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41

TEACHING OF THE FICTION AND FILM UNIT IN THE HIGH SCHOOL
WITH MELVILLE'S "BARTLEBY THE SCRIVENER" AND
BLUESTONE'S BARTLEBY AS MODELS



A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Michael Paul Lions

June 1968

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

I. INTRODUCTION

Eventually, almost all great works of literature become full length motion pictures. The classics and the best sellers, whether novels, plays or short stories are made into film versions.

This trend, which has included movie interpretations of the classic works such as of Shakespeare, Dickens, Poe and Hemingway, continues today. A Patch of Blue, To Kill A Mockingbird, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, In Cold Blood, are a few modern literature works made into films.

With the great number of motion pictures made, and the popularity they have received from American audiences, vast amounts of foreign, Hollywood, and experimental films are now available in 16mm prints at reasonable rental rates. By using motion pictures with literature, teachers could enhance the student's ability to analyze and understand literature.

II. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. Because literature teachers have little understanding of the art of film, they often consider the film to be a frill rather than an aid to learning.

The author contends in this study that literature teachers must be convinced that the motion picture is an art, and that the motion picture teaches the student to appreciate and understand literature more thoroughly. The problem is to convince the literature teacher of the art and the power of the film.

Importance of the study. This study is a presentation of how the short story, "Bartleby, the Scrivener," and its film version can be taught together in the literature classroom. This study, however, is only a model of the hundreds of other literature-film units that could be offered by high school literature teachers.

The second, third, fourth and fifth chapters deal with the study of the short story and film, Bartleby. The first chapter is a fuller defense of the motion picture as an art form, including why the literature teacher should use film, and a presentation of several problems the teacher must confront and solve in teaching film with literature.

It is the assumption of the author that many literature teachers are now using motion pictures to supplement literature. However their lack of knowledge about film prevents the teachers from doing a just job with film. The content of the thesis; the bibliography which lists film texts and periodical articles; and the appendix, which

includes film rental companies, film magazines, and possible movie-literature combinations will be valuable aids for the teacher who attempts film-literature units.

III. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Film. The terms film, motion pictures and movies are interchangeable. Film is the projected moving picture that is both entertaining and informative. Film is commonly shown at motion picture theatres and on television. Recently film has become part of the tool of the teacher. Film is the entertaining, artful motion picture such as Bonnie and Clyde; the short features such as Bartleby; the documentary such as film used for information in the classroom; and the experimental; which is an innovative, usually bizarre short film.

Film as an art form. This phrase means film is a complicated, skillful, and meaningful art form. When the motion picture involves the viewer, challenges his thinking, excites him, moves him, and/or creates a meaningful experience for the viewer, the motion picture is an art form. Film, as an art form, is not just a loose series of pictures that are haphazardly or poorly constructed. Like literature, music, and painting, film is an art form where much work is involved in the production, and when, by the artist's definition, or the expert's definition, the film is well done.

Experimental film. An amateur, usually non-script, non-plot film that experiments with technique to achieve a certain effect or an experiment with film technique alone is an experimental film.

Documentary film. A film that reports non-fiction. Some documentaries use a storyline to hold the viewer while others employ visual and audio techniques to involve, persuade and inform the viewer.

Film study. The study of the many kinds of film. Camera technique, sound, acting, editing, as well as the literary techniques, are among the many aspects of film study.

Film technique. Film, like literature, has many techniques which are like the techniques of literature. But many techniques, such as those involved in camerawork and sound, are unique to film. The numerous techniques are used in film to affect the viewer.

Film language. Like literature, film does have grammar and language. A picture or sequence of pictures does make a statement. In addition to visual language, sound is used separately and with pictures to help achieve the language of film.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

The remainder of the study examines the following material:

Chapter II emphasizes the need for high school film study.

Chapter III discusses the literary approach to "Bartleby, the Scrivener."

Chapter IV examines the filmic approach to "Bartleby."

Chapter V presents the literary and film techniques in the film.

Chapter VI summarizes and presents conclusions on why film should be introduced into the literature classroom.

CHAPTER II

THE NEED FOR FILM STUDY IN HIGH SCHOOL

I. INTRODUCTION

High schools need to offer study and appreciation of movies. Despite the fact that students watch underground films, foreign movies, hollywood movies, television programs, television commercials and educational films, schools have failed to make film study a major part of the curriculum. Reverend John M. Culkin, a leading figure in the area of education and film, contends that movie teachers are badly needed in high schools.

Teen-agers need movie teachers. By the time the average American student graduates from high school, he has watched more than 15,000 hours of television and has seen several hundred movies. In this image-saturated culture it is an educational imperative that the schools train judgment, taste, discrimination, and appreciation for the image media. Enter: high school movie teachers (21:337).

Culkin's article in the National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin magazine, entitled "Teaching Film as an Art Form," is a key one for the teacher who wishes to examine the need for film study. In this article Culkin adds that the students not only need film study, they want it!

Stanley Kauffman put it best: "The film in this country is the one art form that is wanted." It is wanted by the students; it is wanted by the new generation of teachers who are intelligent, selective movie-goers. Although it is not wanted very much by the

schools today, I believe that the idea makes so much sense that it will steamroll over the obstacles of snobbishness, rigid scheduling, and misunderstanding as soon as competent teachers take film programs into the schools (21:339).

Another teacher, Reverend J. Paul Carrico, director of film study at Notre Dame High School for Boys, goes a step further and suggests that film should be required for high school graduation:

But as educators, we might legitimately ask what is to be gained by upsetting the proverbial applecart of our often classically conceived order of course and inserting a film course. In other words: WHY FILM? Is this just another "enrichment" program: should it be an elective or a once-in-a-while program conducted by an outside expert? Or more, is the film so necessary for the growth of the modern student that it be labelled "Important: Mandatory for Graduation" (12:23)?

A third proponent of film study, Marshall McLuhan, goes beyond Culkin and Carrico by discussing the role of film in the future. In his well-known book, Understanding Media, in which he points out that the printed word is dead, McLuhan envisions a film world much like the pocket-book world we know now!

At the present time, film is still in its manuscript phase, as it were; shortly it will, under TV pressure, go into its portable, accessible, printed-book phase. Soon everyone will be able to have a small, inexpensive film projector that plays an 8-mm sound cartridge as if on a TV screen (86:291-292).

II. CURRENT FILM STUDY

Although high schools are not teaching film as a regular part of curriculum, several teachers have introduced

film into literature programs. Sister Bede Sullivan, Raymond Oliva, Carrico, and Culkin for example have put film in the classroom.

Sister Sullivan, high school English teacher, discusses the success of her film teaching:

That the students, after seven Mondays of film study, could penetrate the film knowingly with artistic awareness, and thus see in the film much that others who merely looked at it misses, convinced the parents that film study ought to be part of the high school English program to enable students to communicate in the medium (119:434).

The second teacher, Oliva, teaches a novel into film class at Sierra College in Rocklin, California. He, too, praises film:

The students read nine novels and viewed the motion pictures based on those novels: 1) All the King's Men, 2) The Informer, 3) The Grapes of Wrath, 4) How Green Was My Valley, 5) Shane, 6) Intruder in the Dust, 7) Goodbye Mr. Chips, 8) The Ox-Bow Incident, 9) The Caine Mutiny. The main purpose of the course, "The Novel and the Film," as with all the other courses in the motion picture that I have taught, was to give a wider bases of knowledge about motion pictures in general, a greater appreciation of film art, and an introduction to the art of the motion picture (Appendix C).

Carrico writes in the English Journal about his high school film course:

The results of our film program have been one degree below fantastic. Academically, the film has been good for the students. As one educator puts it, "Film turns people on." . . . Film has done more than its share to promote better student-faculty relations. . . . And finally, we have discovered that film can be the bases of an even greater communication between students of different schools (12:34-35).

As a final example of film courses in high schools, I point out the two film-literature classes I have taught at Auburn High School for the 1967-68 school year. I have taken two approaches: 1) comparison of film to literature, 2) analysis of the art of film. We watch short features, documentaries, experimentals and full-length motion pictures. The students miss key points in film. Editing and camerawork are difficult parts of film for students to analyze. What students need is practice in film viewing, a selection of better films, and practice in film making.

III. FILM STUDY IN LITERATURE CLASSROOM

One of the best ways of introducing film to students is within the literature or English classroom. The transition seems natural because English majors possess analytical skills in literature, and those same skills can be used to evaluate film. In an important book that deals with motion pictures in the teaching of English, The Motion Picture and the Teaching of English, the authors point out the similarities between film and literature and note film's uniqueness as well:

There are many reasons why we have considered the role of the moving picture in the teaching of English. First, the film has an unparalleled power to transmit information and inferences. Second, it may illuminate and augment the study of literature. Third, it has form, structure, theme, irony, metaphor, and symbol--aspects of any work of art, and hence subject to examination and isolation. And finally, it is concerned with ethics, values, and truth--which may be embodied or distorted in films as in any other medium (111:viii).

In addition literature involves telling a story and involving the reader in an experience. Film does the same thing. Even McLuhan, who defines film as a stronger force in today's world, draws an analogy between literature and film:

The close relation, then, between the reel world of film and the private fantasy experience of the printed word is indispensable to our Western acceptance of the film force (86:286).

Certainly the teachers that are introducing film into high schools are taking similar approaches in which they relate film to literature. Culkin discusses the similarity of aim by both the film and English teacher:

What do high school movie teachers teach? They teach teen-agers and they teach movies. They teach teen-agers by putting them in contact with films which will both widen and deepen their understanding of themselves and of others. They teach movies by analyzing the language through which film makes its point. The goals are analogous to those of a teacher of English literature-- to have the student experience the best within the medium and to equip him with tools for analyzing both the content and form of the medium (21:337-338).

In my classes, I have used the "literature into film" approach. We studied two short stories, "Bartleby," and "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and their film versions; then we moved to novels, Ox-Bow Incident, Requiem for a Heavyweight, The Informer, and The Grapes of Wrath and compared them to their film versions.

Not only does film study help students deal with literature, but films introduce students to a vital, twentieth century art form. Introducing film study into literature

programs will open the way for film-only courses. Where I teach, for example, we have screened and studied many excellent documentaries such as Did You Hear What I Said, The Wildest Ride and The Rival World. We screened and studied several National Film Board of Canada productions such as Hors D'oeuvres, Jamie: Story of a Sibling, and a full-length motion picture, Nobody Waved Goodbye. We screened and studied one international movie, Nothing But a Man and several Hollywood productions: The Loved One, A Patch of Blue, Dark Victory, Nevada Smith, Sands of Kalahari, King Rat, 1984, Animal Farm, Blackboard Jungle, Citizen Kane, and The Killers. We have even screened and studied several television commercials. What started out to be a literature into film course, has become a study of film qua film, and not at the expense of literature.

IV. PROBLEMS OF THE INTRODUCTION OF FILM STUDY

Before film study becomes an accepted part of high school curriculum, several key problems will have to be solved. First, since administrators play a major role in determining school curriculum, it is very much their lack of knowledge about film that has prevented the introduction of film courses into the high school curriculum. Administrators worry about discipline, accommodating superiors, school boards, parents, planning new buildings and hiring teachers.

Until administrators are convinced that film study is more than entertainment, film study will stand little chance in high schools.

A second problem is the lack of film courses in college. David Stewart, in Film Study in Higher Education, states that only a handful of film courses are offered by the largest one-hundred colleges in the United States in 1963-64. According to Stewart only 152 film history, criticism, and appreciation courses were offered in the United States during the 1963-64 school year in those colleges (117:163-167).

High school and college English teachers are a third problem. They will not abandon the study of grammar and literature for film, largely because most of them view film as entertainment or informational. Stewart comments on their antipathy:

. . . higher education has only just begun to respond to motion pictures as a contemporary art. The traditionalists insistence upon custom as a guide to subjects which merit serious inquiry is ever-present . . . there will always be those who maintain that human experience can be effectively recorded only in print (117:37).

