the past remind us of our family and friends and other loved ones, and of the loss of our childhood through the rites of passage to adulthood. In the strategies of storytelling, the past is evoked by our memories through the recollection of these emotional experiences.

Fried Green Tomatoes actually is structured as a dual narrative: there is the contemporary story told by Mrs. Threadgoode, known as Ninny, in the present day, and her narrative of the past that reveals the maternal melodrama between a mother and son as she recounts the lives of Ruth/Idgie and Buddy. I will compare this melodrama to the contemporary story of Evelyn and Ninny which follows the genre of a "woman's film," and of female bonding, which is more specifically addressed to the female spectator. Although the stories are separated by more than fifty years, both film narratives explore the "melancholic imaginary" (Kristeva) as the women in each narrative attempt to break the bonds of patriarchy and societal oppression.

Fried Green Tomatoes takes a somewhat satirical and ludic view of the contemporary situation in regard to the Ninny-Evelyn scenario, but it is built upon the foundational story of Ruth/Idgie that goes to great lengths to critique

the repressive powers of the patriarchy upon these two women. The early story of Ruth and Idgie is a flashback to the South during the Great Depression. Historically, the Deep South is still depicted as racist with scenes of the Ku Klux Klan as white suprematists inflicting punishment to black people. Also it is depicted as extremely sexist with incidents of patriarchal authority found in the institutions of the court and church through judges and priests.

The earlier story of Ruth and Idgie, is part of several flashbacks related to us by Ninny. These women are unique for the time since they succeed in setting up a restaurant as equal partners. Also, in raising a child together, they hold a subversive position in the town of Whistle Stop with regard to mothers working outside the home after a separation from the husband/father. Acts of violence against the women are depicted graphically only to clearly demonstrate the social-political spheres that are under attack. Yet subversion to the dominant male Oedipal drama tends to make such films as *Fried Green Tomatoes* more disturbing since it presents a maternal melodrama inside a woman's film. By such a strategy it "situates itself more firmly in the terrain of unconscious Oedipal needs, fears and desires" (Kaplan, 1988, p. 126). However the contemporary narrative attempts to "problematize the public/male, domestic/female split" (p. 126) as Evelyn shows "a sensitivity to the female sphere that can only come from inside knowledge and identification" (p. 127). What also is significant is that most women's films are directed by men, although the novel, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, is written by a woman, Fanny Flagg.

Interpretation of *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1991)

Fried Green Tomatoes presents an Anglo–American perspective on the representation of women in the past and present. The film narrative brings the past into the present to find a space for the "feminine imaginary" to surface

through the story of Idgie and Ruth. The psychoanalytical notions of Lacan and Kristeva bring the semiotic and symbolic orders into perspective to explicate how a woman's desire for role playing as a man helps her unite with the "other" female through meaningful strategies on identity formation.

In many respects, *Fried Green Tomatoes* depicts two similar pairs of female bonding, first with Ruth and Idgie and second with Ninny and Evelyn. But although Idgie is a rebel against the roles dictated by society as to what is considered her role, she acts out her rebellion by dressing like a man and frequenting the Pickle Club to play cards and beat the "boys." We never see her in any sexual situations. Behind her "male" facade she is devoted to Ruth, and acts as her protector. On the other hand, Idgie is in touch with nature, and does everything in her power to overcome the alienation she feels after Buddy's death. To this end, she acts like Buddy would in many different roles; she delivers food to hobo camps as Railroad Bill. She also forms a strong bond with Ruth and together they become partners to run the Whistle Stop Cafe and raise Buddy Jr. The film develops her character as a rebel against male domination, always showing the viewer how she can outsmart the authority and power of men in her community.

As a film narrative, *Fried Green Tomatoes* is a "woman's film" about female bonding for a common cause. It is about experiences of the past united with the present to help regenerate a contemporary woman (Evelyn) who finds herself approaching middle age without the compensating love and recognition she desires. In her attempts to overcome her frustrations and lack of purpose in her life, she becomes an addictive eater, fearing she has lost her sex appeal. Her husband is a "couch potato" consuming sporting events on television and eating carefully prepared meals cooked by Evelyn, who hopes such attention to her husband's needs will result in fulfillment of her sexual fantasies.

This contemporary dysfunctional middle-aged family is commonly found reporting their woes in typical fashion to Ann Landers and other so-called news analysts who relay such gossip through the mass media. *Fried Green Tomatoes* does parody this kind of social gossip in the book and film, yet behind this pastiche of sexual moralism is a hidden psychoanalysis of the bonding of women that occurs in a hospital for the aged. Ninny, as confidante, listens to Evelyn's frustrations of middle age and skillfully acts as a story-teller to help Evelyn regard herself as an attractive woman in her own right. From these highly imaginary story-telling sessions Ninny brings to Evelyn's attention the life history of Ruth/Idgie. As life-time partners they challenged patriarchal laws to take control over their own lives in service to themselves, their own family and the community. Through their example, Evelyn can re-imagine her own self, and finds a way to lead her life in new directions. Thus Ninny's story follows the adage that "one must imagine the future in order to create it." *Fried Green Tomatoes* depicts for the viewer how she accomplished this changeover.

Thus, this "double narrative," a story of the past within a story of the present, well illustrates its feminist position, the successful bonding of two women: Ruth, the maternal female with Idgie, her male persona. Also the name of ID/gie may signify or be interpreted as the unconscious part of Ruth's psyche which is easier to demonstrate through cinematic representation by the physical presence of the Other.

In telling the story of Ruth/Idgie, Ninny enjoys herself in recounting how these two young women overcame the intervention of a dominant male figure and the adversity of a wife-beater and kidnapper. Yet, Ninny also acts as an analyst listening to Evelyn's plight, her lack and her desire, then as an adviser who suggest indirectly how she, too, could run a business like Ruth and Idgie's Whistle Stop Cafe, thus nurturing an extended family of women like

herself. With Ninny's encouragement and support, Evelyn gains a better understanding of who she is and how she can become a surrogate mother to all women who, like herself, desire love and recognition through pursuing sexual fulfillment in a world that is becoming more and more dehumanized by technology. The haunting spectre of the train engine that is heard but unseen thus becomes the oppressive signifier in the imaginary town of Whistle Stop.

Visually the illusion of reality of the past and present in the film *Fried Green Tomatoes* is represented in contrasting ways. The past is treated in muted colors of day and night, rich and romantic for the sunny wedding and tragic accident at the Threadgoodes' house at the beginning of the first flashback. All the characters are dressed in period costumes and hairdos to accent the nostalgic return to this past. This is consciously compared to the harsh, plastic look of the contemporary world, full of pastel colors, especially seen in the wardrobe worn by Evelyn, who wears a different outfit each week when she visits Ninny at the hospital. Ninny is not a patient but is there to attend to a dying Sipsy, her own surrogate mother. The Mary Kay Cadillac is pink but at the picture's end Evelyn wears a more sophisticated wardrobe.

The director tells the stories in an episodic fashion, making the most of each scene to help connect the narrative to the central characters. It is fragmented to such a degree that we find the repeated trips to the hospital setting up Brechtian V–effects, where, as viewers, we become self-conscious of the situation. The untimely death of Ruth ends the relationship between her and Idgie; yet it is poignantly given an elegaic feeling by Idgie in the rending of the legend about the ducks and the frozen lake. Some may interpret this legend as Ruth's spirit being carried away to a safe haven by Angels. In a similar fashion, the spirit of Idgie is kept alive for Evelyn after the death of Sipsy. Evelyn, upon realizing Ninny's homeless situation, offers her a place to

live, bringing about the "happy ending" and closure to this film. Evelyn also finds out who killed Frank Bennett, what happened to Idgie and Big George, and why she is fascinated by stories about the Whistle Stop Cafe. In fact, the film version is fashioned more as a melodrama than as a persuasive feminist critique on the destructive powers of patriarchy. Yet, the film does emphasize women's perspectives and the importance of female bonding.

However, the feminist message is ambiguous in *Fried Green Tomatoes*, mainly because the director concentrates on making the film a murder mystery downplaying the parodic nature of the Ruth/Idgie relationship. Thus, the film has sequences designed to create tension out of a given situation rather than develop any theme with character motivation. While the screenplay gives full attention to the modern story and the transformation of Evelyn, the development of the adult relationship between Ruth and Idgie is limited. Viewers do sense the "melancholic" state of affairs portrayed by a middle aged married woman going through menopause trying to save her marriage.

The feminist critique is left to Ninny, who, as narrator, holds a mirror up to Evelyn to unmask both her weaknesses and strengths. Since two veteran actresses were cast in the lead roles of Ninny and Evelyn, the parallel story of Idgie and Ruth is given a lesser treatment. Most of the supporting characters in this film narrative do no more than appear in the cafe. The relationship that did develop between Ruth and Idgie is never satisfyingly motivated: it became obvious that the erotic summer adventure between the two women was more than this adaptation wanted to depict. Thus the story, and the spirit of Idgie as a free and unfettered woman, never to be dominated or controlled by a man or the Law, hardly emerges in the film as it does in the novel. Moreover, as viewers we are charmed and moved by the performances of the young actresses playing Ruth and Idgie. Yet, however good the casting, the fact remains that

Fried Green Tomatoes – the film narrative – does not translate into the powerful feminist critique of a male–dominated society.

There are two important lessons that are brought out in this film. The first deals with the past as a story about two women (perhaps two sides of one woman) who got away with manslaughter and lived within the community hiding their secret amongst their own extended family, both black and white. They became an integral part of a community that fought the patriarchal system and won. And for their efforts they won respect and love from the community.

Second, in the present, Evelyn is caught in a narcissistic world of her own making as she struggles to find meaning in her dysfunctional marriage. Her problems are considered normal by Ninny, the story-teller, as a phase of middle age. Evelyn sees that with intelligence and effort, she too can live the life she wants by taking advantage of her natural abilities to become a successful business person. She puts on a cosmetic mask of beauty and follows the Mary Kay route to personal achievement with other women. While it is again a narcissistic turn of events, she realizes that there is a powerful aggressivity that helps her pursue her goals. Most important for her is that she has found love and respect in the eyes of another -- Ninny -- and for that she has felt more of a whole person.

Yet what is absent from the film are scenes of Evelyn as an adult educator. She has the necessary props, costumes and role already down pat, but what kind of teacher or facilitator will she be? It is implied that Evelyn will be more than considerate to the plight of other women of her age, past child rearing and alone or separated from their husband attempting to find fulfillment in an *imago* that masks their own self-image. Cosmetics is like a veil that mediates the person from the other --- holds one off in a distant

relationship -- and is a necessary illusion to imply sexual potency and attractiveness. In the commercialization of sex, Evelyn has bought into the patriarchal system without questioning how it is operating upon her new life. This unquestioning, unreflexive attitude is one of the lessons learned from this film. Her success denoted by the pink Cadillac is a Mary Kay promotional scheme providing temporary alleviation of the role of women in contemporary Western society. While the black humour of the film speaks to the ability of women to challenge the status quo, in the end, viewers may find that women like Evelyn perpetuate a form of sexual politics of representation still within a dominant patriarchal narrative.

A Lacanian Reading of *Green Fried Tomatoes*

Green Fried Tomatoes uses a common story–telling device of a present–day narrator telling a younger person what happened at the Whistle Stop Cafe during her lifetime. The film narrative starts in the present day at a nursing home where Evelyn starts a conversation with Ninny (Mrs. Threadgoode), one of the older residents, while her husband visits his aunt. Ninny then begins to tell Evelyn her tale about the Whistle Stop Cafe the day a rusted automobile was pulled out of the river. She recalls the past in a form of a detective mystery about two women who became best of friends and how they opened the Cafe, and in self-defence indirectly killed a man attempting to kidnap an infant.

Like the unconscious, the story comes up to the surface in innumerable ways. And as spectators we identify with Evelyn who eagerly pays attention to the whole affair. From a Lacanian viewpoint, the film narrative attempts to display the characteristics of the unconscious as it seeks the means "to propel the repressed contents of the unconscious into the pre–conscious and conscious domain" (Bowie, 1979, p. 118). The narrative carries this dialectical

conflict through the use of figurative language of metaphor for the actions of the present and metonymy for the actions of the past.

The film adaptation of the novel is structured analogous to the complex Lacanian/Freudian account of the functioning of the unconscious in psychoanalysis. For Freud, in the face of repression and censorship, the unconscious or Id is defined as "the realm of free instinctual energy and knows no stability, or containment, or closure" (*ibid.*, 119). (Also it may be noted that the Ruth/Idgie is a composite person where (Id)gie is defined as a character within the story described as a woman who "knows no containment.") It is also plausible to believe that Ruth/Idgie is actually Ninny, our narrator, who over the years has fictionalized her own life. She may also have given birth to a retarded child, for her a miracle, yet perhaps as a result of wife battering.

The opening sequence to *Fried Green Tomatoes* verges on the surreal in depicting the hoisting of an automobile from the depths of a muddy river. The underbelly of this auto appears like a huge prehistoric beast, removed from its own hiding place and now coming to the surface to reveal its true identity. Viewers are thus placed in a mystery as the displaced object with its bent license plate comes into view. Even as the auto spins on its hoist, the story of its importance is hidden from our awareness; but as the narrative unfolds, the series of events behind this mystery is gradually revealed as part of the melodrama. Over this image the titles to the film fade in. Then, the soundtrack and images change to blues music overlayed onto the clickety–clack of a train passing through as the camera moves down the rails.

In the re–telling of this mystery, the feminine relationship that arose between Ruth and Idgie Threadgoode is established. In its re–telling, Mrs Cleo Threadgoode, or Ninny, acts like a fairy godmother to the child–like Evelyn, leading her into a greater psychological and emotional maturity through her

expert exegesis of this relationship. In this way, the story helps Evelyn find suitable solutions to her daydreams which are re-structured into fruitful personal developments through Mary Kay cosmetics – comically enough, a continuation of the role of fantasizing of the self with the "other."

Conceptually the narrative is grounded like the image of a Calder mobile set in motion by the elements of wind, light and shadow, a constantly changing image as the energies of movement in time re-structure their identification of the form in space. As a metaphor for Evelyn, her early melancholic state appears to be bound by her loss of self-esteem through a failed marriage. Now, like a mobile, she is depicted endlessly trying different classes and exercises, imaginatively hoping to rekindle that sexual spark that had died in her marriage.

It is important at this stage to introduce the concept of tension between the psychic force of the unconscious and the notion of repression. How does the psychic energy become a motive force in which the subject, male or female, retains memories and experiences of the past, of his or her intentions and the work of a creative intelligence? In the displacement of "always already given" theoretical structures inhabiting the field of adult education, Lacan's writings make their contributions to the efforts of surrealism and the "topologies" or psychical developmental models he prefers. He builds towards loosely structured conceptual mobiles that respond to the question of what path to travel and what can these conceptual mobiles do that can adapt to the reorganization of life experiences. (Bowie, 1979, p. 124)

As the film narrative progresses, the viewer witnesses a two-way mapping of the unconscious from both the past and the present. In each flashback, Life then takes on the appearance of theatre, while role-playing and theatre becomes life-like or material in attempting to capture the spirit of life. The

bonding of the two distinct realms, the psychical energy with the sound images or thought, brings about the re–appearance of what Lacan refers to as a signifying chain of the "signifier" that dominates the narrative. Lacan develops the notion that all experience, repressed in the unconscious, is structured like a language based upon his knowledge of Saussurean linguistics and Freudian psychoanalysis. This concept allows Lacan to theorize that language is the structure or form necessary for the transformation of psychical tensions at play in the unconscious. In the present–day story of *Fried Green Tomatoes*, the unconscious drives and repressions are to some degree permitted to come to the surface of Evelyn's world when the story–telling activities of Mrs. Threadgoode reduce the tensions of the psychic drives that made Evelyn feel in her own melancholic imagination like a "monster" to herself and other.

The term "melancholic imagination" comes from Kristeva's psychoanalytical exploration of a subject's affective experience of loss or despair. As a disciple of Lacan, she echoes Lacan's point about the signifier–signified as a distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic. Lacan claimed that the signifier preceded all verbal representations. Kristeva uses the term semiotic to understand the mental representations of the senses as they are informed by the primary Freudian processes of unconscious displacement and condensation. To this notion, she identifies the semiotic with the material, maternal body or *chora*, "the psychic receptacle – archaic, mobile, unstable, prior to the One, to the father." Like a "floating signifier" it cannot be defined in the language system since it is a desire proceeding from a need or "lack" within a person. Kristeva equates the symbolic with language formation – or the signifier – and with the paternal hegemony of grammar, syntax, and the Law. (Kristeva, 1991, pp. 22–23.)

Like Lacan, Kristeva reveals that the "subject" of a discourse becomes a

"split subject," a person (Ruth/Idgie) is divided but a person belonging to both the semiotic *chora* and the symbolic order of signification. Thus, the mind reacts to the experience of loss and despair by creating this melancholic imagination through which a desire of the "self" unites with the "Other."

Fried Green Tomatoes narrates this sense of melancholia depicted by Idgie and Ruth as they experience loss and despair when Buddy is killed in a train accident. Mrs. Cleo Threadgoode, in re–telling the story of Ruth and Idgie to Evelyn as a weekly serial, recollects the past to explain how this death brought about the strong bond of friendship between these two women. Idgie, in her love, care and devotion to Ruth, accepts her friendship and love. As Idgie rescues Ruth from a violent marriage, Ruth, in turn, saves Idgie from her melancholia to become her best friend and companion. Together, they help energize the entire community of Whistle Stop, displaying how the desires of "self" can bridge the gap with the "other" regardless of gender identification.

The subjects are signifiers in themselves. What is represented in this story is the power of symbolic renewal through Evelyn being able to hear her own voice again as a woman. Her transformation is symbolized by the Mary Kay job as a new role to play, a new personality. It returns her to the imaginary self that takes on symbolic powers in her new relationships with other women who wish to transform themselves into their own "mirror image" and return to a narcissistic stage of being in which her own pride and self-esteem revitalize her life She recognizes that illusions are part of her reality in the social/political construction of our culture. And further it is this social reality that "constitutes the lived world of social actors" (Mumby, 1993:5).

Implications for Adult Education

There are various theories in adult education on how learning takes

place from self-directed learning (Candy, 1991) to transformational perspectives (Mezirow, 1991). Yet there is no definitive theory of just how the act of learning is initiated by an adult educator. In this regard Freudian or Lacanian psychoanalysis is "notably absent from the literature on adult teaching and learning" (Tennent, 1988). The absence seems contradictory since the emotional needs, fears and expectations of the adult learner is of great importance to adult educators. Tennent suggests three ways that adult educators can benefit from the psychoanalytical approach to learning. One way is to bring about "clinical insights" into the formation of human relationships between self and other. A second way is to understand how language links the adult learner with society. A third way acts as a reference point to approach "adult development" (p. 25).

Lacan's linguistic psychoanalysis advances the concept of desire as a drive towards psychic wholeness or unity. The object of desire is the desire of love and recognition by the Other. The three psychic processes that Lacan writes about differ from Freud's three Oedipal phases and are not biologically based. Instead they are psychically founded upon the phases that occur in the acquisition of language; as such, these three registers proceed from the "imaginary," to the "symbolic" to the "real." In the first register, the initial development of the "self" is formed through the mirror phase when the child is self-aware of his/her own physical unity in the mirror's reflection. This imaginary phase is pre-linguistic and alienating for the child.

Further, the Lacanian writings on psychoanalysis involve adult education by challenging the "egocentric" and "logocentric" theories that have become "metanarratives" for adult learning. These theories tend to discourage research initiatives by penalizing risk, and in turn support the status quo. Lacan's writings follow Freud's insights concerning not only the existence of

the unconscious, but that the unconscious is structured; "that this structure affects in innumerable ways what we do and say, and that in thus betraying itself it becomes accessible to analysis" (Bowie, 1979, p. 118). But it is the conflict arising between the psychical forces of repression and the bounded forces of the Id that seeks "to propel those repressed contents into consciousness" through "the use of figurative language (where) the unconscious speaks in the face of repression and censorship" (pp. 118-119).

It is also important to point out how *Fried Green Tomatoes* brings about a view of the father and the Name of the Law as a form of oppression that must be challeged by the desires of the women in their social community, so that life can continue. The death of the father (indeed the killing of the father) and the rescuing of the child from the threat of castration or destructive tendencies of this man, posed a constant threat in the film. A similar tension also exists in adult education where the play of "floating signifiers" which allow for multiple signifieds or meanings resist giving way to an *a priori* signified found in theories on adult education that shape the identity and performances of the adult students within a number of "problematic" theoretical structures.

Fried Green Tomatoes and other "women films" of the 1980s and 1990s depicts what happened in America from the years of the Great Depression of the 1930s up to the present. For Ruth and Idgie, life became meaningful through practicing the teachings of Christ of the New Testament – "love thy neighbor as thyself," as good Baptists do. This is depicted in the success of the Whistle Stop Cafe when it opened its doors to all, catering to the homeless, out of work men and women, like the transient railroader, Smokey Lonesome. The cafe was a community kitchen ignoring a lethal Southern racism that politically divided the small community. These teachings included believing in the Other, as Ninny helps Evelyn finally see herself in a positive light.

The different routes taken by each pair of women, based upon their parental upbringing, allows the viewer to contemplate the powerful patriarchal discourses in relation to the teachings in the Bible. They appear to be paradoxical and ambiguous. In Ruth's case they help women fight against the Law, when it appears to be against women caught within the hidden patriarchal discourses of power and repression. Thus, each episode of this narrative appeals to a feminist critique for resistance to and rupture of such hegemonic discourses. In a parallel manner, the film narrative displays how acts of violence lead to loss, despair and mourning, and a "melancholic imagination."

Feminism is an attack upon such theoretical structures, and perceives in their use the continuance of a form of repression in the dependence between the theory and practice -- the signifier and the signified. It is the exact role of the signified that is brought into a tension by Lacanian psychoanalysis as it attempts to locate and delimit the signifier. This metaphorical strategy of adult education to find similarity of the unknown with the known is fraught with danger because the self, or signifier, is (no)thing in and of itself. The "self" or subject can only be understood as a set of tensions and upheavals with a continuous, intentional figure-directed process of relationship with Others. When learning strategies permit the entry of the signifier into a metonymic association in a signifying chain, then difference and deferment of meaning can be important for adult education as a way of shifting the "always already given" to other possible identifications of the adult learner in a changing world.

Fried Green Tomatoes (1991) Directed by Jon Avnet. Based upon the novel *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe* by Fanny Flagg. Starring Katie Bates as Evelyn Couch and Jessica Tandy as Ninny Threadgoode. PG-13.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IRONIC DISCOURSE --- TECHNOLOGIES OF SELF

In this chapter I will explore the poststructuralist critique of modernity by Michel Foucault, and his radical break with Levi-Strauss' notions of cultural formation from a universal structure that manifested itself in myths and other symbolic works of art. What I will emphasize is Foucault's historical viewpoint based upon his essay "Nietszche, Geneology, History" (Rabinow, 1985, pp. 76-100). Foucault's writings in this collection of essays are focused upon an "escape from the historical and moral confusionism that mixes the theme of humanism with the question of the Enlightenment" (p. 45). Following a review of this essay I will analyze Szabo's *Mephisto* (1981), which raises the problematic concerning human notions of universal mythic structures as part of the power/knowledge "regime of truth." After this analysis, I will draw implications for adult education stressing the break from some conventional strategies of representation in planning programs for adults.

Introduction to Foucault: Historical Identity as a Cultural Effect

In a recent interview with a Vancouver reporter from the *Georgia Straight*, American director John Sayles spoke candidly about his independent feature film *Lone Star* (1996). As both a competent film writer and director, he is well aware in his own filmmaking of how film narratives depend on an integration of words and images in order to tell their story. In *Lone Star*, his leading film character is a young sheriff who returns to the past to investigate the murder of a long-dead racist sheriff. Setting the film in Texas, along the Rio Grande River, helps propel the action in a border town where "the characters are separated by race, class, sex and rank." In telling this particular story, Sayles

readily admits that much of the tale "is about history -- the burden of history and how we have to carry it and live up to its demands. Is it possible to escape it? If you are a Serb, is it possible not to shoot the guy across the street who's a Croatian?" With a romantic alliance between an Anglo cop and a Chicana history teacher similar to Romeo and Juliet, Sayles has his contemporary lovers attempt to earn the right to throw away the past. He comments that "if you just try to escape it but you don't understand it, you're doomed in a way, (since) you don't get away from under the shadow of the past." If his lovers can efface the past, then they have the right to cry out - "Forget the Alamo." (Eisner, 1996, p. 35).

The historical sense imparted by Sayles in this film is parodic, opposing the reality of a narrative discourse that had become a legend. At first, the sheriff becomes involved with attempts to identify the murder victim. The scant evidence immediately challenges this legend. Simultaneously, a tall tale is introduced by an oldtimer, as a charade masquerading for the truth, to stand in for the reality of the crime. There is a gap of credibility and a mask that emphasizes how a legend of the past has brought about the veneration of his own father. This "historical" version of the past causes the sheriff to review his own life and in turn, his own identity. In order to escape the carnivalesque qualities of this "tall-tale", which attempts to support and congeal the recognition of this mask, the sheriff attempts to disassociate himself from the legend, trying to see the crime as it really is, where his own identity is not just a product of some mythic world. In this sense, the sheriff is a Foucauldian character displaying an "attitude to modernity" in relation to a contemporary reality. It is his task to struggle with attitudes of "countermodernity" (p. 39).

But his return to the past is blurred since he too is caught within a mixture of his own memories and other tales. Yet, as he continues his

investigation, he comes upon different versions of the legend re-surfacing into the present. But as Foucault states, "the purpose of history, guided by genealogy, is not to discover the roots of our identity, but to commit itself to its dissipation. It does not seek to define our unique threshold of emergence, the homeland to which metaphysicians promise a return; it seeks to make visible all of those discontinuities that cross us" (Foucault, 1977, p. 95).

The remembrance of things past always occurs in present time where conceptions of ourselves and our actions are part of a series of historical *discourses* that "construct identities by producing meanings about 'our culture' with which we can identify; these are contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past, and images which are constructed of it" (Hall, 1992, p. 293). Sayles is committed through his own fictional devices to compose a number of different symbols and representations of American culture that emphasize the formation of identities, past or present. *Lone Star* is distinctive in revealing many layers of reality that masks itself, inhibiting a recognition of any simple continuity of "the laws that govern us." The sheriff, in seeking the "truth" in the evidence he has collected, finds it pointing to multiple forces at work in the creation of the legend. It awakens him to the realization that the mask cast by the legend hides the neutrality of the story-teller, and further, it is not committed to truth. A tensionality grows more intense between the past and the present, disrupting and dislocating the legend. Throughout his investigation, the people he interviews disclose various tales about the murdered person and here he discovers the violence in a will to knowledge that positions itself against those who are happy to remain silent or ignorant. Many "necessary illusions" have grown in time to protect the innocent. When the sheriff is reunited with his childhood sweetheart, he realizes that the injustices of the past must be understood for what they are,

but the legend of his father, and the murdered man will be sacrificed to the past. In this respect, it is proper for the woman, a history teacher no less, to say: "Forget the Alamo!"

