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The University of Southern Mississippi

A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE

by

Deborah Jae Alexander

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2010

ABSTRACT

A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE

by Deborah Jae Alexander

May 2010

The American Film Institute (AFI) is a highly politicized, powerful organization. To date, most historical documentation and recording of AFI events and activities has been disseminated to the mass media from within the organization through its own publications or in other historical documentation as incidental history in relation to another topic. This dissertation, written as an overview, is the first comprehensive, independent historical examination of the AFI. The examination begins with an exploration of the development, activities and decline of the American Council on Education's original AFI and other film organizations that existed prior to the present day AFI. It then follows through to suggest an explanation for the contentious public discussions concerning the AFI's purpose and direction during its early years, which favored commercial film interests over educational/instructional film interests, as well as limited opportunities for women. This examination continues with documentation of the accomplishments of the AFI and the programs it sponsors concerning film education, preservation and promotion of U.S. films.

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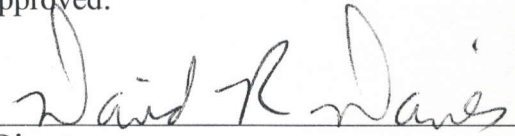
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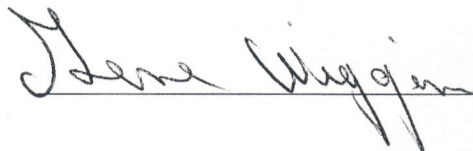
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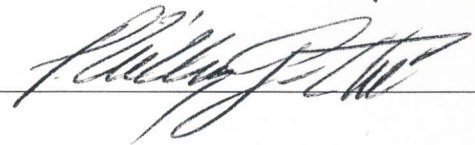
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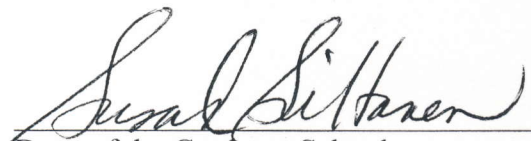
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Marion A. Shearer, who is always there for me, and to Grace, my faithful Italian Greyhound, who was there with me, in my lap or beside me as I wrote, and in my heart forever.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank committee chair, Dr. David R. Davies, and committee members, Dr. Phillip Gentile, the late Dr. Arthur Kaul, Dr. Chris Campbell, Dr. Deanne Nuwer and Dr. Gene Wiggins. Special thanks goes to Dr. Davies for his expert guidance through the writing process and to Dr. Nuwer for her kindness, guidance and support through beleaguering difficulties and beyond.

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A special thanks goes to Jan Haag, former founder of the Director's Workshop for Women, for her enthusiastic support. The author would also like to thank Dawn Letson, Women's Curator/Librarian at Texas Women's University in Garland, Texas, for her help and hospitality while researching the Jan Haag Papers located there. Special thanks go to my stepsister, Christine Shearer Kaewpraedit, for her warm hospitality in housing and feeding me while researching the Jan Haag Papers.

Thanks also goes to Kay Loveland, former assistant to Toni Vellani; Jill Bogard, of the American Council on Education; Carol A. Leadenham, Assistant Archivist for Reference at the Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University; Ronald Bulatoff, Archivist Specialist at the Hoover Institution Archives; Elizabeth Dunn at the Duke University Special Collections; Richard Johnston at the Stanford Research Institute and University of Kentucky Librarians; Craig Amos, Cindy Parker and Bethany Croteau.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Few are aware that the American Film Institute (abbreviated AFI) of today, an institution that celebrated its fortieth anniversary on June 5, 2007, had a predecessor that shared the same name. In 1934, the American Council on Education (ACE), a firmly established organization founded in 1918 during the Woodrow Wilson administration, created the Advisory Committee on Motion Pictures on Education. Under the auspices of this committee, a nationwide “Educational Film Project”¹ was launched a year later in 1935. The project was subsequently and informally dubbed “The American Film Institute” (hereafter, the ACE AFI) and publicized as such. This original AFI, and its purpose, was nationally known among educators from 1935 until 1947. The ACE archival guide indicates:

The Advisory Committee on Motion Pictures on Education, formed in 1935 and soon known as the Committee on Motion Pictures on Education, was to serve as a national clearinghouse to promote the use of motion pictures in organized education. The committee was to catalog educational films available, prepare bibliographies of pertinent books and periodicals, and devise plans for classroom implementation of such materials. From 1943 to 1947 it was known as the Committee on Visual Aids. In 1947 it became inactive.²

Few educators were unaware of this project. As early as the 1920s and prior to the ACE AFI announcements, there had been numerous discussions in educational circles calling for an American film organization of national scope. Thus, there was already a

¹ Lorraine Noble, “Modernization by Way of the Educational Film,” *Journal of Educational Sociology*, Vol. 10, no. 3, The Motion Picture in Educational and Social Aspects, (November, 1936): 151. The author credit after the article title indicates that Noble was the Administrator of the “Educational Film Project.”

² Judith A. Pfeiffer, *American Council on Education Archives, Guide, 1918-1977* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1982), 21. There are indications the committee may have existed past the 1947 end date, as documents exist with dates to 1949. The question arises here as to whether this original committee may have transformed into one of the later committees concerned with this subject, such as the “Commission on Motion Pictures on Education,” the “Committee on Visual Aids in Education,” or the “Teaching Film Custodians.”

preconceived notion among educators as to the general functions and purposes of an American film institute. The general function and purpose was serve the educational field in providing filmic visual aids and materials for instructional purposes.

There was a twenty-year gap between the demise of the ACE AFI and its projects and the establishment of the present-day AFI (established by the National Endowment for the Arts, hereafter, the NEA) where there was no American film institute at all. The ACE, however, did not simply drop its efforts concerning visual aids and motion pictures in education after the Committee on Visual Aids ended in 1947.

As media changed from visual slides to film to television and now to computers, different monikers have been utilized on similar projects as the work continued through the efforts of several different committees over the years. The purpose and direction concerning education and visual aids also changed, in accordance with the influence of the federal government during World War II and in the post-war rebuilding efforts. Additionally, as television entered more and more homes across the nation in the 1950s, the ACE decreased efforts in the film arena in order to increase activities in educational programming for television.

Nearly twenty years after the original ACE AFI's post-WWII demise, President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration provided, in 1965, congressional monies for artistic concerns by forming the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)³ and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Shortly thereafter, in 1967, a new American Film Institute—the one we know today (the NEA AFI)—was granted startup monies

³ NEA initials denoting the National Endowment for the Arts should not be confused with NEA initials denoting the National Education Association. If the NEA initials refer to the National Education Association in this document, it will be footnoted. Otherwise, NEA references will refer to the National Endowment for the Arts.

from the NEA and private donors “to train the next generation of filmmakers and to preserve America’s fast-disappearing film heritage.”⁴ Forty years later, the now-privatized American Film Institute holds a unique position serving the film industry, the federal government and the American public, while also serving as a national vehicle for the preservation and promotion of American film industry interests and as an educational institute for film studies.

Accordingly, we have two very different American Film Institutes with two very different histories, the former ACE AFI and the present NEA AFI. Nationally, somewhere between the 1920s and 1967, a dramatic change had occurred in the idea of what an American Film Institute should be. The initial educational film project of the ACE AFI was supplanted by the end of the century with a NEA AFI that revealed a marked shift in emphasis from an educational film clearinghouse toward the preservation and promotion of Hollywood motion pictures. This observation opens a variety of questions for study:

- How did we arrive at the latter NEA AFI, primarily defined as being concerned with entertainment film as an art, rather than a derivative of the former ACE AFI that was concerned with film as an instrument of education?
- How did the definitions and functions of an intended national AFI change and why?
- What were the transforming events that defined, or redefined, what the AFI should be?

⁴ “History of AFI,” *American Film Institute*, <http://www.afi.com/about/history.aspx> (accessed June 26, 2009).

- Is there a historical thread that connects the two?
- How did educators and other existing film organizations react to the newly proposed NEA AFI? Did they have any influence or say about how the NEA AFI would function and if so, how much?
- Who were the participants in these historical arenas?
- Why is an American Film Institute needed at all?

These are the initial questions that launch this study, the first in-depth examination of the American Film Institute. It is an examination of the intersection and relationship between three entities that influence and govern American ideals and cultural practices—the entertainment industry, the educational industry and the U.S. government.

Purpose of the Study

The initial purpose and focus of this study originally centered upon an examination of the forty-year history of the present day American Film Institute from its inception in 1967 to the present. The examination covered the political and social influences involved during the founding years of the AFI, how the AFI was funded, its key personnel, its main purpose and goals, how it functioned, its internal press, the external press framing of the AFI, and the AFI's progress toward a variety of identified goals throughout its forty-year history. It also considered other historical, sociological and cultural aspects related to the founding and existence of the AFI, such as the influence of the international film community, the impact of the women's movement upon the AFI and the importance of the AFI in promoting and maintaining American artistic and cultural values.

Preliminary research, however, broadened the original goal of the examination.

This history would not be complete without a study of the preceding film organizations and events that existed prior to the establishment and institutionalization of the existing NEA AFI. The ACE AFI had always been hopeful that government support would lead to an official, financially supported organization that would carefully manage films in order to aid in the education of American citizens. Additionally, other film clubs and societies throughout the country also had a vested interest in government support to help aid their private monetary needs and agendas.

Hence, the central point of this investigation sought not only to document the basic historical chronology of the two AFIs, but also to understand the historical background leading up to a national film institute and the reasons why educators (and others) objected so strenuously to the direction the newly established AFI was taking—the decided slant toward commercial film interests over educational, independent and avant-garde film concerns. By interpreting the historical evidence and artifacts of the two AFIs (and other film interests) in the United States, important questions arise:

- With all the possible models available in the form of preceding film organizations, how did the NEA AFI emerge to take the form it did?
- How were the ideals of the original ACE AFI and other film clubs and societies in America that represented, promoted and celebrated educational, documentary, informational and avant-garde films usurped by a commercial-arts-oriented filmic entity that pushes Hollywood motion pictures?