Scheduling is a fourth problem. Most high school classes are fifty minutes long, and most full-length motion pictures run two hours. The solution to the problem is to show long films over two and three periods either on the same day or in two or three separate days.

Lack of money presents a fifth problem. Most full-length movies rent for thirty dollars or more. Although there are many less expensive films renting for less than twenty dollars, their quality is usually poor. A budget of at least seven-hundred dollars a year is needed if the teacher is to do a competent job of teaching film.

Among the most unusual difficulties in teaching films is the process of locating and renting movies. Stewart remarks about the problem:

To try to track down a film now requires too much detective work. We need a volume similar to the one libraries have in Books In Print. A foundation would have to finance the gigantic effort of getting the book compiled. After that, a commercial publisher would probably take over (117:63).

Yet many film sources are available. For free films, the catalog, Educator's Free Guide to Films, lists current and older free films distributed by American companies. In addition many recent and well-done documentary films are available from Shell Oil Company, Pacific Northwest Bell, and Standard Oil Company. Miscellaneous documentary, short fiction, and experimental short films may be rented inexpensively from local colleges and universities that have built film collections. The Seattle Public Library provides an excellent source for a large number of experimental, documentary, short fiction, and early silent films. Also, dozens of film rental companies, like Brandon and Contemporary on the west coast, will rent cartoons, short features,

documentary, and full-length movies at a nominal fee. In their film libraries can be found such films as Alfie, Zorba the Greek, A Patch of Blue, The Bicycle Thief, La Strada and The Grapes of Wrath. Brandon also rents recent long features such as Nothing But A Man, Nobody Waved Goodbye and Red Balloon. Blackhawk Films, another film company, rents and sells the classic silents. Schools could buy 8mm prints of Charlie Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy for as little as \$5.98 per film.

The purpose, then, of the following two chapters is to show how film can be introduced and used alongside literature. The next two chapters will treat only one short story and one film--Bartleby. This will serve as an example of how other stories and their film versions can be used together.

In the appendix there are listed several novels, plays and short stories with their film versions. Although I intend to emphasize more recent literature and more recent films, teachers will find hundreds of others listed in the various catalogs and in the appendix.

Film study belongs in the high school curriculum. Critics and teachers alike have pointed this out. Although film study is being introduced into high school classes, its methodology has not been wholly decided. Film should be introduced through comparison to literature, but once established, its study should be independent and autonomous.

V. SUMMARY

High schools should offer film study. Many critics favor film study and some teachers are beginning it in high school and college. Film can be introduced into the curriculum through film-literature comparison. Although there are problems to the introduction of film, once established in the literature classroom, film will evolve as a separate subject matter in high schools.

CHAPTER III

THE LITERARY APPROACH TO "BARTLEBY, THE SCRIVENER"

I. INTRODUCTION

"Bartleby, the Scrivener" by Herman Melville, is the story of a young man who withdraws into himself and expires unceremoniously in prison after the exhortations of his former employer the lawyer.

II. PLOT SUMMARY

The elderly, nameless lawyer opens by discussing scriveners (law-copyists) and states that Bartleby is the strangest scrivener he has met. The lawyer does a "smug business" in rich men's bonds, mortgages, and title-deeds, and he is the Master of Chancery in New York. His chambers are on the second floor of a Wall Street Building. He employs two copyists, Turkey and Nippers. Ginger Nut works as the office boy.

The lawyer needs additional help because of increased business and hires Bartleby. The lawyer pictures him pallidly neat, pitiably respectable, incurably forlorn. Bartleby works hard in his corner separated from the lawyer by a screen and removed from the office staff by a wall and door.

A conflict arises when the lawyer asks Bartleby to check a law paper. Bartleby refuses. His response, "I would

prefer not to," is one which he repeats throughout the story. In a second and later conflict, Bartleby again refuses to check copy and the lawyer draws the office staff into the situation and uses them against Bartleby. The lawyer notices that Bartleby keeps to himself and eats only ginger nuts.

On a Sunday morning the lawyer, on his way to church, stops at his office. He discovers that Bartleby lives in the office and feels both pity and repulsion for Bartleby. He labels Bartleby as a ". . . victim of innate and incurable disorder."

Later the lawyer tries to pry personal information from Bartleby but fails. The lawyer asks Bartleby to be reasonable and to check copy. Bartleby will not check copy. Nippers and Turkey verbally attack Bartleby because of his refusals. Immediately after the conflict, Bartleby states that he will do no more writing. The lawyer dismisses Bartleby and gives him six days to leave.

Bartleby does not leave. The lawyer offers Bartleby extra money, but the scrivener will not vacate the office. The lawyer submits to Bartleby, allows the scrivener to stay and calls himself charitable.

The arrangement does not work. The lawyer's professional associates are leary of Bartleby. The lawyer fears that rumors are beginning. He decides, "Since he will not quit me, I must quit him. I will change my offices." He does.

After the lawyer moves, Bartleby refuses to leave the building. The landlord appeals to the lawyer. The lawyer goes to Bartleby and pleads with him to leave the building. Bartleby again refuses to budge. Disturbed, the lawyer spends a few days away from Wall Street traveling in the nearby area. When he returns he discovers that Bartleby has been taken to the tombs and charged with vagrancy.

The lawyer visits Bartleby at the prison, but Bartleby turns away from him. Although the Narrator terms the jail yard as pleasant, Bartleby acknowledges that he knows where he is. The Narrator pays the grubman to feed Bartleby well.

In a few days the lawyer returns to prison. Bartleby is ". . . huddled at the base of the wall." He is dead. His epitaph:

Grubman: "Eh! --He's asleep ain't he?"

Lawyer: "With Kings and counselors."

The lawyer adds an explanation of Bartleby. He later learned that Bartleby had been a clerk in the Dead Letter Office before working for the lawyer. The lawyer states that the previous job explains Bartleby's strange behavior. He utters, in closing, "Ah Bartleby! Ah, humanity."

III. THE CRITICS' APPROACH

"Bartleby, the Scrivener" has had its share of critical study. Among the most profitable are those by Marvin Felheim,

Richard Fogle, Leedice Kissane, Mordecai Marcus, Egbert Oliver, Norman Springer and Kingsley Widmer. Felheim states that critics have taken three similar approaches to the story: the search for "Bartleby's actual identity," the identification of Melville as Bartleby, and the discussion of the aesthetics of the story. A second critic, Fogle, defines Bartleby and the Narrator as the only "full" character; Bartleby, a "specter," successively defies the Narrator. A fourth critic, Kissane, argues that the Narrator is the dynamic character, changing and developing through his relation with Bartleby. Marcus views the work in terms of psychological doubles. Bartleby is the double of the ". . . sterility and impersonality of a business society," an extension of the Narrator. Oliver draws a parallel between Bartleby and Henry David Thoreau. A seventh critic, Springer, contends that the Narrator does not see himself and Bartleby as clearly as does the reader.

Although the critics discuss several aspects of the story, I emphasize three approaches: The Narrator as the main character, Bartleby as the main character, the story as an allegory of Melville's life.

The Narrator as a Main Character

Four critics, Fogle, Kissane, Springer and Widmer, draw valuable arguments in defending the Narrator as the story's main character. Fogle considers the Narrator as a

major force who determines the fate of Bartleby, and Kissane shows that the Narrator writes dangling constructions when he is upset by Bartleby. Springer sees the Narrator as complacent, egotistic and emotionally blind. Widmer treats the Narrator as the lone full character. All of the critics agree that Bartleby and the Narrator do not communicate with each other and that the Narrator's attempt to help Bartleby is futile.

Fogle's central contention is that the Narrator tries to help Bartleby, fails, and these attempts are, in part, responsible for Bartleby's withdrawal and death. Fogle says, in part, that:

"Bartleby" is a story of absolutism, predestination, and free will, in which predestination undoubtedly predominates. The scrivener has been perverted before the story opens; the narrator-god perhaps unwittingly assists in his undoing; and his later well-intentioned efforts to rescue Bartleby are so futile as to be merely ironic (34:26).

The Narrator senses the strangeness of Bartleby and desires to help the scrivener as early as their first meeting when Bartleby applies for the job. The Narrator recalls, "I can see that figure now--pallidly neat, pitiably respectable, incurably forlorn! It was Bartleby" (87:130).

As the story progresses Bartleby refuses to check copy, which frustrates the Narrator. In addition, the Narrator discovers that Bartleby lives in the office, and when he fires him, the scrivener will not leave. Unable to deal with

Bartleby, and considering himself charitable, the Narrator decides to let Bartleby stay, ". . . I shall persecute you no more; you are harmless and noiseless as any of these old chairs; in short I never feel so private as when I know you are here" (87:148). Fogle thinks that it is "humorous fatalism" that the Narrator considers his mission in life to take care of Bartleby (34:15) and that Bartleby's inability to help himself is due to fate.

Unlike Thoreau, however, he is passive; he has not premeditated and freely willed his isolation. His will is perverted beyond his hope of redemption. His god, the narrator, is genuinely well disposed toward him and offers him a generous number of choices, but he will choose nothing (34:20-21).

After the Narrator allows Bartleby to stay, he quickly changes his mind because his colleagues begin to discuss Bartleby. Soon, he abandons Bartleby:

Since he will not quit me, I must quit him. I will change my offices; I will move elsewhere, and give him a fair notice, that if I find him on my new premises I will then proceed against him as a common trespasser (87:150).

He moves his offices to another building, but Bartleby remains. Later, the Narrator returns to try to convince Bartleby that he must move. Bartleby refuses and is jailed. Still later, the Narrator visits him in prison and again tries to connect but to no avail. Soon after Bartleby dies, unconvinced of the worth of existence. Fogle claims that the Narrator does not understand the futility of trying to deal with Bartleby, and "He is forced at last to see Bartleby

steadily and see him whole--a human irremediably wrecked, for whom nothing can be done" (34:14-15).

Fogle may be right about the Narrator's finally realizing that he cannot deal with Bartleby; however, Bartleby is not "irremediably wrecked." There is proof that the Narrator is not capable of helping Bartleby. The Narrator is too limited, too dispassionate and too much a part of the business world to practice psychiatry on Bartleby. For example, when Bartleby refuses to check copy, the Narrator grows enraged with him. Bartleby's vague reason, that he prefers not to, is not enough a reason for the Narrator. Instead of accepting Bartleby's quality work of copying, the Narrator pursues the course of trying to force Bartleby to obey. A wiser employer might have ignored Bartleby's oddness, accepted Bartleby's work, and not met with such conflict.

Further, the Narrator fails to see why Bartleby lives in the office and why Bartleby is somewhat friendly with Ginger Nut. And the Narrator's blindness is shown fully when he does not understand why Bartleby refuses to copy. Bartleby lives in the office because he feels more comfortable there, and Bartleby likes Ginger Nut because only he does not attack him. Bartleby quits copying because Nippers and Turkey attack him. In the key scene, for example (87:141-143), Nippers and Turkey admonish Bartleby and leading him to find more meaning in "giving up" than trying to please the office

staff. The Narrator assumes that Bartleby's refusal to write is due to poor eyesight. He fires Bartleby.

At the conclusion the Narrator tacks on a rumor, that Bartleby's strange behavior is due to his former job as Dead Letter Clerk, but this rumor does not explain Bartleby, and demonstrates that the Narrator has not searched enough to find out what it is that bothers Bartleby. As Fogle points out, Bartleby is too much for the Narrator to handle:

"Bartleby, . . . is an extremist, and is more than his shrewd and moderate god [narrator] can cope with" (35:19).