Michel Foucault: Nietszche, Geneology, History

Coming to terms with this "imaginative community" set in contemporary times allows a film narrative to revise and re-evaluate the historical events of the past and the national symbols which are *re-presented*. A historical discourse of this kind brings us to an important understanding in pedagogical terms of the investigative writings of Michel Foucault, the French historian, and his own discourses on power and knowledge. For Foucault, the "will to knowledge" in our Western culture is simultaneously part of the danger and a tool to combat that danger. In his essay, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* (1977), Foucault writes that "19th century Europeans no longer knew themselves; they ignored their mixed ancestries and (sought) a proper role" (p. 92). Like Sayles implies, we need to "forget" our reliance on "past achievements" that connect our lives to a destiny that pre-existed us; rather we need to seek to understand how one's history leads us to become creative in our own lives. Thus, Foucault's writings urge us to consider dismantling a traditional philosophy of history "beginning with the things it produced;" (therefore) "it is necessary to master history so as to turn it to genealogical uses, that is, strictly anti-Platonic purposes. Only then will the historical sense free itself from the demands of a suprahistorical history" (p. 93).

Foucault writes of a genealogy where we find 'three uses' to produce this new historical sense. First, an opposition to a veneration of past heroes as a substitute for reality; second, an opposition to a history as representative of traditional role models and identities; and third, an opposition to a history

that appears to be neutral, passionless and in search of the truth (*ibid.*, 93). In this sense, Foucault questions the dominant notions within national discourses on the representations of a cultural identity. Such constructions, he argues, are demonstrations of the indissolvable relationship between knowledge and power and the construction of "regimes of truth" through the practices and discourses of specific institutions. Foucault claims to find such knowledge grounded symbolically on the centrality of a foundational myth. Hence, they are correlated to traditions, continuities, and a timelessness where the manifold operations of power are hidden in a cultural praxis in general, namely discourse (White, 1979, p. 82).

Foucault states in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* that "the traditional devices for constructing a comprehensive view of history and for retracing the past as a patient and continuous development must be dismantled . . . History becomes "effective" to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being" (p. 88). In different ways Foucault's writing explores "a crisis of representation" prevalent in discourse. In his preface to *The Order of Things* (1966), he states "by attempting to uncover the deepest strata of Western culture, I am restoring to our silent and apparently immobile soil its rifts, its instability, its flaws, and it is the same ground that is once more stirring under our feet" (p. xxiv). Again, Foucault recognized how language itself placed restraints on the nature of discourse in the human sciences in terms of the "politics of representation."

Therefore, Foucault's early work on archeology /geneology follows a desire to utilize the Freudian discovery of the "unconscious" and the manifold ways "dreamwork" disavows any modernist thinking in terms of fixed models and macrostructures. Following the trajectory of madness accorded to 19th century artists like Rimbaud or Van Gogh, he underscores the power of

these artists akin to the work of the unconscious "as dispersed, indeterminate, heteromorphous, subjectless, and productive, constituting individuals' bodies and identities" (Best and Kellner, 1991, p. 49). Foucault's earlier books, *Madness and Civilization* (1961), *Birth of the Clinic* (1963) and *The Order of Things* (1966), defined power in juridicial terms within the discourses of psychiatry, medicine and the human sciences respectively. They were repressive powers dedicated to force submission through punishment or confinement. These powers grew out of the manifest ways official discourse perceived, classified, and distributed such terms as "sanity," "health," and "knowledge" at different times in the history of Western culture.

Moreover, in his genealogy of Western culture, a "cultural binary" was deliberately established in books and treatises to make those oppositions and differences between madness and sanity, sickness and health, truth and error as always a function of a prevailing discourse which was preserved in "centres of social power at different periods" by the "politics of representation" (White, 1979, p. 90). Foucault ascribes the term "regimes of power" to these predominant discourses he found in disciplines such as law, medicine, psychiatry and other forms of "disciplinary knowledge." In describing them in this way he alerts us to the *politics* of discourses. "He enables us to see knowledge differently, as tied to politics, that is to power" (Hoy, 1988, p. 19).

Thus, in his deconstruction of the discourses that have emerged in the individual studies of psychiatry, clinical medicine and the human sciences, Foucault undermines all rational systems of thought that arise from traditional religions and scientific reasoning. His "differential historiography" is published in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) and *The Discourse of Language* (1971). In refusing to be labeled a structuralist or poststructuralist, Foucault's writings "emphasize accidents, not universal rules, not depths;

multiplicities, not unities; flaws, not foundations; and differences, not identities" (Leitch, 1983, p. 144). In his style of discourse Foucault invalidates traditional historiography through the introduction of *discontinuity* and *difference* into cultural history.

Throughout all his writings Foucault is consistent in his genealogical methodology that seeks to discover the *rules* that structure the specific organizations of discourse. From an adult learner's perspective, his research leads to an acknowledgement that any discourse is a conceptual framework for purposes of power and control. "He wants to know which particular objects and concepts appear in discourse and what rules render them possible. In the discourse of an *episteme* some things and theories take shape, subsist, change and disappear -- all according to definable rules. Relentlessly, Foucault collects and analyzes the rules of formation and transformation of such elements within specific discursive fields. History then is the descriptive analysis of "regulated changes in discourses" (Leitch, 1983, p. 145).

Cultural Identity and the New German Cinema

Film narratives like John Sayles' *Lone Star* situate a narrative discourse within a contemporary postmodern space to dismantle the discourses of racism and white colonialism on a border town between the United States and Mexico. In many respects, this film is indicative of the move on the part of American filmmakers to follow the lead of European filmmakers "to render the past ever-present" through returning to history in an imaginative film discourse. Yet, some viewers may find Sayles' film is an exception to the rule for filmmakers in the United States because there is no centre or closure to this film; it is all surface, similar to Foucault's own discourse. The film resists the impulse to seek an origin or transcendental subject which would confer any "traditional"

or "specific" meaning on contemporary human life. The film's discourse is wilfully superficial, consistent with the writer's larger purpose "to dissolve the distinction between surfaces and depths, to show that wherever this distinction arises it is evidence of the play of organized power, and that this distinction is itself the most effective weapon that power possesses for hiding its operations" (White, 1979, p. 82).

We can recognize this change of perspective in the film narratives from post-war Germany. Over the last two decades, debates over Hitler and the Holocaust, "Heimat", and German cultural identity brought forth the rebirth of the new German Cinema. From traditional narratives to more revisionist narrative discourses, German directors both reconstructed the past and used film images, stored in archives, to return us to a past, a past that will not go away because its cultural representations are re-surfacing everywhere. In his book, *Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (1989), Anton Keas correctly advances the "politics of representation" contained in these new film narratives. He writes:

> Gradually, but inexorably, these images have begun to supercede memory and experience. All of us, whether or not we have lived through the Hitler era, have partaken of its sights and sounds in a host of documentary and feature films. Cinematic representations have influenced --- indeed shaped --- our perspectives on the past; they function for us today as a technological memory bank. History, it would seem, has become widely accessible, but the power over memory has passed into the hands of those who create these images. It is not surprising that in recent years we have witnessed a virulent struggle over the production and administration of public memory. (Keas, 1989, p. ix)

The New German Cinema is a collective term used to describe a group of young filmmakers who signed the Oberhausen Manifesto in 1962. Under the tutelage of Alexander Kluge, they declared that the conventional German film industry was moribund, and that a new German production system was about to replace it. The decline of the "old" film industry was in part brought about

by the rapid rise of television during the 1960s in West Germany and the loss of film distribution in Germany to American companies during the 1950s. With the loss of audiences to television and American films, the hope of the young filmmakers was to set out to emulate the French New Wave directors and find new methods of financing, producing and exhibiting their films.

Within three years, well over 20 feature films were made, including Alexander Kluge's first film, *Yesterday's Girl* (1966). This feature film traces the misadventures of Anita G., a young refugee from East Germany, trying to find work but who finds herself trapped in a repressive sexist society. People try to help "educate" her or "improve" her situation only to be plagued by Germany's past history towards women. Kluge's films parody the political aspects of West Germany dependence on American military power and its fascist mentality. Kluge appropriates many Godardian techniques to break the narrative into quasi–documentary episodes filled with allusions and printed quotations from news headlines to force viewers to critically examine those controlling "regimes of truth" that appear to be taken for granted. This film won a Silver Lion award at the Venice Film Festival, giving notice to the international film community that a revival of German cinema had happened.

In 1968, under pressure from the commercial film industry, the subsidy system was altered by a new law. Now the Kuratorium became the Film Subsidies Board and funds could only go to producers, which, in turn, encouraged these young directors to establish production companies to produce, distribute and exhibit their own films. In 1971, Wenders, Herzog and Fassbinder with the help of Kluge formed the Filmverlag der Autoren – an authors' film publishing company to assist the sale and distribution of their films abroad and in Germany. Like the French *cinema des auteurs,* the German directors also considered themselves serious artists who "authored" their own

films. Thus, they called the New German Cinema an example of *Autorenkino* – personal visions of these directors. By 1974, the noncommercial West German television began financing films made for television. Many co-production deals were signed with directors, like Fassbinder, that brought a new series of films to international attention (Sandford, 1980, p. 14).

With this international recognition, Fassbinder began to revise German history, to fit the knowing atrocities of the Nazi Party and Hitler into a master discourse. With Herzog and Wenders also undertaking this special theme, by the mid-1970s films and television programs focused upon "discontinuities" in German history and the "lack" of a national cultural identity. Similar to the disillusionment and defeat after World War I, the German preoccupation with its history and their identification to a homeland, their "Heimat," became paramount for them (Kaes, 1989, p. x).

Appropriating many conventions and cliches of post-war American genre films, mostly *film noir*, these young West German directors also studied the expressionistic film practices of the earlier German silent filmmakers like Murnau and Lang. Each of the three leading directors took up one of the three basic film themes in the genres of the 1920s. Werner Herzog continued the historical/mythological dramas of Fritz Lang where his central characters are possessed by over-powering romantic desires, plunging them into death–defying adventures. The films of Wim Wenders follow the Caligari–like themes of sleepwalkers, sexually depraved men wandering about under the hypnotic influence of another mind, unaware of their own identity, nor of the purpose of human existence. Fassbinder uses the chamber film or *kammerspiel* films, similar to Strindbergian theatre, to focus attention upon sexual identities caught in sado-masochistic power conflicts with other characters.

Their efforts also developed out of a conscious recognition of American

films and the influence American consumer society had on the lives of postwar Germans. To off-set this powerful consumer environment and the impact of its ideology, the directors of the New German Cinema employed distancing or "alienation" effects drawn from Brechtian theatre so that their films required active viewer participation. Also by incorporating collage effects in each film narrative, the directors separate these filmic images from their ordinary contexts allowing the viewer an opportunity to reflect upon the socio-political meanings behind these images. Kaes summarizes the situation very well:

> These directors also tended to move and manipulate spectators in a more direct emotional way. Moreover, films - as complex fictional constructs - offer ambivalent perspectives and contradictory attitudes that resist simple explanations and call for multiple readings. Fictional films are able to unlock the viewers' hidden wishes and fears, liberate fantasies, and give material shape to shared moods and dispositions. Films can thus be seen as interventions in cultural and political life. For example, films like Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Die Ehe der Maria Braun (The Marriage of Maria Braun,* 1978), and the West German reception of the American television series *Holocaust* of 1979, broke through thirty years of silence. Other films of the New German Cinema became "discursive events" that emerged in response to specific concerns and took the position in debates about German history and identity. (Kaes, 1989, p. x)

Siegfried Kracauer's earlier historical study called *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film,* was written in 1947 with the intention to expose the "deep psychological dispositions" towards "pastoral power", authoritarianism and Nazi fascism. This book covers the period from the opening of UFA film studios outside of Berlin in 1918 to combat Allied propaganda in World War I to the coming of power by Hitler and his cohorts in 1933. Kracauer selected notable fictional films which, in his mind, foreshadowed Hitler's rise to power -- such films as *Dr. Caligari, Nosferatu, Metropolis, 'M', The Last Testament of Dr. Mabuse* and others. Fritz Lang's directorial work in some of these films in unison with spectacular futuristic settings, critiqued the imaginative abuse of power and technology. His last film

in Germany, *Dr. Mabuse* (1932), with the depiction of a master-mind giving orders to his gang through innovative voice-over sound technology, clearly demonstrated the power of a criminally-insane mind determined to take control of the state. These films became the catalyst for Kracauer's thesis that such a trajectory "from the fictional tyrant Caligari to the all-too-real Hitler is more than a bold but very problematic construct" (Kaes, 1989, p. xi).

Kracauer's thesis argues that the cinema possesses the political and pedagogical power to influence public perceptions and mold opinions. In *From Hitler to Heimat*, Anton Kaes alludes to the influence of Kracauer's earlier historical study to his own work, but, in contrast to Kracauer's thesis, his book "traverses only a fictional space; Hitler has become today, literally, *Hitler, a Film from Germany*, and Heimat can exist only as a memory evoked in a film." Kaes' concern, therefore, is situating the films of the New German Cinema "in the cultural, social and political ambience from which they issue and within which they function. Seen in relation to the [various] dominant discourses of their time and place, these films begin to resonate with various voices, with diverse political convictions and aesthetic tradtions. Unlike Kracauer, who pursues a single thesis, I will strive to focus on the complexity of the films so that they begin to tell not *one* story but *many*" (p. xi).

"No other film industry in the world has ever been so subservient to government propaganda; no other government has ever represented itself so obsessively on film" (Leiser, '*Nazi Cinema*' cited in Kaes, p. 124). Yet the Propaganda Ministry of the Nazi Party, led by Joseph Goebbels, made sure to conceal the political and pedagogic function of its films. Speaking before the Reichsfilmkammer in 1941, Goebbels said: "This is the really great art -- to educate without revealing the purpose of the education. The best propaganda is that which as it were works invisibly, penetrates the whole of life without the

public having any knowledge at all of the propagandist's initiative" (p. 124).

Goebbels knew when he called for "apolitical" entertainment, "that films would cajole the public into (day)dreaming and implant in them indirectly, often only by insinuation and subtle allusion to autocratic rulers and authoritarian rules, the basic principles of National Socialist ideology. Mass culture and militarism went hand in hand" (Witte, 1981-2, pp. 261-5).

The German director, Wim Wenders, upon viewing a documentary film directed by Joachim C. Fest, entitled *Hitler: A Career,* commented that "never before and in no other country have images and language been abused so unscrupulously as here, . . . and nowhere else have they been debased so deeply as vehicles to transmit lies" (Wenders, 1988, p. 128).

Regimes of Disciplinary Power: Szabo's *Mephisto* (1981)

With great conviction, Kaes' book argues persuasively that indeed History has returned to post-war Germany as film narratives --- as images of history, of memories re-presented in black and white. Here is the cinematic formula for multiple renditions of *"The Third Reich"* as a film document. "Germany as the location, Hitler, the producer, Goebbels and his officers as directors and stars, Albert Speer as set designer, and the rest of the population as extras... the more questionable Germany's struggle to survive became, the more dependent people grew on the deceitful images produced by Goebbels's propaganda machinery, which dangled the promise of German victories and triumphs before their eyes up to the very last day before the capitulation" (Kaes, 1989, p. 4).

Out of the effort of many exhibitions, conferences and books dealing with the vacuum that existed within West Germany after the war was the powerful desire of filmmakers to re-write and re-stage German history and to

secure their desire for identity of their homeland and a past. Klaus Mann's novel *Mephisto* was a *roman-a-clef* about a real provincial actor from Hamburg, Gustav Grundgens, who produced Mann's first play in 1926. Mann's novel was written in exile in 1936, but was not released in Germany until the late 1960s. The novel follows the theatrical career of a stage actor, one Henrich Hofgen (Grundgens) as he grows in stature and fame coinciding with the rise to power of Hitler and the Third Reich. The film adaption of the novel, *Mephisto* (1982), directed by Istvan Szabo, chronicles the moral quandry facing this talented actor who is befriended by a high-ranking Nazi officer, modeled after Hermann Goering.

Henrich Hofgen, as the actor, is caught in between a complex theatrical world in Germany in the 1920s and the growing powers of the Nazi party. Unwittingly, the actor trades his moral convictions and his friends for success and fame in the theatrical world of Nazi Germany, but then, the likeable actor plays his part knowing full well that the Nazi party were play–acting for real.

This Hungarian film was a co–production with West Germany and featured an Austrian, Klaus Maria Brandauer, in the lead role. As in previous films by Szabo, the director contrasts the illusory hopes of the protagonist seeking personal identity through securing public acceptance of his role within the fatal realities of politics and alliances where powerful officials control a totalitarian state that bring about the downfall or death of the artist.

In many respects, Szabo's treatment of this story as a film narrative continues the history of the New German cinema by combining two major genres of the silent period: the fantasy/mystical genre, where the hero fights against diabolical monsters in human disguise that occupy dreams of past kingdoms such as *Dr. Caligari, Nosferatu* and *Dr. Mabuse*; and the realistic/psychological genre, where the action revolves around the desires and

frustrations of a character caught in a changing social and political world of the times.

In *Mephisto*, Szabo is able to unite these two genres together through the world of the theatre. Szabo exposes each spectator to the manifold ways the theatre captivates us with its charm, its artifice and deception, but the director also takes us behind the scenes to show the viewer the frantic desires of an ambitious actor who desperately craves the applause of the crowd. In this simple way, Szabo allows us to penetrate the masks and disguises worn not only by actors and actresses alike but by others like the Nazi party that decide to appropriate this theatrical world for their own phantoms and illusions.

As a provincial actor setting out to learn his trade in Hamburg, Hendrick Hofgen is presented as a painfully likeable person in the most immediate human terms. We witness his struggles to perfect his art in a series of Brechtian vignettes as he postures as an actor and director. By correlating the personal dramatic conflicts of this actor with the actual narrative of Hitler's rise to power, Szabo shows us how the pretenses and deceptions used by an actor in the theatre are used by others, who substitute their own power fantasies for "reality." In holding up the mirror of history to life as a theatrical masquerade, as spectators we witness the development of a "regime of truth" that carefully yet covertly hides the "dark" side of humanity.

Szabo's script for *Mephisto,* written in collaboration with Peter Donai, claims only to be "based on the novel" by Klaus Mann, and thus in a postmodernist style is a "metahistorical fiction," not at all worried about being held to historical facts. Hofgen, the actor, willingly sells his soul, Faust–like, in a deal with the Nazi General, whose powerful persona represents the "Other" or dark side of "Mephisto" in this film, in order to secure his theatrical stature as an actor. In so doing, Szabo shows us how an artist, like Hofgen, becomes

trapped in a regime of disciplinary powers, morally and critically afraid to speak out against the ideological stratagems of the General and the Nazis. When challenged by his wife, mistress and leftist friends for making this alliance and the possible threat to his artistic freedom, Hofgen replies naively that "theatre will always be theatre, and no one can change that." Basically, Hofgen is a coward, deathly afraid of being perceived by the public or the General as weak and vunerable. He has learned to play roles that are deemed acceptable by "others," on either the "Left" or "Right," mainly to stave off the humiliation and embarrassment that he suffered as a youth.

As the "other" or dark side of his personality begins to warp his sense of morality, the film parallels this development with the takeover of Germany by the other "actor." The Nazis come into power and their ruthlessness and cruelty is personified in the powerful figure of the General. The General, through his mistress, Lorelei, invites Hofgen back to Berlin to act in the Prussian State Theatre now controlled by the Nazis.

The first public meeting of the General with the actor occurs during a performance of Goethe's *Faust* when The General is won over by Hofgen's performance as Mephisto. Requested to his King's box, the General becomes a sharer of Hofgen's secret of the mask. The General astutely analyses Hofgen's interpretation of *Mephisto* as one who uses the dramatic art craftily "to display strength and wit while, in reality, one is weak." Hofgen confesses to the secret of his performance although he is privately annoyed at the comment about his "weak handshake."

As director, Szabo develops the film discourse as a psychological journey towards a dark abyss that separates these two men. For Hofgen, the actor, as he continues to play-act, the tensionality grows as he is caught between his own desire for theatrical success in his new role as director and actor for the

Prussian National Theatre and the demands to serve the interests of the General and the political ambitions of the Third Reich. In the powerful unfolding of this dilemma the viewer witnesses just how the "other" or dark side of one's self is nurtured and developed by corrupting influences. Thus, as the dark side takes over the unstable and neurotic personality of Hofgen, a parallelling take–over by the powerful General and the Nazi regime is shown growing in power and strength as it prepares for its visionary empire.

This alliance between Hofgen and the General casts the actor into a new role, one in which Hofgen publicly endorses the Nazi party and its ideological constructs. The General carefully masks the destructive nature of his agenda from Hofgen. Hofgen then begins to rationalize his actions to his wife, his mistress and his friends, knowing full well that the Nazis are a bunch of "murderous thugs" but refuses to acknowledge the reality of these evil forces.

Throughout the film, Hofgen is seen facing himself in the mirror, first without the "Mephisto" white mask, later, with the mask on as he constantly makes contact with his "mirror" side to restore his confidence in his own self-identity. This continual visual device propels the narrative as we gradually see the actor become more and more like the image he is addressing in the mirror. This imaginary "other" or dark side of his personality finally comes face to face with the "malevolent" dark side as portrayed by the General of the Nazi party.

As viewers, we watch the General take over the performance strategies used by Hofgen in his portrayal of Mephisto. In a later sequence, the General confesses to Hofgen how much he is learning from him. "I've discovered your secret, Mephisto -- it's the surprise effect, right? -- The unexpected, the surprising, the unpredictable." And Hofgen concurs. "It's important that the spectator doesn't know what steps I'm taking, nor in what direction I'm going." "Right", says the General. "As a political strategy, one can't defend against it."

Before we witness his final capitulation to the Nazi party, we see Hofgen as an opportunist using his charm and guile to advance his professional career at any cost to himself. He has one loving confidante, his dance teacher and mistress, Juliette, to whom he can shed his mask and dance before the mirrors to allow his true self to be mockingly revealed. His relationship to her displays a tenderness and love that is partially lustful, but at least she knows his weaknesses. His social climbing is discussed with Juliette as he decides to marry another woman whose connections can bring him into contact with "friends" that will open doors for him as an actor. Later, Juliette argues against the acting role Hofgen has taken on behalf of the Nazi's. She sums up Hofgen's speech–making as "You're a nicely behaved boy, who wants to enjoy the rewards of good behavior." But she also realizes that these Nazis have to be taken seriously, and for her pose a grave danger. Once Germany is under the influence of the Nazi party, Hofgen can only provide her with the safeguard of a successful deportation outside of Germany.

But it is already too late for Hofgen. The irony is that Hofgen is play-acting, and only knows his role as an actor. Over and over again he proclaims both on stage and off that he is an actor. He hardly suspects the strategies the General will take, nor does he have the slightest awareness of the direction the ambitious Nazis and its military arm are planning.

After informing on his rival actor, Miklas, who realized too late the designs of the Nazis, Hofgen meets with the General, who offers him the position of general manager of the Prussian State Theatre. Before he accepts the post, Hofgen has to check with his actress friend, Nicoletta Von Niebuhr.

This would lead to the final artistic and moral corruption of the actor, but the craving for personal respect and acclaim lets him rationalize why he should accept this offer. Part of the bargain is that he accept his role as a

spokesperson for Nazis policies. When he meets with his actor friends and discusses the plays he can produce at the theatre, he knows full well that what he's doing is obscene. But now there seems to be no other choice except to follow Nazi policy.

Hofgen continues his own self–deception even when Dora Martin tells him that she knows what will happen in Germany, but as *Mephisto*, Hofgen pleads that art and culture can rise above the politics of those in power. Not willing to support them, Dora Martin emigrates to America. Hofgen argues that he cannot think of uprooting himself from his homeland, his language and the German audience. As a displaced person, he reasons he would find it hard to succeed outside Germany as an artist. Faced with this doubt, Hofgen accepts the roles the Nazis offer him, including re-shaping of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Unfortunately, his success as director of the State Theatre casts him into a different role than he imagined. Under the invitation of the General, he is seen publically endorsing the Nazi party and their ideological constructs that subtlely mask. like *Mephisto*, their cruel and destructive agenda. Hofgen, though, refuses to acknowledge this dark reality.

Another opportunity to escape is presented to Hofgen when he arrives in Paris to speak on behalf of the Nazis. After the reception, he meets with his estranged wife, Barbara, to complete his divorce and tells her why he is accepting this role as a Nazi propagandist. Yet she implores him to free himself from these political activities because his endorsement "legitimates these people." Hofgen argues that he would lose all he has gained in Berlin, and to leave now would be artistic suicide for him. At this point an outraged theatre critic, out of moral indignation, slaps Hofgen in the face. His pride wounded, Hofgen walks out of the restuarant into the empty streets of Paris, wondering about his future as an German actor outside of Germany, his homeland.

He says to himself, "Freedom, what for?" Then, as Hofgen shrugs off the idea, he symbolically descends into the underground, to uncertainty and doubt, into a darkness that awaits him on his return to Germany.

His plight as an actor in a Nazi regime reaches its culmination as Hofgen succeeds in rewriting Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into a Nazi hero of pure racial origins. After the gala performance, Hofgen is then escorted by Nazi officials to an arena where the General proclaims to him the dawning of a new empire. Uncannily, the setting is similar to the ramparts found in Hamlet as he awaits the ghost of his Father. But here, Hofgen is trapped in a crossfire of spotlights as the General bellows out his name. As Hofgen tries to shield his face from the blinding light, he cries out, "What do they want of me, I'm only an actor." This close-up of his face reveals that Hofgen finally has been transformed by the spotlights into Mephisto! His face is frozen into a white death mask that evokes a surreal, but ghostly vision of himself in the surrounding darkness.

Throughout the film, the representation of this dark world is captured by the expressionistic techniques of cinematographer Lalos Koltai. The camera and the cutting shift between the objective view-point of the audience to a subjective view of the actor's world. Great elliptical cuts quickly catch the action in each sequence to give pace and style to the editing. Framing is at times impressionistic, allowing for unbalanced compositions that appear improvised; while at other times there are formal compositions, especially of theatrical performances seen from a distance. The editing allows the viewer to see the reverse angle to capture the actors reacting to the audience. Using a subjective camera in this manner allows the viewer to share the excitement of the stage world of Hofgen as he plays Mephisto.

Szabo carefully chose on-location settings in theatres, museums, and public buildings for the majority of the scenes. In keeping with the theatrical

theme of power through spectacle, this director skillfully combines set props and dressings of Nazi symbols and banners with formally staged rituals giving power and privilege to the entrances of the General and his entourage. Throughout the film Szabo deliberately contrasts the intimate, personal portrait of the artist with the public world of the theatre and the imperial and impersonal environment of the Nazi head-quarters.

Lighting for dramatic contrasts also is carefully planned, at times to enhance the expressionistic sense of a 'damned' world of *Mephisto*. Many sequences are shot with stage lighting focused directly at the viewer which haloes the actor, usually Hofgen, or becomes part of the high contrast, low key - *film noir* lighting effect to accentuate the darkness and dread of the unknown. The blood red banners with the white circle and black swastika also act as menacing symbols of the times. In a way they also are framed in scenes to hypnotize us. In all cases, Szabo uses the lighting of the stage and other settings to function as a powerful psychological element which subtly re-inforces the theme of identity, and reveals the acts of human deception that occur upon the darkened stage. The persistence of history on film has never been so powerfully rendered as in this narrative of an ambitious actor who gazes constantly at mirror images of himself, ironically unaware of being held captive by his own demonic "Other."

A Foucauldian Reading of *Mephisto* --- Power/Knowledge

Historical research of the critical writings of Michel Foucault address the second major area of analysis – *the ironic* or Faustian concept of power. Foucault's historical criticism demonstrates how "the genealogy of the modern subject" de–centers the "self" of one's identity. Foucault claims a new type of power and control came into existence in Europe at the end of the 19th century that Foucault designates as "disciplinary power." It is concerned with

the regulation and surveillance of the human species and the governance of the individual and the body. It is sited in the new institutions of the modern world, from schools and hospitals to workshops and prisons, et al, infiltrating and shaping what is said and done. Its purpose is to produce human beings as "docile bodies" through the power of administrative regimes and the expertise of the professional (Hall, 1994:123). The *ironic narrative discourse* illustrates how such power relationships are historically reconstructed in the Hungarian-German film *Mephisto* (1981).