My thesis sought to answer these (and other) questions set forth in this study and to explain the changes that took place in the national/governmental mindset that allowed a transition from the organizational identity intended by the original AFI to the

organizational identity that the contemporary AFI holds today. The thesis, or theme, of this work also illustrates the basic interpretative, political and ideological differences between two organizations that independently defined what an American film institute should be, while explaining the dissension that appeared from Hollywood outsiders when the latter AFI formed.

In seeking to discover how the NEA AFI emerged as the institution it is today, this was also a study of the formation of filmic institutions. By following the formation, activities and decline of film organizations and institutions that have existed across the country since the 1920s, a change in emphasis will become apparent. The emphasis transforms from the early AFI educational and documentary film clearinghouse, through to the establishment of film studies as a fine art subject in universities, and finally to the establishment of a commercially oriented AFI.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it is the first independent, in-depth, historical examination focusing solely on the American Film Institute,⁵ even though there are numerous sources addressing various issues concerning the AFI. While these sources

⁵ One small self-published volume exists covers the first ten years of the American Film Institute in the form of an annual report. See Jane Firor Kearns, ed., *The First Ten Years: 1967-1977* (Washington, DC: The American Film Institute, 1977). One article has been written on the relationship between the AFI and the Library of Congress during the first twelve years—see Lawrence F. Karr, “The American Film Institute and the Library of Congress: A Twelve-Year Perspective,” *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 37 Nos. 3-4 (1980): 355-369. Michael Straight’s biography of Nancy Hanks (former NEA director) includes a chapter on the AFI—see Michael Straight, “Political Pressure: The American Film Institute,” in *Nancy Hanks: An Intimate Portrait* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988), 227-249. Academic studies also include partial histories on the AFI. Concerning the physical structures that house the NEA AFI, see Rebecca J. Harmon, “To Spark Imagination: The American Film Institute,” (Master of Architecture Thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1989). The AFI’s involvement in film preservation is aptly covered throughout Anthony Slide, *Nitrate Won’t Wait: A History of Film Preservation in the United States* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1992). The NEA AFI’s archival activities are discussed throughout Caroline Frick, “Restoration Nation: Motion Picture Archives and ‘American’ Film Heritage” (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2005).

serve as fragmented historical documentation, not one covers the AFI in a comprehensive, in-depth manner.

Additionally, this study brings attention back to the original AFI formed by the ACE—an important reminder of a project overlooked by most film scholars (but not scholars of educational technology). This examination also offers an explanation of the educational community’s objections to the direction the new AFI took upon its inception—the new AFI was not following any of the educational models formerly discussed by educators. To repeat a point made previously, it is important to include in this study a short history of the ACE AFI and other preliminary film clubs and societies—they set forth pre-existing expectations that influenced how some thought about the new NEA AFI. Admittedly, enough materials exist for several separate in-depth studies. Additionally, although there has been some recent research into better-known film clubs and societies, there are many more histories to uncover in this area.

Review of Selected Literature

Academic Plans for an AFI

Several journals dedicated to the usage of film for educational instruction appeared in the 1920s, among them *Education Film Magazine*, *Visual Education*, *The Screen*, *Moving Picture Age* and *The Educational Screen*. Each of these periodical resources are underutilized in the film studies arena and are worthy of their own in-depth examination. One in particular, *The Educational Screen*, contains valuable articles discussing national film institute proposals by authors George E. Stone, Edgar Dale and Lorraine Noble.⁶ Numerous other articles reflect the mindset of the times through a

⁶ See George E. Stone, “Visual Education—A Retrospect, an Analysis and a Solution,” *Educational Screen*, Vol. 4, no. 6 (June 1925): 329-337, 348; Edgar Dale, “The American Film Institute,” *Educational*

variety of discussions on the usage of film as an educational tool, the issues surrounding such usage, and the logistics involved in national educational film distribution.

Another set of resources contains the ACE archival papers housed at Stanford University's Herbert Hoover Institute. These resources are listed in the 1982 publication, *The American Council on Education Archives, Guide, 1918-1977*, edited by Judith A. Pfeiffer. There are eighteen boxes containing 56 folders and a total of 769 pages listed in the ACE Archives Guide pertaining specifically to the ACE Committee on Motion Pictures that were studied by the author. More about the ACE AFI will be covered in Chapter II.

Perhaps even more important than the two sets of sources discussed above is one that comes from the field of educational technology and saved valuable time and money in researching this subject. Michael Simonson tells us, "The history of the [educational technology] field, *The Evolution of American Educational Technology*, by Paul Saettler is *the* basic reference for how the field has grown and become the driving force in education and training that is today."⁷ Saettler's history of the technological advances used in education contains indispensable information on the intersecting relationships between educational, governmental and Hollywood media as changes in formats have occurred. It was also valuable as a concise resource on the ACE AFI.

Film Clubs and Societies

Existing concurrently with the ACE AFI, and prior to the NEA AFI, were numerous film clubs, societies and institutional film organizations. These organizations

Screen, Vol. 15, no. 3 (March 1936): 79-81, and; Lorraine Noble, "Modernization, By Way of the Educational Film," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, Vol. 10, no. 3, The Motion Picture in its Educational and Social Aspects (Nov., 1936): 151-157.

⁷ Michael Simonson, "They're Back!," in Paul Saettler, *The Evolution of American Educational Technology* (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2004), v.

emerged in the 1920s and thereafter throughout Europe, North America and the rest of the world. Foreign organizations were influential models in the structuring of the NEA AFI and must be included in this examination. In *Variety*, June 7, 1967, reporter Les Carpenter states that, “[S]ome 18 foreign film institutes were visited, more than 100 individuals were interviewed”⁸ in anticipation of setting up the newly formed AFI.

A good journal article for first delving into the area of inquiry on film organizations is Thorold Dickinson’s 1969 work entitled “Film Societies,”⁹ a general survey of film societies around the world. Along with the history of the film club/society movement, Dickinson points to their contributions in several arenas, such as developing “adequate audiences,” “local film production,” “comment and criticism,” the “relaxing of censorship” and the discouragement of “traffic in pornography by a persistent education in discrimination.”¹⁰ More important to this study, “it is safe to say that in every country the cine-club movement has made an essential contribution to national cinematic activity. It has provided a reason for the installation of national film institutes and has furnished a nucleus of information, opinion, and personnel towards their establishment.”¹¹

Two “bookend” volumes by Scott MacDonald have preserved the collected correspondence and other pertinent papers concerning two of the most important American film societies existing in the mid-twentieth century. *Cinema 16: Documents*

⁸ Les Carpenter, “Institute Ducks Archives,” *Variety*, June 7, 1967, 7. It is possible this statement was derived by Carpenter from the Stanford Report, an AFI press release or an unidentified interview. Another version of this statement is later described in Michael Straight’s biography of Nancy Hanks, cited earlier, that the Stanford Report “studied at first hand the structures of eighteen national film institutes” (p. 228) and that “the SRI conducted one hundred interviews.” (p. 228).

⁹ Thorold Dickinson, “Film Societies,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 3, no. 3, Special Issue: Film, New Media, and Aesthetic Education (July 1969): 85-95.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

*Toward a History of the Film Society*¹² contains the correspondence and papers of the most powerful non-theatrical film society ever in existence in the United States, Cinema 16. Founded by Amos and Marcia Vogel, Robert Delson, David Diener, Rene and Ralph Avery and Samuel Vogel in November 1947, Cinema 16 was located in New York City and represented East Coast alternative film sensibilities. MacDonald's "Backgrounds" section in his Introduction gives a concise account of film club and society history in Europe, Canada, and the U.S.A. East and West Coasts.

Like his first volume above, MacDonald's second volume, *Art in Cinema: Documents Toward a History of the Film Society*,¹³ has preserved papers and correspondence originating from the San Francisco version of Cinema 16, a film society called Art in Cinema. Art in Cinema "presented programs of independent film to audiences at the San Francisco Museum of Art and the University of California, Berkeley. Led by filmmaker Frank Stauffacher, Art in Cinema's programs pioneered the promotion of avant-garde cinema in America."¹⁴

National Film Institutes Worldwide

Histories written on film institutes are scarce and difficult to locate, suggesting that this area needs expansion in the scholarly field. One volume on the history of the British Film Institute (BFI) has been located. Ivan Butler's 1971 "*To encourage the art of the film*": *The story of the British Film Institute*,¹⁵ although dated, serves as a springboard example for this project. Butler's document was written nearly forty years

¹² Scott MacDonald, *Cinema 16: Documents Toward a History of the Film Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

¹³ Scott MacDonald, *Art in Cinema: Documents Toward a History of the Film Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

¹⁴ "Editorial Reviews, Product Description," of Macdonald's *Art in Cinema*, Amazon, <http://www.amazon.com/Art-Cinema-Documents-History-Society/dp/1592134254/sr=1-11/qid=1> (accessed August 25, 2008).

¹⁵ Ivan Butler, "*To encourage the art of the film*": *The story of the British Film Institute* (London: Robert Hale, 1971).

after the BFI's 1933 inception, a timetable that this project holds in common in its examination of the AFI.

Butler's volume breaks down the BFI history into time periods described as loose decades and by structural/departmental divisions. Structural/departmental divisions covered in the tome are organization, preservation, education, presentation, production, distribution, publication, film societies and the future. Appendices and historical photographs are also included. It is a daunting example, packed with information that Butler has gleaned from "an unwieldy mass of material with numerous and confusing digressions."¹⁶ It is a fine example of scholarship to emulate and provides a basic model for this work.

Hilla Wehberg's 1938 article, "Fate of an International Film Institute,"¹⁷ gives a brief, concise account of the formation and demise of international film organizations starting in 1923 with the Swiss student-organized International Film Library. The goal of the Swiss organizers was that their organization would be backed by the League of Nations. Instead, the 1927 choice as the center of international film was the Educational Cinematographic Institute in Rome, Italy. It would last only until 1938, just before the outbreak of World War II.