Kissane defends the story as the Narrator's. In discussing the dangling constructions in the story, Kissane notes that when the Narrator is upset by Bartleby, his writing slips into an overuse of dangling constructions. For instance, when Bartleby refuses to compare papers for the first time, and utters his first, "I prefer not . . ." the writing of the Narrator worsens. Another example of the Narrator's awkward writing occurs after he has run away from the situation, returns and tries to reason Bartleby out of the building: "Going upstairs to my old haunt, there was Bartleby silently sitting upon the banister at the landing" (59:198). A third example occurs when the Narrator visits Bartleby in the prison: "Strangely huddled at the base of the wall, his knees drawn up, and lying on his side, his head touching the cold stone, I saw the wasted Bartleby" (59:198).

Kissane's case is a good one and demonstrates that Melville, the artist, had control of the short story by portraying the Narrator in constant emotional chaos, showing this mood with awkward sentence constructions.

Springer describes the Narrator as the complacent main character. Although the Narrator fails to define Bartleby, he does define himself. The Narrator is orderly, prudent, methodical. To him, the "easiest way of life" is best. His clerks are beneath him in self-control, intelligence and attainment. Springer, too, defines the Narrator: "Not only does he believe in the importance of work, but he is well rewarded for it by all the appropriate signs: money, success, establishment" (115:411). Springer discusses the Narrator's sensibleness and charity; he states that the Narrator is too sensible to be completely charitable. Springer is right, I think, because the Narrator does attempt at least partial charity. He runs from the situation Bartleby presents in three ways: he offers Bartleby an extra twenty dollars, vacates his offices, and takes his retreat-like vacation. The Narrator rationalizes that Bartleby is mentally ill, and that Bartleby refuses to be helped. Further, the Narrator terms himself charitable when he cannot reach Bartleby through many tries. At this point in the story (87:148), the Narrator is heard to say that ". . . my mission in this world, Bartleby, is to furnish you with office-room for such period

as you may see fit to remain" (87:148). Of course he later betrays this promise by moving his office quarter and abandoning Bartleby.

Springer also views the Narrator as egotistical. He bases this view on the fact that the Narrator opens the story with a lengthy description of himself, that he judges Bartleby and his other workers by his own standards, and that he continues to build a difference between his employees and himself, ordering them and expecting their obedience. But Bartleby weakens the Narrator's "self-esteem" by refusing to obey. Ironically, the Narrator is metaphorically blind: he fails to see Bartleby, unaware that he has failed to help him. And Springer concludes:

The triumph, and therefore pleasure, for the reader will be that he knows what the narrator does not know-- that it is Bartleby who acts, in the world of the story, on the absolute knowledge of the "hopelessness of remedying" (115:418).

Widmer acknowledges the Narrator as the only full character, and like Marcus, considers Bartleby as the psychological double of the Narrator: Bartleby is neither more nor less than the bland attorney's specter of irrational will, whose authenticity he denies, and who therefore haunts and defies him (127:277). Widmer labels the Narrator as a rationalist who battles Bartleby with "practical reasoning." However, Bartleby applies "defiant choosing" and creates chaos for the Narrator. Also, Widmer calls the Narrator's

Christian attitude, "reiterated and reductive generosity" revealing "incomprehension and contempt" (127:283).

According to Widmer, Bartleby is humanity in only two ways, as "forlorn negation" and as ". . . the obsession of the benevolent rationalist's consciousness" (127:284). Widmer's final defense of the Narrator as the main character rests in his note that Bartleby, even though an unreal character, wins the battle with the Narrator through his death:

The Narrator attempts to exercise that pessimistic image with common sense, authority, rationality, theology, prudence, pity, charity, resignation, causality, flight, morality, and even, at the end, reverence. But . . . the walls of incomplete comprehension, remain (127:285).

In a second responsible approach to the story, Bartleby emerges as the central protagonist. The argument to support this reading is threefold. First, the story is about Bartleby and not about the Narrator. Although the Narrator tells the story and inserts his characterization, the story remains as Bartleby's effect on the Narrator. Second, since the story's title is, "Bartleby, the Scrivener," Melville was obviously concerned with telling Bartleby's story. Third, in his effect on the Narrator, Bartleby stands as the dominant force in the story.

Although other critics discuss the importance of Bartleby, two critics fashion essential arguments about Bartleby as the main character. Marcus sees Bartleby as a double of both impersonal business world and as an extension of the

Narrator. Fogle, who argues that the Narrator is a dominant character, also defines Bartleby as a key force in the story. Reference to the criticism of Marcus and Fogle will be made occasionally.

Bartleby as the Main Character

We can argue that it is Bartleby's story because the Narrator says this in the first paragraph: "What my own astonished eyes saw of Bartleby, that is all I know of him, except, indeed, one vague report, which will appear in the sequel" (87:124). He labels Bartleby as strange and notes that little is known about his personal history. Although the Narrator digresses momentarily from his story of Bartleby into a description about himself, his office quarters and his staff, once he returns to discussing Bartleby, he does not digress again.

As I will discuss later in the section on allegory, Melville probably had someone in mind from real life when he drew the characterization of Bartleby. Marvin Felheim points out that Melville may have had considered three people. Thoreau, Eli James Murdock Fly and Melville, himself, could have been the basis for Bartleby (32:534-535).

We can further argue that it is Bartleby's story because Melville attributed human qualities to Bartleby. Some critics, however, contend that Bartleby is not a real

character, but Bartleby speaks, defies the Narrator, and demonstrates his awareness of self and others. A good example of this occurs when the two main characters confront each other for the last time at the office. Here, Bartleby speaks and reacts firmly: he refuses to check copy. Turkey and Nippers explode, attack, and chide Bartleby, but Bartleby will do no more writing.

Bartleby shows his ability to perceive the cruelty of the office situation and reacts against that cruelty. He decides here that he will not be accepted by the office staff, and if he continues to be a worker he will suffer constant admonition. So, Bartleby takes a stand. He withdraws from his job. He is real here because he speaks in reaction to his situation. He is aware that he cannot fit into the stifling world of the Narrator and business, and chooses an interesting path of defiance: resistant withdrawal.

Bartleby's importance in the story arises from his ability to disturb the Narrator. Bartleby bothers the Narrator from the time he arrives to apply for the job through several conflicts with the Narrator. The Narrator fails to communicate with Bartleby in the stair and jail scenes in the final pages of the story, and the Narrator's memory of Bartleby deeply disturbs him. The troubled Narrator recalls his first impression of Bartleby: "I can see that figure now-- pallidly neat, pitiably respectable, incurably forlorn! It

was Bartleby" (87:130). The Narrator adds that although Bartleby worked well he did so in seclusion and in silence.

Their conflict begins when the Narrator asks Bartleby to check copy and Bartleby refuses. The despairing Narrator sits ". . . in perfect silence, rallying my stunned faculties. Immediately it occurred to me that my ears had deceived me, or Bartleby had misunderstood my meaning" (87:131). But Bartleby has not misunderstood: he does not and will not obey, and the Narrator progressively becomes disarranged by Bartleby's ineffable behavior.

When he fails to win over Bartleby, the Narrator abandons him by moving to quarters in another building. Nor can the landlord budge Bartleby, so he pleads with the Narrator to move him. But the Narrator's renewed attempt fails, leaving the now exasperated Narrator attempting to rationalize his position:

I now strove to be entirely care-free and quiescent; and my conscience justified me in the attempt; though, indeed, it was not so successful as I could have wished. So fearful was I of being again hunted out by the incensed landlord and his exasperated tenants, that, surrendering my business to Nippers, for a few days, I drove about the upper part of the town and through the suburbs, in my rockaway; crossed over to Jersey City and Hoboken, and paid fugitive visits to Manhattanville and Astoria (87:153).

His pilgrimage to nowhere is in search of the unattainable grail: a clear conscience, but his running away and later his troubled reaction to Bartleby's imprisonment are sure signs that the Narrator's guilt runs deeply. The Narrator visits

Bartleby's prison twice. He finds Bartleby's reception less than agreeable, and, again, the Narrator suffers.

The story concludes with the Narrator's exploration that Bartleby's behavior may be due to the job Bartleby held before working for the Narrator. The last paragraph, tacked on by the Narrator, reinforces my contention that the Narrator has never understood Bartleby, and further intensifies the man's sense of guilt:

Dead Letter! Does it not sound like dead men? Conceive a man by nature and misfortune prone to a pallid hopelessness, can any business seem more fitted to heighten it than that of continually handling these dead letters, and assorting them for the flames (87:156)?

That Bartleby's "Dead Letter" office job causes Bartleby's strangeness is, to say the least, hardly adequate explanation. Bartleby's oddness remains vague in the Narrator's mind because he approaches Bartleby as he would his business--rationally. The Narrator's world, a world of walls, business and money, do not appeal to Bartleby. The realm of the Narrator is dull and overdemanding to Bartleby, and like a "hippy" Bartleby "tunes out" and accepts death.

Marcus, the critic, stresses the characterization of Bartleby, too, and like Widmer, observes Bartleby as an extension of the Narrator:

I believe that the character of Bartleby is a psychological double for the story's nameless lawyer-narrator, and that the story's criticism of a sterile and impersonal society can be clarified by investigation of this role (80:540).

Marcus offers several reasons for his thesis. Bartleby has no history, he lives and works in the office, he depends on the Narrator, and he will not leave the Narrator (80:540-541). The lawyer, too, behaves as if Bartleby were part of him. He places Bartleby in the same room, and uses only a screen as separation; Bartleby has a strange hold on the Narrator, a "wonderous Ascendancy" as the Narrator points out; and later the Narrator accepts it as his station to take care of Bartleby. Marcus further argues that the characters are caught in a kind of prison in the Wall Street setting: "Bartleby's role as a psychological double is to criticize the sterility, impersonality, and mechanical adjustments of the world the lawyer inhabits" (80:542). Marcus states that the Narrator employs two sterile and monotonous scribes, Turkey and Nippers. They are weak characters who appear comical in their futile attempts to challenge the Narrator and the business world: "Turkey and Nippers combine automation behavior, self-narcosis, and awkward attempts to preserve their individuality" (80:542). Bartleby, Marcus continues, is a contrast to them for he does his work with intense seriousness at first, then successively prefers not to check copy, refuses to copy and refuses to obey any of the Narrator's demands. Bartleby defies the business world, a feat impossible for the Narrator.

According to Marcus, all the characters are trapped by the wall, a major symbol. The walls of Wall Street, the walls of the prison contain the characters who struggle to free themselves:

I believe that Bartleby represents a protest within the lawyer which has at least partially taken the form of a death drive. Parallel to this paradox is the fact that Bartleby's protest also resembles the protests of Turkey and Nippers, who combine self-effacement, self-assertion and self-narcosis (80:544).

Although Fogle defends the story as the Narrator's, he too considers Bartleby as extremely important. Fogle submits that Bartleby is "exploited" by the American society, and is controlled by his society and especially by the Narrator. The scrivener has failed to be an American success, and ". . . has been perverted before the story opens" (35:26). Since the Narrator "plays the role of fate," Bartleby exerts what he has left, free will. He forces himself into a steady recession in the story: "Bartleby is above everything, an inoffensive person, an object of compassion" (35:21). Fogle points out that Bartleby is an absolutist, a "nonconductor, neutrality, and an opposite of opposition in that he 'prefers not'" (35:19-20). Bartleby is like many of the Melville heroes in that he is a bachelor and uncommitted (35:105).

The Story as an Allegory

Several critics read the story as allegory. They point

out that Melville had several real life people in mind. Felheim submits a key discussion and states that there were four people who may have been models for the characterization of Bartleby: Thoreau, Eli James Murdock Fly, a man named Adler, and Melville.