By employing Foucault's writing of history or "genealogy," the rise of fascism in Germany in the 1930s, as depicted in *Mephisto,* illustrates how a "disciplinary regime . . . brought individuality into the field of observation through a vast meticulous documentary apparatus" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 122). Throughout this film narrative, the historical developments are analyzed and understood from the perspective of a talented German actor who becomes seduced and morally corrupted by the "rituals of power." The actor helps legitimate the Nazis' rise to power with his popular star appeal. Ironically his public support of the Nazi Party and their military coup in Germany during the 1930s brought about his own imprisonment as a propagandist for them through the Prussian State Theatre. Paradoxically, through its narrative, the spectator uncovers how such "disciplinary power" operates on the "self" and its narcissistic importance to the mask worn by this actor, hence while the mask provided him with an opportunity to alight upon many different roles, his sponsors showed interest in only one mask which they fixed permanently upon him as part of his social and political obligation and allegiance to Nazi tactics for spectacle and propaganda.

Two later books by Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976), illuminate the structure of deception

and duplicity underlying this film discourse. Both books study the relationship between a desire for power (the coming to power of the Nazi party) and the power of desire (an actor's dream of becoming a famous actor) as revealed in the controls exercised by modern society over two social types or (misfits). The irony is the manner in which these men assume roles that invert the rationality of the Enlightenment. In each case, the discourse or myth of the Third Reich disguises the desires of Hitler and his cohorts with a theatricalism that requires the showmanship of a professional actor like Hofgen. What ensued was the inability of either party to discern how their own "discourse of power" came into conflict with the "discourse of desire" of their own imaginary selves.

> What is at work in discourse -- as in everything else -- is always 'desire and power', but in order for the aims of desire and power to be realized, discourse must ignore its basis in them. This is why, (as Foucault goes on to say in 'the Discourse on Language') discourse, at least since the rout of the Sophists by Plato, unfolds always in the service of the 'will to truth'. Discourse wishes to 'speak the truth' but in order to do this it must mask from itself its service to desire and power, must indeed mask from itself the fact that it is itself a manifestation of the operations of these two forces. (White, 1979, p. 89)

Implications for Adult Education

> "Education is political - knowledge gives one power to act - to make choices and not to act out of innocence or fear." (Foucault)

There is a truism Hamlet states to "take arms against a sea of trouble and end them", to fight fire with fire, or as the German Red Army Faction known as the Baader-Meinhof gang did in the autumn of 1977 in Munich, taking upon themselves counter-terrorist action to fight the terror of the neo-fascists. Yet this terrorist action spawns another form of tyranny that holds itself within the rhetoric of the power/knowledge nexus, while the neo-conservative government legitimizes their own terror-tactics and smashes such

insurrection within the rules of law and order. Where is democractic action in such a situation? Can democracy deliver a govern-*mentality* that will allow for difference and tolerance of others? Will a new political pedagogy arise to enable people to deal with the rapid change in late modernity?

Within this power/knowledge 'regime of truth' we can understand how adult education operationalizes itself in the educational arenas similar to public theatre and film narrative. Both respond to the complex interplay of sociological/political forces within certain institutional conventions and traditions like any narrative relating to social control. Thus we can conclude that film narratives provide entertainment; they also are political acts. All film narratives are produced within a political and social context to express different perspectives about "lived experiences" within our Western culture. The work of this researcher is to specify those ways in which we can make valid inferences about film narrative as part of the political process. For certain films are produced in an Aristotelian manner to represent how Third Wave anxieties and fears can be contained within a palatable fictional setting. The narratives create terror and pity in the spectator: hopefully a catharsis occurs, purging these emotional fears and anxieties, but the status quo remains.

Bertolt Brecht, the German playwright, insisted that such special effects were "obscene," a form of bourgeois drug traffic that impaired the ability of the audience to think and reflect upon the narrative In its place he advanced his theories of "epic theatre," a strictly *historical* theatre which "constantly reminds the audience that they are merely receiving a report of past events" (Esslin, 1961, p. 125). Listening to such tales, in a sense a form of ethnography, allows for a critical detachment from empathic response. Exposure of viewers (adult learners) to film narratives of this kind - globally - allows them the opportunity to engage in a variety of learning experiences to help them grasp the powerful

social, economic and historical forces controlling their lives. Thus such film narratives serve a deliberate pragmatic function -- the films engage the imagination of people in such a way as to offer alternative solutions to contemporary problems of alienation, displacement and oppression.

As a manifestation of today's information society and its popular culture, such film narratives act as persuasive historical documents that introduce social and political realities into our educational systems. They, in turn, influence our notions of identity and place with regard to how ideas and power relations pervade institutions of government and their educational institutions. Today, in fact, with the emergence of global communications, all the areas of our social/political life are under the mediation and surveillance of such technologies. I might even suggest that such film narratives function pragmatically as political myths about fashioning imaginative selves that challenge or justify the contemporary conduct and actions of people operating in tensions of the Third Space, a space of ambiguity.

As cultural artifacts, they are primary sources of learning about the paradoxical conditions of living in a "risk" society. As part of the educational/ socializational process in our filmic culture, covert controversies over different and competing myths about ourselves and others are fictitiously played out. For these film narratives let us play with multiple identities within an imaginative world of cinema.

For program planners in adult education, the postmodern discourse is multifaceted, interlaced with differences and contradictions, yet it raises questions about social relations and possibilities for social visions in a postmodern world. This contemporary situation eschews the modernist discourses based upon a trans-historical theory of class and patriarchy and all reifying or "totalizing" structures of social identity and cultural life.

In a brief introduction to Foucauldian strategies, there are implications to suggest an alternative planning model based upon an understanding of cultural politics that focuses on a new engagement of adult education through a "politics of difference." A multiplicity of textual strategies are used to promote a postmodern play of irony and resistence to undermine and "deconstruct" the possibility for any "always already given" master narrative that represents an interpretation of culture and identity. The postmodern discourse also operates within this "risk society," but instead of re-negotiating coherent modernist narratives, it sets out to break down the signifiers of the modernist discourse, bring out the fictive structures and foreground its methodology. At the same time, the new discourse does not situate players in expected patterns. Thus, postmodern discourses are concerned with parody and the "politics of representation." Through parody they critically question the nature and formation of subjectivity as well as the humanist assumptions of a coherent and autonomous self. Postmodern writers and critics challenge the experience of self within the dominant humanist framework through this use of "ironic discourse." A double coding reveals the playful formal investigation and experimentation against the expected confines of any systematic formula program planners use. The purpose is to dislocate certain power plays by reproducing multiple versions of the "real." This is the postmodern strategy of play and paradox. "This does not mean that art has lost its meaning and purpose, but that it will inevitably have a new and different significance. In other words parody works to foreground the politics of representation" (Hutcheon, 1989. pp. 93-4).

Yet, the modern practice of program planning in adult education, as articulated by Cervero and Wilson (1993), argues for a social activity rather than a genealogical process. Their social theory of planning situates planners

as "social *actors* in a context of interests, stakeholders and power, dimensions either unaccounted for or only partially so in other conceptions of planning practice" (p. 188). However, this programming model is not an original one: rather, it is congruent with the flexible social action model of Beal, Blount, Powers and Johnson (1966). Central to this planning process is a negotiation of interests to recognize the relationships of authority and influence to obtain legitimation for a proposed program. This is the dynamic for a social-action model created by Beal et al., in their book *Social Action and Interaction in Program Planning* (1966). Beal et al., employ an apparent "theatrical strategy" in the articulation of the programming process. First, Beal et al., define the "interest" roles of the key "actors." Second, they analyze the social context in which "actors" will "perform" as agents for various interpersonal, societal and organizational institutions who wish to improve social progresss.

It is my understanding that Beal et al's multipurpose model focuses just as much as Cervero and Wilson's model on explicitly acknowledging the dominant interests of the cultural and political institutions that do not "constrain what is possible and desirable for the community." But who decides what desires are worthwhile pursuing when the community is pluralistic? The practice of program planning for adult education is always placed within an "interpretive" social or institutional arena where "interests" and "power" help decide desirable planning outcomes. The tragic flaw in both these planning models is their non-reflexive response to "respect differences" in the changing social dynamics of a postmodern globalized culture. Thus a new relationship to this culture seems to require an understanding of the plurality of voices within institutions for the diffusion of power/knowledge heretofore restricted to a

single analytical framework for the negotiation of "interests" of stakeholders who represent the dominant ideology. Foucault's thoughts imply a shift in focus to a geneology of education which would favor the recognition of subject construction drawing out the manner in which "subjectification" occurs. This would then lead to the acknowledgement of subjectifying practices and a resistence to them (Best and Kellner, 1991, p. 47). Program planning for adult education would then envision "a reconstructed view of adult education as a cultural field, one which is itself very diverse and which faces an increasingly diverse series of interacting consumer demands" (Westwood, 1991, p. 49).

When adult educators recognize openly that adult education is a multi-faceted power/knowledge nexus engaged in various "politics of representation," then a geneology of adult education can support an unmasking of those corporate planners and educators who carry narratives of exclusivity and hierarchy into these practices with their self-styled vanities.

Mephisto (1981) - West Germany/Hungary co-production. Directed by Istvan Szabo. Screenplay by Peter Donai from a novel by Klaus Mann.
CAST: Klaus-Maria Brandauer (Hendrick Hofgen), Krystyna Janda (Barbara))Karin Boyd (Nicoletta Von Niebuhr) and Rolf Hoppe (The General).

CHAPTER SIX

THE PARODIC DISCOURSE - INVENTING THE SELF

This chapter introduces the writings of Jacques Derrida and his commentaries on structure, sign and play in the relationship between literature and philosophy. As a literary critic he follows the "absurdist" theatrical practices of Ionesco and Beckett in the "deconstruction" of language and its meaning. His philosophical and literary activities expose the notion of "logocentrism" and the traditional criteria of Western philosophers from Plato to Kant who employ the term "logos" to construct certainty, identity and truth. Derrida contends that the written language writers use in constructing their arguments does not only convey their own thoughts and meanings. The use of language creates paradoxes with meaning, between the event and the structure, one's experience and the ideal, a system and its origin, and most notably between speech and writing. This parodic discourse will be focused upon an interpretation of Hal Ashby's film *Being There* (1979), based upon a screenplay written by Jerzy Kosinski from his novel of the same name. After the analysis of this film, implications for adult education as perceived from the perspective of Derrida's deconstructive approach to pedagogical texts will follow.

Existentialism and The Theatre of the Absurd

If we step back into history for a moment, a new problem developed during the 19th century from the combination of modern science and technology. As scientific reasoning and rationality replaced religious beliefs, philosophers saw the paradoxical and contradictory situation developing for modern societies and their cultures. The forces of science and technology were "dehumanizing people," stripping nature from any meaningful relationship to

human thought and existence. Icons and symbols were devalued, leaving modern human beings within a universe that was neutral, and at times alien. The vastness of the universe was found lacking a human purpose.

Science opened a Pandora's box of mechanical, electrical and chemical power that led to 20th century nuclear power. The impact of these discoveries left human beings alienated from one another. Now, human existence ceased to be sheltered within a stable framework of any religion or philosophy by which people could express their own aspirations toward psychic wholeness.

The loss of this human framework is depicted in the allegorical writings of Franz Kafka (1883-1924), particularly in his novel, *Metamorphosis* (1915). The nightmarish atmosphere reveals a man sensing he has lost his identity. He is caught in a sinister and impersonal bureaucratic world which is slowly dispossessing him of Being. Moreover, he has become a cipher, an unknown subject, a fragmentary object. This "crisis" of identity for a faceless person, trapped in an existential predicament, is not new in European literature.

In the 19th century, several European theologians and philosophers, namely Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, attempted to explain humankind's moral actions and temporality in relationship to one's consciousness of being and existence. Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) was a Danish theologian who undertook to write a series of books on what it meant to be a Christian. For Kierkegaard, it was the only way for a person to become a human being. In his major work, *Fear and Trembling* (1843), he produced a dramatic doctrine that emphasizes the contrast between human existence and the kind of existence possessed by natural objects. He reasoned that a person, because s/he is endowed with consciousness and will, differs from these objects. Furthermore, Kierkegaard argued that living or existence is different from theory, that existence must precede thought. Each individual has some

unique value because existence allows people to advance through various stages of consciousness to become aware of their relationship with God. Kierkegaard described these various stages as the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious. When a human being advances through an "existential dialectic" towards a consciousness of the temporal and eternal, reason was supplanted by what he called "a leap of faith."

Existence and nonexistence became the philosophical point of departure for the Existentialist thoughts of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus after the Second World War. They brought forth a concept that a person is a subjective, self-creating being who is not initially endowed with a character or with goals. For Sartre, a person must choose these through acts of pure chance. It is an irrational act, since reason cannot help individuals decide for themselves. Also, paradoxical relations between a person's own existence and another arise to confound the problem. For Camus, a person must accept the absurdity of the human condition. Then one's humanity is asserted through acts of rebellion against the social and political constructs that alienate and isolate the person from his or her community. His work includes *The Stranger* (1942), *The Plague* (1947), *The Fall* (1956), and *The Rebel* (1957). Through these literary works, Camus advances the premise that a person can free him or herself from the tyranny of existence when that person acknowledges the idea that life is without meaning of any kind. In repeating Shakespeare, existence may be "full of sound and fury," but it "signifies nothing." The loss of faith and spiritual enlightenment defined a form of theatre that expressed the human situation in a world of shattered beliefs.

The Theatre of the Absurd is derived from the writings of Camus, and the Existentialists. As explained by Camus in his essay on "The Myth of Sisyphus,"

> a world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty, is
> a familiar world. But in a universe that is suddenly deprived of
> imagination, of illusions, and of light, man feels a stranger. His is

an irremediable exile, because he is deprived of memories of a lost homeland and in such a situation, he lacks the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of Absurdity. (Camus, cited in Esslin, 1961, p. xix)

French playwright Eugene Ionesco defines the absurd as "that which is devoid of purpose. When Man is cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost: all his actions become senseless, useless, absurd" (*ibid.*, p. xix). This sense of metaphysical anguish, according to Martin Esslin (1961), and the senselessness of the human condition is, broadly speaking, the thematic thread in the plays of Beckett, Adamov, Ionesco and Genet. In this theatre of Beckett and Ionesco, the playwrights do not have their characters argue about the absurdity of the human condition, instead they present it through the actions of their central characters placed within some metaphorical stage images. Often what happens on the stage contradicts the dialogue between these characters, usually given a token name. Within these stage plays the complexity and contradictions of the spoken language begin to "deconstruct" the meaning of the world they create. Language directs the actions of the characters as well as creates the apparent reality of the world in which they live. On close analysis, for Ionesco and Beckett words seem to have no connection with an outer "reality" or with the concepts or ideas that guide human action. Thus, what is presented to the audiences, in the tradition of Dada or Surrealism, is a context that saturates the action of the stage play with meanings that are essentially ambiguous and enigmatic, stressing the impossibility of interpretation. Frequently, "reality" appears on stage as an exchangeable verbal or visual symbol, seemingly reversible.

Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1958) is a world-famous example of the "absurdist" attack on the logocentric framework of two-term oppositions that is basic to Western rational thought. Terms such as nature/culture,

being/nonbeing, thing/word, reality/illusion, master/slave, truth/fiction, male/female are inverted and taken apart by this playwright in order to contradict reason and logic thus displacing the sense of self-identity and transforming the behavior of each character who also plays his other self.

Kierkegaard's existential thoughts on lived experiences brought into question the seeds of doubt that seriously threatened the positivist notions of Enlightenment. Moreover, these questions slowly dismantled the philosophical Idealism created by Hegel and his belief system in a completely rational universe within the framework of "logocentrism." Logocentrism is defined by Derrida as part of the history of metaphysics that is characterized by a grounding of the central concept of "presence," or of a fixed origin based on the translation of the term "logos." Further, Derrida explains that this Western narrative is based upon "the determinations of being as *presence* in all sense of the word" (Derrida, 1970, p. 249). He argues that "it would be possible to show that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have the constant of a presence - *eidos, arche, telos, energeia, ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject), *aletheia,* transcendentality, consciousness, or conscience, God, man and so forth" (Derrida, 1970, p. 249).

Jacques Derrida on Deconstruction --- "Metaphysics of Presence"

"To some he is no more than a mischief–maker, to others he is the most revolutionary philosopher of the 20th century," states Richard Kearney in his introduction to Jacques Derrida (Kearney, 1986, p. 113). Derrida, born in Algeria in 1931, is a French Algerian of Jewish faith. He moved to Paris as a young student where he studied phenomenology with Emmanuel Levinas who introduced the writings of Husserl and Heideigger to his French students in the early 1950s. In the1960s and 1970s, Derrida had authored an impressive series

of original works, among them, *Of Grammatology* (1967), *Writing and Difference* (1967), *Disseminations* (1972), *Margins of Philosophy* (1972), and *Glas* (1974).

In these textual commentaries Derrida displays his anarchic and parodic play with traditional philosophical and aesthetic discourses. These writings demonstrate his own "deconstructive" tendencies learned from the phenomenological enquiries of Husserl and Heidegger, whose questionings began to undermine the notions determined by a 'logocentric' bias in Western metaphysics. Derrida takes upon himself the philosophical task of exposing "the ruling categories of an original presence as no more than substitutes or supplements of their own absence" (Kearney, 1986, p. 116). His penetrating commentary reveals that the idea of structure and center are rhetorically present but, like the emperor's new clothes, they are illusions to preserve the pretensions and the paradoxes of power, possessions and authority. Not only is the logic of identity and non–contradiction proven to be missing, but Derrida makes the observation that the "emperor" was not <u>there</u> *at all.* Against this imposing structure of logic, he brings into contestation the free play of language as an endless *differance* in the ways we construct meaning through the strategies of deconstruction (Carroll,1987, p. 151).

In his analysis of the work of the anthropologist, Claude Levi-Straus, Derrida (1970) takes to task Levi-Strauss' basic structural method. He asks: can all human behavior be regarded as a system of communication using a binary system of opposites? Derrida challenges the "metaphysics of presence" in so far as any interpretation of findings is both *retrospective* as a history that attempts to reconstruct an original meaning or "truth" and *prospective* in welcoming a variety of meanings and interpretations. Derrida suggests that the "metaphysics of presence" and "logocentrism" mask the differences and the ideological apparatus that supports the relationships between elements, terms,

and functions. By reversing the order of the relationship between an event and its structure, Derrida then asks: do events determine structures or do structures determine events? Signification in language, spoken or written, depends upon the concept of difference, or a dialectic between the terms used. When you focus upon one, you lose the other. Derrida suggests that the "metaphysics of presence" simultaneously conceals within it the idea of "absence," therefore confirming but also undermining interpretation. This undermining from within the written text is the first stage in deconstruction. It acts as a subversion of the "privileged" term; thus, "nature" is already subverted by the term "culture," and "speech" by "writing," "event" by "structure," "form" by "content," "theory" by "practice," "self" by "other," and so forth. The main effect of Derrida's technique of "close reading" a text dissolves the play of signifiers and destroys the assumption that a given text "has something to say." Like the Theatre of the Absurd, there is no guarantee that the actions of the characters are in any way determinate or significant.

What is deconstruction? "To "deconstruct" a text is to draw out conflicting logics of sense and implication, with the object of showing that the text never exactly means what it says or says what it means" (Norris, 1988:7).

Deconstruction comes out of Husserl's phemomenology, in that it produces "a mode of argument by raising certain problems about the nature of knowledge, meaning and representation. It suspends our common sense - intuitive attitude and asks what ultimate grounds exist, in the nature of (lived) experience or *a priori* knowledge, for those items of belief we standardly take on trust" (*ibid.*, p. 13). "Writing -- that 'dangerous supplement' -- perverts the natural order of things by substituting fictions and lifeless signs for the authentic living presence of speech" (*ibid.*, p. 9).

The techniques of deconstruction involve a textual analysis of rhetorical

figures of speech that structure a discourse or text. By focusing on binary oppositions within a text and showing how those oppositions are structured hierarchically, Derrida shows how no single meaning can be "read" or signaled by the text. Every text, through interpretation of these figures of speech, can be shown to contain a "dissemination" or "multiplicity of meanings;" through deconstruction of texts, the intentions of the author with the multiple meanings released within the text reveal the internal contradictions and complexities of written language.

The other method is to displace and reassert the oppositional terms and expose the non-hierarchical relationship of "difference." This strategy comes about through the linguistic work of Saussure who postulated the nature of the linguistic sign as being "arbitrary," thus divided into a spoken or written word – signifier – and the mental concept attributed to the signifier. Hence in a theory of language, there is no motivating reason for signifying a particular concept through a particular word. Agreement on the meaning of the word is thus based upon social convention. Words acquire value and identity not through any natural correspondence between signifier and signified but through any word's opposition to each other word within a system of interdependence in which both signifier and signified are determined by what they are not, or what Saussure calls difference.

Derrida often uses the neologism, differance to denote the dual function of writing as both a differing (each sign differs from the other) and deferring (the endless chain of signs that postpones any termination in some original signified). The concept of differance is crucial for Derrida as a philosopher. His task is to "deconstruct" traditions of Western philosophy by claiming it is based upon the notion of "presence" in which metaphysical concepts such as "truth," "being" and "reality" are determined in relation to an ontological center

or essence, origin or end. This logocentrism represses absence or difference for the sake of metaphysical stability. His work attacks such structures through the play of opposites: signifier/signified, presence/absence, nature/culture, literal/figural. This line of argument breaks down a text by revealing the incongruities in the logic or the rhetoric at play.

The following passage from Derrida's seminal essay, "Structure, Sign and Play" (1970), provides a formulation of deconstruction. He writes:

> From then on it was probably necessary to begin thinking that
> there was no centre, that the centre could not be thought of in
> the form of a being–present, that the centre had no natural locus,
> that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of non–locus in
> which a infinite number of sign–substitutions came into play.
> This moment was that in which language invaded the universal
> problematic; that in which in the absence of a centre or origin,
> everything became discourse --- that is to say, when everything
> became a system where the central signified, the original or
> transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system
> of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the
> domain and the interplay of signification *ad infinitum*. (p. 249)

By privileging the free play of *signification* over the presentational intentions of *perception* or the representational intentions of *imagination*, Derrida contrives to de–center all notions of original presence. The play of a sign, each one substituting for the other in an infinite chain, becomes for Derrida, an affirmation of the non–centre rather than a loss of centre that could return as presence.

Inventing the Self: Hal Ashly's *Being There* (1979)

In the film *Being There* (1979), based upon Jerzy Kosinski's satiric novella, the lead character is a middle-aged gardener called Chance. The role is played with brilliant understatement by Peter Sellers. The unique characteristic of Chance is the manner in which he has been raised. Being a somewhat slow-witted person, he has lived in seclusion in "the Old Man's" private mansion

and extensive garden. His major occupation is to tend this garden. A servant, Louise, serves him his meals each day. She is the only living contact he has with other people. During his lifetime the Old Man first gave him a radio to tune in the world outside, and later television sets, one in each room of the house. Through watching television, Chance is able to perceive this outside world, recognizing other people acting and reacting to one another. Through the magic of the remote control device, Chance switches from program to program like a child looking for entertainment of one kind or another.

Throughout the film Hal Ashby, the director, contrasts the images from different television programs with the film images of the characters in their own natural environments. In fact, the cross-cutting between the different television commercials, news broadcasts, Sesame Street, and others becomes a satirical commentary upon the happenings to Chance and others in the narrative. This emphasis on television is used as a political force that unites viewers later on as they watch what happens to Chance as he, himself, becomes a "media personality."

In this fashion, *Being There* is a modern rendering of Plato's myth of the cave, where images projected from the television monitor are similar to the shapes projected onto a wall inside a darkened cave. In both instances these images become a 'reality' of the world outside for people like Chance, who remain prisoners trapped by the projected images or shadows of reality. Not only does the director employ the metaphor of the cave throughout the story, but he prepares the viewer to notice the images cast on the frosted window of the main entrance as shadows cast by people entering or leaving the house. In fact, Ashby's *mise-en-scene* is lit to simulate a television soap opera, like the hospital dramas such as ER, where in many scenes we sense the "reality" of the setting because it appears to be authentic as opposed to the graininess of

the TV images when blown up to full screen size. Scenes in the Old Man's mansion and, in particular, the night scenes leading to the Rand Mansion are rendered cinematically as fragments of a larger reality. Even Chance is given to register the similarities of the framing of the outside world through the windows of the limousine. His first experience of traveling in a car is to state to Eve that "This is just like TV, only you can see much farther."

Chance is forced to leave the Old Man's mansion after his benefactor dies. As in the Cave metaphor, as Chance leaves his garden (of Eden) he is "dazzled" by the sunlight -- but is not completely blinded. As Kosinski (1970) writes, "So far, everything outside the gate resembled what he had seen on TV; the images were burned in his mind. He had the feeling that he had seen it all" (p. 24). Ashby plays upon the contrast between the wealthy interior of the house to the daytime squalid of the Washington ghetto that Chance enters. Music also adds to the narrative as Ashby contrasts lively 'street music' with a portentous score from "Also Sprach Zarathustra," to link the magnitude of Chance's journey to the stars with the theme from *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Intertextual references also abound such as the TV clip from Cheech and Chong's music-video about "Basketball Jones" who dribbles his way into a magical heavenly stardom.

These textual references to black basketball players, black and Hispanic gangs, and to the other homeless people, like Chance, are racial comments that are not developed but involve the poor and the homeless struggling in activities just to stay alive. But Chance, as a white man, easily walks out of the black ghetto into the main thoroughfares of Washington, D.C. Here Ashby decides to introduce a one-point perspective long shot of Chance moving up a central island towards the Capital building which looms in front of him, placing Chance front and center in the drama about to take place and as a

foreshadowing of things to come.

Ashby then produces the important sequence where Chance passes by a store-front window where a hidden video camera projects Chance's image onto a large TV monitor. For the first time, Chance is captured "on" TV. This image both startles yet confuses Chance as he realizes that he is both watching himself watching his image, but more than that he is being televised. In previous viewing of TV we saw Chance imitate actions of others on the screen. Seeing himself on TV he now realizes that he does not look like Chance, but like another person, a person dressed as a stately businessman. In his fear, he retreats from the window as he pulls out his remote control device to switch channels. But it does not work. As he steps into the street he is hit by a car.

By some random fate, this accident brings him into the care and safety of another benefactor, a woman named Eve. However, his inability to control the video picture is another foreshadowing of things to come as Chance will become involved with media events that he will not be able to control. It begins in the car ride to the Rand mansion, when he allows his name to become understood as one "Chauncey Gardiner." Thus, he adopts a new persona in hopes of finding sanctuary in the Rand household.

Chance has a series of friendly encounters with Eve's husband, Benjamin Rand, a wealthy financial leader and adviser to the President of the United States. Since Chance is dressed in expensive suits, clothes of the Old Man, it is taken for granted that he, too, is a wealthy businessman, who has run into bad times. Rand introduces Chance to the President, and in a brief meeting, Chance unwittingly expresses his experience as a gardener as a way of seeing how the economy will recover. Ironically, his garden rhetoric expressed through words such as "growth" and "seasons" are mistakenly taken as metaphors for capitalist economies. As such he is regarded as a wise and

influential businessman. In fact, his tacit wisdom is quoted on TV in a speech by the President. Now, Chance's words are greeted with applause and he is soon to become a new TV personality after his interview on a talk show.