Adolf Nichtenhauser's 1946 article, "The Tasks of an International Film Institute,"¹⁸ was especially helpful in providing a visionary background on the formation

¹⁶ Ibid., Preface, 13.

¹⁷ Hilla Wehberg, "Fate of an International Film Institute," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 2, no. 3 (July 1938): 483-485.

¹⁸ Adolf Nichtenhauser, "The Tasks of an International Film Institute," Galley proof for the October 1946 *Hollywood Quarterly*, dated September 25, 1946, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10 (1946-47).

and goals of an international governing body that would be concerned with cooperative film activities and institutes worldwide just after World War II.

The Commercial Cinema vs. the Non-commercial Cinema

The first motion pictures captured audience interest simply because they *moved*, unlike any static drawing, painting or photograph that had gone before. First considered a phenomenon, then an amusement that progressed to storytelling and entertainment, moving pictures (and their power) were soon recognized by the triumvirate of entertainers, educators and the government alike as a valuable tool for their respective agendas.

While the very early film industry participants enjoyed an unregulated freedom in production and distribution of their films, economic battles soon emerged as opposing interest groups argued over the distribution of motion pictures. Even though trust-busting laws were written early on, there is evidence of a foregone consensus that the commercial motion picture industry has continually worked against, or attempted to control, non-theatrical presentation outlets and vice versa.¹⁹ This point will be discussed throughout this dissertation.

Political, Cultural and Social Influences on the NEA AFI

Every presidential administration had its own version of an arts and/or cultural policy, defined by the events and progress that had been made historically up to their respective eras; some were stronger and more active than others. For example, Franklin

¹⁹ See the following works: W.W.C., *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 7, no. 5, (May 1936): 281; Noble, "Modernization," *Ibid.*, 151; Philip Chamberlin, "Allies, Not Enemies: Commercial And Nontheatrical Experience on the West Coast," *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 14, no. 2 (Winter 1960): 38; Ernest Callenbach, "The Unloved One: Crisis at the American Film Institute," *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 24, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 43; Ivan Butler, *"To encourage the art of the film": The story of the British Film Institute*, (London: Robert Hale, 1971), 18.

Delano Roosevelt's administration is known for its support of the arts through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) art commissions. During the 1950s, an era when television was taking the nation by storm and making a dent in cinema and theatre audience revenues, a congressional report stated that, "the relationship between the Government and the arts has been mainly directed toward a proposal originally made by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his State of the Union message of January 6, 1955, to establish a Federal Advisory Commission on the Arts within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. In that message, President Eisenhower said, 'In the advancement of the various activities which would make our civilization endure and flourish, the Federal Government should do more to give official recognition to the importance of the arts and other cultural activities.'"²⁰

These attitudes were certainly predecessors to Lyndon B. Johnson's 1960s "Great Society" cultural policy, which seems to be a culmination in fulfilling the intentions of John F. Kennedy's administration, as well as earlier Democratic and Republican administrations, to sponsor arts and cultural efforts with federal monies. It was during this era that film was finally accepted as an art form—a point that Shyon Baumann explains as "the legitimation [*sic*] of film as an art form"²¹ in his 2001 article.

Starting in the 1960s and continuing well into the 1970s and the 1980s, the growth of the women's movement influenced the AFI in its early development. News articles, books, an anonymous Internet blogger and interviews with Jan Haag²² and Kay

²⁰ Mr. Pell, "ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS AND THE NATIONAL ARTS FOUNDATION," 88th Congress, 1st Session, Calendar No. 761, Senate Report No. 780, December 16, 1963, 2.

²¹ Shyon Baumann, "Intellectualization and Art World Development: Film in the United States," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 66, no. 3 (June 2001): 404.

²² Jan Haag is responsible for doing the day-to-day founding work on the AFI's Director's Workshop for Women (DWW).

Loveland²³ helped explain how the NEA AFI' Director's Workshop for Women was established to provide educational opportunities for women interested in film directing at a time when they were usually shut out of this prestigious position.

An odd note is that, while women were pressuring the AFI for their rights to be included in this arena, African-Americans were not, as a group, targeting the AFI for better representation. They were busy with their own struggles concerning general civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s, with the Civil Rights Act being passed in 1963. Melvin Van Peebles, the now famous director, dubbed the "father" of blaxploitation films,²⁴ concurrently rose in significance during the formative years of the NEA AFI, as did other black film directors. Van Peebles was known for two films that helped launch the genre. The first was *Watermelon Man* (1970), starring Godfrey Cambridge, which followed a storyline of a bigoted white man who turned black overnight. A year later *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971) was released. However, Gordon Parks' *Shaft* (1971) was the most famous of the films in the group that launched this genre and received more credit as *the* film that started the genre. It was a movie that enjoyed commercial success because of the widespread popularity of the main character, Shaft, a cool, hip and sexy detective, who was also a ladies' man. Played by Richard Roundtree, Shaft was used as a model for many copycat characters that followed, but it can be argued that none of the subsequent characters were ever as cool as Shaft. Several years later, Robert Townsend illustrated the trials and tribulations of a college-educated, Shakespearean trained, African-American actor trying to break into Hollywood feature film roles in *Hollywood Shuffle* (1987)—the frustration of the main character was that the

²³ Kay Loveland was a former assistant to AFI production faculty head Tony Vellani.

²⁴ For a detailed discussion on the definition of blaxploitation films, see Novotny Lawrence, *Blaxploitation Films of the 1970s—Blackness and genre*, (NY: Routledge, 2007), 18-22.

roles offered were more in line with stereotypical blaxploitation characters than his training warranted.

Literature on the NEA AFI abounds in newspaper articles, AFI annual reports, the AFI website and government documents dealing with the establishment and funding of the organization. The first study on the NEA AFI was done by the Stanford Research Institute, hired by the NEA in the mid-1960s to research the feasibility of the AFI. A copy of that study, frequently referred to as “The Stanford Report,” but actually entitled “Organization and Location of The American Film Institute,”²⁵ was sought after by the author with Stanford Research Institute personnel for comparison to the 1935 ACE AFI proposal, but was not obtained.

Early articles found in *Variety*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, film journals and other sources cover hope-filled announcements of the establishment of the AFI and the consequent public reactions questioning everything about it from the assumed youth and inexperience of its first director, George Stevens, Jr., to its organizational structure and direction. Educators and avant-garde filmmakers seemed particularly upset about the new AFI’s obvious connection to the Hollywood film industry and were the most vocal concerning its course of direction. Negative reactions found shaped an interesting and noteworthy question that creates a central core to this dissertation:

- Why should educators care so much about the set-up of an AFI, especially when many colleges and universities were expanding their programs to include courses on popular films?

²⁵ “A PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE, Sponsored by American Council on Education, 744 Jackson Place, Washington, DC, October 1935,” located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box Number 107, Folder ID 9 (1935).

During the startup years of the NEA AFI, the papers and publications of the NEA and the AFI administrators are especially useful to this study, as illustrated by those of Nancy Hanks. The Duke University Library Special Collections contains the papers of Nancy Hanks,²⁶ the chairperson of the NEA from 1969 to 1977, from which those concerned with the AFI were obtained. Hanks' experience offers a valuable "overseers" perspective to the AFI. Michael Straight's biography²⁷ on Nancy Hanks contains a valuable chapter on the AFI that covers the contentious relationship between the NEA and the AFI during the initial years of her position as the chair of the NEA.

There are four books containing references to actor Charlton Heston's participation in AFI activities—*The Actor's Life: Journals 1956-1977*,²⁸ *In the Arena: An Autobiography*,²⁹ *Charlton Heston's Hollywood: 50 Years in American Film*,³⁰ and *From My Cold, Dead Hands: Charlton Heston and American Politics*.³¹ Heston served on the board of the NEA when the AFI was being formed and later served as the chairman of the AFI Board of Trustees from 1973-1983. While the first three Heston books have brief AFI references, Emilie Raymond's book, *From My Cold, Dead Hands*, contains a valuable chapter that covers Heston's AFI participation in-depth.

²⁶ For more information on Nancy Hanks' NEA years, see the Nancy Hanks Papers, 1894-1987; (bulk 1945-1983), located at Duke University Library Special Collections. Her American Film Institute papers are located in Boxes 1-3 & 127. [Note: Hanks was the chairperson of the NEA from 1969 to 1977 and this collection includes "papers relating to her involvement with the American Film Institute (1965-1979)."]

²⁷ Michael Straight, "Political Pressure: The American Film Institute," in *Nancy Hanks: An Intimate Portrait* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988).

²⁸ Charlton Heston and Hollis Alpert, *The Actor's Life: Journals 1956-1976* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976 and 1978).

²⁹ Charlton Heston, *In the Arena: An Autobiography* (New York: Boulevard Books, 1997), originally published in 1995 by Simon & Schuster.

³⁰ Charlton Heston and Jean-Pierre Isbouts, *Charlton Heston's Hollywood: 50 Years in American Film* (New York: GT Publishing, 1998).

³¹ Emilie Raymond, *From My Cold Dead Hands: Charlton Heston and American Politics* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2006).

Terms and Definitions

Gatherings of motion picture film enthusiasts, whether officially sanctioned or not, often use general terms such as club, society or institute in conjunction with the words film, cine, cinema and/or movies when dubbing their organization. These terms seemingly lend themselves to an associated identity indicating a definitive idea about the recognized image the organization wishes to have. The titles film organizations choose for their moniker and the definitive description and purpose of the organization, however, is not always clear. For the purposes of this dissertation, film organizations discussed are named and defined according to their own stated purpose.

In general, discussions using the terms *film club* and *film society* will most likely indicate private organizations, whether formal or informal, while a *film institute*, for the most part, will represent a nationally sanctioned, governmental organization. While there may be some interchange of terms, the film organizations being discussed will be aptly described to avoid confusion. Note, too, there are also film festivals organized only as festivals, as well as film festivals held by special interest clubs, societies and institutes.

Terms defining the differences between the types of film industries are important to differentiate as well. *Theatrical, non-theatrical, commercial, alternative, avant-garde, experimental, educational, instructional and documentary* are all familiar terms that are sometimes used interchangeably and are relatively easy to understand in general terms. However, meanings can also be muddled, or they cross over into other realms.