Oliver defends Felheim's thesis. Oliver treats the first of the identities, Thoreau, and delves into the withdrawal symptoms of Bartleby. Melville was greatly influenced by Thoreau, and Bartleby demonstrates many of the same passive resistances: His (Bartleby's) attitude toward life was a gradually progressive nonviolent nonco-operation--even while he attached himself as a parasite to his employer and benevolent guardian (97:432). Oliver feels that Melville was criticizing Thoreau and Bartleby for their paradoxical irresponsibility and dependence on society. They were willing to receive but not willing to give. Melville disliked Thoreau's refusal to pay taxes, own land and do his own work (97:438).

Oliver sees other similarities between Bartleby and Thoreau. Bartleby has nothing to do but stare out the window, and Bartleby and Thoreau both went to prison (97:437). Finally, Oliver defines the problem both kinds of men present: Organized society could not dispense with Bartleby as easily as Bartleby could dispense with society (97:437). Also, Oliver levels criticism at Bartleby: "Try as you will, you cannot cut

yourself off from society, and to persist in such a direction can only destroy the individual" (97:439).

Fogle, too, defends Felheim. Fogle describes Bartleby as a "melancholy Thoreau." But Fogle penetrates deeper:

Unlike Thoreau, however, he is passive; he has not premeditated and freely willed his isolation. His will is perverted beyond his hope of redemption (35:20-21).

Fogle makes a key point. Even though there is similarity between Bartleby and Thoreau, the characterization of Bartleby is more complex than the real person Thoreau. Melville, the artist, crafts a protagonist that the reader cannot fully understand. According to Fogle, there is only one thing we know of Bartleby--he will choose nothing (35:20-21).

Felheim's second identity is Eli Fly. Another critic, Jay Leyda, mentions that Melville could have met Fly at ". . . Albany Academy or during Fly's five-year apprenticeship in the law offices of Peter Gansevoort, Melville's uncle" (67:455). Melville wrote in a letter, "He (Fly) has long been a confirmed invalid and in some small things I act a little as his agent" (67:455). A third Felheim candidate is Adler who had severe agoraphobia (abnormal fear of crossing or being in open spaces) and was placed in Bloomingdale Asylum (32:535).

The fourth identity proposed by Felheim is Melville. Felheim asserts that the story of Bartleby is a parable to Melville's pursuit as a writer: ". . . Bartleby represents

not just Melville but the nineteenth-century American artist in conflict with his environment" (32:535). Melville wrote "Bartleby" soon after the failure of his novel, Pierre, and after he was refused a government diplomatic post. Harrison Hayford and Merrill Davis report that Melville wanted the government position to ease his health and secure a steady income. His failure to get the job was a disappointment to him (49:168-183).

Another critic, R. E. Watters, considers the era in which Melville wrote:

Herman Melville lived in an age when most Americans were more concerned that society should not interfere with the individual than that the individual should contribute to the welfare of the social group (126:33).

In defense of Walters it is clear that the Narrator demonstrates uneasiness in trying to help Bartleby, the individual. Bartleby, who imprisons himself in the Wall Street building is further ignored by society when he is imprisoned and left there to die.

Leyda and Chase, too, help make Felheim's point. They point out the family influence on Melville. Leyda writes,

Two of Herman Melville's brothers, Gansevoort and Allan, were practicing Lawyers; his observation of their practice and atmosphere of their offices (at 10 Wall Street) may account for exceptionally concrete background of this story (67:455).

Chase, like Felheim, sees Melville ". . . writing a parable of the artist . . ." in the characterization of Bartleby (13:147). There was a "strained and complex" relationship

between Melville and his father-in-law (also a lawyer), for Melville had accepted financial relief from him while he was writing (13:147). If "Bartleby" is a parable, as Chase suggests, then Melville resented his dependence on his father-in-law more than he welcomed aid he needed. Further, Bartleby both accepted and refused the Narrator's help. He refused the money but accepted the room. He refused to live with the Narrator, but refused to leave the Narrator's office.

Finally, it is pertinent that "Bartleby" the short story was not a success to the 1853 reading public. Chase notes that few readers were ready for the message of the story: "For Melville, literature was life; ideally Bartleby should have been able to convey its message of love and vitality to the readers who awaited it" (13:147).

IV. SUMMARY

The plot summary is an introduction to the short story, "Bartleby, the Scrivener." Three main approaches to the story are discussed: The Narrator as the main character; Bartleby as the main character; and the story as an allegory of Melville's life. Various critics' points of view are presented. So that the student can guide himself in understanding the story, a question list is in Appendix E.

CHAPTER IV

"BARTLEBY": FILMIC APPROACH

I. INTRODUCTION

In examining the film version of "Bartleby, the Scrivener," I will point to its filmic qualities and to its similarity to the short story. Then I will attempt to show how the film improves on the short story. First I will include a plot summary of the film, questions unanswered in the short story the film answers, a schedule of the film-short story unit on "Bartleby," film questions for Bartleby, the test for Bartleby, the literary and film techniques in Bartleby, and conclusions about the film-short story unit.

The film version, compared to the short story, takes a slightly different approach to the plot and story-line. The plot summary which follows, when compared to the plot summary of the short story (in chapter two), will be helpful in distinguishing some of the differences.

II. PLOT SUMMARY OF FILM

Mr Parsons, Attorney-at-law and recently named Master of Chancery, stands in front of the building that houses his office quarters. He narrates an introduction to himself while the viewer watches him ascend the stairs to his office.

After his office staff, Turkey, Nippers and Ginger Nut, greet him, Mr. Parsons enters his office in a pleasant frame of mind ready for a day's work. But he is puzzled when, later in the morning, Bartleby enters applying for a job as a scrivener.

Mr. Parsons hires Bartleby. He confides to Bartleby and points out the flaws of Nippers and Turkey. Nippers is unsettled in the mornings and works well in the afternoon. Turkey works in the morning but is reckless in the afternoon. Bartleby smiles slightly indicating that he understands.

Mr. Parsons narrates Bartleby worked ardently at first. The Narrator checks copy with his workers while Bartleby works in the next room by himself. The Narrator requests Bartleby to check copy with him, but Bartleby refuses. The Narrator confronts Bartleby at the scrivener's desk. Bartleby still refuses repeating, "I would prefer not to." The Narrator returns to his office staff and asks them what they think of Bartleby. They oppose Bartleby. The Narrator returns to work with his office workers; Bartleby writes again. The scene fades out.

The next scene is a fade-in of Ginger Nut entering the lawyer's office where Bartleby sits at his desk facing the wall. The Narrator watches Ginger Nut give Bartleby ginger nuts while he narrates that Bartleby's passive resistance is irritating. Ginger Nut gives Bartleby a paper doll that looks

like Bartleby. The lawyer does not seem to see the doll. Mr. Parsons again orders Bartleby to compare papers with him. Again Bartleby refuses. The lawyer, furious, goes to Nippers and Turkey for their advice. It is afternoon and Turkey, enraged, wants to punch Bartleby. Nippers, calm, is more patient. Mr. Parsons returns to Bartleby and asks him to go to the post office for the mail. Bartleby refuses. Mr. Parsons, bewildered, leaves Bartleby, stops in the outer office and talks to himself and Turkey. He decides Bartleby, despite his refusals, is a good worker and can stay. Mr. Parsons leaves for the post office. The scene fades out.

On a Sunday morning Mr. Parsons, on his way to church, stops by his office. The door won't open. Bartleby opens the door from inside then runs out of the office. Mr. Parsons discovers Bartleby has been living in the office and is appalled and empathetic with Bartleby. He narrates that he cannot help Bartleby's condition. He says that Bartleby ". . . was the victim of an innate and incurable disorder."

In the next scene Bartleby stands by the screen that separates him from Mr. Parsons. Mr. Parsons tries to pry into Bartleby's past, but Bartleby refuses to reveal himself. Nippers enters the lawyer's office. Bartleby refuses to examine papers and Nippers explodes. It is morning, and the more calm Turkey kiddingly chides Bartleby by playing with the word "prefer." Mr. Parsons orders them back to work.

Then, Bartleby states that he will do no more writing. Mr. Parsons assumes that Bartleby's eyesight is bad, but Bartleby says, "I have given up copying, Mr. Parsons." Mr. Parsons says he cannot keep Bartleby if he will not copy and gives him six days to leave. Bartleby stands with his head lowered. The scene fades out.

Bartleby does not leave. The scene opens with Nippers and Turkey listening at the sliding doors while the lawyer talks to Bartleby. Mr. Parsons orders Bartleby to leave and gives him thirty-two dollars (twenty dollars extra). He leaves the money on Bartleby's desk. Mr. Parsons leaves for court. When Mr. Parsons returns that evening Bartleby is still there. Mr. Parsons lectures Bartleby telling him he must leave. Bartleby sits, Mr. Parsons stands. Bartleby will not budge, and Mr. Parsons, in submission, allows him to stay but states he will ignore Bartleby.

Mr. Parsons sits at his desk, and another lawyer, Mr. Grimshawe arrives to pick up his Title-deed. Mr. Grimshawe is alarmed by Bartleby's strangeness. Bartleby sits at his desk doing nothing. Mr. Grimshawe warns Mr. Parsons that his colleagues are talking about Bartleby. Mr. Parsons states that he will move his offices. The scene ends.

In the next scene, we find the outer office bare, and Ginger Nut takes out the last few articles. Mr. Parsons stands by Bartleby to give him wages which he does not accept. Mr. Parsons takes the screen and departs.

The landlord visits Mr. Parsons at his new office and in a doorway scene, the landlord pleads with Mr. Parsons to remove Bartleby from the landlord's premises (the building where Mr. Parsons had his old office). Mr. Parsons agrees after first balking.

Bartleby sits on a bottom stair, and Mr. Parsons asks Bartleby what he would like to do. There is nothing Bartleby wants to do. Mr. Parsons gives up his attempt to move Bartleby from the building and tells the landlord to call the police.

As the lawyer walks along the outside of the prison wall, he narrates that Bartleby has been imprisoned. He enters the prison, climbs the stairs and spots Bartleby who stands against the wall in the open prison yard. Although Mr. Parsons tries to reason with Bartleby, he shows contempt for him and will not talk except he says, "I know you--I have nothing to say to you." Mr. Parsons gives the guard money to feed Bartleby well and leaves the prison.

Ginger Nut and Mr. Parsons return on a separate day. The guard escorts them to Bartleby who is lying on the ground next to the wall. Mr. Parsons discovers Bartleby is dead. Ginger Nut weeps, and Mr. Parsons and the boy ascend slowly up the prison stairs both saddened greatly by Bartleby's death. The camera tilts upward taking a closing shot of the building. The wall remains.

So much for the film's plot. In looking at the short story critically, we were left with a series of unanswered questions:

1. What effect does the Narrator have on Bartleby?
2. Are the characters real or abstractions?
3. What is the meaning of the wall?
4. What is the meaning of Ginger Nut?
5. What kind of people are scriveners?
6. Is the story comic, serious or absurd?
7. What do the workers think of the Narrator?
8. What kind of life does the Narrator have?
9. What kind of private life does each office worker have?
10. What does Bartleby eat?
11. What is the history of Bartleby?
12. What is Bartleby's relation to the other employees?

III. DISCUSSION OF QUESTIONS

Although the film does not answer all of these questions, it does clear up most of them. The film deals best with question four: What is the meaning of Ginger Nut?; question two: Are the characters real or abstractions?; question six: Is the story comic, serious or absurd?; question eleven: What is the history of Bartleby?; and question twelve: What is Bartleby's relation to the other employees?

What is the Meaning of Ginger Nut?

In the short story Ginger Nut serves as a very minor character. The Narrator defines him as a twelve-year-old errand boy but has little consideration or judgment about him. The film enlarges Ginger Nut's role. Ginger Nut fears Mr. Parsons, feels compassion for Bartleby, dares to befriend Bartleby, and at the conclusion he is called on by Mr. Parsons for help.