As viewers we quickly realize the power of the media as Chance becomes the talk of the social-political scene in Washington. However, he is a mystery man. Newspaper research into his past as well as federal agencies cannot uncover his past as a "real" person. He had no birth records or history. Also he carries no identification, no driver's licence, medical cards, credit cards, or anything related to the capitalist system used for identification. It is as if Chaucey Gardiner never existed. He is a paradox to all since we know he exists, but there is nothing to prove that he ever existed. Yet he doesn't exist on paper. He is both "present" in one sense and yet "absent," in another sense.

A Derridean Reading of *Being There*

"Derrida's writings have been predominantly concerned with philosophical, rather than literary texts, although he would certainly reject the very terms of this distinction, arguing that philosophy --- like literature --- is a product of *rhetorical* figures and devices. What defines philosophy as a discipline, he argues, is precisely its reluctance to face this fact: its desire to ignore the omnipresence of figural language in the texts of its own past and present" (Norris, 1988, p. 7). This fact becomes the underlying humour behind the film narrative, *Being There* (1979). Kosinski's screenplay is based on his own novel. The translation into a film narrative insures that his clever parody deconstructs the power base of American politics as it moves against the grain through its use of covert meanings and intentions. They are supplemented by the actions and words of the central character, Chance. Since Chance is simple-witted, he speaks directly, possessing an unique authenticity and

truthfulness that leads other people to believe his presence and speech are metaphorically aimed towards an unmediated access to knowledge and wisdom.

Yet the parodic thrust of the film is to "deconstruct" the manifold ways in which language uses rhetorical devices and tropes to privilege meaning in simple communication between parties. The film narrative continues this parody in a straight forward manner, never falsifying the environment in which Chance encounters other members of the Rand household. The continual play on miscommunication occurs because of the constant desire by other leading characters to behold Chance as an educated man, and to grasp what he says as supposedly clever metaphors about the social, political and economic situations of the day. The constant mix-up between literal and figural speech parallels Derrida's interest in the privileging of the spoken word (signifier) over the written word (signified).

For Derrida, written language is a "supplement" to speech, that which is absent from written language. In a similar fashion, the image acts like a graphic member, which gives "presence" to an "absent" person. Even the sound of the spoken word shows that in all narrative films, we are in the presence of an illusion of the "real." As a supplement to the reality of existence, film images like written words have a double logic, in so far as they can add to something that is already complete, i.e., a person or thing. On the other hand, it is a substitute of something that makes up for the "lack" of the original. In this manner writing and image-making become ambiguous as to expressing a normative meaning. Writing becomes a reflective sign of unstable relationships as to what is meant, in reference to what is written or signified in words. Derrida's deconstructive approach attempts to show that language itself, whether visual or verbal, is always subject to the dislocating forces at work in "texts" which display a "metaphysics of presence" that subordinates writing

and image-making to the authenticity of speech and the "logos."

Plato and the shadows of the cave metaphor are in the age before sound films, similar to writing itself, a supplement to natural signs, but again they are illusions of presence, likened to dreams themselves, and they act that way. Thus Plato perceived them as corrupting influences - a false consciousness that makes the viewer a prisoner to them. Writing, argues Derrida, is a corrupting influence on the oral tradition; a double-edged device that is considered a "treacherous gift." Writing "brings along with it the power to dominate others through possession of a secret, mandarin skill; the authority to lay down laws and prohibitions which are always those of a privileged class, and can thus be used to prop up a system based on arbitrary differences of rank" (*ibid.*, p. 10).

In *Being There,* Chance is identified at first with the Old Man, who practices as a lawyer, or law-giver, a Godlike figure that has isolated Chance over the years from any contact with the outside world except through television. When Chance is forced out of the House and Garden after the death of the Old Man, we see how he becomes, by chance, involved with another powerful Old Man, also on his death bed. Here power is related to financial connections that implicate the President's Office. As an adviser to the President of the United States, Benjamin Rand accidentally allows Chance to meet the President and share with him his homilies about the economy. This meeting leads inadvertently to a guest appearance on a TV talk show that Chance was familiar with, resulting in a further "word play" and "reading " of his direct, literal speech-acts.

This agrees with Derrida's task of deconstructive readings which not only follow a desire for "word play" to support certain ideas of Western philosophy but also to understand "the way such ideas have worked to reinforce the values and assumptions of Western ethnocentric discourse" (*ibid.*, p. 16).

Critical Pedagogy and Television - Implications for Adult Education

Edward Sullivan (1987) contends that the mass-media of television is the most powerful cultural instrument in Western democracies in its ability to convey the dominant mythic structures of capitalism. He claims that television commercials, sitcoms, and news programs codify these mythic structures as part of the ideological symbol system of the cultural ethos that denies human agency and judgment in "naming the world." To counter-act the dominant cultural *story* and *vision* communicated continuously through television to viewers and consumers, Sullivan advocates a critical pedagogy to raise political awareness in adults to challenge the hegemony of such mythic structures through "deconstruction" (Sullivan, 1987, p. 57-75).

We may ask: what relevance does "deconstruction" have for analysis of film narratives that involve the predominance of television as a culture force within Western society? By locating these mythic structures residing in the immediacy of "television personalities, their images and institutions" we can call them to answer for the dominant cultural *story* and *vision* they transmit. The myth of television becomes a dynamic interplay of humankind's need for a cultural *story* which communicates to viewers a *vision* that supports a sense of inevitability to cultural values and ideological symbols. As part of our popular culture such symbols implicate us as adults, forming our identities and indoctrinating us as part of a consumer education. Barthes contends that these mythic structures change *historical events* into natural or essential happenings. Thus Capitalism, as an economic system with a *specific* history, takes on a *universal* essentialist cultural ethos similar to logocentric thinking.

Television is thus the communicator of "consumer capitalism" that is addressed to individual viewers not groups. Viewers learn to accept the judgment of "experts" and information that is fed on a daily basis to the

consumer/viewer without questioning. Technology, through extensive advertisements, is seen by viewers as the cultural actor that transforms our world seemingly without the judgment or help of human agency.

Progress still remains the dominant myth of Western enterprise. Thus it becomes a "necessary illusion" containing the hidden story line of a utopian world requiring movement and change. This, in turn, requires a new line of commodities for consumption once the old products have been acquired. The continual process of consumption is typified in the use of quasi-public events such as the World Series or the Super Bowl that extols the dominant symbols of a culture where competition and merit are rewarded in the "star system." These events are sponsored by the most powerful commercial interests in our society using commercial television to communicate the mythic structure of capitalism. Hegemony is re-enforced by constant repetition throughout the mass-media communications network.

Through critical pedagogy, Sullivan recognizes that one of the first steps necessary in educating and organizing adult students and educators is the need for a culture of resistance. He appears to take for granted that a liberal democracy can operate to control the self-interests of the corporations who sponsor commercial television. While challenges are arising from various oppositional movements in Western society such as the peace, ecological, and feminist movements who recognize the dangers of the consumer society, the educational journey to rethink our attitudes and values requires more than just reflection upon the effects of mass-media and problem-posing. It may require the force of public opinion to directly intervene in the development, sponsorship, production, and control of television programming. Such cultural resistance could provide a public forum moving us into a creative journey to rethink our attitudes in response to changing national and global conditions.

First, adult educators need to recognize that television is a "supplement" to the actual world for it can function both as an addition or as a substitute.

In response to the Kantian question, What is a frame?, Derrida re-interprets Kant's question in terms of deconstruction. Kant's response to the question of "What is a frame?" was that it is a parergon -- a hybrid form combining the outside and inside -- but it was not a mixture of both. A frame is "an outside called to the inside in order to constitute it as the inside" (Norris, 1988, p. 18). Like the "other," the frame gives the inside, or the "self," its identity.

Thus the implications for the adult learner and for adult education is that there is no way to simply draw a firm, authoritative line distinguishing the content of adult education from that which supervenes (follows or occurs in addition to) as a consequence of the interests, life histories, projections or investments that are brought to work by two contending parties.

By extending Derrida's point on the discourse on aesthetics and the relationship of the frame to the image or work of art, we can grasp that any theory on adult education is always and inevitably bound up with the interests that belong "outside" the privileged domain of pedagogical understanding. Moreover any liberal knowledge of adult education must have functioned, at least since the inception of this concept, as a pretext for imagining that such training or learning by adults gives them access to only apolitical, disinterested meanings and values. The purpose of a deconstructive reading with any particular text used in adult education classes would thus point out the covert interests and motives in "word play" which claims a "truth" within social relations in each and every lesson. This is borne out in the recent study by Quigley and Holsinger (1993) on the "ideological content" found within three widely-used ABE readers used in adult literacy education.

Thus, by a deconstruction of such reader-texts, we can say that they are "embedded" with meanings of the political culture in which they are inscribed. Then the tendency becomes one in which we, as adult educators, can begin to think of the politics of representation in adult education within our culture instead of trying to understand adult education as a political weapon. Here we draw out the power relations between the texts, the educator, the school, and the student in building or structuring the educative elements. Again we are confronted by metaphors that shape our identities and life style. Like Western philosophy, we become involved with the logocentric desire to bring out various meanings of interpretation through the system, method, edifice, or structure based upon an architectural model. Instead, if we follow Derrida's strategy and employ a re-thinking of the cultural crisis in adult education and visual representation in terms of deconstruction, we will be able to establish better (meaning different) ways to understand one another. Thus, we can see how the moment of adult education occurs when both student and teacher capture the interaction between the contingencies of history, chance occurrences, and events. Each factor becomes meaningful when we recall our lived experiences as "being there."

Being There (1979) - (United Artists/Lorimar) - Produced by Andrew Braunsberg. Directed by Hal Ashby, Screenplay by Jerzy Kosinski, from his novel. Cinematography by Caleb Deschanel. Edited by Don Zimmerman. Music by John Mandel. CAST: Peter Sellers (Chance), Shirley MacLaine (Eve Rand), Melvyn Douglas (Benjamin Rand), Jack Warden (President), Richard Dysart (Dr. Allenby), Richard Basehart (Skrapinov).

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FANTASTIC DISCOURSE - MYTHIC IMAGES OF SELF

In this chapter we will review the modern discourse on myth by Levi-Strauss, and its expansion by Roland Barthes on the codes in literature and ideology. Barthes' work on images and ideologies will be continued by the French sociologist, Jean Baudrillard, in his use of language/signifiers to supplant and override the use/exchange value inherited from Marxist political economy in a new society formed by the "simulacra." These discourses on mythic images of self and how they function in this new post-capitalist system will be considered through a science-fiction film narrative, *Solaris* (1972), as adapted and directed by Andrei Tarkovsky. The film is based upon a novel by Stanislaw Lem. After an analysis of this film, implications of such life histories, using the new electronic media of film and television, for adult education will follow.

Levi-Strauss, Barthes and Baudrillard on Cultural Symbolism

In his introduction to *Structural Anthropology* (1963), Levi–Strauss claims that the historian's goal differs from that of the anthropologist's. The goal of the anthropologist "is to grasp, beyond the conscious and always shifting images which men hold, the complete range of unconscious possibilities" (p. 23). He further states that the task of the social anthropologist is to dig beneath "representations and actions of men" in which political history "chronologically strings together dynasties and wars." Therefore he insists that although the historians' desire for a framework to interpret the past is commendable, their linear transitions from one historical event to another require, to some degree, the aid of unconscious elaborations by the

anthropologist who intuitively seconds the historian. Levi–Strauss writes about the road toward an understanding of mankind (sic):

> They (the historian and the anthropologist) have taken the same journey on the same road in the same direction; only their orientation is different. The anthropologist goes forward, seeking to attain, through the conscious, of which he is always aware more and more of the unconscious; whereas the historian advances, so to speak, backward, keeping his eyes fixed on concrete and specific activities from which he withdraws only to consider them from a more complete and richer perspective. A true two–faced Janus, it is the solidarity of the two disciples that makes it possible to keep the whole road in sight.
> (p. 24)

The importance of Marxist historical materialism on the thoughts of Levi–Strauss helps one grasp the notion that "man" (sic) collectively does not consciously know how the mind organizes the social structures of society, or what laws effect such social organization. Thus, consciousness does not determine human existence but, on the contrary, it is the social existence, as expressed through myths and rituals, that determines human consciousness.

But Levi–Strauss does not use this materialist law related to economic modes of production, nor a Freudian biological law of instinctual drives. Yet he seizes upon the Freudian sense of the unconscious when he stresses that language is a social phenomenon that obeys structural laws of logic at a linguistic level independent of the user (p. 57). Thus, the linguistic character of language shapes society which in turn shapes the character of human beings. This structural law of language in itself becomes the most formative feature behind human beings and their social and cultural constructs.

Levi–Strauss is indebted to the new linguistic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure which he called "semiology." Semiology means a science (logos) of signs (semeia). Saussure argued in his seminal book, Course in General Linguistics (1916), that language should be analyzed in terms of its internal structures -- as a formal system within itself -- and not in terms of its content

or what it refers to. His model identifies the formal laws that structure speech or spoken language. His basic method, now called *structuralism*, is comprised of binary pairs of opposites that informs structural analysis – between *langue* and *parole*, signifier and signified, system and realization, paradigmatic and syntagmatic, synchrony and diachrony. The simplicity of this structural method was appropriated by other structuralist thinkers in different forms of discourse: first by Levi–Strauss in the discourse on myth, then later by Roland Barthes on the semic codes in literature and ideology, and further by Jean Baudrillard in his use of sign/simulacra to override the use/exchange value inherited from the Marxian concept of historical materialism.

Besides his elemental researches into the three principles of kinship corresponding to the three universal principles of the human mind, Levi–Strauss concentrated more on the varying systems of myth within a syntagmatic "whole." He followed the notions of Saussure in that language is a system of signs made up of two components – a sound–image or signifier with a concept or signified. However, Saussure states that the bond between the two components making up a linguistic sign is <u>arbitrary</u>.He states that any object whatsoever can become a sign, naturally or artificially, provided it is employed to communicate a message. Further, Saussure understood language as a system of relationships between comparable elements. Most important is the place that the signifying unit occupies in the linguistic system that determines its value. He notes, "Language is a form – not a substance."

Levi–Strauss directly applied these three notions to his study of mythic systems and cultural symbolism. First, he understood these myths as sharing a mode of thinking – *la pensee sauvage* – (untamed thinking) common to all humans. Second, each symbol (signifier) in a myth was open to a great variety of different interpretations, rather than a given one. Third, he established a

systematic relationship among symbols that yield value. Levi–Strauss does not attempt to decipher the symbols or to describe the symbolic code. Instead, he is more interested in demonstrating how natural and social phenomena bring about intellectual stimulation and elaboration, what elements stand out for attention, and what kind of mental associations can thus be established for the social group. Contrary to classical thinking, Levi-Strauss recognized that signifiers led to other signifiers where language becomes meaningful dependent upon the point–of–view of the observer and what is of interest at that moment in time. "A spoken language is a *code* which determines what messages are available for (among other possible uses) circulation in the social network(s) to which speakers belong" (Sperber, 1979, p. 23).

When we shift Levi-Strauss' structural process to a work of art, we grant the premise that the artwork would be a mythic form derived from unconscious mental processes common to all cultures. These unconscious forces impose compatible structures upon an entire range of social or cultural symbolism, since myths represent the collective thought of the culture and what the culture has constructed about itself and its ways of experiencing life. Though some features of the artwork remain invisible to untrained observers, the elements in the art form gain meaning in their systematic relationship to the structure of the myth. Within this structure, the artist visualizes forms within the symbolic system. For Levi–Strauss, myths are crucial attempts by human beings to understand the contradictions between life and death, self and other, culture and nature, time and eternity, and so forth. In his analysis of the Oedipal myth, he pursues the argument "that myths do have a logic based upon binary oppositions" (Levi-Strauss, 1986, pp. 808-822).

Roland Barthes is best known for his contribution to literary criticism, where he applied "structuralist" principles to mass–media advertising and

popular culture. Barthes clearly outlines his structuralist philosophy in the introduction to his book, *Elements of Semiology* (1964), as follows:

> In his *Course on General Linguistics*, first published in 1916, Saussure postulated the existence of a general science of signs, or Semiology, of which linguistics would form only one part. Semiology therefore aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gesture, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, in not *languages*, but systems of signification. There is no doubt that the development of mass communications confers particular relevance today upon the vast field of signifying media, just when the success of disciplines such as linguistics, information theory, formal logic and structural anthropology provide semantic analysis with new instruments. (Barthes, 1964, p. vii)

Barthes's approach is focused upon the mythology of everyday life in the context of an analysis of signs in media. He found a plethora of images in mass advertisement and popular literature. As coded messages, Barthes took the opportunity to use the structuralist model to analyze "signifying systems" from avant-garde novels to a contemporary narrative film where every sign, whether a word, image or political slogan, operates within a symbolic cultural system. Barthes calls his method *translinguistics*, in which the meaning is derived from the interplay of signs within the cultural discourse. Further, these structural relationships are determined by the hidden codes of the language system, confirming Jakobson's maxim: "there are no things, only relations between things." What Barthes does then is skillfully replace the interpretative model of humanist psychology with his rendition of a structuralist sociology. Here the intentions of the author are irrelevant since it is again the myth that produces the system of social signification. Thus, Barthes succeeds in calling our attention to the unconscious codes that structure our modern culture.

In applying a structuralist approach to everyday myths, Barthes attempts to demystify the norms associated with the dominant ideology of capitalism. Barthes writes that "Society is a spectacle he can help to explain, by revealing

to us some of the mechanisms by which it obscures its artificiality" (Sturrock, 1979, p. 61). The important function of myth is the form it takes over the message as a sign. As well, the use of conventional forms within a particular historical period helps structure the social reality of the myth into a specific social purpose. "Barthes shared to the full Bertolt Brecht's belief in the contemporary need for a drama which *explained* society to people and did not merely represent it"(*ibid.*, p. 61). Thus, Barthes defines "mythology" within the confines of mass media and its manipulation of certain kinds of ideological discourses which govern the consciousness of our late modern society.

No signifier, natural or otherwise, remains innocent of a surrounding ideological connotation that gives the myth a "double" meaning, first, as an existing sign and second, as carrying hidden and covert messages that exist in the culture. Myths, for Barthes, are able to become "hidden persuaders," by a dialectical interplay of the messages and images. The constant saturation of images through television commercials, narrative films on video, and documentary TV news programs, displays the growing influence the new media has over the perception of our society and ourselves. Because television is backed by corporate economic and political power, radical changes in the ways information and knowledge are communicated to viewers, produce paradoxes and contradictions. While advancing the range of information and knowledge to viewers, the new information technologies, especially television, reduce the ability of the viewers to distinguish between illusion and reality.

The culture of television assumes certain mythic structures through the immediacy of "personalities, images and institutions of capitalism . . . the core elements of the mythic structure is a dynamic interplay of humankind's need for a cultural story (habitus) and a vision (change)" (Sullivan,1987, p. 58). Barthes (1973) contends that mythic structures change historical events into

natural or essential happenings. Thus, capitalism, as an economic system with a "specific" history, takes on a universal-essentialist cultural ethos.

Jean Baudrillard: The Age of Hyper-Reality and Simulacra

It is upon this stage in the new "information age" of media saturation that Jean Baudrillard comes into the spotlight. Baudrillard takes us one step further into the post-structuralist arguments of Louis Althusser based upon the re-readings of Karl Marx and historical materialism. These neo-Marxists argue that Marxism displaced two key propositions of modern philosophy, de-centering the notion of individual agency and the essence of being of modernist thought. Althusser argued that social and economic relations in the modes of production and the exploitation of labour power and the circuits of capital displaced the notion of Man (*sic*) at the center of modern philosophy.

This anti-humanist track has found an ally in Jean Baudrillard who titled his book on the "postmodern condition" as *The Mirror of Production* (1975) based upon the ecstasy of communication. It follows the surreal fantasies of Barthes, Bataille and Bunuel in which they allude to the postmodern moment as the *simulacrum* which conceals the truth of the 'real'; it is a site where images and signs fashioned by the advanced techno-culture stand for objects in themselves. Thus the "age of hyperreality" is created; a dream-like state where memories of the past act as a paralysis for future thought or action. The science-fiction film narrative, *Solaris*, brings us into contact with this "hyper-real" situation and the power of the *simulacra* upon the central character.

In an age of mass-media simulation, an epoch of pervasive "hyper-reality," Jean Baudrillard (1988) suggests it is impossible to distinguish between truth and untruth, "science" and "ideology." This state of being represents what psychologists would define as the schizoid temperament -- a

split-personality. The method and way of life is introspection. For a human being to understand himself or herself requires an analysis of all contradictory elements that go into the formation of the person's personality. The media or culture industry has created an excess of high-tech consumer machines that can visually reproduce electronically any documentary or filmed narrative which subjectifies our emotions and experiences. These video and film images interpenetrate our daily lives with their "virtual realities." In this manner these media machines inhabit our consciousness and colonize our imaginations and desires (McCaffery, 1991, p. 5).

An example of the cultural schizophrenia overwhelming many German survivors after the end of the war in 1945 is represented in the Wim Wenders' film, *Kings of the Road* (1976). The central character is the postmodern hero, an unadaptable man, a wanderer and dreamer trapped in an "illusion of reality." The history of the past was created for him by American motion pictures. As he discovers this "past" history of Germany through cinematic representations, before and after the rise of Hitler, he comes to the realization that the "Yankees have colonized my sub-conscious." The amnesia that befalls this man is visually depicted as a constant disruption between the social and political conditions in West Germany and the filmic representations of past lives. Here there is a denial of his identity causing a "restlessness" where the man is continually forced to live in a threatened state of anxiety.

Jean Baudrillard (1983) suggests that the Western world has already reached the saturation point of information through media exploitation. He states that the "mirror of production" has replaced human interaction with "reality," diminishing our contact and understanding of the complexity of "reality." In this present state of *simulacrum*, Baudrillard fears that when the "map engenders the territory" and everything is a generational copy of

everything else We find "a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality;
of second–hand truth, objectivity, authenticity . . . a panic–stricken production
of the real and the referential" (p. 10–12). This is the space of the hyper-real. It
breaks down the interconnectedness of humankind with their own perceptions
of themselves, creating a "political unconscious" (Jameson, 1981) that raises
the individual to the collective level where narrative discourses operate to
repress "revolution." Knowledge and information now "function as a form of
social control in diverse communication contexts" and images of identity
conceal the discourses of a late capitalist, postmodern world of endless
production and consumption.

Critical Adult Education and Film Narratives

What an adult viewer or spectator realizes about myth making is that it
is an integral part of identity-formation. Further, any liberation of human
beings from this "historical" context requires a critical educational reflection,
helping the adult learner transfer and re-organize the past to allow the adult
learner to re-function according to the needs and desires of his/her own
existence. A contextualist film critique can situate such film narratives within
an existing social/political conflict that is not just a model of the monolithic
"dominating ideology."

A critical adult education or pedagogy poses questions as to the social
and cultural benefits of images presented through this new electronic media.
In wanting to be informed and educated by such media, adult educators need
to broaden their scope and critically appraise the widespread social/political
narratives whose power structures determine the institutional design and
shape of the "messages" before we lose the capacity to produce knowledge for
ourselves in different communities of understanding. In a critical definition of

adult education, Brookfield (1985) states that "through a spirit of critical reflection . . . adult participants are prompted to consider the ways of thinking and living alternative to those they already inhabit" (p. 48).

For this reason, a more literary and cultural analysis of high-tech communication through a multi-perspective theory of film narrative or story-telling can help address the problems created by a "postmodern" informational society. When considered by adult educators in classroom situations, the concept of narrative operates on two levels: as a communication phenomenon that culturally constructs human identities and role-playing and as a social phenomenon that reinforces or challenges the social order (Mumby, 1993, p. 2).

Therefore, narrative theory recognizes the open-ended nature of knowledge claims. It examines the shifting terrain of meaning that makes up the social/political world and acknowledges the difficulty of making any universal claims concerning the nature of the human condition. It also acknowledges that as researchers and theorists we are never neutral observers of behavior, because of the role we play in the construction of the social reality in any narrative, large or small (Mumby, 1993, p. 3). The inter-relationship between narrative and knowledge claims is stated by the post modern ethnographer Stephen Tyler:

> Because postmodern ethnography privileges discourse over "text,"
> it foregrounds dialogue as opposed to monologue, and emphasizes
> the cooperative and collaborative nature of the ethnographic situation
> in contrast to the ideology of the transcendental observer. In fact, it
> rejects the ideology of 'observer-observed,' there being nothing observed
> and no one who is the observer. There is instead the mutual, dialogical
> production of a discourse, of a story of sorts (1986, p. 126).

This raises the fundamental question as to what becomes of the authorial voice and "the various ways narratives function to construct the social reality that constitutes the lived world of social actors" (Mumby, 1993. p. 5). The integration of film narratives into classroom situations can either

allow the viewer to discern the social-political positions adopted by an authorial voice or see how the construction of the diegesis encodes relations of power and domination. Film narratives are social/political artifacts that incorporate important social and political issues through use of ideology, rhetoric and genre. Because of their political intentions, it is important for adult learners to analyze, interpret and critically reflect upon their ideological messages and effects. The reading of film narratives also requires an analysis of the issues of gender, race and class that are ideologically formed through images, genre codes, and myths in popular culture.

Simulacra in Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (1972) --- Illusion/Reality

The science-fiction genre consists of a range of film narratives where contemporary myths are created or "dreamed up" to provide us with imaginary representations of ourselves and our identity in a future world. "Reality" and "experience" undergo imagistic transformations in these film narratives. As systems of discourse, these narratives "reproduce" and "replicate" us in the hidden social and political constructions of power as technology and culture conflate into utopian schemes. They become unseen hegemonic forces of "late capitalism" that control and privilege one set of vested interests against other competing forces. Some science-fiction film narratives attempt to challenge and contradict these existing myths of cultural power. Other voices struggle for equal representation and distribution within this new cultural phenomenon. Thus, what has come to be called "a postmodern condition," becomes one in which an imaginary science-fiction scenario indicates an erosion of confidence in a prevailing Modernist (and Soviet) hope for a coming socialist Utopia. It is usually symptomatic of the malaise of the Modernist project. In *Solaris*, the opening sequences deal with problems confronting scientists on a space station

where a scientific-dominated communist society is characterized by two major features: "the transformation of reality into images" through a network of televised media images and the simultaneous "fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents" (Jameson, 1988, p. 28).

Briefly, the film concerns a group of scientists aboard a Soviet space station orbiting the planet Solaris. After a number of strange encounters with an alien intelligence, namely, the Solaris Ocean, Kris Kelvin, a psychologist, is sent to investigate the situation by the State possibly to halt the experiments. The opening scenes establish the basic antagonistic battle between the cold scientific viewpoints of Kelvin against those of Andre Berton, a helicopter pilot who reported to the High Commission a surrealistic sighting he witnessed on Solaris. Even though this is a stereotypical opening for the science-fiction genre, Tarkovsky carefully minimizes the plot and maximizes the emotional forces at play within this narrative, allowing the external spectator to interact with these "mysterious forces" just as they are experienced by the three scientists living inside the space station. Tarkovsky uses a series of moving or floating camera shots throughout the film that track and pan in long takes creating a surreal, dream–like cinematic experience.

Tarkovsky's earlier epic film, *Andrie Roublev* (1967), is a story of an icon painter who believes that "all great art is at the service of something beyond itself and does not assert itself, it serves another, higher and communal idea" (*Sculpting in Time*, 1989, p. 38). The emphasis is similar in *Solaris* where again, three men, isolated in the small space station, are confronted with an enigma about making Contact with an intelligent alien life form. In his adaptation of Stanislaw Lem's novel, it is clear in looking over the other films of Tarkovsky that "he was attracted by the novel's moral implications and psychological insights rather than its fantastic events," (Johnson and Petrie, 1994, p. 100)

since the central protagonist, Kris Kelvin, has the opportunity to relive a past in order to start a new beginning. The contact with others in isolation served Tarkovsky's spiritual aspirations, within the science-fiction genre.