Generally, *theatrical* and *commercial* motion pictures refer to those films produced by Hollywood studios and entities categorized as for-profit ventures in a movie theatre. *Alternative* films refer to motion pictures that are an alternative to Hollywood ventures,

such as *independent* films, as well as *avant-gardé* and *experimental* films. Currently, the term *independent* film is frequently defined as a narrative commercial film that is not financed by Hollywood studios, but is funded by private sources. These days, independent films often fall into the narrative category, hoping to be picked up by the Hollywood distribution system. *Avant-gardé* and *experimental* films still fall within the realm of artistic motivation and experimentation with the form or the technology. *Instructional*, *educational* and *documentary* films are more closely related to one another in that they attempt to accurately inform upon, educate about, and document their subjects. While instructional and educational films mostly stay within the educational realm (either school systems or corporate education), documentaries do end up on the large screen Hollywood distribution circuit, for example, the documentaries of director Michael Moore.

Methodology

Overview of Historiographical Methodologies Literature

In *History and Historians: A Historiographical Introduction*, Mark T. Gilderhus offers a concise overview of the critical thinking on issues of historiography (or, in other words, the approach to history) from important historians and philosophers, starting with the Ancient Greeks and ending with those of the present. The main concern, whatever the approach or language used, can be identified, in simple terms, as the balance between the facts of an event and the representation of those facts in the narrative discourse that records those facts. There has been much debate and many valid points brought about in the historical arguments better covered in the myriad volumes on the subject. Some,

however, stand out more than others in their acceptance by scholars of both past and present day and are addressed below.

More recently, in the Preface and Introduction of the 1975 edition of *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe*,³² Hayden White, concerned with the “deep structure of the historical imagination,”³³ addresses methodology, treating “the historical work as what it most manifestly is: a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse.”³⁴ Additionally, White states that, “Histories (and philosophies of histories as well) combine a certain amount of ‘data,’ theoretical concepts for ‘explaining’ these data, and a narrative structure for their presentation as an icon of sets of events presumed to have occurred in times past.”³⁵ He proposes the manifest dimensions of the historical work as, 1) epistemological, 2) aesthetic, and 3) moral. White also identifies three strategies to gain different kinds of “explanatory effect” that are further broken down into subcategories: 1) explanation by formal argument, a) Formism, b) Organicism, c) Mechanism, d) Contextualism; 2) explanation by emplotment, a) Romance, b) Comedy, c) Tragedy, d) Satire; 3) explanation by ideological implication, a) Anarchism, b) Conservatism, c) Radicalism and, d) Liberalism. White then identifies styles that writer’s use to “prefigure” the historical field—four types of tropes of poetic language: 1) Metaphor, 2) Metonymy, 3) Synecdoche and, 4) Irony.³⁶

Later, in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical*

³² Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

³³ *Ibid.*, Preface, p. ix.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, “Preface, ix-xii.” See this and “Introduction,” pages 1-42, for a complete description of White’s theoretical premises.

Representation,³⁷ White further addresses “the problem of the relation between narrative discourse and historical representation.”³⁸

During the 1970s boom in cinema studies, and shortly after Hayden White’s *Metahistory*, Charles F. Altman proposed a historiography of commercial American film by dividing film history into time periods and defining “a typology of American film history writing.”³⁹ His time periods are broken down as follows:

to 1905	archaeology
1905-14	silent short
1915-27	silent feature
1927-34	coming of sound
1934-41	Hollywood’s golden age
1941-48	the war and its effects
1948-55	Hollywood beleaguered
1955-62	blockbuster years
1963-	New Hollywood ⁴⁰

Altman’s “types of film history” lists thirteen approaches:

1. technology
2. technique
3. personality
4. film and other arts
5. chronicle
6. social
7. studio
8. auteur
9. genre
10. ritual
11. legal
12. industrial
13. sociological⁴¹

³⁷ Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, paperback edition (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, “Preface,” ix.

³⁹ Charles F. Altman, “Towards a Historiography of American Film,” *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 16, no. 2 (Spring, 1977): 2-3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3-22.

Although Altman's essay is "suggestive and not exhaustive, thought-provoking rather than conclusive,"⁴² it serves as an introductory approach for early to mid-century film historiography. In his section on the "types of film history," i.e., industrial historiography, Altman mentions the contemporary AFI, not as an entity to be examined, but as an entity that helps preserve filmic history: "The American Film Institute has already begun the task of collecting oral histories, but with an emphasis on aesthetically oriented personnel. If we are ever to have a full industrial history of American film, it is essential that this focus be broadened."⁴³ In Altman's last period, the 1960s "New Hollywood," the NEA AFI came into existence and a national boom in cinema studies was starting. Altman's time periods are useful aids in determining the public and private mindsets of those involved in establishing the NEA AFI at the time.

Additional time periods and typologies are useful in understanding the more recent historical attitudes now needed for the decades of the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and the early 2000s. Here, the writer digresses and suggests that the 1960s and 1970s could be recognized as decades of political commentary (*The Manchurian Candidate* [1962], *Z* [1969], *M*A*S*H* [1970]), *The Candidate*, [1972]), "buddy" films (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* [1969], *The Sting* [1973]) and the beginning of graphic violence (*Bonnie & Clyde* [1967], *The Godfather* [1972], *The Godfather: Part II* [1974]).

While the 1980s is known as the Punk era, with representative films such as *Sid & Nancy: Love Kills* (Alex Cox, 1986), this decade may also be described as having been dominated by Stephen Spielberg and George Lucas. Of the top ten grossing films,

⁴² Ibid., 2.

⁴³ Charles F. Altman, "Towards a Historiography of American Film," *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 16, no. 2, (Spring, 1977): 21.

Spielberg and Lucas have credits associated with six. Most of these films are now recognized as being high-production, stylized versions of 1950s and 1960s Saturday-afternoon-TV genres and stories, a formula that made Spielberg and Lucas the two most successful director/producer/writers of the 1980s.⁴⁴

The top ten movies in box office gross for the 1990s continues the trend started by Spielberg and Lucas, with new players entering the scene and showing off spectacular visual effects geared toward both adult and children's audiences.⁴⁵ Saturday-afternoon type fantasy genres and animation continue to dominate this decade, while new computerized visual effects, seen in *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995), are being introduced for the first time.

The first decade of the 21st century may be considered as the decade of computerization.⁴⁶ The direction in computer graphics abilities that appears to threaten

⁴⁴ The top 10 grossing films of the 1980s according to the IMDb: 1) *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial* (Steven Spielberg, 1982); 2) *Star Wars: Episode VI, Return of the Jedi* (Richard Marquand, 1983 [George Lucas—Writer]); 3) *Star Wars: Episode V, The Empire Strikes Back* (Irvin Kershner, [George Lucas—Writer] 1980); 4) *Batman* (Tim Burton, 1989); 5) *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Steven Spielberg, 1981); 6) *Ghost Busters* (Ivan Reitman, 1984); 7) *Beverly Hills Cop* (Martin Brest, 1984); 8) *Back to the Future* (Robert Zemeckis, 1985); 9) *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (Steven Spielberg, 1989), and; 10) *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (Steven Spielberg, 1984). This list was compiled by the author by going through the list entitled “All-Time USA Box Office,” Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/boxoffice/alltimegross>.

⁴⁵ The top 10 grossing films of the 1990s according to the IMDb: 1) *Titanic* (James Cameron, 1997); 2) *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (George Lucas, 1999); 3) *Jurassic Park* (Steven Spielberg, 1993); 4) *Forrest Gump* (Robert Zemeckis, 1994); 5) *The Lion King* (Roger Allers, Rob Minkoff, 1994); 6) *Independence Day* (Roland Emmerich, 1996); 7) *The Sixth Sense* (M. Night Shyamalan, 1999); 8) *Home Alone* (Chris Columbus, 1990); 9) *Toy Story 2* (John Lasseter, Ash Brannon, Lee Unkrich, 1999); 10) *Twister* (Jan de Bont, 1996). This list was compiled by the author by going through the list entitled “All-Time USA Box Office,” Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/boxoffice/alltimegross>.

⁴⁶ The top 10 grossing films of the first decade of the 2000s (to date November 5, 2009) according to the IMDb: 1) *The Dark Knight* (Christopher Nolan, 2008); 2) *Shrek 2* (Andrew Adamson, Kelly Asbury, Conrad Vernon, 2004); 3) *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* (Gore Verbinski, 2006); 4) *Spider Man* (Sam Raimi, 2002); 5) *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* (Michael Bay, 2009); 6) *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith* (George Lucas, 2005); 7) *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (Peter Jackson, 2003); 8) *Spider Man 2* (Sam Raimi, 2004); 9) *The Passion of the Christ* (Mel Gibson, 2004); 10) *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (Peter Jackson, 2002). This list was compiled by the author by going through the list entitled “All-Time USA Box Office,” Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/boxoffice/alltimegross>.

human talent, or at least may change how human talent is utilized, was eerily forecast in a line from Robert Altman's *The Player* (1992). Tim Robbins, playing film producer Griffin Mills, states, "I was just thinking what an interesting concept it is to eliminate the writer from the artistic process. If we could just get rid of these actors and directors, maybe we've got something here." Beginning in the 1990s with *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995) and *Toy Story 2* (John Lasseter, Ash Brannon & Lee Unkrich, 1999), the trend has escalated with such films as *Shrek* (Andrew Adamson & Vicky Jenson, 2001), *Shrek II*, (Andrew Adamson, Kelly Asbury & Conrad Vernon, 2004) *The Polar Express* (Robert Zemeckis, 2004), *Cars* (John Lasseter & Joe Ranft, 2006), *Happy Feet* (George Miller, Warren Coleman & Judy Morris, 2006), *A Scanner Darkly* (Richard Linklater, 2006), *The Dark Knight* (Christopher Nolan, 2008) and *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* (Michael Bay, 2009). Many of these computer-animated films feature the voices of well-known movie stars, as well as caricatured images that frequently mimic the facial expressions of the stars. If computer audio/voiceover becomes as successful as computer imaging has been in steps toward replacing live representation of humans (and animals), then Robert Altman's prophecy through the Griffin Mills character will become a standard and a threat to the "star" driven system we recognize today.