In the first part of the film we see little Ginger Nut. His responses to Mr. Parsons are boyish. He fears the Narrator but when asked what he thinks of Bartleby, Ginger Nut replies with a smile. In a major scene Ginger Nut brings ginger nuts to Bartleby in exchange for money. Ginger Nut gives Bartleby a paper doll fashioned in the image of Bartleby. The exchange of the doll causes Bartleby and Ginger Nut to smile at one another. This human interchange is the lone warm relation in the film. Also, it portrays Ginger Nut's ability to be friends with Bartleby.

Finally, Mr. Parsons falls back on Ginger Nut at the end of the film. Unable to elicit response from the imprisoned Bartleby, Mr. Parsons takes Ginger Nut to the prison to see Bartleby. Ginger Nut bends down to Bartleby as Bartleby lies on the ground in the prison. When Ginger Nut offers the blanket he has brought to Bartleby and receives no response from Bartleby, Ginger Nut shows an empathetic concern.

When Ginger Nut realizes Bartleby is dead, he weeps. Ginger Nut's compassion seems to be the only empathy that Bartleby receives. Certainly, Ginger Nut's ability to smile, to give, to weep are signs of a human being expressing emotion. The other characters, including Mr. Parsons seem sterile and have difficulty expressing anything except in terms of work.

Are the Characters Real or Abstractions?

In the short story, the names sound like characters from a Grimm fairy tale. The holiday names of Turkey, Ginger Nur and Nippers sound like treats from a Thanksgiving meal. Bartleby is only half a name. The landlord, the grub-man and the guard are not personal names but vocational titles. No one in the story has a full name. The characters then do not sound like real people.

However, the film gives reality to the story by picturing the characters. The characters show emotions, are shown reacting to one another, and speak as human beings speak. The characters are consistent. Turkey and Nippers, for example, are moody, fear the lawyer, dislike Bartleby and react with Bartleby and Mr. Parsons. Ginger Nut smiles, demonstrates his fear of Mr. Parsons, and is boyish. Bartleby looks like a sulking Jesus Christ figure. He is intelligent, refuses to anger, is pained, then feels betrayed by Mr. Parsons.

Because Bartleby does react in the film, he seems more real than he does in the short story. He smiles at Ginger Nut, looks at Mr. Parsons occasionally, and in the prison scene turns away from Mr. Parsons. He is a real face not an abstraction. The viewer sees close-ups of Bartleby's face, and watches him at work and in conflict with Mr. Parsons.

If the characters are specters in the film, they exist that way only in the eyes of the lawyer. For example, when he discovers Bartleby at the office on a Sunday morning, Bartleby seems like an illusion as he bounds down the stairs in flight. The apparitional quality represents Mr. Parsons' impression of Bartleby. The camera reports the real person, Bartleby, fleeing away. In another scene, Mr. Parsons demonstrates his inability to see the characters as well as the viewer does. Ginger Nut drops several apples on the desk in the outer office, but when Mr. Parsons enters after an argument with Bartleby, he does not notice Ginger Nut's disturbance. Mr. Parsons, hypnotized by Bartleby's disobedience, fails to sense much of what the camera reports for the viewer.

Is the Story Comic, Serious or Absurd?

The short story does emphasize the seriousness of Bartleby's plight and the Narrator's inability to handle him. But the short story is sprinkled with two key comic scenes that function as comic relief in the solemn story. The office

scene when Turkey chides Bartleby and toys with the word "prefer" is comic. So is the scene in which the Narrator talks to Bartleby on the stairs. The contrast of the serious and comedy lend still another tone, absurdity. Certainly the story is full of absurd characters. Turkey, Nippers and Ginger Nut appear to be abstractions or unreal. They are not well-drawn, and their names do not sound real. Bartleby, for example, has no background and the reader cannot determine what ails him.

The film plays down the comic and the absurd, and stresses the seriousness and reality of the story. The two comic scenes (pointed out) are humorless in the film. The editing is concise, chronological, and helps tell the story quickly and realistically. There is no surrealistic, impressionistic or flashback camera work that could make the film bizarre. In addition, the camera reports more and the Narrator speaks less in the film than he does in the short story. This means the viewer sees real situations rather than depending solely on the Narrator's impressions.

Finally, the camera man and the director team to imply the Narrator changes. Because the Narrator changes he seems more human. In contrast the short story concludes with a flimsy rumor in which the Narrator explains the strangeness of Bartleby. But the film pictures the reactions of Ginger Nut and Mr. Parsons to the death of Bartleby. Ginger Nut cries,

and he and Mr. Parsons cling to each other as they sadly climb the prison stairs.

What is the History of Bartleby?

In the short story none of Bartleby's personal history is revealed. The Narrator adds, at the end of the story, that Bartleby once worked as a Dead Letter Clerk in the post office, but this fact is only rumor.

The film, however, reports more of Bartleby's history. When Mr. Parsons goes to convince Bartleby to vacate the building owned by the landlord, he talks to Bartleby on the stairs:

Lawyer: Would you like a reference for the post office?

Bartleby: No, Sir. I've worked in the Post Office--filing Dead Letters. I shall never return again.

Although this is the same fact, the film presents the information more realistically.

What is Bartleby's Relation to the Other Employees?

The Narrator points out Bartleby lives in the office, is a vegetarian and is strange. He fails to mention whether Bartleby associates with the other employees, and only states Ginger Nut brings ginger nuts to Bartleby. The Narrator implies Bartleby isolates himself.

Again, the film expands upon what the story implies. Bartleby is friendly with Ginger Nut. In a key scene, Ginger Nut brings ginger nuts to Bartleby and gives him a

paper doll. Ginger Nut and Bartleby smile at each other. But Mr. Parsons, who narrates and muses while the viewer watches Ginger Nut and Bartleby, does not seem aware that Ginger Nut and Bartleby are friendly to each other. Later, at the prison, Ginger Nut shows affection for Bartleby when he brings him a blanket. Ginger Nut weeps at Bartleby's death.

There is friction between Bartleby and the two other office workers, Nippers and Turkey. Although Bartleby appears indifferent to them, Turkey states he wants to punch Bartleby, and Nippers is at the edge of physically attacking Bartleby in another scene.

Teachers will vary in their method of teaching the two genres, and indeed, the two almost different stories. My method is a tried one; it can serve at least, to help the teacher understand the relationship between the genres when they are being taught.

IV. SCHEDULE OF UNIT

First Week:

Monday: "Bartleby" the film. Response and discussion.

Tuesday: Introduction to short story and film.

Questions for film and short story distributed. (See Appendix E and Appendix F for sample questions.)

Wednesday: Discussion of the short story, "Bartleby."

Thursday: Final discussion of the short story.

Friday: Introduction to film aesthetics.

Second Week:

Monday: Second showing of the film, "Bartleby."
Discussion.

Tuesday: Final discussion of the film.

Wednesday: Comparison of film to the short story.

Thursday: Theme written in class.

Friday: Objective test and summary discussion.

(See Appendix G for the test.)

By showing the film first and treating the short story second, the student will likely consider the film as the true story and consider the short story in relation to the film. There is reason for seeking this response. When a person reads a book and then sees the movie version of it, he often criticizes the film because it does not follow the book. In essence, he considers the film as the weaker art form. By presenting the film first, the teacher will influence the student to regard the film as at least an equally good art form.

After the film is viewed on the first Monday, discussion of the film should follow. The kind of discussion that should follow the first viewing of the film should be free,

permitting the student to react subjectively if he chooses. There should be no set response or no set questions offered by the teacher. The value of this will be seen in the second showing. By the second showing (second Monday) the student will have been presented an introduction to film aesthetics (first Friday's lesson) and will be able to discuss filmic aspects of the film. He will see more in the second showing because of the new film knowledge and because he has had two viewings.

On the first Tuesday the teacher should present background on the short story and the film, "Bartleby." The teacher can discuss the various critical interpretations of the short story, distribute and discuss (in a general way) the question list, and point out that the short story leaves several points unanswered, which appear in elaboration in the last chapter. In addition, the essential book, The Melville Annual, 1965, A Symposium, lists a complete bibliography of information about the film, "Bartleby." In presenting information about the film, "Bartleby," a key chapter in the above book, "Bartleby: the Tale, the Film," contains the important facts surrounding the making of the film. George Bluestone, script writer and director of the film, points out, among other valuable information, the actors, the setting, the cost and the purpose of the film. Bluestone also has a six-page analysis of the film in the

University of Washington Library. The teacher should distribute and generally discuss the question list on the film and point out the film is both the same and different from the short story.

Wednesday and Thursday of the first week are discussion days. The short story should be analyzed, and the question list is useful as a guide in directing the discussion. Although the film is not the form discussed on these two days, it is likely that the students will refer to it.

On the first Friday film aesthetics should be presented. The teacher should point out that several literary techniques, such as symbolism, point of view, and theme are present in film. In addition the student should learn about film-only techniques present in acting, sound, camerawork, and editing. Various film terms such as cut, close-up, fade-in, cross or lap dissolve should be introduced. Several key film definitions appear in the glossary and many more can be found in the glossaries of film books listed in my bibliography.

After the second showing of the film, on the second Monday, the students should be more sophisticated in their response to the film. They should be able to discuss camera angle, talk about the choice and timing of the music, evaluate the acting and decide whether the editing was well done.

On Tuesday there should be full discussion of the film as a separate art form. On Wednesday the film and short story should be compared. What similar techniques did each art form use? Was the wall as meaningful in the short story as it was in the film? The film question list has several questions which will direct the students.

By Thursday the students should be able to put their evaluations into words. They could write a theme on either the short story or film, or they could compare the short story to the film. The students, by choosing their own topics, are apt to express their true reaction and feelings about the film and/or short story. A list of questions for the short story and one for the film are included as Appendix E and Appendix F respectively. These questions have been used and found to be among those eliciting the best kind of response from high school students.

Testing, as all teachers know, is an integral part of the educative process. In this unit for the teaching of "Bartleby," the short story and the film, I have devised an examination which can be adapted to accommodate any other film and story. The test is included as Appendix G.

V. SUMMARY

The film, Bartleby, does differ slightly from the short story model. The film does answer many of the questions

left unanswered by the short story. The schedule of the unit, the questions, and the test of the unit are added to assist the teacher who attempts a similar film-literature unit.

CHAPTER V

LITERARY AND FILM TECHNIQUES

I. INTRODUCTION

Although a growing list of books treat film, two are vital for the teacher who has background in literature but little or no background in film. Both The Motion Picture and the Teaching of English and Teaching About the Film present the fundamentals of film analysis. The former deals with literary techniques found in film and stresses the importance of the camera. This book was published by the National Council of Teachers of English and has several authors. The second book, Teaching About the Film, is by J. M. L. Peters and deals strictly with film and the training of the film teacher. Peters emphasizes film language and discusses the fundamental film techniques in depth.

II. FILM AND LITERARY TECHNIQUES

In The Motion Picture and the Teaching of English, the authors stress such literary techniques as simile, metaphor, irony, cliché, dialogue, style, economy, unity, continuity, discontinuity, and context. Let me attempt to show how a study of this book, specifically its sections on simile, metaphor, and style, can apply to a film like "Bartleby."

Simile and Metaphor.

The simile and metaphor are more difficult to understand in the film than in literature. Certainly the words, "like" and "as" for the simile, and "is" for the metaphor, will not be flashed on the screen. But the film does use the simile and metaphor. In The Motion Picture and the Teaching of English, the authors discuss film metaphor and simile:

In a film, a nervous, fussy, quick-gaited man hurries along the beach. In the next shot a sandpiper minces along the wet sand. We have been shown that the man is like a sandpiper. The sequence of two shots creates a film simile. In another sequence, a man lies in bed, eyes closed. The next shot shows him, like T. S. Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock, watching mermaids "riding seaward on the waves." The same man has lain on the bed in one shot and lingered in caves by the sea in the next, with no transition. The sequence creates a film metaphor (111:5).

Similes are frequently used in film, but metaphors occur only occasionally.