This moral transformation of the hero, Kelvin, alters the meaning behind Lem's adoption of a Nietzschean philosophy towards encounters of this kind. While Lem's thoughts focus in the novel upon the limits of human knowledge, he is able to critique anthropomorphic thinking. The love story in the novel is desperate, but as it develops it helps explain what Kelvin faces when he attempts to "do all he can to stay human in an inhuman situation. Noble it may be, but it isn't going to get you anywhere" (Lem, 1987, p. 151). Lem simply strips Kelvin of belief in "final solutions." What Lem tells us in this parable is the difficult realization that in the age of relativity and post-cybernetic sciences, there is no closed reference system to depend upon. By sending a psychologist into this new science-fiction space world, Lem can illustrate that human sciences are polyvalent, and their methodologies can lead us into vast unfathomed areas of new findings, techniques and orientations -- to a new cognition, which will give humankind new sets of contingencies to choose from. As Nietzsche understood at the beginning of the 20th century, modern sciences are open ended and the possibility of witnessing other "cruel miracles" are still to come.

In contrast to the thematics of the novel, Tarkovsky's film takes this science-fiction world and turns it into a vehicle to display a humanistic statement of values through the power of love in such an inhuman environment. Working on the binary split between science/humanity, Tarkovsky emphasizes the family as the center of human endeavor. When we first meet Kelvin, we recognize the detached and isolated air about him. Even when he is being reproached by his Father, after quickly dispatching the older

Berton and his hallucinating story about Solaris, we see his dilemma in the film as one of separating his "scientific and objective side" in favor of a humanistic one within a set of moral consequences. Hari, his resurrected wife, becomes the sacrifice through love that follows most of Tarkovsky's films. Lem's advanced thoughts on a postmodern world are truly irreconcilable with the film adaptation by Tarkovsky. In fact, the space library is dressed with art objects and paintings of modern times, establishing a "human" presence in the midst of future exploration and scientific experimentation.

This setting visually dramatizes how far Tarkovsky moves away from the morally absurd situation found in the novel. The director clearly establishes this central learning space as an attempt to continue a dialogue with the past and with a humanistic ideal that "man needs man." The theatrical props Tarkovsky features are Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Breugel's painting of *Return of the Hunters*, and the choral music of Bach's Fugue in F minor.

The sense of naturalism presented by the photographic image is not altered throughout the film but Tarkovsky tampers with the appearance of objects by changing camera movements to capture the "dream-like" quality of the image. All the characters in the film then become part of the dream as presented in the space sequences. Because the dream appears to be real, we appear to enter the space of "hyper-reality" for the mystery of how it does happen creates tension in our rational mind. The constant shifts from "hyper-reality" or dream state to "reality" is achieved also by altering the time–space continuum in which the characters function.

In the opening sequences of the film, we experience a detailed presentation of a summer landscape featuring a lake, marsh and home where the first action occurs. This continuous movement of the camera in conjunction with the action of the characters in the frame captures the sense

of real time and space. Instead of using montage editing to control the attention of the viewer, Tarkovsky emphasizes the temporal nature of reality making the filmic image look real but at the same time having this image possess the qualities of the "poetic" or imaginary.

Tarkovsky has claimed that the notion of time is the most important function of cinema, since film can conserve time forever. Thus, in keeping the literal sense of time within the cinematic image, Tarkovsky can quietly evoke strong emotional responses as well as contemplation in the viewer. Viewers are encouraged to search for something more that the image as a representation of reality and to reflect upon what they perceive on the screen. The cinematic images created by Tarkovsky allows them to become involved in the meanings hidden beneath the narrative level.

The realism of this kind of surreal cinema defies the orthodox concept of narrative cinema as a linear unfolding of representational events that reach a diegetic conclusion. On the contrary, *Solaris* begins with a sense of place and realism of our physical world but it is replaced by video images on a screen that indicate many features associated with the notion of the surreal. Tarkovsky evokes the surreal world in his film to express the true function of the mind or thought. According to Andre Breton, founder and guru of the French Surrealists in the 1920s, surrealist images are released as dream images by the artist in the absence of all control exerted by reason and consciousness of all moral preoccupations. They are created by the irrational forces of fear and desire. It is certainly not a coincidence that Lem, the novelist, brings back the past through Andre Berton, a play on the name Breton.

The video imagery displays a surrealistic sea which Berton describes as the Solaris Ocean. It is assumed to function as a gigantic brain capable of thought. It is used by Tarkovsky as an analog to parts of the human brain

where it functions intuitively and irrationally outside of logic and control. However, the radiation from the Solaris Ocean has adversely affected the three men on the station and that is of great concern to the scientists. We also learn that three men are left on the space station hovering over Solaris - the astrobiologist, Sartorius; the cyberneticist, Snouth (Snow), and the psychologist, Gilbarian, who talked about making Contact with the Ocean.

When Kelvin speaks to Berton after the video presentation, we learn that Kelvin is not impressed by Berton's report. Moreover, he is insensitive to Berton's argument that you don't destroy what you don't understand. Kelvin takes the scientific position that he cannot be swayed by emotions. Kelvin's father is enraged that his son has driven Berton off and protests that Kelvin has not understood the fragile nature of the situation. This argument allows the viewer to ponder what will happen to Kelvin when he arrives at the space station. It sets off the next dream sequence illustrated by the alternation of lights and darks when Berton's cab enters a tunnel in the ride back to the city.

The cab ride, with its attendant flicker effect, is carried out in silence yet it is repeated several times. We see Berton's son appear out of the darkness in the back seat as he places his head next to his father. The cab, like a space vehicle, plunges both the viewer as well as the cab's occupants into a dark, mysterious, unexplainable, and absurd universe. As a cinematic effect, Tarkovsky is able to create a "virtual reality" of traveling through space/time during this extended sequence. For the viewer it is a prelude to the mystery of space travel and the displacement of human beings trying to make contact with an unknown intelligence in an alien environment.

Evening in the city becomes a montage of lights moving in various highways. Then Tarkovsky brings us back to the House and the shift in tonality and color again places the cinematic images into a dream–like black and white

environment. The symbolic image of death is presented by a horse that enters the space. A dark star–filled sky brings us to the lift–off. The close–up of Kelvin's eyes as he goes into space travel is akin to the dream process of losing one's balance and falling into a trance. The unexpected changes from black and white imagery to color forces us, as viewers, to continually make associative links with what we consider as illusion or "simulacra" and what we will consider as a true representation of the world.

Tarkovsky continues this cinematic strategy of moving from dream to "reality" throughout the film as if to emphasize the ambiguity between the spiritual and the material. Once Kelvin lands on Solaris, he continues this strategy when he locates Gilbarian's cabin. Inside, he finds a note instructing him to play back Gilbarian's video tape of his last hours. Tarkovsky contrasts the colors in the room to the large black and white images on the screen.

The sinister room is prefaced by the child's drawing of a man with a rope around his neck and then a picture of the wild horse on the wall as the camera completes its pans of the wreckage. Gilbarian's message is cryptic and he does not mention the presence of "guests." Yet he wants Kelvin to know right from the start that he is not insane. He warns Kelvin that if the same thing happens to him, he must realize instantly that these "guests" or "phantoms" are material and not hallucinations, and furthermore, that he has not gone mad. Then, to add more mystery to the situation, Tarkovsky allows the camera to follow Kelvin as he peers through the black porthole into the ominous and mysterious, black Solarian Ocean beneath the space station.

The "radiant appearance" of his dead wife, Hari, after he wakes up in his room, forces Kelvin to believe what Gilbarian had told him. Yet Kelvin quickly decides to destroy this guest, as he is gripped by fear, and does so, sending her off in a rocket. But Snouth knows she will re-appear later on, and she does.

Kelvin then realizes that his thoughts about her must have enabled her materialization. The distrubing deaths and reappearaces of Hari bring this film into tragic focus. Tarkovsky's spiritual quest for meaning in human affairs rests upon her sacrifice. By bringing such power to dreams, images and the unconscious mind into play in his film, Tarkovsky conception of cinema manifests itself, one which can generate a sudden moment of revelation for the viewer as well as Kelvin, the central character. This intuitive grasp of the human condition, like an epiphany, occurs when we witness the closing of the film, where the filmmaker attempts to resolve the oppositions and ambiguities between dreamstates and "realities" created by images upon human perception.

While *Solaris* outwardly appears to be a film narrative interested in the scientific investigation of strange events happening on a space station, Tarkovsky's film takes the viewer into this strange alien environment as a means to discover the subjective feelings of his characters. This journey, then, is a psychic exploration into the subconscious desires and thoughts of a human being at sea without the support of logic or reason. He demonstrates how the material world dissolves into the psychic world of dreams and memories. Once here, we come into contact with the materialized projections of the human mind. They are called "Phantoms" by Freud – the dark intruders mysterious emanating from the unconscious dream world of the mind.

When the three men and Hari convene in the library to celebrate Snouth's birthday, his late arrival turns into a drunken attack on the efforts of the space station. Berating Sartorius, Snouth argues that "we don't want to conquer space. We (humans) want to expand endlessly. We don't want other worlds, we want a mirror. We are in a position of a man striving for a goal he doesn't want. We are turning a science project into a bedroom farce."

When Sartorius leaves after this assault, the birthday party is all but

over for the drunken Snouth. Yet for the viewer it takes a curious turn since the viewer knows that weightlessness will soon occur on the ship. As Snouth said, "We want to seek contact but man is in a foolish position of striving for a goal he fears and doesn't even want." At the moment of weightlessness, candles magically rise in the air and float next to the lovers as Bach's choral fugue is heard to underscore their union. The following montage becomes a series of disconnected dream images summarizing the associational ideas Tarkovsky has selected for his film. Like his hero, Kris Kelvin, Tarkovsky cannot disengage himself from his Russian Orthodox past. Like a nostalgic Don Quixote, he is a man chasing unreachable dreams though the winter landscapes of Breugel, the remembrace of the warmth of a fire in childhood and the embraces of father and mother at home. These are contrasted to the mysterious forces of nature and the Solarian Ocean as the origin of intelligence. Themes of flight/escape associated with dream imagery become a repetitive motif in Tarkovsky films.

The religious dimensions in this film require further exploration as Tarkovsky seeks to understand the subliminal experience of the unconscious dream world. In each Tarkovsky film, the dream content mirrors the central character's frustrated mind, his desire to escape from something oppressive and fearful into something that offers "spiritual revelation" and freedom.

While this quest for some kind of "revelation" permeates the film, Lem's novel is philosophical enough to realize the weaknesses in any argument that assesses everything in terms of human values in an inhuman situation. This major theme ends the novel. Through the contact with the Solarian Ocean, Kelvin is given a second chance to re-visit his moral and personal traumas, including a troubled Oedipal ordeal with his wife Hari, who is resurrected as a "simulacra" or "Double" (or a "guest" as Lem calls them). Kelvin finally understands how the Ocean resurrected his past according to the desires

and wishes he consciously or unconsciously encoded in the encephalograph. Thus, for him and the other men on the Solaris station, the Ocean responded accordingly to their own personality and perhaps sense of guilt. Gilbrarian, Kris' mentor, committed suicide in order to avoid becoming insane. Sartorius maintains privacy at all costs, and Snouth (Snow) attempts to find ways to restrain the "guests" in order to maintain his own sanity.

In the novel, Kris Kelvin realizes that love and personal beliefs are necessary for a scientist to maintain his mental balance but he also learns, after the disappearance of Hari, something else which he relates to Snouth in a confession: "I will not give myself completely to them, as I shall never again give myself completely to anything or anybody" (Lem, 1970, p. 196). In realizing his dilemma, this open-ended decision by Kelvin to hesitate from any final commitment brings forth his "shattering of eschatological illusions" which human beings in the past relied upon. For Lem the existence of a universe unresponsive to human suffering signifies that human values and their moral underpinnings are just part of an imaginative construct of a humane universe.

Whatever affirming life-force the Ocean on Solaris represents, Lem argues that it is not a god because it repeats itself. Kelvin now believes it is feasible to imagine believing it is an evolving god, an imperfect god, "a god whose passion is not redemption, who saves nothing, fulfills no purpose -- a god who simply is" (p. 199). On the other hand, Tarkovsky's film adaptation of Lem's novel imprints his quest to present the science/humanist dichotomy.

Solaris, as a science–fiction film, has been compared to Stanley Kubrick's *2001 - A Space Odyssey* (1968), but this comparison is obvious when you talk about space technology and the race between the Soviets and the Americans during the Cold War. Yet Tarkovsky's themes are much broader in terms of the moral and metaphysical crises facing scientists and "modern man" at the

dawning of the Space Age. Tarkovsky wants to re-establish the importance of life-affirming human values through the love story of Kris and Hari in a universe that is either indifferent or hostile. However, Tarkovsky presents the scientific world as narrowly focused upon the pursuit of materialistic goals. Tarkovsky questions these scientific goals since it forgets to observe the damage it has caused the modern world, especially when scientific objectivism and logic alienates human beings from any recognition of the spiritual dimensions of the human condition.

Critical Reflection on Film Narratives as Life Histories

Critical adult educators (Mezirow, 1991, Brookfield, et al., 1987,) have entertained the idea that life histories can reveal subjective learning experiences that become a relevant context for research into adult education (Dominice, 1990, p. 194). As an educational biography, I believe that *Solaris* presents the viewer with a life history that functions on the reflections of the central protagonist. Watching this film narrative, we, as viewers, witness the re-construction of the past as a scientist moves into the challenges of future space exploration. Kris Kelvin as a psychologist travels to the planet *Solaris* concerned with testing out a psychometric model related to the strange happenings reported to Soviet scientists. His mission is to evaluate the relevance of the "sightings" of Berton, and to report on other strange events now happening on the space station. Once aboard the space station, his mission is interrupted by his own contact with a person from his past. This intervention by a "guest" allows Kelvin to become an explorer of his own psychic experiences, which occurs as he reflects upon his past personal traumas with his wife who has re-appeared as a "simulacrum." Yet as a scientist he knows this is not possible, for Hari is dead. This new "Hari" is not

Hari; she is a manifestation of a projection from Kelvin's mind.

The visual materialization of this woman brings about a reconsideration by Kelvin of the emotional/affective aspects from his personal past. This imaginative resurrection of his wife at the space station is the trigger that allows Kelvin to reflect critically about the personal "meanings perspectives" he has constructed about himself and his own family over time.

I believe that Tarkovsky's interpretation of *Solaris* can be analyzed as a psychological probe into the ways reflective thinking in adult education reaches beyond the borders of the empirico-analytical models. "Reflection-in-action" is the phrase developed by Donald Schon (1983) to study the methods adopted by professional practitioners when they come upon life situations that are unique, ambiguous, unstable, and far from certain.

As a life history, *Solaris,* introduces the viewer to the way the director structures his film about a person facing such a life situation where previous knowledge and beliefs are challenged. The application of "scientific" or "technical rationality" appear to be non-operative for the central protagonist, Kris Kelvin. New intuitive approaches are thus employed reflectively to gain knowledge and comprehension about this new situation which confronts him. By bringing into play relevant theories-of-action, he accidentally has the opportunity to examine his past "self" as object. While it is similar to other theraputic approaches used by adult educators, the life history approach to adult education "helps adults become more aware of and more responsible for their own learning processes" (p. 196). These theories-in-action provide the protagonist with the interpretive tools to probe, metaphorically, the new situation in search of an explanation, based upon feedback from the persons he encounters in reflective thought.

Solaris is a simple experiment in narrative to demonstrate how scientists

continue a scientific research program when their personal lives are being directly influenced by the unknown forces at play in the space station. Kelvin, the central protagonist, focuses upon his own life history when the appearance of Hari, his dead wife, suddenly surfaces in his room at the station. She has no "history;" yet her mind is capable of reading the thoughts of Kelvin, and by this process she begins to reconstruct her own identity as Kelvin's wife.

The process of reconstruction of his past life is aided by photographs and a home movie (video) that introduces not only Hari as his wife, but also earlier episodes of Kelvin's life at home with his parents. As this past life is introduced to the viewer, we learn, with the new "Hari" about the life style, and the environment of home which became meaningful to Kelvin. Yet, at first, Kelvin believes the entire resurrection of his wife, Hari, is but a dream; she is just an hallucination. But his other colleagues at the station, Sartorius and Snouth, also are contending with their own "guests" at the same time as Kelvin is. However, Kelvin is given advice from his former mentor to realize that whatever is happening to him, to remember that he is not gone mad!

The startling appearance of this apparition into a full-life sized replicant who appears to be more real than her former self allows Kelvin to frame his problem of guilt over the "original" death of Hari before his space mission. Now we can readily understand this whole narrative as a parable, allegorically structured to bring a man back to his former life when at the start he appears at first to be cold and lifeless, a person lost in his own traumatic existence. The film demonstrates the strategies he first employs to deal with this problem, the growth of his own intimacies with his "guest," and the regard for his own identity based upon the way he frames his role with the other scientists.

Kelvin goes through different stages of awareness as the film progresses, but the plot is not as important as the qualities of humanity that begin to

return to Kelvin. Tarkovsky uses the group meeting at the library to explore how the process of critical self-reflection is undertaken. The debate clarifies what each scientist understands about the "world" of Solaris they now inhabit, and explores the belief and value systems held by each person. Hari, as a "guest," states that "we emerge from your memory or your imagination -- we are only an instrument to study your reactions" (Lem, 1970, p. 51). When challenged by Gilbarian that she is just a replicant, a copy, a double, Hari responds, saying, "I'm becoming human."

The "real" experiences for Kelvin on Solaris climax with the sudden disappearance of these "guests" from the space station after a second electric encephalograph had been radiated into the Ocean. Like a dream suddenly broken, Kelvin re-appears in front of his house on Earth. He has returned home having experienced a view of himself that he could not have imagined. Or was the life history just a play of his imagination? The "real" world and his reflection-in-action on his personal traumas, appear to leave Kelvin with a new attitude and perspective towards humankind, and especially to the "cruel miracles" of life. This "re-formed" Kelvin is apparently chastened, for he falls to his knees in front of his father, a re-enactment of the prodigal son's return.

As viewers, we can also reflect upon the outcome of this film narrative. Has Kelvin returned a more knowledgeable person who can now deal with life and death situations of loved ones? Does he now understand his own responsibility to his family and to his social identity as a scientist? Do we, as an audience, gain some knowledge in understanding ourselves and the changing world we live in? Do we, as Lem suggests, enter a cybernetic world in order to realize there is no "utopia" -- no ideal closed reference system? Yet in the context of adult learning, Kelvin appears to have resolved his own inner struggle for a more autonomous life, freeing himself from other people's

expectations yet remaining culturally bound to the beliefs and values of his family. From his first arrival on *Solaris*, the scene of disarray and death that faces him challenged his own abilities and knowledge to deal with this critical life-threatening situation.

Only when we see his own values and beliefs surface do we understand that such validity testing helps assure us that he does realize his own identity. It is through the opportunity to re-examine his own attitudes, and the ability to locate his own space, that he recognizes the "second chance" he has been given. His reflection-in-action not only challenged his values but enriched what he already knew. We do not know the next chapter of his life, but as viewers what is learned from this film narrative indicates the ways adult learners can find their own identities through the recognition "others."

For Kelvin, he seems to have gained a new set of contingencies to choose from as he has learned that science cannot dismiss the traditional life of his father or its cultural foundation. It is from this base that an adult learner and practitioner builds new life experiences within social expectations. The mysteries of life are still present, but the human capacity for love and meaningful life-affirming experiences appear ever present in our world.

I think research through life histories facilitates adult learning because the adult learner becomes more conscious that all learning is necessarily dependent upon how, what, and why a person learns in contact with others in the context of the human condition. Tarkovsky's film recognizes the old adage that "the true responsibility of humankind is to be human." When other people appear as "strangers" from oneself, we must learn to love and live with them.

Implications for Adult Education

The integration of film narratives as part of a critical adult education

allows the adult learner the opportunity to discern the social-political positions adopted by an authorial voice. Further, the adult learner is able to experience a life history and relate how the construction of the film's diegesis uses images to encode relations of power and domination. Film narratives are social/political artifacts that incorporate important social and political issues through use of ideology, discourse, rhetoric, and genre. Because of their political intentions, it is important for adult learners to analyze, interpret and critically reflect upon their ideological messages and effects, especially as they reach the viewer both emotionally and intellectually. A coherent reading of film narratives also requires an analysis of the issues of gender, race and class that are ideologically formed through images, genre codes, and myths in popular culture. This merger of films and videos with traditional educational practices and techniques raises a number of research questions. How are critical skills developed by adult learners through the exposure to the cultural texts of film narratives? How can adult learners become critically aware of the ways film narratives mediate and transform "reality?" In what ways may instructors use film narratives to support or challenge the dominant ideology of the narrative? How does "critical theory" and critical analysis fit into the learning strategies for adults? Should film narratives encourage a subversive element in adult education? Would certain film narratives encourage better learning skills in different adult vocational training programs?

In my argument, science-fiction myths such as *Solaris*, contained within the film narrative, reflect distinct social/political beliefs and values that interpret and organize life experiences. In myriad ways they impose perspectives and identities on a diverse group of people. Second, film narratives are now emerging as part of the overall educational system in (post)modern life, and like other art forms, use images and sound to re-interpret the learning process

so that different people can re–experience their own past histories or lived experiences. Third, filming can become a thinking process that can allow every adult learner the experience of remembering re-framing, re-positioning, re-setting, re-locating, re-exploring, and re–examining, and re-constituting their own biases and value judgments of their own personal perspectives. These filmic experiences can also challenge or confirm a person's relationship to "others," partly through revival of memories, past histories, and through fictionalized dramas. It is through the experience of the dramatic event, where emotion and argument are blended into a desire of the viewer to "look" into oneself more clearly, a person's thinking and imagining may undergo a transformation of the values and beliefs we share together (Brook, 1968:123).

Solaris (1972) - Colour - 35mm in Russian with English subtitles. 167 mins. Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky - Distributed by Creative Exposures. Screenplay adopted from the science-fiction novel *Solaris* by Stanislaw Lem.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ROMANTIC DISCOURSE --- LACKING IDENTITIES

In the previous chapters I have explored some of the key discourses of post–structuralism from the strategy of the formation of the I in the mirror phase of self/other (Lacan); the interpretations of "regimes of truth" in the relationship of knowledge to power (Foucault); the strategies of the "metaphysics of presence" in deconstruction (Derrida); and the role of the "simulacra" in the world of hyperreality (Baudrillard). "Truth, objectivity and certainty" were displaced by a focus on "regimes of truth," a deconstruction of the binary, linear logics of Western rationality, the impact of desire and the unconscious on human society and a foregrounding of ambiguity, openness and contingency in the role that language plays in forming human society.

This anti-foundational movement eventually "was designated by the terms 'postmodern' in the United States and 'poststructural' more globally" (Lather, 1991, p. 23). Further, people as diverse as Wittgenstein, Kuhn and Foucault argue that objects of knowledge are locally and historically specific, and that they become available for human understanding only within certain "language games," "paradigms" and "discursive formations." From these different positions, postmodernism contains multiple histories that attempt to seek out, rupture, and destroy the dominance of any unitary, linear historical narrative supporting Western modernist thought.

This notion suggests that our identities, beliefs and practices are culturally "contingent" upon the construction of paradigms or models, subject to revisions or paradigm–shifts, but not tied to any historical determinism based upon grand historical schemes (*les grands recits*). Into this debate enters Jean-Francois Lyotard, a professor of philosophy, an essayist and militant

journalist, who has tried to reconcile the philosophical questions raised by avant-garde artists such as Marcel Duchamp with the paradoxes or the "paralogisms" of discourse that are "undecidable" in judgment. His diagnosis of *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979/1984) brings into play the different regimes of "language games" in the style of Wittgenstein. This report on knowledge, written at the request of the Conseil des Universities of the government of Quebec, allows Lyotard to examine the game rules for science, literature and the arts in relation to the scenario called forth by the "computerization of society."

Lyotard's research on knowledge addresses the "crisis in knowledge" and thus legitimation that is the dilemma of a postindustrial society "in which the dissolution of the self into a host of networks and relations, and contradictory codes and interfering messages is prophetically valorized" (Jameson, in his foreword to Lyotard, 1984, p. xviii). Lyotard argues that science does not simply consist of a neutral body of knowledge claims about the world but rather such knowledge "produces a discourse of legitimation with respect to its own status, a discourse called philosophy." Lyotard states that the postmodern involves "an incredulity toward metanarratives" and conceives of knowledge as paralogical: that is, as searching for and creating instabilities in the dominant perspectives of the world (*ibid.*, pp, xxiii–xxiv). "Postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert's homology, but the inventor's paralogy" (p. xxv).

Narrative theory becomes a part of the postmodern voice that orientates itself through "little narratives" *(petit recits)* as an alternative way of making knowledge claims about the social world today. Accordingly, Lyotard conceives of "a postmodern sensibility" as one which continually critiques any

foundational conception of knowledge. Therefore narrative theory recognizes the open–ended nature of knowledge claims. It examines the shifting terrain of meaning that makes up the social/political world and acknowledges the difficulty of making any universal claims concerning the nature of the human condition. It also acknowledges that as researchers and theorists we are never neutral observers of behavior because of the role we play in the construction of the social reality in any narrative, large or small (Mumby, 1993, p. 3).

Jean Francois Lyotard and the Postmodern Condition

For Lyotard, the postmodern condition consists of a heterogeneity of "language games" at play in the narratives of research (*science*) and those narratives of learning/culture (*bildung*). "Knowledge (*savior*) in general cannot be reduced to science, nor even to learning (*connaissance*)," states Lyotard, since "*knowledge* is not only a set of denotative statements . . . it includes notions of "know-how," "knowing how to live," "how to listen," etc. Knowledge, then, is a question of competence that goes beyond the simple determination and application of the criterion of truth, extending . . . to the criteria of efficiency, of justice, and/or happiness (ethical wisdom)" (1984, p. 18). Characteristic of these language games then is the relation between knowledge and custom "to make it possible to distinguish one who knows from one who doesn't (the foreigner, the child) in constituting the culture of a people" (p. 19).

Statements concerning this ambiguous area of "opinion" is where contemporary myths are created or "dreamed up" to provide us with representations of ourselves, our identity and the world. "Reality" and "experience" undergo imagistic transformations in these narratives. As systems of discourse these narratives "reproduce" and "replicate" us in the hidden social and political constructions of power. They become unseen hegemonic forces of "late

capitalism" controlling and privileging one set of vested interests against competing forces (Gramsci, 1971).

Some narratives attempt to challenge and contradict these existing myths of cultural power. Other voices struggle for equal representation and distribution within this new cultural phenomenon. Further, what has come to be called "a postmodern condition" is one that mirrors a consumer-dominated capitalist society characterized by two features – "the transformation of reality into images" through a network of communications media of computers and television which "fragments time into a series of perpetual presents" (Jameson, cited in Kaplan,1988, p. 28).