Additionally, we now have the newest revolutionary form of motion pictures shared on the popular and well-known Internet website YouTube, where anyone can upload and/or view digital videos free. Note that the videos range from amateur to professional quality and are reminiscent of the early days of cinema in that people lined up to see nearly anything that moved. On the Internet, though, the audience—unlike the select few distributors of the past who held the power—have the ability to make a motion

picture widespread virtually overnight through word-of-mouth e-mailing. With so many now able to record moving pictures, we are fast becoming a nation of director/producer/camera operators—documentarians and historians with a camera recording everyday events, quirky events, disasters and our own fictional stories.

Returning to the discussion on Charles F. Altman’s categories—they are later utilized and expanded upon in the 1980s by Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery in *Film History: Theory and Practice*.⁴⁷ Allen and Gomery state, “The object of study in this book will be historical writing on the cinema: *film historiography*.”⁴⁸ Allen and Gomery utilize Altman’s typologies on technology, auteur, industrial and social, while adding and/or suggesting new categories that include, for example, the role of the “Star” in film history (which could be categorized as Altman’s “personality” listing), economic and Marxist critiques, as well as Cinema Verité and aesthetic critiques. Another important typology suggested by this author is “political”—a discussion of national politics through film stories and documentation (for example, *JFK*, [Oliver Stone, 1991]) and the political involvement of individuals and the government in the establishment of the American Film Institute.

Gerald Herman addresses the “popular perceptions of history [that] have been increasingly shaped by non-print presentations of that history.”⁴⁹ Films are important non-print historical documents that are often the center of attention to film historiography. It is also important to pay attention to the NEA AFI as a purveyor of

⁴⁷ Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1985).

⁴⁸ Allen and Gomery, 3.

⁴⁹ Gerald Herman, “Chemical and Electronic Media in the Public History Movement,” *The Public Historian*, Vol. 21, no. 3, The National Council on Public History: Reflections on a Twentieth Anniversary (Summer 1999): 111.

popular history through the preservation of selected American motion pictures. American culture is continually recycled through screenings of “classic” American films, thus encouraging a status quo historical influence upon society. Only films considered worthy of representation of certain segments of American society are continually re-screened. This is where the institutionalization of film becomes apparent and historical attention centers, not upon all films produced in the society, but rather, the promotion and preservation of selected films for mainstream cultural reference. David Bloor explains, “We now have a simple answer to our question: what is an institution? It is a collective pattern of self-referring activity.”⁵⁰

Closely related to film historiography is mass media historiography. Only four years after Allen and Gomery explored film historiography, Startt and Sloan describe mass media historiography as the interpretation, or perspective, one takes when explaining history in Chapter 2 of *Historical Methods in Mass Communication*.⁵¹ They break down mass media historiography into six main schools of thought: Nationalist, Romantic, Developmental, Progressive, Consensus, (with sub-categories known as Neo-conservative or the ‘business history’ schools) and Cultural.⁵²

Thus, there are several important tomes on historiography that have been perused speaking on the general subject of history and the more specific subject of cinematic, or mass media, history. What is one to make of all these variations in approaches?

⁵⁰ David Bloor, *Wittgenstein, Rules and Institutions* (NY: Routledge, 1997), 33.

⁵¹ James D. Startt and Wm. David Sloan, *Historical Methods in Mass Communications*, (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1989).

⁵² *Ibid.*, 19-39.

The Author's Methodology

As discussed earlier, this study changed from its original intent of documenting an institutional history of the NEA AFI when research findings guided the author in a different direction and forced the consideration of the ACE AFI, thus, re-enforcing the Startt & Sloan statement that, “The good historian does not set out with a theory and marshal facts to fit the history.”⁵³ The author hopes that the theory, i.e., educators across the nation were upset because the direction of the NEA AFI was entertainment-based rather than educationally-based, will be explained through a long history of prior intentions toward an educationally-based national film institute.

The author's methodological historiography has been to start in the manner of Herodotus, who, according to Gilderhus, “checked his information against the reports of eyewitnesses and participants and also consulted the documents available to him—in inscriptional records, archives, and official chronicles.”⁵⁴ Although the author began to approach interviewees early in the process of study, this method was abandoned after concerns about biases and agendas by interviewees were expressed. The author has searched extensively for primary and secondary resources that gave any insight into the history of the two AFIs.

Herodotus also “interpreted the course of human affairs as the product of human will”⁵⁵ and “departed from the custom of explaining events in the human world as the outcome of divine will.”⁵⁶ The author is in agreement with this idea and the actions of people involved are not explained with any indication toward divine will.

⁵³ Startt and Sloan, 20.

⁵⁴ Gilderhus, 16.

⁵⁵ Gilderhus, 16.

⁵⁶ Gilderhus, 16.

According to Gilderhus, Robin G. Collingwood's idealist premise indicates that we see through the lens of our own time and that efforts should be made to view historical events not only for factual information, but also through the lens of the individuals, the collective society and the historical period within which they live.⁵⁷ Recalling Collingwood's critique of Auguste Comte's sociological, positivist philosophy, Gilderhus writes, "William Drey and others pointed out that the task of historians required them to make actions comprehensible within the context of the historical actors' own motives and aspirations."⁵⁸ Thus, the author recognizes that the lens of the present time period is decidedly different from the eras that have been studied and every effort has been made to understand actions and events from all sides of historical participants' experience, as well as hindsight that comes with the passing of time.

Startt and Sloan posit, "One purpose of good history is to provide understanding of change."⁵⁹ It is the purpose of this dissertation to provide an understanding of how and why the political, social and cultural changes caused the demise of the ACE AFI and the development of the very different present-day AFI.

While considering the historical arguments concerning narrative over the years, the author recognizes the importance of narrative content within the form it is written. It is crucial here that the author informs readers of the feminist influences on historical thought that cannot be ignored and is not mentioned by White. While he discusses Algirdas Julien Greimas's work on binary oppositions using the example of "male vs. female,"⁶⁰ White makes no mention of a feminist historiographical method.

⁵⁷ Gilderhus, 77-82.

⁵⁸ Gilderhus, 82.

⁵⁹ Startt and Sloan, 20.

⁶⁰ White, *Content of the Form*, 158-159.

Thus, the author also writes this history with the lens of a woman while struggling with, and within, historiographical concepts surmised from a long history of male historians and historical philosophers. According to Gilderhus, Sheila Rothman suggests, “the study of women in history required an approach consisting of three parts.”⁶¹ These three parts maintain that 1.) “historians must comprehend the roles and responsibilities assigned to women in any given period; 2.) scholars must determine the degree to which various women of different classes and races actually adhered to those demarcations, and; 3.) historical studies must carefully observe the process of change, the shifting definitions of women’s proper place over time, and the degrees to which the various categories of women actually complied with them.”⁶² Lorraine Noble, of the ACE AFI, Jan Haag and Jean Picker Firstenberg, of the NEA AFI, and Nancy Hanks, Director of the NEA, are important individuals in this examination, along with other women who have been significant in influencing AFI activities. Thus, the feminist influence upon my life demands exploration of the cultural implications of gender dynamics within the two AFIs, the film industry, and within my own experience in writing this dissertation.

Research Problems

Holdings at Stanford University are an important source for this study. Files from the American Council on Education Archives, located at Stanford University’s Hoover Institute, were invaluable in studying the ACE AFI. Copies of these files were obtained and examined by the author. Documents such as correspondence, proposals, legal papers and reports helped in understanding the extensive work done by the ACE concerning film for educational use. The sheer number of documents examined brought in a confusing

⁶¹ Gilderhus, *History and Historians*, 125.

⁶² Gilderhus, *History and Historians*, 125.

array of information that had to be sorted and selected. The Stanford Research Institute also holds the initial feasibility study done in the 1960s on the formation of an AFI commissioned by the National Council on the Arts (which was, unfortunately, not obtained), although references to its contents were found.

One trip to Denton, Texas, was made to research the papers donated by Jan Haag to the Women's Collection in the Texas Woman's University Library. Many good primary newspaper sources, correspondence and records were found and copied for later examination.

As mentioned previously, planned interviews were abandoned when concern was communicated to the author early in this study that interviews usually result in the interviewee's agenda being the center of the discussion. Another serious problem in any examination of the film industry through interviews is the reluctance of many industry participants to speak frankly about others in the industry. There is a deeply embedded fear of retaliation or blacklisting that is still strong in the film industry, with roots dating back to McCarthyism. Many Hollywood notables suffered blacklisting because of rampant accusations concerning their supposed communist activities. Additionally, memories fade, either honestly or conveniently, and one must anticipate and circumvent any possibility of intentional or unintentional misinformation. Thus, more importance was paid to the large amount of aforementioned newspaper articles, books, journal articles and archival materials available.

Chapter Outline

- CHAPTER I—INTRODUCTION. The introductory chapter presents the subject of the American Film Institute and film in America in an overview, as well as the

statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study, research questions, the literature review, terms and definitions and methodology, along with a description of Chapters II through VII.

- CHAPTER II—THE ORIGINAL AFI. This chapter reveals the original ideals, intents and discussions of educators concerning the establishment of a national film institute. It continues to explain the makeup of the original American Council on Education's (ACE) AFI, its demise, their subsequent activities and proposals that followed. It also discusses the relationship between Will Hays' and the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association (MPPDA) and the ACE.
- CHAPTER III—FILM CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS. From the early days of film, there were many film clubs and societies formed around the world and in the United States. This chapter examines some of these organizations along with their political and/or social agendas. Along with foreign and domestic film clubs and societies, there were at least eighteen national film societies/institutes in existence throughout the world before the NEA AFI was founded.⁶³ It is important to this study to understand the variety and scope of both domestic and foreign film organizations that competed with and influenced the formation of any film institute, in particular, the ideals of an American film institute.
- CHAPTER IV—THE 1947-1967 INTERIM. Although the Committee on Visual Aids ended in 1947 and the ACE AFI ended earlier, the ACE did not suspend its

⁶³ Carpenter, in Straight, "Political Pressure." (See Footnote #5 in this chapter).

activities concerning visual aids for education. This chapter examined some of the activities of the new ACE committees, as well as the development of television and its threat to the film industry. It will also discuss a new proposal for an AFI in 1961.