In the film version of "Bartleby," the simile is used but the metaphor is not. The paper doll, which functions as a symbol of Bartleby's death-like quality, is a simile, too. The film contains a shot of the doll and a shot of Bartleby; and a shot of Bartleby taking the doll from Ginger Nut; the relation between Bartleby and the doll is established. In addition, the doll remains pinned on the wall Bartleby faces while he sits at his desk. The doll remains until Mr. Parsons abandons his office. Bartleby is like a paper doll in that

he is motionless, does not reveal his emotions or personal history, is pinned to the corner in the office like the paper doll is pinned to the wall. Finally, Bartleby is abandoned by Mr. Parsons as the paper doll is apparently abandoned by Bartleby.

Style.

Style is another literary technique used in film. Since the style of the film is influenced by more than one author, style becomes more complex in the film than in the literary model. The script writer, the director, the cameraman, and the actors all participate in the manner of the film. An endless question is which of the four act as the author and therefore determines the style of the film. George Bluestone wrote the script and directed the film. Anthony Canedo was the photographer. Eight actors performed.

Bluestone remarks in his scenario that he intended to show the conflict between Bartleby and the Narrator, and in the process develop a solemn tone. Successively, he fits nine parts and twelve scenes into twenty-nine minutes of film. The quick cuts between scenes give compression and lend to the seriousness of the conflict. The shortness of the film and the consistency of tone make the film tight, unified and very solemn.

The cameraman, Canedo, had influence on the style of the film. The camera is the seeing eye of the film, and it

was Canedo who shot from various angles, distances and lightings. His camerawork helped establish the seriousness of the film by picturing a wall in almost each shot, shooting close-ups of Bartleby's pained face, photographing Bartleby in one room in contrast to the others who worked in another room, and developing light near the back of Bartleby's head in one scene to hint Bartleby's eyesight was bad.

The actors, too, such as John Haag, who played Bartleby, were part of the style. In the book, Melville Annual, 1965, A Symposium, which treats "Bartleby" as a film, short story and opera, Haag talks about his role as Bartleby:

Certainly I went beyond it (the text)--I had to if I were to orient myself well enough in the psyche of my character so that my responses for the camera would remain consistent. . . . What Melville said about Bartleby had to be converted to posture, gesture, and expression, motivated from within the character (122:56-57).

Haag's acting fit into Bluestone's solemn tone, and as Haag presented Bartleby to the camera, Haag became an influential part of the style of the film.

III. THE LANGUAGE OF THE FILM

Film has its own language. Although many English teachers and students fail to see film as a separate art and persist in comparing film to literature, film does employ techniques which literature cannot. Sound, camerawork, acting and editing are four areas stressed in this section and areas fundamental to film. Each of these techniques is part of

film language. This film language is defended well in Peters' book, Teaching About the Film:

The film language opens up to our minds a new dimension; perhaps a dimension that, in different respects, meets the needs of modern life better than verbal language alone is able to do. If this is indeed so, then the incorporation of this new language into our film education activities should not be merely supplementary, but the most fundamental thing of all (98:19).

Film language, then, is when all the parts of the film (of which sound, camerawork, acting and editing play major roles) combine together to say something, to make meaning. Peters, for example, offers his definition of film language:

Both words and film images may be used to convey "ideas about something" and in both cases there are more or less rules and laws that govern this process, so that we may speak about a system of forms to convey ideas (98:22).

In "Bartleby" we find film language. For example, Mr. Parsons sits at his desk, and Ginger Nut announces Bartleby. Mr. Parsons orders Ginger Nut to show Bartleby into the lawyer's office. Mr. Parsons sees Bartleby, the music sounds strange, then Bartleby is pictured standing in the doorway. The meaning of this scene is: Mr. Parsons senses a strangeness about Bartleby and is troubled by Bartleby's appearance. The viewer knows this is one of the messages. But what did the filmmakers do to establish the message? They combined each of the parts of the film with one another. The music was a combination of cellos (representing Bartleby) and a flute (representing Mr. Parsons). The music sounds weird.

The camera pictures medium shots of Ginger Nut, Bartleby and Mr. Parsons and a close-up of Mr. Parsons. The close-up of Mr. Parsons emphasizes it is Mr. Parsons who is affected by Bartleby's appearance. The acting is well done. Ginger Nut is his boyish self. Mr. Parsons is serious and troubled. Bartleby is firm and mysterious. But the editing is the most influential film technique we used. First Ginger Nut announces Bartleby, Mr. Parsons waves for Bartleby to be allowed in, the Narrator is astonished by Bartleby, then, and not until then is Bartleby pictured. The viewer sees the effect Bartleby has on Mr. Parsons before he sees Bartleby. The filmmakers, then, do not allow the viewer much room to interpret Bartleby. They force the message: Mr. Parsons is troubled greatly by Bartleby.

Sound.

Sound is an integral part of film language. Sound comes in four main forms: music, voice, no sound, and sound effects. Each of these forms is employed in Bartleby. Peters, too, points out that sound is not separate from film but part of film:

Except with commentaries which are spoken as an explanatory text to a film ("non-functional" sound), we should not regard sound--that is, dialogue and accompanying music--as being a separate element added to the visual one, but as forming a component of the picture itself. Sound has as much of a compositional function as have the optical factors. It adds to the meaning of a picture, and often determines it (98:29).

Sound plays a key part in "Bartleby." The music defines the mood of the lawyer. When Mr. Parsons is not troubled the music is pleasant. But when Bartleby is around Mr. Parsons, the music depicts Mr. Parsons' troubled mind. The cello, which represents Bartleby, is added to the flute sound, for the disturbed effect.

Another sound, dialogue, creates the tension of the film. In several scenes Mr. Parsons and Bartleby clash. Their conflict centers around Mr. Parsons' demands and Bartleby's refusals. In typical dialogue Bartleby and Mr. Parsons clash:

Lawyer: Bartleby, Ginger Nut is away at court. Just step around to the Post Office, won't you? And see if there is anything for me.

Bartleby: I would prefer not to.

Lawyer: You will not?

Mr. Parsons delivers his words with force and aggression while Bartleby states his preference mildly and in an uncertain tone. In another scene the characters are further defined in their use of words. Mr. Parsons stands for authority, coercion and the world of business. Bartleby represents the small man, the individual who takes a stand against authority, and the loser.

Lawyer: Bartleby, the time has come. You must quit this place. I am sorry for you; here is money; but you must go.

Bartleby: I would prefer not to.

Lawyer: You must. I owe you twelve dollars on account. Here is thirty-two--will you take it?

Notice that Bartleby chooses to "prefer" and Mr. Parsons demands that Bartleby "must" leave. The contrast of Mr. Parsons' force and Bartleby's preference create the seriousness and tension of the film.

Camera.

The camera is a key part of film because it both reports and interprets the meaning of the action. The authors of The Motion Picture and the Teaching of English clarify the role of the camera:

The term "point of view" has two distinct implications. The primary one concerns the physical location of the camera. The second implication has to do with the way in which the position of the camera helps to reveal the attitude of the observer, or director and hence to influence our own. The ultimate result of the selection of a point of view is to establish meaning (111:31).

In "Bartleby" the camera both reports and interprets. The camera reports when it pictures Mr. Parsons, Bartleby and the other characters. It reports the building, the office, the screen, the stairs, the jail, the walls. These, the viewer takes for granted because the reporting role of the camera is a mechanical job. But the interpretive part of the camera and cameraman is more vital. As pointed out on page 27, the subjective camera determines the meaning of each shot.

In "Bartleby," the camera begins interpreting in the opening scene. Mr. Parsons stands in front of an office

building. The camera selects a medium shot of Mr. Parsons as he prepares to climb the stairs to his office. In this simple shot the camera has begun its subjective approach. By picturing Mr. Parsons in front of the building, a type of simile is established. The viewer makes the connection that Mr. Parsons and the building are much alike. Mr. Parsons is steady, well-dressed, conservative, and he, like the building, is very inanimate and solid. In this shot the camera only hints that Mr. Parsons is conservative, but in repeated scenes, the camera works cleverly in developing Parsons.

The camera functions in developing other characterizations too. There are close-ups of Ginger Nut which suggests his fear of authority. The wall, too, is emphasized by the camerawork. Each scene has a wall in it or the wall is implied by scenes that are juxtaposed. For example, before we see the close-up of Ginger Nut, we see Ginger Nut and Mr. Parsons standing before the prison entrance with a wall in the background.

In addition to the subjective and objective aspects of the camera, several camera techniques are necessary for the film student to understand. In Teaching About the Film, Peters defines fundamental camera techniques such as fade in, fade out, close up, long shot, pan, tilt. In addition there is a lengthy list of film texts in the bibliography. Film

And Its Techniques by Raymond Spottiswoode, for example, lists many film and camera techniques and offers a huge list of film books valuable for the film student.

Acting.

Acting is less concerned with the techniques of film and more related to film content. This is not to say that acting is not part of the total film, but as Peters points out, characterization in film is more closely allied to the meaning of film:

The film takes the viewer through all the situations which each leading character has to experience. He is being pursued and shot at, he goes to a wedding or loses a close relation, he experiences personal trouble or romantic success. . . . The resulting tension is shared by the spectator; for whom the film becomes a very concentrated experience indeed (98:52).

Peters offers a long list of questions in connection with the characterization; What kind of people are the main characters? Is the character of the main person genuine? How do the main characters behave? What are the motivations of the main characters? These are a few of Peters' questions (98:57-58). Peters' central question about acting is: Is the acting believable? Do the actors seem like the characters they portray? Do Turkey and Nippers seem like scriveners? Does the guard seem like a real guard in a New York prison in 1850? Next, are the actors consistent in their portrayals? Does Ginger Nut seem like a twelve-year-old each time we see

him? Does Bartleby maintain his forlornness, or does he switch roles?

The actor, Mr. Rustad, who plays Mr. Parsons, makes him believable. Parsons is old, serious, orderly and domineering as an employer. He stresses reason and assumption and does not handle his emotions well. He is businesslike, does not smile, and as an employer is a man of strength from the beginning of the story to the end. Although he demonstrates the ability to run his business profitably, he cannot deal with Bartleby. Bartleby, a passionate human being, acts according to emotion and personal desire. This upsets the lawyer's order. Rustad gives a consistent performance, and at the end of the film, it is clear that the lawyer, shaken by Bartleby's refusal to obey and the lawyer's inability to handle Bartleby, has changed from a strong self into an older man who no longer has the answers.

Haag's portrayal of Bartleby is believable and consistent too. Haag has said that Bartleby's most important quality is dignity: Bartleby's personal dignity never falters before the world, though within his private thoughts he cannot always maintain it before the pressures of his own frustration and contempt (46:60). Haag succeeds in relating Bartleby's dignity. Bartleby may be beaten by the capitalistic world of Mr. Parsons, but Bartleby has the strength to refuse to show disinterest in money. He also exemplifies complete

contempt for the business world by resigning as an employee of Wall Street.

Bartleby is more. He is shy and reticent. He shows friendship for Ginger Nut and contempt for Mr. Parsons. But the part that is most consistent about Bartleby is his mysteriousness. He does not reveal much about his life, and he does not converse. His reactions are reserved and painful for him. He does smile at Ginger Nut partially, but he always expresses pain when he talks with Mr. Parsons. Even the slight smile Bartleby gives Mr. Parsons when he is first hired is a difficult smile for Bartleby to muster.

Finally, the student should decide what the acting means. If the acting is believable, what is the meaning of the acting? Does each characterization in "Bartleby" carry a meaning? Does Mr. Parsons represent the good or evil of the business world? Is Bartleby an 1853 version of the 1968 hippie? These and other questions that concern the meaning of acting need to be answered by the viewer.

Editing.