These advanced high-tech electronic systems of communication are part of the changing status of information processing and transmission of knowledge. According to Lyotard, they designate the power possessed by highly developed industrial nations to influence not only their own societies but other Third World societies as well. "Along with the hegemony of computers comes a certain logic, and therefore a certain set of prescriptions determining which statements are accepted as 'knowledge' statements" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 4). This new "media imperialism" has transformed the world, and directly created a postmodern culture, a culture where the instantaneous flow of information has considerable impact on what is considered "knowledge." As Lyotard states, two different functions are assigned to these new technological machines; one is to assist in research following the paradigm of cybernetics. The other function is to change the way knowledge is transmitted to the learner. This new form of "knowledge" makes obsolescent the old ways of acquiring knowledge from cultural experience and the training of minds *(Bildung)*, into a new relationship where knowledge is produced to be consumed like any commodity.

Lyotard notes that when late modern cultures translate knowledge into

new channels of information, the use–value of knowledge will not be an end in itself, but a new product that can be "sold" for exchange value. When this happens, Lyotard warns us of this postmodern condition because "knowledge in the form of an informational commodity indispensable to productive power is already, and will continue to be, perhaps the major stake in the worldwide competition for power. It is conceivable that the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory, and afterwards for control of access and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labour. A new field is opened for industrial and commercial strategies on the one hand, and political and military strategies on the other" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 5).

System Control and Cybernetics

The new science of control and communication in animals and machines was called cybernetics by Norbert Wiener in his book *The Human Uses of Human Beings* (1967). This American scientist/teacher derived the name from the Greek word meaning "steersman" to demonstrate that adaptive control is more akin to steersmanship than a dictatorship. His machines "learned" to adapt to changes in operation through an "in control" flow of information. He claims that the laws governing input and output control are universal. Wiener also believed that any society could be understood through a study of the messages used to organize and communicate between the members of that society. Moreover, there were additional techniques that helped regulate order.

Cybernetics as a systems theory is thus conceptualized as a theory of effective language organization developed to control machines through direct communication with people. Wiener's theory is based upon his belief that human beings adjust to the contingencies of the natural or outer environment

through the ability of the human nervous system to process information. Here the concepts of feedback and entropy become dialectical entities to organize information (p. 38). Entropy is the tendency of any closed system to move from a lesser to a greater state of disorganization. Feedback, or negative entropy, occurs when the information system arrests the tendency toward entropy. Feedback attempts to control and stabilize any regulatory system.

The use of cybernetics in the creation of feedback machines, known as cyborgs or cybernetic organisms, has always been commonplace in different kinds of science–fiction. The first important cinematic cyborg was named HAL, a 2000 series computer capable of running a space ship sent off towards Neptune in Kubrick's satirical film, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Since then, the most famous cyborgs were created by George Lucas in his trilogy called *Star Wars* (1977). In this series of films two automated machines, C3PO and R2D2, were computer-wise machines that could decipher or link with other computers providing informational access to other machines thus protecting the major characters against the schemes of the Empire. Automated electronic machines using cybernetic techniques are now called robots. They implement human labour in many industrial plants throughout the world. These robotic machines, using computer programming, and interfacing with video monitors, have replaced industrial labor on the assembly line, revolutionizing the labor market in all fields of commercial endeavors.

The connection of postmodern culture with the development of science fiction, cybernetics and high-tech machines demonstrates the way technology is transforming our perceptions of "reality." Film director Francis Ford Coppola states that "we are caught in an uneasy confrontation with ourselves." We live in a complex world where we cannot deny our heritage nor forget our current technocratic and social realities of the present. The danger in our

confrontation between past and present resides in the fact that there are no over-all master plans or ideologies to carry us into the future. (But there is an over-riding economic imperative to continue this consumer society). We are caught in the consumer web of artificial images and products. Our "reality" is created by our technology as they transform time, memory and our own self–identity. Through science-fiction narratives our culture is systematically replacing the "real" with images and representations of the "hyper-real." These images easily "stand in" for reality (McCaffery, 1991, p. 7).

Features of Postmodernism in Architecture, Art and Literature.

The postmodern is most notable in an architectural context where it exhibits a "double coding," according to architect, Charles Jencks (1983). Each building embraces and continues the techniques and technologies created by modernism, but at the same time, the architect attempts to deconstruct the autonomy of the structure by the application of some historical "style" to reveal an intertextuality of the structure to other cultural identities. By deliberately introducing another coding to the autonomous identity of the structure, postmodern architecture undermines and revolts against the signification and authority of a modern discourse, and instead displays a tendency towards pastiche, parody, quotation, intertextuality, eclecticism and self-referentiality to multiple identities. Jameson (1984) identifies two basic features of postmodernism as (1) the transformation of reality into images and (2) a schizophrenic fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents.

These terms contain their own paradoxes, suggesting that modernism and structuralism are decisively over and that a new cultural epoch has begun. Yet, at the same time, the terms imply that this new movement is historically

dependent upon later modernist tendencies growing out of Dada and Surrealism of the 1920s, especially in the re–appearance of Duchampian ideas in the work of Rauchenberg and Johns and later "Pop" artists such as Andy Warhol. The states of enigma and ambiguity in these assemblages illustrate the artists' attempts to bridge the "space" or close the "gap" between life and art. Their artworks also display satirical displacements of objects from their contexts thereby liberating the 'fixed' identity of these "objects d'art." This de-contextualization and re–contextualization leads to a devaluation in the "aesthetic" or "artistic value" in such objects. Further, the collage/bricolage structure of the artworks both attack and challenge our preconceived perceptions and sensibilities between signifier and signified.

In effect, the strategies and games of chance, the discontinuity and disruption of the Renaissance mimetic "illusions of reality" relate to the montage techniques of Picasso and Braque, continued by Eisenstein and Brecht and other artists in theatre and film-making with the revival of such techniques in the documentary tradition of Jean Rouch and the Third Cinema. Most important was the revival of the Pirandellian attack on forms of "social conditioning," role-playing, the emancipation of human beings from objectivity and identity conditioning and the re-occurrence of myth-making or narratives as an integral and unconscious part of identity formation.

Luigi Pirandello (1867–1936), an Italian writer and critic, became inter-nationally famous as a playwright during the 1920s throughout Europe and the United States. In a series of unusual plays he was able to give tremendous dramatic representation to his own philosophical discourse on the weaknesses and contradictions of human existence. His plays, *It Is So: (If You Think So)*, *Six Characters in Search of an Author, Enrico IV*, and *Each in His Own Way*, brought out the contradictions between appearance and reality in recurring

human relationships. Personal identity is displayed as a gap between art and life, or self and other, where the realm of make-believe becomes a world of reality. In the struggle to pursue the characteristics of objective knowledge about human beings, the playwright implies that one's identity is produced by the roles and situations that life itself forces upon us. Each person then adopts extrinsic and multiple selves in order to maintain a sense of balance. Thus, he concludes that illusion is a positive and necessary element in helping an ordinary person cope with real life circumstances. His characters create masks, imposing on themselves a fictitious reality to reshape the image of the self in order to overcome human desire, pain and suffering. Life itself becomes a performance where these multiple selves, as characters in a play, merge artifice with human spontaneity to produce an improvized dramatic form. For Pirandello, the interrelationship and the contrast between the fixity of art – the mask – and the changeableness of life – our identity – underlies the theatrical world of our human desires and actions, blurring the boundaries of artifice and reality, sanity and madness,

Thus I understand the postmodern condition, analyzed by Lyotard, "as a search, not for consensus, but very precisely for 'instabilities,' as a practice of *paralogism*, in which the point is not to reach agreement but to undermine from within the very framework in which the previous normal science had been conducted" (Jameson, 1984, p. xix). Thus Lyotard moves in the direction of the non-hegemonic in a "free play" of agonistics that are immanent in the narratives of avant-garde art, literature and cultural politics of late modernism. These postmodern narratives contain images representative of anti-mythic differences in identities drawn from a multiplicity of thinkers and artists who employed deconstructive, anti–aesthetic techniques to challenge the scientific codes of discourse of the Enlightenment. These concepts emerge

from the theatre of Luigi Pirandello and the drama of improvisation; the neo–dada assemblages of Jasper Johns and Robert Rauchenberg using collages and "ready–mades," inspired by the French artist Marcel Duchamp; surrealist dream images, the "art of wandering" and the "floating signifier" in the writings of Walter Benjamin and Jacques Lacan; the Epic theatre of Bertolt Brecht and the notion of "distanciation;" the influence of Nietzsche on Michel Foucault and the power/discourses on the structure of cultural codes during an "epistemic" epoch; and the program of deconstruction, not to forget the free play of language initiated by Jacques Derrida and Maurice Merleau–Ponty from the existential phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger.

All together they provide the intellectual environment that enables a critique the social/political structures of modernism and the logic of scientific language that attempts to objectify universal "truths" through "timeless" or "universal" metanarratives. In order to displace this Idealist discourse of the Enlightenment, "the common project of postmodernity is to bring about dissensus," states Lyotard, in order to recognize the collapse of the grand narratives of legitimation. In a computer generated society of informational data banks, an encyclopedia of knowledge will be considered as "natural" for postmodern man. Yet Lyotard insists "that what is of utmost importance is the capacity to actualize the relevant data for solving a problem 'here and now' and to organize that data into an efficient strategy" (1984. p. 51). The most useful "performativity" thus comes from arranging the data in new and unfamiliar ways thereby reasserting "the capacity to articulate what used to be separate" (p. 52). Here is Lyotard's definition of "imaginative work," a competence linking the intersubjectivity of human beings to the world and its historical roots. In this way, the shared cultural subjectivity and intertextuality is brought to the surface through language "moves," where culture and art yield meanings to

human beings at the same time calling upon each person to recreate these meanings for themselves — thus allowing the acquisition of "local" narratives of one's own cultural experiences, within an interdisciplinary approach.

These anti-foundational challenges to the positivist paradigm will be considered later in this chapter within the implications for a cultural politics in adult education. Before that, I will review other writers who discuss the nature and politics of a postmodern narrative discourse as it operates on two levels: (1) as a communication phenomenon that pedagogically and culturally constructs human identities and role-playing and (2) as a social phenomenon that reinforces or challenges the social order (Mumby, 1993, p. 2).

The Politics of Postmodernism

Linda Hutcheon (1989) describes in *The Politics of Postmodernism*, the properties of fictional representations as functioning in the same manner akin to critical pedagogy. Her intentions are to counteract the social and political constructions of representation in modernist fiction. Instead of accepting these narratives from a realist (late modern) perspective where the "seamless quality of history/fiction is implied by realist narrative," Hutcheon advances the claim that "postmodern fiction does not disconnect itself from history or the world." The new fiction challenges this mode by "foreground(ing) and thus contest(ing) the conventionality and unacknowledged ideology of the assumptions of seamlessness" (1989:53) Like an adult educator who seeks to have students pose questions within postmodern representation, she "asks its readers to question the processes by which we represent ourselves and our world to ourselves and to become aware of the means by which we make *sense* of and *construct* order out of experience in our particular culture" (pp. 53-54). Thus, she implies that cultures invest in narratives to such an extent because people

"cannot avoid representation." If we assume such narrative representations are "trans–historical or trans–cultural" we avoid facing how our notions of ourselves and others are so constituted. But the politics of postmodern fiction, and especially in postmodern film narratives adapted from them, is designed to help us "study how representation legitimizes and privileges certain kinds of knowledge — including certain kinds of historical knowledge" (p. 53).

Once we begin to understand how "historiographic metafictions" occur as adult educators, we can then pose such questions not only about how it is constructed, but also about whose interests are served by such cultural ideas and conventions. The consequences that develop for a postmodern author, Hutcheon claims, is his/her desire "to de-naturalize history as a new self-consciousness about the distinction between the brute events of the past and the historical facts we construct out of them." Historical lessons learnt through these narratives are simply this. "Facts are events to which we have given meaning. Different historical perspectives therefore derive different facts from the same events" (p. 57).

Again, in following the postulates of a critical pedagogy, Hutcheon proposes that "postmodern fiction often thematizes this process of turning events into facts through the filtering and interpreting of archival documents. The very process of turning events into facts through the interpretation of archival evidence is shown to be a process of turning the traces of the past (our only access to those events today) into historical representation." Therefore, Hutcheon concludes her assessment of the politics behind postmodern fiction as being "in a very real sense, the ways postmodernism reveals a desire to understand present culture as the product of previous representations. The representation of history becomes the history of representation" (p. 58).

The Risk Society in the Postmodern Era

I will analyze the practices of North American adult educators through the conceptual frameworks of a "risk society" and of "reflexive modernization" as set forth by Ulrich Beck in his book, *Risk Society* (1992), in which he examines "the changing relationships between social structures and social agents" (p. 2) that have developed in the late modern or postmodern era.

Before introducing Beck's sociological ideas, it is important to review the modern implications of the neo–Marxist concepts of Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist who died in 1937. His *Prison Notebooks* appeared after the fall of Mussolini. In these essays, Gramsci reformulated Marxist theories on the ways ideology, as a political belief system, is used as a means through which "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (Marx, cited in Tucker, p. 172). Ideology thus was defined by Marx in *The German Ideology* as a justification which masked a specific set of interests. In creating this concept of ideology, Marx rejected the Platonic and Christian ideals that knowledge "exists" independently from human existence. In place of this idealist theory, Marx offered a concept of knowledge and how people think as developing from their social interactions with others. Further, Marx claimed that the economic base supports the cultural superstructure where a person's consciousness or identity is formed by their relationship to the modes of production. However, Marx qualifies his ruling ideas doctrine by suggesting that the dominant class and the apparatus for the distribution of ideas may also arise from intellectuals outside the ruling class (Abercrombie, 1980, p. 24).

This separation of ideas from the ruling class leads to the assumption that some ideas may be produced and disseminated in a society that are in opposition to the ruling ideas, and can formulate opposition to the "always already given" ideas of the ruling class. These social determinants of ideology

are considered by Clifford Geertz as an interest theory or a strain theory. In either case, Geertz states, "For the first, ideology is a mask and a weapon: for the second, a symptom and a remedy. In the interest theory, ideological pronouncements are seen against the background of a universal struggle for advantage; in the strain theory, against the background of a chronic effort to correct socio–political disequilibrium. In the one, men pursue power; in the other, they flee anxiety" (Geertz, 1964, p. 52).

These two ways of knowing "reality" through ideological thought were formalized by Marx as a means toward a social identity; such a social identity was established through the active process of knowing in concrete, materialist terms. For Marx, human consciousness is constituted by different beliefs, symbols, values and ways of thinking and feeling which explain what reality is taken to be. In most cases these are called ideologies. Gramsci paraphrased Marx by stating that "Reality does not exist on its own, in and for itself, but only in an historical relationship with the persons who modify it" (Gramsci, cited in Kearney, 1986, p. 169). Marx gives his definition of reality in this paragraph from his book, *The German Ideology*, written with Friedrich Engels:

> The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material inter course of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men appear at this stage as a direct efflux of their material behavior. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of the politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.— real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development in their productive forces, and the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than con- scious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life process (Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*: cited in Tucker, 1978, p. 154).

For Gramsci, Marxist elaboration and analysis of how human thought and ideas were determined by economic factors fell short in accounting for the

modes of producing and diffusing knowledge within capitalism. In the battle for control of the mind, Gramsci introduced the concept of hegemony, whereby social classes influence other classes through cultural institutions such as schools, churches, films and books, using reason and common consent rather than force. Thus, the ruling class becomes the dominant group by influencing the power structure of the culture by their own cultural constructs or ideology. Gramsci felt that the class-war is not fought over "facts" but is a war over ethical-political values. A cultural critique of the workings of a capitalist ideology was necessary to show how bourgeois interests masked themselves as cultural values common to all classes. For this reason Gramsci claims that cultural production which contained ideas, symbols and emblems of a nation contribute to shaping the values and attitudes of that society as much as the economic modes of production create social identities.

Gramsci did not live long enough to see the development of the consumer society in postwar Europe and America after World War II, that employed mass marketing techniques and strategies in production and reproduction of products for the consumer. Further, Gramsci never envisaged the risks and hazards set–up by modern science and technology through atomic energy. Yet these technologies now pose a greater threat to the late modern society of the 1990s. They loom as serious as the social and political threats that arose from the Great Depression during the 1930s in Canada and the United States and the rise of Fascism throughout the Western world leading to World War II.

In relation to the social and political concerns of late modernity, Ulrich Beck, a German sociologist, introduces theories of social relationships that go "beyond status and class." Beck's book *Risk Society* (1992), examines two interrelated issues facing contemporary technological society; one issue concerns *reflexive modernization,* and the other, *the issue of risk.* These two

theories differ from a Habermasian mode of communicative rationality and a Parsonian sociology of structural differentiation and functional integration in modern societies. These older traditional social theories have a trajectory towards a utopian solution. For Beck, "modernization involves not just structural change, but a changing relationship between social structures and social agents. For modernization to successfully advance, these agents must release themselves from structural constraint and actively shape the modernization process" (p. 2). Furthermore, Beck's sociology considers scientific and industrial development as a set of hazards in which the modernist discourse must become *reflexive* in order to redeem the goals of modernity itself from its own contradictions and paradoxes. Therefore, Beck is fully aware that modern science and technology place social relations and processes at risk, vulnerable to the interpretations and "management" of a small group of technocrats. In this situation of late capitalism or postmodernity, issues of trust and credibility are reduced to instrumental terms in order to secure credibility without questioning the forms of power and social control exerted by the "culture of scientism."

Beck calls these operations of experts a defense against reflexivity and a "systematic assumption of realism in science" (p. 5). In place of an unreflective imposition of experts concerning the truth value of any scientific proposition, Beck suggests a reflexive learning process that would grapple with the "essential tension between human indeterminacy – as reflected in the incessant but always open attempt to renegotiate coherent narratives of identity and the inevitable tendency of our institutions to objectify and naturalize our cultural productions" (p. 6). From this perspective, the issue of cultural specificity arises within specific social-historical processes. Thus, in terms of cinematic practices, questions concerning the complexity of differences and "otherness"

are posed about how social existence comes about or is determined by certain power relationships. In the 1960s, an experimental cinema emerged "grounded in an understanding of the dialectical relationship between social existence and cultural practice" (Willemen, 1994, p.175).

Introduction to the Third Cinema --- Fact/Fiction

At the 1986 Edinburgh Film Festival a conference was initiated to debate new practices of cinema within contemporary culture that avoided both the sentimental leftist cultural theory emanating from the UK and the cultural or educational practices of corporate cultures and market consumerism that in line with related variants of "post-modernism." Instead, the conference focused upon non Anglo-American cinematic practices and their approaches to cultural politics. Therefore, in turning to Third Cinema, the conference was able to draw attention to "questions of Brechtian cinema and cultural identity (which directors) . . . now posed in a different context" (Willemen,1994, p. 176). The central concept of Third Cinema (not Third World Cinema) was adopted by the conference "partly to re-pose and (re-examine) the question of the relations between the cultural and the political, and partly to discuss . . . a kind of international cinematic tradition which exceeds the limits of both national or industrial cinema (First Cinema) or those of Euro-American as well as English cultural theories (Second Cinema)" (p. 177).

Historically, Third Cinema received its impetus from the success of the French New Wave and their use of Italian theories on neo-realism for low-cost, location-based, improvisational style cinematic practices. These were inspired by an infusion of neo-Marxist cultural theories ranging from Althusser and Brecht and the Soviet Formalists to post-structuralist thinkers like Lacan, Foucault and Lyotard. As these cinematic practices found success within the

international scene, the notion of a Third Cinema "was first advanced as a rallying cry in the late 60s in Latin America (including South America). As an idea, its immediate inspiration was rooted in the Cuban Revolution (1959) and Brazil's Cinema Novo, for which Glauber Rocha provided an impetus with the publication of a passionate polemic entitled 'The Aesthetics of Hunger' (or The Aesthetics of Violence')" (Willemen, 1994:178).

"One of Third Cinema's more readily noticeable characteristics seems to be the adoption of a historically analytic, yet culturally specific, mode of cinematic discourse," states Willemen, which are best exemplified by Amos Gitai, Michael Angelopoulos, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Ousmane Sembene, Ritwik Ghatak and others, "each summing up and reformulating the encounter with diverse cultural traditions into new, politically as well as cinematically illuminating types of filmic discourse, critical of, yet firmly anchored in, their respective social-historical situations" (p. 177). As one of these directors, Greek-born Michael Angelopoulos, went to Paris to study with Jean Rouch, to learn this documentary style of cinema for political purposes.

Under Rouch's tutelage, he began his own film productions based upon this new discourse. Like the other Third Cinema directors, his films "refused to oppose a simplistic notion of national identity or of cultural authenticity to the values of colonial or imperial predators" (p. 177). Instead, his cinematic discourses "started from a recognition of the many-layeredness of their own cultural-historical formations, with each layer being shaped by complex connections between intra and inter-national forces and traditions" (p. 177). Further, Willemen noted these filmmakers strove to "inhabit their cultures, and grasp the relations between the cultural and the social (in order to) convey their sense of "a creative understanding" (Bakhtin) of the situation in which they worked and to which their work is primarily addressed" (p. 178).

In presenting his notion of Third Cinema the Argentinean film-maker and essayist, Fernando Solanas, *La Hora de los Hornos* (The Hour of the Furnaces,1968) sees his work "as a meeting ground of the political and avant-garde engaged in a common task which is enriching to both" (Solanas, cited in Shohat and Stam, 1994, p.260). Excerpts of Solanas' essay "Toward a Third Cinema" is quoted in length by Willemen (1994, p. 182) stating that:

> First cinema expresses imperialist, capitalist, bourgeois ideas. Big monopoly capital finances big spectacle cinema as well as authorial and informational cinema.... Second cinema is all that expresses the aspirations of the middle stratum, the petite bourgeoisie. Second cinema is often nihilistic, mystificatory. It runs in circles. It is cut off from reality....So called author cinema often belongs in the second cinema, but both good and bad authors may be found in first and third cinema. For us, Third Cinema is the expression of a new culture and of social changes. Generally speaking, Third Cinema gives an account of reality and history. It is also linked with national culture. (It) is the way the world is conceptualized and not the genre nor the explicitly political character of a film which makes it belong to Third Cinema. Third Cinema is an open category, unfinished, incomplete. It is a research category. It is a democratic, national, popular cinema. Third Cinema is also an experimental cinema, but it is not practiced in the solitude of one's home or in a laboratory because it conducts research into communication. What is required is to make that Third Cinema gain space, everywhere, in all its forms. But it must be stressed that there are 36 different kinds of Third Cinema. (p. 182)

In other words, Solanas as a filmmaker and polemicist is paralleling the educational theories of Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire advocates an adult education which moves illiterates, submerged in a "culture of silence," from the colonialized conformity of their situation into a more aggressive counter-cultural attack, by "raising consciousness" of their own social and political situation. "Like the defining characteristic of Third Cinema itself: the aim of (adult education) is to render a particular social situation intelligible to those engaged in a struggle to change it in a socialist direction" (Said, cited in Willemen, 1994, p. 194). While Solanas refers neither to class struggle in a revolutionary way nor to status, there is room for "an analytic

perspective aimed at evoking possible strategies for change" (p. 185). Solanos stresses the experimental nature of Third Cinema wherein "political and economic liberation would be a necessary precondition for the emergence of a popular culture" (p. 193). Therefore the primary task of directors of Third Cinema is to create a "cinema of lucidity" with the emancipatory power of reason advocated by Brechtian agonistics. The cinematic discourses in which the audience finds its cultural identity "relies on an understanding through cinematic representation of the multifarious social-historical processes at work in a given situation" (p.194).

Two characteristics that keep Third Cinema from being a didactic cinematic endeavor are defined as the following: "One is the insistence on its flexibility, its status as research and experimentation, a cinema forever in need of adaptation to the shifting dynamics at work in social struggles. The second is its attempt to speak a socially pertinent discourse excluded from mainstream and authorial cinemas" (p. 185).

In serving its pedagogic aims, directors of Third Cinema, who are engaged in anti-imperialist struggles for cultural as well as economic and political independence, realize the hybridization that occurs in the "double references" to both the national and international aspects of their situation. It is for this reason that a gap or "space of ambiguity" emerges between fact and fiction in the issue of social power because the participants are both representative of "outsiders" or "others" to the dominant social-historical discourses and "in and of" the culture simultaneously. Yet "it is no accident but rather a logical consequence that a sense of non-belonging, non-identity with the culture one inhabits, ethnically or in any other way, (becomes) a precondition for 'the most intense and productive aspects of cultural life" (p. 201). Willemen stresses that Third Cinema polemicists conceive this outsideness-otherness as a disjuncture,

"as an in-between position, where the production of social intelligibility thrives, at least as far as socialist cultural practices are concerned" (p. 201). Ambiguities which arise for Third Cinema directors are derived more from the "openness" of the political signification based upon historical passages of a particular culture than from the documentary processes of production (Shohat and Stam, 1994, p. 261). It is the skill of directors, like Angelopoulos, to be aware of how to introduce the political/historical traumas of a culture within the hegemonic discourse of post-colonial ethnocentrism.

Multiple Narratives in Angelopoulos' *Landscape in the Mist* (1988)

Theo Angelopoulos' *Landscape in the Mist*, features two children, a young boy (Alexander) and his older sister (Voula), as the central protagonists. They are setting forth on a voyage of discovery in search of their father. Voula believes he lives in Germany, across the border from Greece. The boy follows, apprehensive and somewhat afraid. He exclaims his fear, and to comfort him Voula tells him a story, a tale similar to the one we are about to witness.

Angelopoulos treats their expedition both as a myth and as a mystery. The initial expectations of the viewer is that this film will be constructed as a "road movie." But with a repetition of the children's attempts to reach their destination, the film takes on a circular pattern, and becomes a simple strategy used by the director to depict the many-layered cultural aspects of Greek life. The harsh realities of this Greek landscape envelop them in a magical, surreal environment. Here, they encounter the discordant narratives of the past as they collide in different ways with the dreams and desires of all Greek children.

Angelopoulos follows the documentary style of Jean Rouch and the Third Cinema. He eschews the use of montage effects to psychologically order reality in the mind of the spectator. In using the long-take he follows a cinema which

expresses itself through the ability of the camera to record physical reality. In other words, the purpose of cinema was to make visible the drama inherent in nature itself. Thus he keeps the camera fixed in one position for directing his mise–en–scene. This cinematic style requires a shot–in–depth to keep in focus the foreground and background of the physical reality. This preserves the temporal and spatial realities we normally perceive. The shot-in-focus assisted by the focal depth of the camera lens, allows the spectator to make connections and correspondences with these images in relationship to a real time and space continuum. When the actors move his camera pans with them when necessary. By following the action within the same space, he allows the actors to play out the scene without changing the spectator's point-of-view. This cinematic technique forces the spectator to become aware of how this physical landscape interacts with the characters and their multiple histories.

The artistic vision of the director then allows the camera to record this live action without intervening in his selection of this reality and without manipulating this reality through montage. By following film theories of Andre Bazin, the French film critic of the New Wave, Angelopoulos achieves an objective reality, a "cinema of lucidity," one which is free to modify our preconceived notions of a planned outcome. This neo-realist style "tends to give back to the cinema a sense of the ambiguity of reality" (Bazin, 1971,p. 37).

Angelopoulos knows that when the time/space continuum of an event is recorded honestly, his narrative can carry ambiguities which allow the spectator the freedom to choose his or her own interpretation of the object or event. Therefore, he wants the camera to record the perceptual reality, then allow the spectator to interpret facts that can be both concrete and abstract. By shifting the spectator's vision to the actual time and space of the action, the film can draw attention to a "reality" which is mediated by images fixed

upon celluloid. As a metaphor for film, Angelopoulos plays with this illusion of reality when he demonstrates in a crucial scene in *Landscape in the Mist* where the viewer and the boy, Alexander, is asked to envisage a tree in the mist on a piece of 35mm film stock.