- CHAPTER V—THE NEA, THE AFI AND GEORGE STEVENS, JR., 1960-1979. This chapter presents an overview of the governmentally backed AFI started by the Johnson Administration under the umbrella of the National Endowment for the Arts in the mid-1960s. It first covers the development of the NEA and the NEA AFI, the history of the NEA AFI's first director, George Stevens, Jr., and his participation in its formative years, as well the development of the fledgling institute. It then covers external and internal conflicts that plagued its beginning and the founding accomplishments of the new institute.
- CHAPTER VI—A NEW AND LASTING AFI DIRECTOR—JEAN FIRSTENBERG, 1980-2007. This chapter examines the directorship of the second AFI director, Jean Picker Firstenberg. Replacing George Stevens, Jr., as AFI Director and CEO in 1980, Firstenberg met with her share of controversy at the beginning of her directorship in 1983 from E. Ann Kaplan, editor of *Cinema Journal*, and others, over the apparent dismantling of the AFI's Education Services.⁶⁴ However, her term as the AFI director was a long and distinguished one that firmly set the growth of the AFI and its programs on solid ground, despite continuing grumblings of critics over the years. Some of the projects were the accreditation of the AFI Conservatory, the 100 Years Series listings, new

⁶⁴ See E. Ann Kaplan, "AFI Terminates Education Services: An Editorial Statement," *Cinema Journal* 22, no. 4 (Summer 1983): 74.

physical sites, corporate affiliations, and fundraising events. Firstenberg recently wrapped up her run as director and was replaced by Bob Gazzale on November 1, 2007.

- CHAPTER VII—CONCLUSION—THE AFI: PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE.

Chapter VII, the conclusion to this study, summarizes the central questions of this examination and the subsequent answers to those questions as explained by investigation of the research materials.

The founders of the NEA AFI were no doubt interested in competing with film institutes from other nations that had preceded them. According to Vincent Canby in a June 6, 1967, *New York Times* article entitled, “Agency to Press Movies’ Artistry,” the Soviet Union, Sweden, Great Britain, France, Italy and India already had long-established national film institutions. The NEA AFI also experienced a turbulent beginning, perhaps a reflection of the political era, the 1960s, in which it was founded. Fundamental ideas concerning the national institutionalization of a representative organization for American film raised important issues among all film aficionados, including those in the commercial film industry, film educators and those within the non-commercial fringe of film societies and clubs. Clashes between the opposing interests of these groups were inevitable.

What is most valuable in this study, however, is the uncovering, examination and refocus on the ACE AFI, an institution that had very different visions and goals for an American institution that would promote and preserve the films of this country. It helps to explain part of the opposition and controversy

that surrounded the NEA AFI's formation.

Although the NEA AFI, at present, has a seemingly unmitigated public reputation to the general public, the hidden intrigue of its story is an interesting subject of historical study. Thus, the need for this initial examination of the two AFIs, hopes to lead to further historical inquiries into the history of the AFI.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGINAL AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE

The film institute was visualized as freewheeling, that it would be equally controlled by the schools, the motion picture industry, and government: that it would operate without a profit motive and not become the creature of any organization.

—Lorraine Noble to Paul Saettler, April 12, 1952

In a complicated interplay of relationships throughout the last one-hundred-plus years of motion pictures, several groups of film entities have been involved historically in a struggle for power in this very enticing form of mass communication. The power struggle takes form in an effort to dominate either one or more of the cultural, political or economic values and/or activities of America through the attraction and influence that movies comprise. Film organizations fall into one or more of several broad general categories. There are four main competing categories—the Hollywood motion picture industry (theatrical/commercial entertainment), educational (instructional/documentary), U.S. government filmmaking and artistic filmmakers (avant-garde/experimental). Other categories remain, including industrial film interests (internal/training), home movies and such, but these will not factor heavily in this historical overview.

Among the four main sectors of motion picture making we will be discussing, each may lack, in one way or another, a properly balanced package of filmmaking skills, subject knowledge, political adeptness and adequate financing. Thus, while these separate entities may be divergent in goals, they have also converged, at times, in working toward common goals. The need for collaboration arises, for example, when educators lack the production skills of Hollywood or independent filmmakers in order to produce technically skilled instructional films or, when Hollywood players wish to be

accurate in their knowledge and presentation on subject matter. In addition, while the U.S. government also produces its own films for its own purposes, it also asks educational and Hollywood producers to work in collaboration with government agendas. Films in the artistic category usually deal in various forms of expression, including visual and technical experimentation. Influences of such filmmaking are often found in the other three, as influence on the medium from the artistic arena becomes widely recognized and is eventually accepted into the mainstream film language. Historically, collaboration attempts have had mixed results, for each separate interest in film has danced apprehensively around the other, protective of its own interests.

In the early 1900s, while Hollywood produced films for entertainment purposes, independent and commercial lecturers were using slides and films to educate adult audiences through, as education technology scholar Paul Saettler listed, “the New England town meeting, the lyceum, the Chautauqua Institution, community public libraries, extension education, commercial or proprietary schools, and the Young Men’s and Women’s Christian Associations. The latter four, established in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, still continue; the former have largely disappeared.”¹

Concurrently, the U.S. government, under President Woodrow Wilson’s administration, was setting up a national public educational system, while also dealing with growing concern about the content of motion pictures and its effects.

It is not surprising then, that Hollywood players, educators and the U.S. government each would have an interest in the activities of the other two. Filmmakers from the artistic arena, always contributing with new modes of screen language, would be

¹ Paul Saettler, *The Evolution of American Educational Technology*, (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2004), 124-125.

somewhat influential in growing the number of audience members in the 1930s and 1940s, yet would not make a significant mark on audience awareness or on the other three motion picture areas until later in the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, the triangle between Hollywood, education and the government will be the focus of this chapter. While Hollywood was busy entertaining the masses, educators (more specifically the American Council on Education—ACE), were working on developing and promoting the use of film as a visual aid for instruction. Hence, the idea of an American film institute was a concept originally formulated and promoted through educators of the early twentieth century, not by Hollywood players. It was important to educators and others to form such an institute. There was much controversy about the content of motion pictures and, while many saw motion pictures as a negative influence on youth and society, it was recognized as a potential teaching tool as well. A government mandated film institute would guide Hollywood content that would teach a wholesome way of life, as well as guide educational institutions on specific subject matter used for instruction.

Generally, the focus of this study is to emphasize the many early factions that were calling for, and competing for, a dominant, organized governing body for film upon which the country would rely for social, cultural, political and even economic guidance. A governmentally supported film institute would help to accomplish the goal of national unification and autonomy. This study seeks to guide the reader through a myriad of early domestic organizations and players in order to illustrate the confusion and chaos that plagued the early attempts at forming an American film institute.

The film-related activities of the ACE is worthy of a separate dissertation in and of itself and calls for a far more thorough examination than can possibly be

presented here. This chapter will abridge this history, covering the arguments and calls for an American film institute by early educators, the ACE participation in a worldwide film conference, and the formation and functions of the ACE Educational Film Project (i.e., the ACE AFI). We will look at the ACE AFI and its five interim projects and follow with the ACE AFI's relationship with the Hays Commission. As we move through, we will touch upon other ACE activities, committees, studies and reports that occurred from its inception in 1934 until its end in 1949. As we shall see, World War II interrupted the timeline toward an American film institute as the activities and attention of nearly all film organizations turned toward the war effort. After WWII, reorganization was dominant in the ACE and other film groups, as everyone adjusted to post-war peacetime activities. The ACE's first attempts at forming an AFI had fizzled prior to the war. It was at this time that the MPPDA and the ACE both proposed national film institutes. The film industry was also the target of government trust busting at the time, which squelched grand plans by the MPPDA for a Motion Picture Institute that would dominate all aspects of film in the United States. Concurrently, at a conference on film, some ACE members failed to recognize the focus, complained about the name of a second proposal of the ACE "American Film Institute," and redirected the ACE's efforts to revitalize the ACE AFI to a new "American Audio-Visual Institute." As we move through this chapter, the illustrations of differing goals and ideals of competing film organizations that were bandied about will offer a partial explanation of why it took so long for an American film institute to form, and, when the NEA AFI was formed, why there was so much controversy.

Subsequent chapters will build upon the interchanges between various film groups internationally and domestically (Chapter III) and the interruption of the motion picture industry's progress in the 1950s by television (Chapter IV). All of these things contributed to a long road before the United States positioned itself to accept the idea of and form a lasting national film institute.

Chaos and Confusion

It is important to point out that the ACE oversaw part of what became widely recognized as, as Charles F. Hoban, Jr., put it, “a very chaotic field of educational films.”² The chaos grew from an untold number of organizations— governmental, theatrical, industrial and educational alike—all dealing in educational film for their own purposes. The competition may have been either economic or altruistic; however, the result was a confusing array of educational films that varied in the validity upon which their subjects were presented.

Additionally, the ACE was only one organization that suffered from its own innumerable temporary and on-going committees and joint committees that often morphed in title and function while working on projects and studies that overlapped in an ebb and flow—some were begun before others wound down to completion.

Compounding the organizational problems caused by numerous committees was the fact that while some members served more or less continuously on some committees, others frequently exited, only to be found serving elsewhere on other committees, and new members entered. The confusion grows exponentially when considering the

² Charles F. Hoban, Jr., to George F. Zook, handwritten letter, 1 January 1947, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10 (1946-47).

number of individuals and organizations across the United States and in numerous nations worldwide—all jockeying for a prime position in the field.