After the film has been shot, the process of editing begins. Editing, as Ernest Lindgren in The Art of the Film defines, is the process of assembling ". . . a complete film from its various component shots and sound tracks" (69:223). Editing functions as a vital part of filmmaking. In editing

the film is arranged so that meaning is made. Through editing the story line is developed, the sound integrated to match what goes on in the picture, and the process of juxtaposing one shot next to another creates meaning. As John Howard Lawson, in Film: The Creative Process, points out, editing develops film language:

The film statement depends on the technical apparatus of cinematic communication. The apparatus include four main factors: the camera, the microphone, the screen and montage. (Montage covers the whole process of editing strips of film and sound track . . .) (65:175).

In studying film the teacher will probably encounter the term montage. Definitions of montage vary, but Lindgren distinguishes montage as separate from editing. Editing is the process of arranging picture and sound. Montage is a term that grew out of the silent era of film and stood for editing of film and now means, in America, the rapid cutting of shots:

Yet montage . . . , is simply the French word for ordinary commercial editing which the Russians themselves had annexed. Unfortunately, seized upon as a catchword by pseudo-intellectuals, it was used to such excess, and with so little understanding, that both it and the valuable idea it represented fell into disfavor, especially among film technicians, and it is now seldom used.

Note, however, that the word montage is used by American film technicians to denote a rapid impressionistic succession of shots, sometimes linked by dissolves, wipes or other optical effects (65:90).

Lindgren offers a fuller definition of montage:

Combination in a film of both the picture and sound elements regarded fundamentally as a creative art process;

editing regarded as a treatment of reality; the combination in art of representations of fragments of nature to form an imaginative whole which has no counterpart in nature; (in USA) an impressionistic assembly of short shots designed to bridge a lapse of time in a film narrative by briefly indicating the passage of events within it (65:229).

If Lindgren is right, then, filmmakers in the United States consider editing as the process of composing the film so that it has form. Montage is a term that once meant what editing means now, but montage has a different meaning as Lindgren points out (above). Editing is the process of trying to make a story, a meaning, a point, an effect. Editing contains cutting, montage. Editing deals with the picture and sound.

In "Bartleby" editing creates the story line, a serious mood, and depicts the moods and personalities of the characters. Through editing, the film is a story told from when Mr. Parsons first meets Bartleby until Bartleby dies in the prison. There are no flashbacks, no mixing of time. The story is presented as Mr. Parsons remembers it, in chronological order. The editing, then, stays close to Bluestone's script and to the short story model.

The film is very serious. Editing helps accomplish this mood. By selecting camera shots that either show or imply a wall, the editor depicts a mood in which the characters are trapped. The cutting is fast and concise. Each shot contributes to the seriousness of the situation. For example, when the landlord goes to Mr. Parsons, quick cutting

is used to intensify their conflict. Mr. Parsons is pictured in a close-up while he argues with the landlord; then Mr. Parsons, the landlord, Mr. Parsons, etc. Included in this scene is the wall behind the landlord and the door that Mr. Parsons keeps trying to close to shut out the landlord. The choice of this scene, and the many others like it, make the film very serious.

Finally, editing helps characterize each actor. Bartleby, for instance, is portrayed as an introvert, lonely and in despair. Editing selects several scenes to drive home this point. Near the beginning of the story, Mr. Parsons checks copy with the others in the outer office. The camera pans from left to right and pictures Bartleby working in Mr. Parsons' office by himself. In several scenes when Bartleby and Mr. Parsons clash, Bartleby is shot close-up. His face is pained, and he has trouble answering. Bartleby relates with Ginger Nut in the scene when Ginger Nut brings him ginger nuts. But Bartleby cannot communicate with Turkey or Nippers. Nippers and Turkey both express that Bartleby is doing an ineffective job. In one scene they both attack and chide Bartleby with words. Bartleby cannot answer them back. Instead he retreats further into his corner, finally gives up copying, and at the end gives up life. The editing, by picking out certain shots and leaving out others, shows that Bartleby is a troubled introvert who cannot cope with the elements and people of the business world.

IV. SUMMARY

Two books are recommended references for a film-literature comparison. The Motion Picture and the Teaching of English deals with literary and film techniques. Teaching About the Film examines film-only teaching. Both books present insight into the introduction of film study.

There is film language. Sound, camerawork, acting and editing are key parts of film language. The teacher must learn fundamental knowledge about film language if he is to do an effective job with film study.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

This thesis has been an example of what can be done with fiction and film in the classroom. Much of what has been said comes from personal experience teaching fiction and film as a high school teacher.

In my students' first encounter with "Bartleby," the short story, they complained that it had no action and that Bartleby went unexplained. Only a few students liked the experience of reading the short story. The film had greater success. The film, they insisted, showed them what the short story failed to do. They had a better understanding of Bartleby; they saw that Bartleby's story is one that many people live today. They expressed that jobs today can be as boring and as meaningless as the one Bartleby faced. In addition, they discussed camerawork, sound, action, and editing. They liked certain camera angle shots, were impressed by weirdness that the sound and editing created, and were moved by Bartleby's plight. One girl wrote what most of the students felt, "The film made an interesting story out of a pretty boring story."

The film-short story unit can be successful. Although the students responded more enthusiastically to the film, the

unit helped them understand the short story better. It showed them that literature is one art and film is another. They saw the connection and similarity between the two forms, and as I suspected before I started, and as I maintain, students respond more enthusiastically to film than to literature. Students get involved with film because it makes them participate. However, the quickest way to fail in the Bartleby unit is to make students answer dull questions in a routine way. What students need to do is react to the film and short story by writing about and discussing both forms.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Finally, this unit on Bartleby is an example of what can be done with so many films that are versions of literature. In the bibliography I include a list of films that would be excellent for literature into film approaches. In addition there is a list of distributing companies which will send film catalogs of 16mm movies that are available.

Films made before 1960 are usually less well-received by students than films made after 1960. There are many exceptions to this, of course. But unless a teacher has seen the film or knows whether it is well done, it is best to stay with films and books from the 1960's. A Patch of Blue, Requiem for a Heavyweight, and To Kill a Mockingbird are a few examples of excellent modern films based on books.

Short films work too. Bartleby, of course, and An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge are short films based on short stories. Both can be rented inexpensively from most college libraries in the state of Washington. Central Washington State College and the University of Washington both rent them.

Finally, films offer a new excitement to the student of literature. He will better understand literature by being involved in motion picture viewing. Many critics, as documented in this thesis, defend this point of view. But the enthusiasm students now hold for film can be maimed by teachers who persist in making exciting subjects dull. Literature in many classes has become an academic waste because of the many teachers who persist in taking the enjoyment out of words. Film can help to reestablish the enjoyment and significance of literature and aim the student at becoming involved in the twentieth century art form of the motion picture.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

MAGAZINES ABOUT FILM

Here is a list of twenty-one magazines that review films and discuss the content and technique of movies.

In addition there are several other magazines that give film reviews. Some of them are: America, Commonweal, Esquire, Playboy, New Republic, New Yorker, Newsweek, Saturday Review, and Time.

1. American Cinematographer. The Magazine of Motion Picture Photography. (American Society of Cinematographers) ASC Agency, Inc., 1782 North Orange Drive, Hollywood 28, California.
2. Cahiers Du Cinema. 635 Madison Avenue, New York.
3. Catholic Film Newsletter. National Legion of Decency, 453 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y.
4. Cinema. 9641 Santa Monica Boulevard, Beverly Hills, California.
5. Film Comment. 11 St. Luke's Plaza, New York, New York 10014.
6. Film Culture. CPO Box 1499, New York, New York.
7. Film Daily Yearbook of Motion Pictures. The Film Daily.
8. Film Facts. P. O. Box 53, Village Station, 150 Christopher Street, New York, New York.
9. Films and Filming. 33 South 154 Queen Street, Portsmouth, England.
10. Film Heritage. Box 42, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio 45409.
11. Film News. 250 West 57th Street, New York, New York 10019.

12. Film Quarterly. University of California Press, Berkley, California.
13. Films in Review. National Board of Review of Motion Pictures Inc., 31 Union Square, New York 3, New York.
14. Film Society Review. 144 Bleecker Street, New York, New York 10012.
15. Green Sheet. 522 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York.
16. Medias and Methods. Educators Guide to Free Films, 134 North 13th Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107.
17. Motion Picture Herald. 1270 Sixth Avenue, New York, New York.
18. New York Film Bulletin. 116 East 60th Street, New York.
19. Screen Education. c/o School of Public Relations and Communications, Boston University, Boston, Mass. 02115.
20. Sight and Sound. 255 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York.
21. Variety. 154 West 4th Street, New York, New York.

APPENDIX B

FILM RENTAL COMPANIES

1. AMERICAN FILM REGISTRY, 831 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.
2. AMERICAN CINEMA EDITORS, 8741 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, California.
3. AUDIO FILM CENTER, 406 Clement Street, San Francisco 18, California.
4. AUDIO FILM CENTER, 10 Fiske Place, Mount Vernon New York.
5. BRANDON FILMS, INC., 200 West 57th Street, New York 19, New York.
6. CANADIAN CONSULATE GENERAL, 1308 Tower Building, Seattle, Washington.
7. CENTER FOR MASS COMMUNICATION, Columbia University, 1125 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, New York.
8. COLUMBIA PICTURES, 711 Fifth Avenue, New York 16, N.Y.
9. CONTEMPORARY FILMS, 1211 Polk Street, San Francisco 9, California.
10. CONTINENTAL 16, 1211 Polk Street, San Francisco, Calif.
11. CREATIVE FILM SOCIETY, 14558 Valerio Street, Van Nuys, California.
12. DE ROCHEMENT 16mm LIBRARY, 13 East 37th Street, New York 16, New York.
13. DU ART FILM LABS., 245 West 55th Street, New York 19, New York.
14. ECONOMY FILM LIBRARY, 4336 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90029.
15. EMBASSY 16mm, Time-Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York 20, New York.

16. EMBASSY FILMS, 1301 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York.
17. FILMS CENTER, INC., 20 East Huron Street, Chicago 11, Illinois.
18. FILM IMAGES, 1860 Broadway, New York 23, New York.
19. FILM INCORPORATED, 1150 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois.
20. FILM-MAKERS COOPERATIVE, 414 Park Avenue South, New York 16, New York.
21. HARRISON PICTURES, 1501 Broadway, New York, New York 10036.
22. IDEAL PICTURES, INC., 58 East South Water Street, Chicago, Illinois.
23. IDEAL PICTURES, 1010 Church Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201.
24. INDIANA UNIVERSITY, Audio Visual Center, Bloomington, Indiana.
25. INSTITUTIONAL CINEMA SERVICE, INC., 29 East 10th Street, New York, New York 10003.
26. INTERNATIONAL FILM BUREAU, 57 Jackson Boulevard, Chicago 4, Illinois.
27. IRVING LESSER ENTERPRISES, 527 Madison Avenue, New York, New York.
28. JANUS FILM LIBRARY, Hotel Wellington, 55th Street & 7th Avenue, New York.
29. MC GRAW-HILL PUBLISHING COMPANY, Text-Films Division, 330 West 42nd Street, New York 36, New York.
30. MODERN SOUND PICTURES, 1410 Howard Street, Omaha, Neb.
31. MOGULL FILM EXCHANGE, 112 West 48th Street, New York, New York.
32. MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM LIBRARY, 11 West 53rd Street, New York 19, New York.

33. NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, Department of Communicative Disorders, School Of Speech, Evanston, Illinois 60201.
34. N. Y. U. FILM LIBRARY, 26 Washington Place, New York, New York.
35. OFM PRODUCTIONS, 1229 South Santee Street, Los Angeles, California.
36. RADIUM FILMS, INC., 220 West 42nd Street, New York, New York.
37. ROYAL 16 INTERNATIONAL, 711 Fifth Avenue, New York 22, New York.
38. TEACHING FILM CUSTODIANS, INC., 25 West 43rd Street, New York, New York 10036.
39. TRANS-WORLD FILMS, 332 South Michigan Avenue, Room 528, McCormick Building, Chicago 4, Illinois.
40. TWYMAN FILMS, 329 Salem Avenue, Dayton, Ohio.
41. UNITED CHARITIES OF CHICAGO, 123 West Madison Street, Chicago, Illinois 60602.
42. UNITED WORLD FILMS, 5023 N. E. Sandy Boulevard, Portland 13, Oregon.
43. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, Motion Picture Division, University Extension, Berkeley 4, California.
44. UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, Film Library, Department of Cinema, University Park, Los Angeles 7, California.
45. WILLIAM M. DENNIS FILM LIBRARIES, 2506 1/2 West Seventh Street, Los Angeles, California 90057.

APPENDIX C

LETTER FROM SIERRA COLLEGE

Sierra College
5000 Rocklin Road Rocklin, California 95677

Harold M. Weaver
District Superintendent

March 1, 1967

Michael Lions
223 East 13th
Ellensburg, Washington

Dear Mr. Lions,

Each spring semester for the past four years I have taught a course in the motion picture in our night college. The first course that I taught I called "The Novel and the Rilm." The main objective of the course was to give practice in thinking and writing critically and analytically about British and American novels and their film versions. I appended the course outline with this comment: "Your papers will be graded to a considerable extent on the clarity and precision of expression on the assumption that there is a relationship between clear thinking and clear writing, and also on the assumption that in judging a piece of writing it is impossible to separate entirely what is said from how it is said."

The students read nine novels and viewed the motion pictures based on those novels: 1) All the King's Men, 2) The Informer, 3) The Grapes of Wrath, 4) How Green Was My Valley, 5) Shane, 6) Intruder in the Dust, 7) Goodby, Mr. Chips, 8) The Ox-Bow Incident, 9) The Caine Mutiny. They wrote five papers, the last of which was a two thousand word paper. The other four were shorter papers, critical and analytical in nature. The main purpose of the course, "The Novel and the Film," as with all the other courses in the motion picture that I have taught, was to give a wider bases of knowledge about motion pictures in general, a greater appreciation of film art, and an introduction to the art of the motion picture.

I must admit that I found teaching the novel and the film very enjoyable and very satisfying. A survey that I distributed to the students at the end of the semester indicated that they also found the course very enjoyable. You might be interested to know that the two films that the students thought were the best were All the King's Men, and The Informer; they also happened to be the two novels that they thought were the best. The novel most often picked as the weakest was Goodby, Mr. Chips. And, for the dubious distinction of being the least important film, there was a tie between How Green Was My Valley and Goodby, Mr. Chips.

Other courses that I have taught in the motion picture have not been the literary type, as you indicated in your letter; rather, they have been a national approach to film art. The course that I am teaching this semester is called, "The Film-Films from France."

With the course that I am currently teaching, I am using the following French films: 1) Rififi, 2) Forbidden Games, 3) The Red and the Black, 4) The Crucible, 5) Hiroshima Mon Amour, 6) The 400 Blows, 7) Shoot the Piano Player, 8) Last Year at Marienbad, 9) Zero for Conduct.

I have read George Bluestone's book, Novel Into Film, and found it very helpful. Some of the other books that I have found especially helpful are: 1) Film as Art, by Arnheim, 2) Film Form and the Film Sense, by Eisenstein, 3) A Grammar of the Film, by Spottiswoode, 4) Film Technique and Film Acting, by Pudovkin, and a new paperback, The Cinema as Art, by Stephenson Debrix.

If I can be of any further help to you, please don't hesitate to ask. I would be very interested in finding out something about the results of your thesis.

Sincerely,

/s/

Raymond Oliva
Sierra College, English Dept.

APPENDIX D

MOVIES AND LITERATURE

The following twenty-one movies, based on short stories, plays and novels are but a few of the many movies based on literature. The Green Sheet listed in the appendix lists current movies and cites many examples of movies that are based on literature and are currently being made.

<u>MOVIES</u>	<u>LITERATURE</u>
1. ALFIE Michael Caine, Shelley Winters Color 114 minutes	ALFIE Bill Naughton Nikos Ballantine .60
2. BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI William Holden, Alec Guinness, Jack Hawkins Color 161 minutes	BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI Pierre Boulle .50
3. CINCINNATI KID Steve McQueen, Edward G. Robinson, Ann Margaret, Karl Madden, Tuesday Weld Color 113 minutes	CINCINNATI KID Richard Jessup .60
4. CITIZEN KANE Orson Welles, Joseph Cotton, Agnes Moorehead B/W 119 minutes	CITIZEN HEARST W. A. Swanberg 7.50

<p>5. DAVID & LISA Keir Dullea, Janet Margolin, Howard da Silva, Neva Patterson B/W 94 minutes</p>	<p>LISA & DAVID Theodore I. Rubin .50</p>
<p>6. DEATH OF A SALESMAN Fredrick March, Mildred Dunnock, Kevin McCarthy B/W 119 minutes</p>	<p>DEATH OF A SALESMAN Arthur Miller 1.25</p>
<p>7. FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX James Stewart, Ernest Borgnine, Peter Finch Color 147 minutes</p>	<p>FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX Elleston Thevor .75</p>
<p>8. THE GRAPES OF WRATH Henry Fonda, John Carradine, Jane Darwell B/W 115 minutes</p>	<p>THE GRAPES OF WRATH John Steinbeck 1.95</p>
<p>9. THE KILLERS Lee Marvin, John Cassavetes Angie Dickinson Color 95 minutes</p>	<p>"The Killers" Ernest Hemingway in A <u>Pocketbook of Short Stories</u> .45</p>
<p>10. KING RAT George Segal, Tom Courteney James Fox B/W 134 minutes</p>	<p>KING RAT James Clavell .75</p>
<p>11. THE LONGEST DAY John Wayne, Henry Fonda, Richard Burton, Peter Lawford B/W 180 minutes</p>	<p>THE LONGEST DAY Cornelius Ryan .75</p>

<p>12. LONELINESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE RUNNER Tom Courteney, Sir Michael Redgrave, Avis Bunnage B/W 103 minutes</p>	<p>LONELINESS OF THE LONG DIS- TANCE RUNNER Alan Sillitoe .60</p>
<p>13. LORD OF THE FLIES James Aubrey, Tom Chaplin, Hugh Edwards B/W 90 minutes</p>	<p>LORD OF THE FLIES William Golding 1.25</p>
<p>14. THE MOUSE THAT ROARED Peter Sellers, Jean Seberg B/W 85 minutes</p>	<p>THE MOUSE THAT ROARED Leonard Wibberley 4.50</p>
<p>15. A PATCH OF BLUE Sidney Portier, Shelley Winters, Elizabeth Hartman, Wallace Ford B/W 105 minutes</p>	<p>A PATCH OF BLUE Grace Livingston 1.95</p>
<p>16. THE PRIZE Paul Newman, Edward G. Robinson Color 135 minutes</p>	<p>THE PRIZE Irving Wallace .95</p>
<p>17. RAISIN IN THE SUN Sidney Portier, Claudia McNeil B/W 128 minutes</p>	<p>RAISIN IN THE SUN Lorraine Mansberry .75</p>
<p>18. REQUIEM FOR A HEAVYWEIGHT Mickey Rooney, Jackie Glea- son, Anthony Quinn, Julie Harris B/W 86 minutes</p>	<p>REQUIEM FOR A HEAVYWEIGHT Rod Sterling .50</p>

19. SANDS OF KALAHARI Stuart Whitman, Stanley Baker, Susannah York Color 129 minutes	SANDS OF KALAHARI William Mulvihill .50
20. TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD Gregory Peck, Mary Bradham, Brock Peters B/W 129 minutes	TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD Harper Lee 1.65
21. ZORBA THE GREEK Anthony Quinn, Alan Bates, Irene Pappas, Lila Kedorva B/W 142 minutes	ZORBA THE GREEK Nikos Kazantzakies .75

APPENDIX E

QUESTION LIST FOR "BARTLEBY"

1. What are the themes?
2. Who is the main character? The Narrator? Bartleby?
3. What is the relationship between the major and minor characters?
4. What is the significance of the first person narrative? Would the story be better told from third person view?
5. Is the story present or past tense?
6. Some of the symbols are: the screen, the wall, the prison, the trades of scrivener and lawyer, Wall Street. What do the symbols mean?
7. Explain the characterization of Bartleby. Is he real or symbolic?
8. How do verbs typify the characters? Which verbs do you associate with the Narrator? With Bartleby?
9. Discuss the rumor that closes the story. Does the rumor tell about Bartleby or the Narrator?
10. Pay attention to the following scenes. How does each scene function?

p. 124--". . . that the easiest way of life is the best."

p. 129--"Their fits relieved each other, like guards."

p. 130--"I can see that figure now--pallidly neat, pitiably respectable, incurably forlorn! It was Bartleby."

p. 134--"Nothing so aggravates an earnest person as a passive resistance."

p. 139--"For both I and Bartleby were sons of Adam."

p. 140--". . . his soul I could not reach."

p. 142--"Do you not see the reason for yourself, he indifferently replied."

p. 145--". . . in short, I never feel so private as when I know you are here."

p. 151--"'Sitting upon the bannister,' he mildly replied."

p. 154--"I know you . . ."

p. 156--"'With Kings and counselors,' murmured I."

11. Do any of the characters change? Is the story as static in the end as it is in the beginning?
12. Is the story absurd? Serious? Comic?
13. Which character is the most believable?
14. Why does the author name the office staff: Turkey, Nippers, Ginger Nut?
15. Is the story worth reading several times?

APPENDIX F

QUESTION LIST FOR FILM BARTLEBY

1. Are the characters real? (This is nearly the same thing as asking, do the actors do a good job?)
2. What camera techniques are employed? Are these techniques effective? Are they used to add to the meaning of the story or are they simply "arty"?
3. How is the music used to set the mood for the story? Is the music used for other effects?
4. How good is the editing? Is the story arranged logically and clearly? Are there scenes that could be cut down in length or removed entirely?
5. Is the film better than the literary model? Does the film interest you more than the story? What are some strengths and weaknesses in both forms?
6. How do the themes differ? What is the main theme in each art form?
7. Name several literary techniques used in the film.
8. What are some changes in characterization in the film?
9. Does the Narrator in the film seem like the Narrator in the short story?
10. What are some of the major changes in the film? Do these changes better or worsen the story?

11. What are the major symbols in the film? There are visual symbols. What are they? There are implied or literary symbols in the film and short story. What are they?
12. How does the use of the verb function? How is conflict shown through the use of verbs?
13. Is the film serious? Absurd? Comic? What is the tone of the short story? The same?
14. What scenes are most memorable in both forms? How do they function?
15. Could the story, "Bartleby," be made into a radio play. Would changes be necessary? Elucidate.

APPENDIX G

FILM TEST

- I. This question concerns only the short story. Answer any two of the following questions: (ten minutes for each question)
 - A. Why does Melville name his employees Ginger Nut, Turkey, and Nippers?
 - B. Who is the main character?
 - C. How reliable is the "dead letter" rumor?
 - D. Does Bartleby have poor or good perception?
 - E. Does the Narrator change during the story?
- II. This question concerns only the film. Answer any two of the following questions: (ten minutes for each question)
 - A. What is the importance of Ginger Nut's character?
 - B. Why is the screen an important symbol?
 - C. What is the function(s) of the minor characters: the landlord and Mr. Grimshaw?
 - D. When and why does Bartleby show resentment for the Narrator?
 - E. How is the camera used to characterize the characters?

III. This question relates to both film and literature.

Answer one of the following questions: (ten minutes)

- A. What does the wall symbolize?
- B. How are verbs used to characterize the characters?
- C. How is the film better than the short story?
- D. Is the conclusion of the film an improvement over the short story's ending?