Landscape in the Mist is a parable that relates to two Greek children searching for a person (or past) that would give them freedom and identity. The person, their father, may not exist at all. The quest by this unlikely pair of wanderers becomes a need for a connection to someone who apparently can give meaning, security and direction to their own lives. Angelopoulos assists the spectator by concentrating on various themes and issues drawn from different viewpoints that surround the children in ambiguous situations. It is the reactions to a variety of older people the children encounter for the first time that becomes the main focus of this narrative. From these interactions, the children learn the ways other people understand their place in the world, and how these people shape their lives and act according to some operation of a cultural law, or myth, or ideology.

These encounters with different people in everyday life become more important for Angelopoulous than a linear movement of a plot-line. In defusing the plot, we have instead the presentation of a number of related life encounters in which the spectator together with the two children, examine the ambiguous mystery of human nature and the cultural myths which sustained human existence. For Angelopoulos Third Cinema becomes a "light" which according to Gabriel Marcel, the French existentialist, shines into the darkness that surrounds "man the traveler," who, as a human being, projects himself or herself toward a future destiny yet to be created.

Thematically, Angelopoulos, shapes this circular pattern as a recurring dream that returns us to a beginning, where like children, we hope to emerge

out of the darkness into the light. We tend to reach out and grasp on to what-ever person or myth appears to be sensible yet upon reflection we find that something that is missing. It appears as a Lacanian desire toward fulfillment that motivates us to continue our search.

Angelopoulos has based most of his film narratives on a modern interpretation of a Classical Greek playwright, Aeschylus and his trilogy, the *Oresteia.* These tragic plays recount the birth of Athenian law and democracy on behalf of the state or Athena. As guardian of the state, Athena forms a judicial body of elders to end the autocracy and primitive justice generated by the House of Atreus. This tribunal was set up to save Orestes after he murdered his mother, Clytemnestra, and her lover.

Angelopoulos connects the story of the House of Atreus thematically to the political struggle for individual freedom and democracy in modern Greece. He reminds people that such political turmoil was generated by a similar desire for power and vengeance. Since 1935, untold deaths were caused by betrayals and murders aligned with primitive justice and power politics in Greek government. Angelopoulos alludes to this with his traveling players as representatives of the outcasts and prisoners of such a dictatorial system.

The film functions on at least four different levels in so far as we, as spectators, become involved in the children's search for a connection to the past and a hope for a future. On the mythological/surreal level, the presence of Orestes, as an older guide for the children, connects it to the myth concerning the House of Atreus. The director also connects Orestes to a possible biblical history held in a strip of film which he claims contains an image of a tree. Alexander holds the strip of film to examine this image. Later, the image connects to the excavation of a gigantic hand emerging from the sea, a relic of some heroic age. The exposure of this hand, raised on high by a helicopter,

calls forth a mystery about our historical past and its heroic characters.

On a theatrical level, we witness the world-as-a-stage when the children enter a deserted town square at nightfall. Using an uninterrupted long take, Angelopolous shows overlapping actions as the children stand by. They watch a bride flee from her wedding reception only to be brought back by her husband and guests inside the tavern. Then a tractor deposits a dying horse in front of the two children, and they watch in silence as the horse expires. There is no spoken dialogue, only the sounds of these events transpiring in front of the children, just as they unfold in time and without explanation.

On the historical/political level we thematically become involved with the wandering troupe of actors, first on the beach where they are rehearsing a play for an evening performance. Yet no sooner have they arrived, and their "left-wing" politics become known, than the local producer cancels the evening show. Orestes, the manager and bus driver for this traveling troupe, cannot explain the problem to the children. Later on, we meet up with the same traveling players in Salonika, where they are rehearsing their lines walking to and fro by the seashore, Upon a second and fuller hearing of this dialogue, as an audience, we recall the personal and political atrocities in World War II and the ensuing Greek Civil War of 1949-1950.

The last level is based upon a personal/psychological relationship. This event involves a sexual attack upon the young girl by an older male truck-driver who gave the children a ride. We are not certain a sexual assault is happening between the girl and her seducer. Yet, the director, in relating to the conventions of Classical Greek Theatre, has the violent act take place "off–stage," masked by a tarpaulin covering the back of the truck. However, when the girl emerges from this attack, as audience we become fully aware of the brutal violation of the innocence of a young child.

In each of the above scenes, the effectiveness of the long take, and the actions we witness and not-witness holds its spell on us as spectators. Angelopoulos knows where to place the camera and thus the spectator's point of view, in order that we can understand and consider the human joys and sufferings within this barren Greek landscape. As a director, he holds our attention to the screen action focussing on the characters within the frame.

Angelopoulos wrote this screenplay in the exploratory fashion of Third Cinema. He deliberately engages the audience's desires and expectations for a heroic narrative, but employs Brechtian devices to reduce empathic responses. Orestes, as the image of masculine youth, becomes only a guide who helps the young girl into her own sexual awareness. Her image of femininity accepts the tentative bonding with the male, but does not assume that this identification can be maintained within the misery of everyday life. Orestes, unhero-like, does not lead the young girl out of the darkness, but in a matter-of-fact way, delivers her to a train station where they part company. Orestes does not sacrifice himself nor act in self–denial. He is not made in the heroic mode. On the contrary, what we find in this film is a world of common people, of women, men and children, without the essential features of a heroic life. They struggle to survive in the midst of the technological monstrosities of modern life, the nuclear power plants and modern efficiency. Approaching the end of their voyage, in the darkness of night, as the border is crossed, we hear the voices of Voula and Alexander. "I'm afraid," says Voula. "Don't be, I'll tell you a story," replies Alexander. Soon, the darkness surrounding them slowly vanishes and a tree appears in the morning mist. The children run and embrace it.

While returning us to the beginning and the need for narrative, this ending is left open-ended. Whether or not the children have reached their destination is not important. What is more provocative is the manner by

which Angelopoulos has presented his film narrative in multiple fragments of reality for us to understand. They are excavated as mythic and symbolic representations of a social/historical past now experienced anew by the audience as well as the young protagonist.

From a psychological perspective we see the formation of the self in the gaze or look of the "other," bringing about the children's (Voula and Alexander's) entry into this symbolic world of culture and sexual difference. We are shown how it is fraught with contradictory and unresolved feelings, leaving us, as audience, a subject "divided" as to our own social/cultural identity. This psychoanalytical process, championed by Jacques Lacan, becomes part of the postmodern condition that orientates people towards "little narratives" (*petit recits*) as an alternative way of making knowledge claims about the social/political world we live in. As Lyotard stresses, and as Third Cinema attempts to represent in cinematic style, a postmodern sensibility is one that continually questions those hegemonic metanarratives and their foundational concepts of knowledge and legitimation.

The *romantic discourse*, familiar to cinephiles as "road movies," are stories about first love, which Angelopoulos' film *Landscape in the Mist* (1988) demonstrates quite well. He sets us on a journey of discovery and helps us recover the memories of multiple narratives existing simultaneously in the metaphoric landscape of our youth when young people attempt to form their social identity. Thus, Angelopoulos' film interrogates these historical narratives, evoked by the exploitation of the weak and the suppression of our desires and longings. Within these multiple social and political identities, the paradox of self and other emerge in the space of a magically lit landscape, allowing us to learn about ourselves through this critical illumination. It is easy to pose questions on the politics at play in the space of these narratives.

Implications for Adult Education

The crisis of representation, an erosion of confidence in the prevailing concepts of knowledge, truth and justice, is a symptom of the malaise of modernity. As techno-science advances, humankind is thrust unwittingly into an electronic age where the forces of late capitalism produce a global postindustrial "risk society." Lyotard (1984) identifies this situation as a "postmodern condition" where the legitimation of knowledge through science and technology provides metanarratives of universality and homogeneity. Lyotard relates the discourse of science as proliferating the world of hi-tech telecommunications and cybernetics. Images and identities of ourselves and the world are constantly saturating the environment through the news media, television and the computer networks on the "information highway." As stated in the last chapter, Jean Baudrillard predicted that the Western world already reached the saturation point (*Simulations*, 1983). He suggests that the "mirror of production" has replaced our understanding or contact with reality.

In our present era of simulacra, Baudrillard states that when the "map engenders the territory" everything is a generational copy of everything else. We find "a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality . . . a panic stricken production of the real and the referential" (pp. 10-12). This is the space of the hyper-real. It breaks down the interconnectedness of humankind with their own perceptions of themselves in the modern world, creating a "political unconscious" according to Jameson (1982), that raises the individual to the collective level where narrative discourses operate to repress "revolution." Knowledge and information now "functions as a form of social control in diverse communication contexts" where images of cultural and social identity conceal the discourses of late capitalist, postmodern world of endless production and consumption.

The fundamental question raised by the acknowledgement of this postmodern condition is: What becomes of the authorial voice in adult education in a postmodern culture, and the pedagogical assumptions of the adult educator? This question is major because, as Lyotard reminds us, "scientific knowledge does not represent the totality of knowledge; it has always existed in addition to, and in competition and conflict with, another kind of knowledge," (p. 7) which he called narrative. Narrative knowledge, both verbal and visual, incorporates important social and political issues through use of discourse, rhetoric and genre. Because these narrative discourses have socio–political intentions, it is important for adult educators to help adult learners analyze, interpret and critically reflect upon their understanding of the ideological messages that have cultural and political forces operating within master narratives about their world and their own identities.

Re–reading of "the various ways narratives function to construct the social reality that constitutes the lived world of social actors" (Mumby, 1993, p 5) also requires an analysis of gender, race and class identities that are formed ideologically through images, genre codes, and myths of popular culture within the postmodern framework of consumerism.

In understanding the non–utopian skepticism towards all grand or metanarratives, Lyotard advances the notion of dissensus as opposed to any discourse which produces conformity and consensus in a desire to play by the "correct rules." In order to meet the challenge of the mass media and to attack "those who refuse to re-examine the rules of art," Lyotard recalls the "anti-art" challenges posed to the authors of realism in painting and the narrative arts by Duchamp's "ready-mades" that actively called into question "the signification of the crafts of painting or even being an artist" (1984, p. 75).

This position of dissensus is key to Lyotard's belief in opposing the

imposition of any "reality" upon the public. His position is analogous to the concept of a critical pedagogy that explores through a critical analysis of the power relationships that occur in any classroom. As articulated by Paulo Freire's theory of education and critical pedagogy, it is parallel to Third Cinema as both:

> a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations. Its dynamic is forged in the dialectical relation between individuals and groups who live out their lives within specific historical conditions and structural constraints, on the one hand, and those cultural forms and ideologies that give rise to the contradictions and struggles that define the lived realities of various societies, on the other. (Giroux, 1985, p. xiii)

Ira Shor, an American college instructor at the City University of New York, develops Freire's theory into a liberating pedagogical practice where he engages his adult students in writing reflective social critiques of their own experiences. His educative task is "to approach individual growth as an active, cooperative and social process" (Shor, 1992, p. 15). By engaging his students to seek the benefits from the practice of critical pedagogy and its "habits of inquiry," his curriculum connects "student individuality to larger historical and social issues." It is a form of critical analysis that encourages his students to examine their own experiences as it "relates to academic knowledge, to power, and to inequalities in society" (p. 17).

Peter McLaren claims in *Life in Schools* (1988) that the critical theorist begins with the premise that "*men and women are essentially unfree and inhabit a world rife with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege*" (italics original p. 166). Further, McLaren states that there is an interactive context between the individual and society in which the two are "inextricably interwoven." The individual, as a social actor, "both creates and is created by the social universe of which he/she is a part" (p. 166). The process in which the production of sense and meaning occurs becomes an ideology. Ideologies

describe social practices and representations that appear to be "already present" and natural (p. 176). As part of a dialectical theory, critical pedagogy involves "an open and questioning form of thinking demanding self-reflection on the cultural forms that construct social values and social practices that legitimate relations between elements like part and whole, knowledge and power, subject and object, being and becoming" (p. 167).

For Freire, the dialectical nature of critical pedagogy is formed around the notions of power in contemporary social theory. According to Giroux, Freire's notion of power "works both on and through people. On the one hand, this means that domination is never so complete that power is experienced as a negative force. On the other, it means that power is at the basis of all forms of behavior in which people resist, struggle, and fight for their image of a better world" (Giroux, 1970, p. xix).

Thus, as McLaren states, "a dialectical understanding of schooling permits us to see schools as sites of both domination and liberation" (p. 167). This notion counters the classical Marxist view of schooling as simply the passive indoctrination of students to reproduce class inequalities and relationships. Also, it runs against the grain of functionalist accounts of educational theory that conceives of schooling as a program to provide students with academic knowledge and attitudes for becoming socialized as industrious workers and citizens.

In relation to a deconstructive analysis, one's understanding of critical pedagogy is dependent upon the teacher's ability to engage students in a dialogue where they learn how "knowledge" becomes allied to power relations in the social construction of their world. Furthermore, by utilizing Freire's problem-posing techniques, the teacher helps the student examine the cultural context of his or her education. As a critical pedagogue, Shor poses generative

questions for his students to help them think through their own "lived experiences." Then they would deconstruct the text to critique the hegemony in a cultural analysis of the dominant ideology. Therefore, this educative process would reveal the power relations that dominate traditional classrooms as well as the contradictory factors that lead to hidden relations of power and privilege within a democratic or a totalitarian society.

Freire, in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, developed the idea of problem-posing as a pedagogical tool to "re-perceive knowledge and power, and in doing so, redefine their relationships to learning and authority, to education and to expertise" (Shor, 1992, p. 35). A critical examination of power relationships can reveal to the students how their own cultural narratives as "lived experiences" supply the images, visions, stories and ideals against which all individuals are expected to live out their lives. This conditioning by a postmodern culture disguises relations of power and privilege through mass media, popular culture and other public institutions such as schools. Critical pedagogy actively strives to reach a collective action that can create a foundation for empowerment and challenge the dominant culture's methods of structuring meanings and representations.

Shor, in exploring these social constructions of knowledge in his classroom, realizes that schools are both a site where cultural structuring occurs and a site for students to engage in resistance and confrontations with the dominant ideology. Thus, his pedagogical methods empower the students in a critical dialogue, a student-centered, teacher-directed process "to develop critical thinking and democratic habits needed for active citizenship in society" (p. 85). However, in my opinion, the task facing a teacher is how to help students recognize, in dialogue with other students, those undemocratic and oppressive features of the dominant ideology that invisibly control their lives

before they attempt to change them. By having students question why schools and other social institutions reproduce the dominant ideology the way they do, a teacher can develop a three-fold critical pedagogy based upon generative, topical and academic themes that address the curriculum and its link to prevailing economic institutions.

As a pedagogical tool, I agree with Shor that critical dialogue attempts to explore those particular social and political discourses that situate the learner within a particular cultural context and historical relationship to the world. In defining culture, it is understood that the critical pedagogue uses the term to signify "the particular ways in which a social group lives out and makes sense of its 'given' circumstances and conditions of life. In addition, it is a set of practices, ideologies and values from which different groups draw to make sense of the world" (McLaren, 1989, p. 171).

Shor accepts the theory that critical dialogue brings a person's cultural experiences into perspective. A critical consciousness develops when it questions a curriculum through which the social interactions of students with others is re-presented. Uncovering the power of the patriarchal educative narratives that label, define and characterize who we are and what things mean becomes a way to counteract this mis-educative practice. I trust that all adult students can perform a critical role by interpreting and giving meaning to their world through their own lived experiences. As Giroux notes, "There is no appeal to universal laws or historical necessity here; theory emerges from specific contexts and forms of experience in order to examine such contexts critically and then to intervene on the basis of an informed praxis" (Giroux, 1985, p. xvii).

As an educator, in my attempts to put into practice the liberating pedagogical theories of Freire, as elaborated and tested out by Shor in his

practice as an English teacher, what did I discover about the effectiveness of critical pedagogy as a form of deconstruction? Would a deconstructive dialogue develop a critical consciousness among my students? In my classes on a history of motion pictures, I found that a critical awareness by students did explore the historical context out of which cultural values and attitudes were formed in particular film narratives. Since the late 1960s, when *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and *The Graduate* (1968) were released, a new generation of young American audiences grasped how these particular films were part of the new "deconstructive" cinema. These films "cast a cynical look back on the genre films of the old Hollywood, suggesting that their assured and optimistic conclusions simplified the unresolved and perhaps unresolvable divisions in American life" (Mast, 1986, p. 434). These particular directors followed the work of the French New Wave directors like Godard and Truffaut. Their film narratives depicted anti-heroic protagonists trapped in contradictory folk–beliefs or myths that succeeded in working against them. Each film contains one or more ideological constructs that sustain certain values and beliefs of the dominant culture. Many interpreted them as "symbolic structures of action" where certain moral conventions and values are taken for granted.

A critical reflection upon those specific social and political values embedded within these mythic narratives would reveal the basic function of commercial and non–commercial films made in our society. They arbitrarily assign significance and meaning to people according to some dominant ideology and cultural construct thereby dispelling the fears, anxieties and contradictions between illusion and reality.

By engaging my students in a critical dialogue to develop their own critical consciousness, questions are posed to help them identify the ways that attitudes and values are constructed through film narratives. Myths

concerning the destiny of certain heroes and heroines were analyzed to demonstrate how their structure conformed to either a genre of order or a genre of integration. Here, the cultural world that film narratives historically re–construct, also reproduce the necessary contexts required by the dominant ideology. These films do not lead to an emancipation of the individual protagonist nor to an in–depth reflection upon the society that demands specific power plays. Only a critique of the social and political constructs would demonstrate how easily a film narrative subtly constructs the roles of the major characters within the hegemony of that dominant ideology. Thus, adult education for social change may acknowledge Gramsci's belief in the role intellectuals play in mediating between rulers and ruled, by establishing "new organizations of knowledge" (Kearney, 1986, p. 184).

CHAPTER NINE

NECESSARY ILLUSIONS: IMAGINING SELVES

Today, film and television are the most pervasive media in providing children and adults alike with a diversity of visual experiences that both inform and persuade these viewers about our world through a wealth of images. Experiences of this 'illusionistic' world and the persons and objects in it are apparently equivalent to our perceptions of actual existence within a real time/space continuum. While these film narratives and television shows generate both a knowledge of our world and our own cultural traditions, we must always remind ourselves that what we see re-presented on the screen or on video has been mediated by many factors persuading us to regard such illusions as being "real." At play is the connection between the "reality" of the image and the psychological and mythical constructs of our Western culture.

In cultural anthropology, issues arising "from uncertainty about the adequate means of describing social reality" in discourse and practice indicate the shifting relationship between meaning and context (Marcus and Fisher, 1986, p. 8). Bill Nichols, a contemporary film critic and educator, states that these poststructural perspectives "turn away from art, aesthetics, value, and man to question texts, codes, effects, and subject positions" (Nichols, 1985, p. 8) Nichols explores the influence of poststructural thought in film narratives as it contextualizes "production of meaning and values, models and standards as aspects of the belief systems that a given social order uses to win the consent of those whose consciousness, identity and desire it regulates" (p. 8). As poststructural thought addresses questions of text as discourse (Foucault), semiotic codes (Derrida), and subject positionings (Lacan), in the experience of language as the instrument of subject construction in a cultural framework,

the basic assumption is the notion that the subject, "I", a person, who believes that s/he exerts control and agency, "acquiesces to the determinations of language and the unconscious, and, through them, the social order, the Western capitalist, patriarchal society in this case (Hall, 1994, p. 145).

Such poststructural perspectives indicate the "series of ruptures" in the modernist conception of Renaissance humanism, its search for ethical models and aesthetic standards, its scientific revolutions, and the Enlightenment which centered on the image of rational Man (sic), freed from dogma and intolerance, who was endowed with the faculties and capacities to investigate, unravel and master the mysteries of Nature. The main effect has been the decentering of the "Cartesian man" (Foucault, 1970).

In seeking appropriate criteria for conducting postmodern research, Hollinger (1994) suggests that the key concepts of politics and community now held by modern society "must be recontextualized in the light of postmodernist concerns about plurality, otherness, and difference" (p. 187). New readings about history, sociology and political science might be transformed in such a way as to give these disciplines a more fluid constructivist perspective. Moreover, more interdisciplinary work that appreciates the insights of literature and the voices of the marginalized will set aside the assumptions of scientism and modernity and overcome their dominant discourses.

More reliance on ethnography, description, narration, interpretation, and literature would insure a more eclectic, flexible and less controlled subject in the social sciences. "Psychoanalysis, deconstruction, genealogy, archeology, and analyses from different individuals and groups would promote greater specific understandings and increase appreciation of differences and variety while avoiding judgmental conclusions. The voices of the many others should be heard as a result of new developments in ethnography" (ibid., pp. 187-8).

As described by the American sociologist, Norman Denzin (1991), "(postmodernism) is everywhere and nowhere. It has no zero point, no fixed essence. Postmodernism contains all the traces of everything that has come before. Its dominating logic is that of a hybrid, never pure, always compromising, not 'either/or' but 'both/and'. The postmodern impulse is both playful and paradoxical" (p. 150) Denzin argues that such postmodern discourses "endeavour to reveal how words, texts and their meanings play a pivotal role in the central performances of race, class and gender relations as these experiences define what is called the postmodern. In doing so, it attempts to connect the worlds of lived experience to the larger textual-cultural systems which create and impose their meanings on everyday life" (p. 153).

The dominant issue for me, at the outset of the observational and interpretive phases of my research, was an awareness of the growing influence postmodern discourses seemed to have over the selected filmmakers and their own perspectives on "late modern" society and themselves. If there is, indeed, a rupture between modern society and what we have begun to call the "postmodern condition," what are the characteristic features of this critical anti-foundational postmodern culture? How do they situate pleasure in relation to desire, and then locate such desires into a sexuality that relates to the dominance of the phallus and of patriarchy?

Moreover, what is the significance of the actions of this learned group of French thinkers, whose writings as educators on "the regimes of truth," "the metaphysics of presence," and an "incredulity to metanarratives" openly transgress dominant social hierarchies, blur boundaries of authority and challenge the dominant social and political discourses of late capitalism?

From my perspective, the film narratives chosen for this research explore and challenge "the dualism which continues to dominate Western

thought." Different perspectives are generated by the films in this study that explore the poststructural process as it attempts to explicate the unity of self and other, a relationship "that depicts a world of multiple causes and effects interacting in complex and non-linear ways" (Lather, 1991, p. 21). As part of a conclusion to my research, I also believe these films can serve as cultural artifacts that attempt to bring about a critical self-awareness in the audience concerning the political conditions of our existence. When such films become part of the cultural fabric of a society, as other visual icons or representations, they will stand out as reference points and frameworks for dismantling the power relations of the dominant culture. Further, they strive to offer different perspectives on rupturing the dualism of either/or thinking in respect to the "metaphysics of presence" that now dominate the self/other relationship. Thus, they become educative instruments yielding new perspectives for an audience of adult learners by acting as a catalyst for social change in adult education.

Guiding my reflectiveness on these films has been Lacan's exploration of the unconscious. I have selected a "painting" which is grounded upon the Lacanian ideas about self and other. Lacan postulates that identitites are changeable "products" in the symbolic process of constituting a person's self-image. With that thought in mind, the painting I selected works, I think, as a graphic image to capture the postmodern sensibility. It is Don Eddy's Photo Realist painting *New Shoes for H.* (1973). (See appendix A). The painting is a window display of a shoe store located on Union Square in Manhattan. As a streetscape, its colors and forms bring life back into the grey anonymous urban streets of the city, transforming and re-vitalizing them. What intrigues me is that Photo Realism is an offshoot of Surrealism. It is a later manifestation of Pop Art since this painting builds its portrayal of reality, through an identity of the modern urban environment, upon a series of still photographs very much

like cinema does. The painting also contains a visual complexity that challenges the perceptions of the most acute observer. While gazing at the painting, at the shoes, the bystanders, street traffic and the buildings of this urban center you realize that everything is seen through two or more layers of glass, all at an oblique angle to the picture surface. "The combined effect created by these window panes, the distortion, displacement and reflection, is a transformation of a familiar scene into a novel, complex and exhilirating visual experience" (Janson, 1977, p. 679). The rhythmic placing of rich color, in uniform sharp focus, captures a moment in time where the internal and external worlds unite giving this work its multiple resonances and reflections that will change and transform this reality in the coming moments.

What is implied by a magic realist painting is the role of the image and of imagining oneself within a postmodern culture. It implicates the viewer into a playful "phantasy" on reflections of self in a supposedly transparent world. As in Magritte's paintings we see that the image (or signifier) is no longer attached to any "original" source or power. It is now related to other images (signifiers) in a chain of signifiers that circulates in a seemingly unending "play" of imitations. The notion that there is "the image" just as if there was at first "the word" is shattered and subverted as one can perceive in the practice of pastiche. The evolution of the cinema as presenting a window on the world, or better still, a framework to contain the world, has slowly moved into the concept of mirror stage, a tantalizing reflection of a reflection into infinity.

One such image haunts the powerful exploration of a newspaper man in Orson Welles' film of the early 1940s, *Citizen Kane* (1941). The investigating reporter wanted to learn, "Who was Charles Foster Kane?" From this point of discovery we, as viewers, are drawn into a vortex of various narratives about this man, like concentric rings shifting in time. These reproduce a multiplicity

of surface images of "the Other" without any depth or satisfying conclusion. Like the imaginary, Kane was able to create a new persona on a number of different occasions, all part of his public image. As a powerful newspaper publisher he was pre-occupied with presenting to the world his own version of the "news." He subverted events for his own purposes, radically rewriting all forms of political happenings. In his lifetime, he deliberately pursued the rising dictators, such as Hitler, Mussolini and others, knowing full-well that his accounting of these events in his newspaper, before the advent of television and Ted Turner's CNN, would be perceived as "real." In the end, no person could say who Charles Foster Kane was. He was so skillful in manipulating his own self-image that he could not be dismantled by his own myth-making.

In my research on the politics of representation in film narratives I am confronted by Foucault's theory of the archive with its "general system of formations and transformation of statements" (1972, p. 130). Foucault's theory of the archive avoids notions of origin and denies any teleological progress in the realm of history. What it does introduce is the sense of discontinuity into a postmodern condition, a historical moment at the end of the 20th century. Hence, many new dramaturgical structures on resistance and power are being produced by different filmmakers world wide. Documentary and feature films of many different cultures now being exhibited are re-defining modernist concepts and perceptions of the "normal, ordinary, and commonplace." Modernism appears as the "Other" -- as difference. In this investigation of the forms of discourse in modernism, The play of Brechtian distanciation and difference is part of the deconstructive strategy in the film narratives I have chosen. This strategy relates to the five films I have analyzed in the preceding chapters which I believe emphasize the cultural discontinuities behind rebellion and resistance in the organization of social, political and economic identities.

These new film narratives speak to the "politics of difference," as depicted in each film, produced by the discourses of a particular culture, and appear to me as postmodern narratives, shifting and changing their position, "blurring the boundaries" of self and other, presence and absence, power and knowledge that has existed in older Western cultures. From the viewpoint of Brechtian stagecraft, these new film narratives are not a rejection of older social representational codes with the intention of creating a totally new place for drama, but a political activity where the viewer witnesses the playing off of past representations against a displacement of those representations. Thus, there is an intervention by the film narrative not only in the way content is presented but also in the effects such diverse presentations of that content may have.

On the other hand, Foucault's theory of the *archive* is aiming his research through the "archaeology" of knowledge to uncover the unconscious rules guiding such systems of thought - leading to discourses - and thus to an understanding of their relations to each other in the formation of "regimes of truth." "Most of his historical studies explore how change occurs, appear to us as a discontinuous transformative process of derivations, of mutations, and of reversals in hierarchical order. Thus, his descriptive analyses reveal the morally disturbing power relations inherent in social practices" (Leitch, 1983, p. 149).