The disorder and confusion is evident in the fast changes in focus and titles of any number of film organizations that were forming to deal with the new medium. Examples from the ACE film committees and the MPPDA will illustrate the problem. The title of the ACE's initial committee was the "Advisory Committee on Motion Pictures in Education," The word "Advisory" was dropped, changing the name to the "Committee on Motion Pictures in Education," which was sometimes shortened to the "Committee on Motion Pictures." It was then renamed the "Committee on Visual Aids in Education." Again, a shortened version came about with the dropping of the ending—"in Education," and it was referred to as the "Committee on Visual Aids." The ACE then abandoned the "Committee on Visual Aids" in favor of the post-WWII "Commission on Motion Pictures." There were always formal references to an "American Film Institute," but there were also casual and more formal mentions of the following terms: national educational film institute, educational film institute, national film institute, international film institute and international educational film institute. There was also an "Educational Film Institute" established at New York University in 1939.

The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association (MPPDA), an organization formed to control content in motion pictures and made up of a group of Hollywood studios, shortened its name to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) in 1945. It is sometimes mistakenly referred to as the Motion Picture Producer's Association (MPPA). It should not be confused with the Association of Motion Picture Producers (AMPP), an organization that was started in 1924, changed its

name to the Association of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) in 1964, and then changed again to the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, retaining the initials. The MPPDA film committee had a very similar title to the initial ACE advisory committee. The MPPDA added three words to differentiate their committee from the ACE committee's "Advisory Committee on Motion Pictures in Education." The MPPDA used the moniker, the "Advisory Committee on *the Use of* Motion Pictures in Education" (italics, added). This MPPDA committee later became the "Teaching Film Custodians." The ACE was involved with the MPPDA in some activities.

There was the ACE "Educational Film Project" and Bell & Howell's "Educational Film Conference." Additionally, there are references within ACE papers to the "Educational Motion Picture Project" and the "Motion Picture Project"—it is unclear at times as to whether the latter, which was often referred to, is an abbreviated name of the former or if they were separate entities. The terms may have been interchangeable. The author has made every effort to understand differences and to retain accuracy.

Early Educators Argue for an American Film Institute

The movement toward visual instruction utilizing motion pictures was firmly, but informally, underway when the Woodrow Wilson administration established the American Council on Education in 1918. After the establishment of the ACE, it would take another seventeen years or so of debate between various educators concerning the utilization of film for instruction before the ACE would establish the Education Film Project and its "American Film Institute" in 1935, during the midst of the Great Depression and before American involvement in World War II. The project developed

was to serve as a nationwide network for the cataloguing and distribution of films and motion pictures for educational purposes. Although using “moving pictures” for educational purposes was still a controversial idea, educators realized the potential value of film as an educational tool.

Scholar Paul Saettler has pointed out that, “One of the most important landmarks in the visual instruction movement was the founding of journals devoted exclusively to visual instruction.”³ *Reel and Slide* was the first periodical dedicated to this subject, starting in March 1918. Saettler offers Lynn Metcalfe’s description of the publication as “a monthly magazine to make the screen a greater power in education and business.”⁴ Saettler identifies four more publications established by April 1921: *Moving Picture Age* [formerly *Reel and Slide*], *Education Film Magazine*, *Visual Education*, and *The Screen*.⁵ *The Educational Screen* then debuted in January 1922. Saettler also states that, “Finally, in December 1922, *Moving Picture Age* merged with the newly established *The Educational Screen* when it became clear that it was ‘in no sense a perfect servant of the field of visual instruction.’”⁶

Evidence of the debate appears in the educational journals of the era as new ideas for the organization, systemization, and institutionalization of visual instructional materials emerged. Contributors to *The Educational Screen* debated and promoted the idea of a national film institute for more than a decade before the implementation of such an entity. They recognized the trend toward the use of films for educational purposes in

³ Saettler, *The Evolution of American Educational Technology*, 161.

⁴ Lynn S. Metcalfe, “Editorial,” *Reel and Slide*, 1 (March 1918), quoted in Saettler, 161.

⁵ Saettler, *The Evolution of American Educational Technology*, 161.

⁶ Milton F. Baldwin, “Editorial,” *Moving Picture Age* 5 (December 1922), 6-7, quoted in Paul Saettler, *The Evolution of American Educational Technology*, (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2004), 162.

museums, schools, churches and even by private citizens. They also recognized the need for organizing information on educational films across the nation—one of the functions that an American film institute would address.

First, a May 1922 *Educational Screen* article by Carlos E. Cummings called “for a library of negatives operated on a non-profit basis from which slides will be made on demand.”⁷ Cummings advocated pre-scripted slides shown on slide lanterns with newly developed Tungsten lamps, over motion picture film, as the chosen delivery vehicle because of problems in loaning and projecting motion picture films. Some of the practical difficulties mentioned by Cummings included not only those who might distribute erroneous information, such as an existing film of the day that stated, “the bee brings home the honey to the hive in pouches on its hind legs,”⁸ but also legal and technical problems. Three important problems listed by Cummings include 1) A New York state law that “standard film must be projected from a booth by an operator licensed by the Mayor;”⁹ 2) “ordinances of the City require that film shall be stored in a fire-proof vault, properly ventilated, subject to the inspection of the Fire Underwriters,”¹⁰ and 3) “[M]oving picture film ‘throws out a vapor that can be ignited by a man lighting his pipe in the open air, fifty feet away from the film.’”¹¹

Subsequently, George E. Stone, writing in June 1925 and inspired by Cummings’ article, proposed the idea of a nationwide film foundation, i.e., a non-profit film

⁷ George E. Stone, “Visual Education—A Retrospect, an Analysis and a Solution,” *Educational Screen*, Vol. 4, No. 6 (June 1925): 335. Here, Stone’s quote describes his own summation of Cummings’ article.

⁸ Carlos E. Cummings, “A Loan Service in Lantern Slides*,” in *Educational Screen*, Vol. 1, No. 5, (May 1922): 136. According to the 1997 *Lansing State Journal*, bees bring home honey in a secondary stomach called a “honey stomach.” See website: http://www.pa.mus.edu/science/ask_st073097.html.

⁹ Cummings, 135.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

organization to serve the needs of education.¹² Stone's plan updated Cummings' ideas by including a technical staff, slide lectures that were set and ready to go and would also be published in a journal and, most importantly, added, "the production of motion pictures of such subjects as warrant the expense."¹³ Stone was the first of many educators who would propose an idealistic model for an American film institute. Stone's article announced that he took "the necessary legal steps to put this scheme into operation. Application has been made for the incorporation of the 'Visual Education Foundation' as a non-profit corporation and at least half of the trustees have been named and have accepted their responsibilities."¹⁴ Further evidence of Stone's Visual Education Foundation and its history has not yet been uncovered by this author at this writing, leading to the assumption at this time that Stone's foundation, if it did materialize, was not successful or the name has changed and is not recognized as the same foundation.

George A. Skinner also had a similar plan in 1925 that would incorporate core ideas associated with a national film institute. Saettler pointed out that, "One of the proposals for a national educational film institute was probably made by George A. Skinner in his 1925 schoolmaster plan."¹⁵ Whether Skinner's plan preceded or followed Stone's proposal is unknown at present and needs to be determined. Skinner's schoolmaster plan has not been located by the author at this writing.

¹² Stone, 329- 337, 348.

¹³ Stone, 335.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Saettler, *Evolution of American Educational Technology*, 255, footnote #37. George A. Skinner was the president of the Educational Film Corporation.

International and American National Plans for Cooperative Film Institutes

Concurrent with the American movement promoting film for educational use, educators worldwide were delving into film for instruction with similar objectives, albeit from different cultural and political perspectives. Students from a Swiss organization, the International Federation of Students, first instigated the idea of creating an international educational film institute in 1923. The League of Nations then assumed the task for the next ten years, with multiple international meetings on the subject held in conjunction with various groups. The United States, as a member of the League of Nations, was always aware of developing international movements related to motion pictures. The mutual collaboration and interest in motion pictures by different factions, often with opposing objectives and views, would ultimately confound and slow progress toward an international film institute and national film institutes around the world.

One international meeting spurred the United States into seriously considering its own film institute in order to oversee the use of motion pictures in education. This meeting was to be hosted in April 1934 by the International Institute for Education Cinematography (IIEC), an organization founded by Italian Fascist Dictator Benito Mussolini, surprisingly, under the cooperation of the League of Nations in 1929. U.S. Commissioner of Education George F. Zook and others began working in September 1933 toward reports for that meeting which included the goal of an American national film institute. Great Britain had already formed the British Film Institute the same year. The British were among the first to understand the need for a national film institute, which would help to preserve and protect their history and culture. Other countries would later follow Great Britain, forming their own national film organizations decades

ahead of delayed efforts in the United States.

Eventually, the Italian-based IIEC would be bogged down, become ineffective and close because, as Adolf Nichtenhauser stated, “The Rome Institute spoiled, distorted procrastinated, or suppressed almost every honest effort coming within its reach,”¹⁶ both internally and externally. According to Nichtenhauser, Mussolini stifled the international effort by locating the IIEC on his estate, surrounded by guards and staffed “with Fascist and other political protégés, incompetents and cynics, who were unable and unwilling to formulate, much less to carry out, a consistent program of their own.”¹⁷

At the U.S. preparatory conference in September 1933 for the April 1934 Rome meeting, it appears that one of the major points decided upon by the approximately thirty-five attendees was the need for a national film institute. Saettler credits Cline Morgan Koon, a “senior specialist in radio and visual education of the U.S. Office of Education,”¹⁸ as the author, in collaboration with others, of the resulting mimeographed “Rome report.”¹⁹ A review by *The English Journal* says that the Rome report covered efforts “to raise the level of the public taste in the selection of photoplays”²⁰ and discussed “the importance of visual aids in instruction, the methodology of the use of motion pictures in school, and the production of educational films.”²¹ These were very

¹⁶ Adolf Nichtenhauser, “The Tasks of an International Film Institute,” Galley proof for the October 1946 *Hollywood Quarterly*, dated September 25, 1946, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10 (1946-47), p.2-3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸ Saettler, *Evolution of American Educational Technology*, 230.