The "morally disturbing power relations" referred to by Foucault are part of the "incredulity to metanarratives" that Lyotard warns us about which obstruct and frustrate the practices of our society. Film directors such as Angelopoulos, Szabo, Tarkovsky, and others use the film medium as a political weapon to strongly influence the ways the public engage and interact with film narratives that affect the ways people think and feel about themselves and the world they inhabit. Our knowledge of this world is mediated by the culture these myths preserve in which some myths are reified, as a simulacrum of a

promised future. The films I selected for this research call attention to such "grand illusions" in Western culture that are granted as necessary to support and maintain that culture. Some of the film directors are neo–Marxists who make allegorical films comparing sexual relationships with political structures. While Angelopoulos deals with an aggressive political strategy to uncover the social–political systems that dominate human lives, Tarkovsky uses a more familiar narrative structure to explore family traumas based upon the sexual and political conflicts between father and son. The psychoanalytical theories of Freud are mixed together with Marxian theories of alienation in dealing with taboos, classical myths and sexual politics.

The Use of Myths in Film Narratives

In film history, most film narratives have their roots in folk–beliefs or myths that interpret natural events in order to shape a particular perspective or perception of life. Usually they are shaped within specific cultural groups who share common beliefs on the meanings of existence. Myths, in a traditional sense, are ahistorical, unlike legends or fables. Essentially they are religious formulations that explain universal or supernatural truths through the adventures and actions of particular heroes. Modern myths are seen today as dramatic narratives necessary for writers to give meaning to their own personal visions and perceptions of something deep and primitive in all people.

When we begin an inquiry into whose power, control and interests are served by myths, we can bring into focus the economic/political forces that brought them into existence. Like any work of art, myths mediate between reality and social consciousness. As narratives, myths are infused with characters to make us aware that certain social conventions are "natural" and are to be taken for granted, but in actuality, reflect specific social and political values and goals. When they are fashioned by film narratives, myths function

to dispel the contradications between illusion and reality. Their role as dramatic narratives is to arbitrarily assign significance and meaning to persons and objects according to some ideological or cultural construct.

While these myths, ideologically latent, appear to be independent of those cultural constructs, they are actually hidden within the work of art to construct a "reality" for the viewer. Narrative films are used as works of art to project particular attitudes and values for the construction and manipulation of feelings and emotions. This emotional formation of attitudes through film narratives as art forms leads to distortions and discrepancies between the real world and the mythic destiny of the cultural world that reproduces conformity and stereotypes. It does not lead to an emancipation of reason and the imagination nor a reflection upon specific social values and perceptions that challenge what they are now.

In breaking away from the negative aspects of myth as teleologically based, the Freudian psychologist Bruno Bettelheim (1964) advocates the creative aspects of artworks. He states:

> I also want to indicate what I believe art's unique place
> to be: that of guiding the individual to a personal vision
> of the world, and of his or her place in it.
> Contrary to theories held by some enemies of art, such as
> Plato and his followers, art is not an imitation of reality,
> neither of external reality or inner reality of the unconscious.
> It is always a vision, an attempt to express visibly what a
> particular age, a particular society, a particular person has
> viewed as the true nature and essence of reality, both the
> essence of mankind and of a person's relations to significant
> aspects of the world. (p. 49)

Roland Barthes (1972), a French semiotician, has reflected upon cinematic images and their relationship to myth. He considers the cinema an imaging machine which processes images in which the subject is continually engaged, represented and inscribed within an ideology. He asks "are film images

immediately readable and meaningful in and of themselves, regardless of the

context or are they made readable by circumstances of their production,

circulation and reception in our culture?" If the latter is true, then film images

must be placed within and read from an all encompassing context of an

ideology, whose mythic values and effects are social and subjective.

In this manner, images as art forms share with writing the attribute of

placing the viewer or reader at the furthest point from authentic knowledge.

For just as writing is a "sign of a sign"– a substitute for speech which in turn

stands in or represents the conscious self–presence of thought – so art provides

a kind of shadow–play on reality, an illusion lacking the wisdom or virtue to

pursue philosophical truths. Plato's Myth of the Cave is quoted by Marcello in

Bertolucci's *The Conformist* (1970) while in conversation with his former

mentor, Professor Quadri:

> Picture men dwelling in a sort of subterranean cavern with a long
> entrance open to the light on its entire width. . .Picture further the
> light from a fire burning higher up and at a distance behind them,
> and between the fire and the prisoners and above them a road along
> which a low wall has been built, as the exhibitors of puppet show
> have partitions before the men themselves, above which they show
> the puppets. (Plato, cited in Hamilton and Cairns, (Eds.) Book VII,
> 1961, p. 747)

Plato's dramatic metaphor illustrates how we attempt to integrate a

single view of the world when there is a belief in the world of change and

motion; but perhaps there is some eternal truth or principle underlying all of

these images. Nonetheless, persons can substitute these illusions or fantasies

for truth, and give up the quest for authentic wisdom and self–knowledge. In

this film, Marcello seeks to distort the metaphor and its statement on the

human condition. He betrays his mentor as he closes down the blinds in the

room to silhouette the professor as a two–dimensional character, visually

becoming just an illusion of a present-day reality.

These aesthetic considerations have produced controversy on how film narratives can be understood as an art form. Herbert Marcuse identifies one way to interpret them:

> the truth of art lies in its power to break the monopoly of the established reality (i.e. to those who have established it) and to define what is real. In this rupture, which is the achievement of aesthetic form, the fictitious world of art appears as a true reality.
>
> Art is committed to that perception of the world which alienates individuals from their functional existence and performance in society — it is committed to an emanicipation of sensibility, imagination, and reason in all spheres of subjectivity and objectivity. The aesthetic transformation becomes a vehicle of recognition and indictment. (Marcuse, 1977, p. 9)

Andre Bazin, in advancing his notions on the aesthetic of reality demonstrated in film narratives of the Italian Neo-Realists, affirms the general trend of cinema towards "realism" yet acknowledges that "realism in the art of the cinema can only be achieved through artifice" (1972, p. 26). Thus the art of cinema is a contradiction that in creating the illusion of reality as the cinema does, also makes it necessary since it attempts to restore reality. "For the initial reality there has been substituted an illusion of reality composed of a complex of abstraction (black and white, plane surface), of conventions, (rules of montage), and of authentic reality. It is a necessary illusion . . . which becomes identified in the mind of the spectator with its cinematographic representation" (*ibid,.* p. 27).

This co-presence of "necessary illusions" to record and represent actual events produce an ambiguous commentary about that world out there, forcing the viewer to realize that illusions and artworks are part of our reality. This is the political condition of our lives, as Bertolt Brecht, the German playwright, declared during the 1920s. Hence, the focus of this thesis has been to explore "the various ways that film narratives function to construct the social reality

that constitutes the lived world of social actors" (Mumby, 1993, p. 5). I have argued that film narratives and video productions are historical, social and political artifacts incorporating important social and political issues through the use of ideology, rhetoric and narrative genre. Thus, because of their hidden political agenda and intentions, I believe it is important for adult educators to use critical and deconstructive methods to analyze, interpret and critically reflect upon the dominance of a "metaphysics of presence" in a capitalistic consumer society, as it is transformed by the communications media through the manipulation of images, genre codes and popular myths of our culture.

Imagining Selves in Mythic Space

We learn from the "necessary illusions" about ourselves first from Lacan who, in re-reading and interpreting the findings of Freud, describes how the formation of the I - or self - is an illusionistic experience that brings about an imaginary state of existence. This narcissistic event in childhood remains as a necessary illusion of who we are before we enter into the world of myth and symbol that language brings into human relationships.

However, this transition into the symbolic realm that would assist the child towards a distinction between self and other requires what Winnicott (1971) argues as "an intermediate area of experiencing to which inner reality and external life both contribute. It is an area that is not challenged, because no claim is made on its behalf except that it shall exist as a resting-place for the child engaged in the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet interrelated" (p. 2). Thus, Winnicott conceives of this transitional realm between the child and mother as a "potential space", an area of play, where the imaginative efforts by the child makes contact with objects outside its own body. Freud's *fort/da* is an example of this child's play.

Winnicott stresses that in this transitional space the child is forming connections and relationships while simultaneously increasing its own understanding of the differences of objects from the external world. He states: "The transitional phenomena represent the early stages of the use of illusion, without which there is no meaning for the human being in the idea of a relationship with an object that is perceived by others as external to that being" (p. 11). The child develops its own individual play into shared interaction that leads directly to situated learning and cultural experiences with 'others'. Thus the playful imagination of a child during this intermediate period displays the ground for later socialization, creativity and symbolization. Winnicott emphasizes that:

> This area of playing is not inner psychic reality. It is outside the individual, but it is not the external world . . . Without hallucinating the child puts out a sample of dream potential and lives with this sample in a chosen setting of fragments from external reality....
> In playing, the child manipulates external phenemena in the service of the dream and invests chosen phenomena with dream meaning and feeling. (Winnicott, 1971, p. 51)

Thus Winnicott elaborates Lacanian discourse in explaining to us how our imaginary selves invest meaning of the external world through the phantasies drawn from the child's internal world. Illusions of this kind are necessary in constructing products of art, literature and drama that become meaningful as functions of myth and language. Yet, these dreamworks or illusions are different from delusion or deception since they are not a desired distortion of the world but an attempt to encode relationships to life within the world. Thus Winnicott shares with Suzanne Langer's her contention stated in *Philosophy in a New Key* (1942), that imaginative selves at play lead to symbolizing human activities in which we give meaning to ourselves and to our experiences of the external world. These creative acts become in time the

artworks of a culture, those narratives that supply and generate possibilities to each and every person to imaginatively create themselves anew.

Play/Imagination and the Third Space

In her contestation of the standard practices of ethnographic writing, Third World documentary film maker Trinh T. Minh-ha (1992) challenges the pre-emptive knowledge accorded to empiricism and its rationality that "writers say what they mean and mean what they say." But the effects of writing, as Trinh T. Minh-ha warns, challenges "the direct relationship between the reader's reading and the text's telling" (p. 230). The "question of belief" is raised when doubting the authenticity of the image/word, and the veracity of the writer. Trinh attempts to articulate this Third Space, a space that is closely related to the "potential space" of playful imagination of Winnicott. This potential space becomes the generative space or Third Space as an "always-emerging-already-distorted place that remains so difficult, on the one hand, for the First World even to recognize, and on the other, for our own communities to accept to venture into, for fear of losing what has been a costly gain through past struggles" (Trinh, 1992, p. 139).

As a hybrid reality this is a place where "the metaphysics of presence" of the structure of reason finds itself confronted by its Other - or the negativity of space - the absence of presence - The Void. In her film work Trinh understands this negative space as one "that makes both composition and framing possible, that characterizes the way an image breathes" (p. 142). Further, this space is a generative space since it is the relationship between the "I" and the "Not-I." Its vitality is a product of the tensionality "in this site that makes forms and contents possible but also inseparable." In her own poststructural film ethnographies, Trinh observes play within the paradox of the true and the

false, the real and the staged. In this juxtaposition a series of "real" interviews with the women in the first part are interwoven with a re-enactment of the same interview with the same women; Trinh is working to achieve a critical space in the viewing of her film between fact and fiction. Yet, this process of recognition of the form and content of her work, produces an uncomfortable, lingering uncertainty about each narrative between performance and non-performance, silently enforcing a Brechtian distanciation rather than an Aristotelian empathy. Once a reader or viewer locates him or herself in the space *in-between* presence and absence, the reader/viewer is more cognizant that film is more readily the place where the effects of Derrida's "absence of a presence" can easily be contemplated.

In relationship to adult education, we can understand that as educators, Trinh moves beyond the fixed space of "cultural binaryism," so that both the student/viewer and the teacher can enter into a generative space of imaginative possibilities "eluding the politics of polarity." Like the playful potential space of childhood, this too is a mental space where presence and absence exist simultaneously, where *no*thing is fixed, positioned in the 'and' -- the space of ambivalence -- where the space of "lack" generates a space of "becoming," where the tensions between the two frames of reference drive a desire to fill the void of absence. Here arises a cultural hybridity, an in-between space that taps the unconscious. This new arena of tensionality becomes the site where the "self" imagines the possibilities of new identities and representations emerging from the symbolic worlds of past through an identification with the object of "otherness," a continual process of identifying with and through the "Other."

Revisiting the Five Narrative Films

The five narrative films selected for this study above all serve the politics

of representation by imagining selves similar to yet other than ourselves. They are part of a network of related positions of identity in the spaces occupied by the dominant Western culture. These cultural artifacts have shifted in their impact under the challenges of the post-structuralist French thinkers who speak to the post-modern condition where "humanism" is slowly yielding to scientific objectivity. The challenges of post-structuralism become indicative of breaking the various forms of mythic structures in a culture that serve to control human interaction. From the "regimes of truth" and the "metaphysics of presence," to the virtual reality of simulacra, we are inundated by power/ knowledge forms of relationships that look for consensus. In this regard, these writers/thinkers are seeking to bring to the awareness of adult readers the absence or negativity that is addressed in any positivism that is pervasive in a postmodern, late capitalist world. It is also a way where new thoughts on ourselves, and our role playing, are gaining consideration by adults seeking new skills, new beginnings and new identities. When adult education encourages adult learners to discover new roles to play, the effect will renew, recharge and reawaken their own sense of community with others.

This study of five film narratives has succeeded in raising important implications concerning the role adult education can play in a postmodern age. Overall I am making a comparison of film narratives with adult education to understand the way films can allow us to imagine ourselves in experiences similar to the central characters in the films under review. Therefore, the major thesis advanced in this study is that film narratives can precipitate a historical review of the past that can inform and persuade us of our own identity. Also, these narratives can help in the comprehension of another's identity. We, as viewers, thus can share experiences, and in fact, learn the effectiveness of playing new roles. Empathically, we can identify with any fictional actor on

screen and grasp the social and political forces acting upon this character within the context of the film narrative. Thus, we follow Marx's notion that it is not the consciousness of Man (*sic*) that creates the person, but instead it is the social consciousness of the person that creates his or her identity.

Fried Green Tomatoes dramatizes how an adult learner constructs her own personal identity based upon the reconstruction or remembrance of the past by another person. As an adaptation of a novel into a film narrative, *Fried Green Tomatoes* depends on storytelling as the mode of representation to present a biography of past events by a person living in the present. Such a narrative device returns the viewer to past events, and features responses of a listener to those events. They are usually anecdotal in narrative form yet help return the viewer to happenings of the past when racism, intolerance, sexism and paternalism all surface as part of the patriarchal system into the present day for consideration, discussion and debate. Once these concepts are uncovered and challenged for what they are, we see how the past precipitates a role model change for an older woman desiring acceptance and recognition in a new lifestyle as a caring and responsible person as well as an educator.

Mephisto dramatizes the differences in representation between the theatre and film. In so doing, the film explores how such returns to past mythologies predetermine the future course of action in the ways unsuspected by a leading actor and other Germans accepting such roles. *Mephisto* is also a biographical tale of an actor who succeeds in his profession by advocating the totalitarian concepts of the Nazis. His own desires for acceptance and fame blind him to the immoral acts of his protectors, and allows him to follow his public role as the representation and personification of evil. The film version compares the recording of stage action - where words are more important that action, with parallel actions taken by the Nazis to "purify" their own members. Sameness is

similar to purity. Against the cultural politics of time, the film emphasizes the theatricality inherent in the representational reality of Nazism. As Thomas Elsaesser (1996) writes, "German fascism was the first political ideology which borrowed the materials, the techniques and the mise-en-scene of its self-image from the cinema and show business. What is called mood-architecture found its way from stage and screen into public life" (p. 150). The film *Mephisto* illustrates the "regime of truth" that Nazism's self-representation evoked, one that carried a *film noir* sense of paranoia and eroticism. In reconstructing this powerful melodramatic force of the "demonic," the recurring historical themes of racism, bigotry, sexism, and the patriarchal system are held up to moral exploration and critical questioning.

Being There (Ashby/Kosinski, 1977) parodies the powerful effects of television as a learning tool. It questions the presumption that information can be formatted for home consumption without any critical self-awareness. It also challeges the notion that viewers will accept TV news broadcasts without due critical questioning. The film asks whether TV can develop critical reflection in audiences when new ideas are advanced that conflict and challenge a person's values and belief systems. For example, film narratives like *Being There* (1977), demonstrate the allegorical power of a film narrative and its images to "deconstruct" experiences of "reality" and "truth." In doing so, the centralizing logic of one's own identity and non-contradiction is exposed, challenging the concealed or hidden "otherness" that is absent. By subverting the given priorities of presence over absence, this film illustrates why "illusions" are part of our reality, revealing how social and political representations become part of the "metaphyics of presence."

Being There succeeds through a careful juxtaposition of televised images representing "reality" situated within the film narrative. The film also parodies

Plato's Metaphor of the Cave where the central character moves from a closed world of mythic proportions into the politics of representation on television that blind the audience into accepting his presence, thus unknowingly operating under the mythic realm of shadows.

Solaris is a science fiction adventure in which the representation of an alien consciousness on a planet in space permits the active reconstruction of replicants, also known as "guests." In this film narrative, a psychologist finds that his unconscious thoughts and desires can materialize as similacra for the use or destruction of the scientists who unconsciously seek erotic pleasures. In *Solaris*, Tarkovsky presents the scientific world as narrowly focused upon the pursuit of materialistic goals for the benefit of the (Soviet) state. Tarkovsky questions these scientific goals since they forget to observe the damage it has caused the modern world, especially when scientific objectivism and logic alienates humankind from the recognition of the spiritual dimensions of life.

Landscape in the Mist is a representative film of "Third Cinema" that endeavors to bring into the present a collage of different mythic fragments from the past that have survived as part of the cultural heritage confronting "modern rational man." In the politics of representation, the film collects various "mythic" narratives that challenge any dominant metanarrative, Marxist or Freudian. The film narrative projects various conflicts that are encountered daily as part of a contemporary "rite of passage" for two children who are seeking their own identities through renewed contact with their father. Other cultural myths are excavated from different historic periods to produce this collage of conflicting and paradoxical situations that over-stimulate the lifeworld of these children. After viewing such a film, the viewer's own self-reflexivity can help the adult identify or perceive other social/political lifeworlds through an interplay of different narrative perspectives.

Thus, each film narrative was selected to demonstrate different ways the cinema can indulge in the politics of representation of "self" and "other" in a dramaturgical sense. Since venturing forth into these analyses I have become more aware that any analysis of the "other" cannot be without, at the same time, developing an analysis of the "self." The reverse is also true, if "we" exchange places. Because of this fact, I now understand that an observer's identity is constituted by the creation of the image of the "other." The "other" then becomes a screen onto which the "self" can project fears or joys, and furthermore, as a place to locate the self. Thus, as Patti Lather (1991) argues, the object of study can never simply be "self" or "other" for both are involved in a dialogic discourse that uncovers the historical and ideological culture that is constituted by multiple voices (Bakhtin, 1984). Such a multivoiced dialogue provides a postmodern approach that recognizes the pluralities within the postmodern culture and offers a more reliable rendition of the complex cultural situations occuring in contemporary postmodern society.

Lather advocates an ideological critique or deconstruction of the political and social "illusions" that "people cling to because they provide direction and meaning in their lives" (Fay, cited in Lather, p. 61). Lather uses the Marxist interpretation of ideology where such beliefs, known as "false consciousness," act as taken-for-granted belief systems that mask some specific set of vested interests, which in turn, shape and determine "reality" for people. This "distortion of reality" is also attacked by sociologists, I believe, such as Talcott Parsons who "defines ideology as an interpretative scheme used by social groups to make the world more intelligible to themselves" (Bell, 1977, p. 405). The anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, perceives ideology "in more neutral terms as one kind of symbol system among other cultural symbol systems such as the religious, the aesthetic, or the scientific."

Lather speaks to the adult learner and reader, to address questions to the "authority culture has over us . . . and to seize an opportunity to create reciprocal, dialogic research designs which both lead to self-reflections and provide a forum in which to test the usefulness, the resonance, of conceptual and theoretical formulations" (p. 61). Hers is an "emancipatory theory," one that she hopes will play a catalytic role for the adult learner by guiding empirical work in searching for "context-embedded" data that keeps "preconceptions" or taken-for-granted beliefs from "distorting the logic of evidence.". From my perspective, even if Lather has trouble avoiding ambiguity in her writing, she enters into the pragmatic world of lived experience and, I believe, sets up a challenge to any imposition of a "theory" or an "ideology" that acts as a "container" to such experiences. For her, theory becomes practice that informs new theory.

In any educational research, the goal, as I understand Lather, is "to operationalize reflexivity in critical inquiry." Step one is "to develop an understanding of the world-view of research participants." (What happens if you find out that their view is a cultural 'distortion of reality?') Step two is to demonstrate historically to the "dispossessed" that "their social arrangements can be both a constraint and a potential for change in their situations." Steps three and four continue the ethnographic research as it moves toward ideological critique and social transformations. Lather wants a researcher to "build towards a more useful theory" using the reciprocity of the theory-data relationship, assisting growth towards an "emancipatory practice."

In response to Lather's critique, I believe that adult education is effective and redeeming for the adult learner when it fosters a desire for change or for a "new" start or a "new beginning." This can happen when adult learners adopt or become aware of the cultural differences of "Others." This new "role playing"

is at first ambiguous since such choices are not easily arrived at nor are they acceptable outside of one's belief system. However, I think that once a new social relationship is chosen and adopted, this will help determine a "new" consciousness leading to a new awareness of the many possible roles that one wishes or wants to play. Successful practices in accepting new roles or models will depend on how well that person adapts to the necessary illusions and strategies to function in a new environment or culture.

It is ultimately a metonymic strategy of displacement, of supplanting familiar way of doing things, of making the familiar ways of learning strange, by separating oneself from a former identity, of locating oneself within a new identity and practice. Here the adult learner seeks to avoid sameness or similarities (metaphors), but to seek out exchanges through metonymic displacements that occasion reflective thought. It is analogous to film narratives, where visual images through repetition and displacement gain the visual power to transform a person's thoughts and feelings.

It is comparable to attending the cinema. Once inside the theatre, the viewer has displaced the "reality" of the outer world to entertain the cinematic redemption of "reality." Each time an adult learner is placed in a new or an unfamiliar situation, one in which the learner redefines his or her actions through social interactions, she/he plays the role of the Other. Such strategies also break the self-delusive mirror image that fosters a fixed ego identification in wanting to remain within the status quo. This is why every film event is a new beginning for adult learners in the exploration of different kinds of social and political representations imaginatively explored by film narratives.

Sally Westwood (1991), in constructing a new adult education based upon the new "politics of consumption," foresees the future of adult education paying attention to specific local cultures interfacing with various life-styles.

This follows from Lyotard's contention that postmodernism is founded upon local narratives that link directly with global concerns. Adult education would entertain new social movements for racial justice, women's and gay liberation, and ecological issues. A new political vision would form around the concept of "difference" (p. 50). The politics of postmodern representation would leave the debate on form and function and move into "deconstructionist practices." Recognition of such practices as parody and pastiche occur in artworks, especially film. Here practices could revitalize one's sense of the relationship between desire, power and vested interests. An example of political challenges to the Eurocentric positions in experimental filmmaking is Sankofa & Black Audio Film Collective. This collective has "formulated an implicit critique on the cultural nationalist tendiencies in Black activism within the realist documentary tradition. The kind of questions posed by this collective deals with power relationships and media technology. Their focus is on the place where Black people could define their own activities and control individual programs. Paramount was the politics of representation from a Black person's perspective" (Ferguson et al., 1990, p. 18). Westwood claims that adult education is related to the politics of culture in more than one way. Adult education should find means to be more cross-cultural and global in its orientation. A "multiplicity of discourses" should find new meaning in the politics of subjectivities that de-centres the self. Thus, emerges a decentred view of the subject and novel ways of theorizing for the adult learner (p. 55).

Stuart Hall (1990) continues the idea of a multiplicity of discourses that have emerged from the Afro-Caribbean experience in film projects of the Third Cinema. His comments on this new cinema of the Caribbean is related to other black film-makers emerging from a post-colonial position who raise questions of cultural identity. "Who is this emergent, new subject of the cinema? From

where does he/she speak" (p. 222)? Hall explains how "positions of *enunciation*" are problematic since the person as a subject who speaks from his or her own experience, also acts as the object who is spoken of, and that their cultural identity is not the same. In his investigation of the politics of representation within the field of cultural identity, Hall acknowledges how "We all write and speak for a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always 'in context', *positioned.*"

Hall takes his perspective from the "diaspora experience" and "its narratives of displacement." He suggests that cinematic representation as part of the Third Cinema can be thought of as containing both a history of continuity and similarity or "oneness" and a second position of "difference" that relates to what black people have become as a result of white rule and colonization. The first perspective transforms the black subject through a re-telling of a past where people learn of a common ancestry and share cultural codes, ones that "impose an imaginary coherence" on the black experience of dispersal and fragmentation in new forms of cinematic representation. These "hidden" histories recount the "lost world of signification." "They are the resources of resistance and identity, with which to confront the fragmented and pathological ways in which that experience has been reconstructed within the dominant regimes of cinematic and visual representation of the West" (p. 225).

The second perspective carries narratives of the "colonial experience" as a continuance of rediscovery of the past but does not follow a linear descendency into a "fixed" cultural identity. These narratives of "difference and rupture" construct identities from a black experience as a "break from the past," one that acknowledges the formation of becoming "different" from their ancestral roots. This translation and hybridity is the play of "difference" within the

cultural histories of black people transported into this location. These narratives speak of the representations of power that brought about poverty. racism, and the underdevelopment of these people. In cinematic representation the colonial discourse of exploration and adventure, the romance of the 'primitive' ignores the forgotten tales of expropriation and exclusion of rights.

As Hall states "the common history -- transportation, slavery, and colonization -- has been profoundly formative." Yet, the "doubleness" as described by Hall about the black experience as both a history of the past and a recognition of the present, of a them/us binary, continues re-positioning signification in the sense Derrida attaches to the word differance.as the suspension of representation and meaning. Here the play of signification and representation is always open to additional or supplemental readings in a translation of the post-colonialist subject. (p. 229)

In conclusion, the postmodern condition is concerned with the presentation of this poststructural context and with the shifting boundaries between the modern social world of self/other. The postmodern culture encompasses the "unmasking" of totalizing narratives of economic and social power to produce self-reflexive modes of expression about ourselves, our identity and our social politics. I believe this research study provides a series of film portraits that represent the desires of human beings breaking the imaginary boundaries of dogma which contain and constrict the human spirit. Some of the adventures appear very hazardous, such as the fate of *Mephisto*, yet through such examples, we, as adult educators, expand our knowledge about ourselves and others now located in an ever-changing landscape of postmodernity.

In a re-location of educational practices within this new informational landscape, the analysis of a number of theoretical positions held by adult

educators in relation to five poststructual perspectives takes on broader implications for educators in general. I believe these implications are equally as relevant to a larger realm of educational practice and not solely situated within the field of adult education.

The French thinkers, from Lacan to Lyotard, are educators who advise us to be critically aware of the kinds of myth, of word and image, that contain and control human imagination. From their own disciplines they describe the same phenomenon which locates us within myths such as "regimes of truth" or "the metaphysics of presence" or "the simulacra." Through these labels they help us recognize the symptom; nevertheless we must re-locate ourselves in an intellectual space of thought where we can re-consider the older social and political codes of representations through a play of signifiers that displace and re-appraise the power of those representations.

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Appendix A

Don Eddy -- *New Shoes for H.* (1973). Acrylic on canvas, 44x48"
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429 West Broadway   New York, New York 10012