¹⁹ The Rome report was published later, in 1934, by the University of Chicago Press as “*Motion pictures in Education in the United States : a report compiled for the International congress of educational and instructional cinematography*, by Cline M. Koon ... in collaboration with Dr. C. F. Hoban ... Dr. V. C. Arnsperger ... Mrs. Robbins Gilman ... Mr. William Reid ... and others.” Information on the title and collaborators of this report can be found at: <http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/133246?#details> (accessed October 25, 2009).

²⁰ “In Brief Review,” *The English Journal* 23, no. 5 (May 1934): 439-440. (Published by National Council of Teachers of English).

²¹ *Ibid.*

important goals for a national film institute at this time. There was much opposition to content of motion pictures in the early days—many motion pictures were considered nothing more than peep shows or were regarded as filled with actions that would take the nation’s youth down the path of immorality. Thus, discrimination in taste and a trend toward aiding education with visual means was an important objective.

Zook resigned his post as the U.S. Commissioner of Education to become the new director of the American Council on Education, beginning on July 1, 1934. “In October, 1934, the Problems and Plans Committee of the American Council on Education authorized its new director, Dr. George F. Zook, to set up a project looking toward the establishment of a national educational film institute.”²²

Saettler tells us, “About that time, Lorraine Noble, a Hollywood scenario writer and long-time advocate of the educational film who had also been strongly influenced by the Payne Fund studies, conferred with Zook and Koon and volunteered her services for the development of a national educational film institute.”²³ Noble served as assistant director for the project. “By January 1934, Noble had prepared the first outline for the institute.”²⁴ Thus, two reports were ready for Zook’s delegation when they attended the April 1934 conference in Rome.

Numerous ACE meetings and reports followed the Rome conference. The first major report, written by Noble, and entitled *Tentative Plans for an American Film Institute*, dated February, 1935,²⁵ was most likely prepared for another U.S. national conference, held February 28-March 1, 1935, as evidenced by the conference record, the

²² Lorraine Noble, *Tentative Plans for an American Film Institute*, February 1935, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 106, Folder 1 (1935).

²³ Saettler, *Evolution of American Educational Technology*, 230-231.

²⁴ Saettler, *Evolution of American Educational Technology*, 231.

²⁵ Lorraine Noble, *Tentative Plans for an AFI*, see footnote #22.

“Second Conference to Consider the Establishment of an American Film Institute.”²⁶ Six months later, in October 1935 and one year after the Problems and Plans committee authorized Zook to set up the film institute project, there was a submission of “A Proposal for the Establishment of an American Film Institute” to the ACE Problems and Plans Committee. The five objectives listed in the proposal were:

1. To collect and distribute significant information concerning the motion picture in education at home and abroad.
2. To stimulate the production and use of the motion picture for educational purposes.
3. To promote the cooperation of the agencies interested in the use and production of the motion picture in education.
4. To initiate and promote research pertaining to the motion picture and allied visual aids in education.
5. To develop a national appreciation of the potential contribution of the motion picture to the cultural life of America.²⁷

Announcements for the new ACE AFI started appearing in late 1935. The earliest public press usage found to date of the moniker, “The American Film Institute,” appeared as an announcement in the December 27, 1935 “Scientific Notes and News” section of *Science*.²⁸ The moniker referred to the American Council on Education’s nationwide film project meant to organize, catalog and distribute educational/informational films among educators countrywide.

In the March 1936 issue of *The Educational Screen*, Edgar Dale expounded upon the newly established American Film Institute, recognizing that Stone had “predicted the development within ten years of an educational foundation which would have not only

²⁶ *Second Conference to Consider the Establishment of an American Film Institute*, February 28 & March 1, 1935, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 106, Folder 1 (1935). The first conference was most likely the September 1933 preparatory conference for the Rome meeting.

²⁷ *A Proposal for the Establishment of an American Film Institute*, Sponsored by American Council on Education, 744 Jackson Place, Washington, D.C.,” October, 1935, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 107, Folder 9 (1935), 1.

²⁸ “Scientific Notes and News,” in *Science* 82, no. 2139, New Series, (Dec. 27, 1935): 613.

the functions of a clearinghouse, but also Film Library functions as well.”²⁹ Dale praised Stone with his opinion that the present plans of the ACE for an AFI, along with other libraries and museums across the country, would “establish Mr. Stone’s reputation as a prophet.”³⁰ Dale also listed verbatim “the five objectives stated for this Institute as developed by two Conferences”³¹ that appeared in the proposal discussed above.

Concurrent with Dale’s March 1936 article, *The American Journal of Sociology*³² briefly announced the establishment of the American Film Institute, and *The American Economic Review*³³ called for participation in the upcoming AFI survey. *The Journal of Higher Education*, realizing film as a valuable evolutionary tool in instructional media, then followed in May 1936 with promotion of the use of film media among their colleagues with an editorial statement, “The change in thinking about the movies in college circles is the dawning recognition of their educational value. They are coming to be seen as a new medium of instruction.”³⁴

Lorraine Noble, as assistant director to Zook, who had been instrumental in writing the ACE AFI’s tentative plans and had served for two years, obtained numerous meetings on the subject with individuals in Hollywood, Pittsburgh, New York and elsewhere. The meetings, both formal and informal, included, among others, Eleanor Roosevelt, Irving Thalberg, Will Hays, Bruce Findlay (president of the Educational Film Conference sponsored by Bell & Howell), William Lewin, Ernest D. Lewis (president of the NEA Department of Secondary Education), Dr. Fannie Dunn, Etta Schneider, Norris

²⁹ Edgar Dale, “The American Film Institute,” in *Educational Screen* 15, no. 3 (March 1936): 79.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² “News and Notes,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 41, no. 5, (March 1936): 670.

³³ “Notes,” in *American Economic Review* 26, no. 1, (March 1936): 191.

³⁴ W.W.C., “Editorial Comments,” in *Journal of Higher Education*, 7, no. 5, (May 1936): 281.

Rakestraw (University of California), Vierling Kersey (future Los Angeles City Schools superintendent) and Dr. John W. Studebaker (U.S. Commissioner of Education).

However, Noble's involvement would end after Zook forewarned her in a July letter stating, "it now seems rather clear to me that our work is not turning in the direction of your major interest, namely, the field of actual production of educational motion pictures"³⁵ and that she "ought to give very serious consideration to other possibilities in the meantime."³⁶ This letter was a portent of problems to come for Noble. Despite Noble's strong participation since 1934, her departure, scheduled to end January 1, 1937, seem to be a pre-planned and foregone conclusion when considering Zook's warnings. Her departure was cemented after a dispute that erupted over payment for expenses and time incurred during the July trip to California where she had gone to work on the script for a Marx Brothers film entitled *Tish* and "averaged 4 to 6 hours a day on the educational film project."³⁷ Zook refused to pay for expenses requested by Noble and suggested that it would be better for her to remain in California in lieu of returning to Washington, which would incur extra expenses for her. Noble then initiated a lawsuit and settled out of court for \$137.50, one-half of the damages she originally sought.

Even though Noble's participation in the ACE AFI was in the process of ending, an upbeat article written by her promoting the Education Film Project and the AFI appeared in the November 1936 *Journal of Educational Sociology*. Considering the

³⁵ George F. Zook to Lorraine Noble, letter, July 16, 1936, 2, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 109, Folders 5-7 (1936).

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Lorraine Noble to George F. Zook, letter, September 3, 1936, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 109, Folders 5-7 (1936). The movie *Tish* was cancelled due to the sudden death of Irving Thalberg on September 14, 1936, and would later be produced in 1942. The Internet Movie database does not list Noble, the Marx Brothers or the "Mr. Wood" she worked with, in the credits of this movie. See "Tish (1942)," Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0035445/> (accessed October 21, 2009).

extended length of time needed for deadlines of the day, it is probable that it Noble wrote it long before there was any indication that she would be leaving the project.

Nonetheless, Noble's article explained how the ACE AFI got its name: "From the first day the project has been rather fondly called the 'American Film Institute' although there has never been an actual incorporation of such an institute."³⁸ Noble further indicated that there was a desire for the American Film Institute to become a national, government-backed institution. "In the early days of our work, there was hope that the organization would be created eventually by special act of Congress, sharing prestige with the National Geographic Society, the American Red Cross, the D.A.R., and similar national nonprofit organizations."³⁹

Five Interim Projects of the ACE AFI

The ACE AFI started with a \$7,500 development grant from the Payne fund,⁴⁰ with an additional budget of \$12,500 from John D. Rockefeller's General Education Board (abbreviated GEB)⁴¹ and an unknown grant amount from the [Alfred P.] Sloan Foundation.⁴² The first five interim projects were:

1. Sports Films, Gladys Palmer/Ohio State University (Fall, 1935).
2. *Teaching with Motion Pictures: A Handbook of Administrative Practices*, by Edgar Dale and Lloyd Ramseyer (April 1937).
3. Preparation of a bibliography of literature in the instruction film field: *Motion Pictures in Education*, published by the H.W. Wilson Company. Began by Lorraine Noble, with the assistance of Fannie Dunn, Robert A. Kissack, Jr., Charles F. Hoban, Jr., and Alice Keliher. Two lengthy volumes prepared mainly by Fannie Dunn and Etta Schneider.

³⁸ Lorraine Noble, "Modernization, By Way of the Educational Film," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 10, no. 3, The Motion Picture in its Educational and Social Aspects, (November 1936): 152.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ James W. Brown, Recommendations Regarding Establishment of an American Film Institute, July 26, 1946, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10, (1946-47).

⁴¹ Saettler, 233.

⁴² H. W. Chase to George F. Zook, letter, March 6, 1944, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 129, Folders ID: 1-3 (1944). Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., was the President and CEO of General Motors and established the Sloan Foundation in 1934.

4. Preparation of a catalog of instructional films.
5. Survey of audio visual equipment in the public schools of the U.S., started by Robert A. Kissack, Jr. and taken over by Cline M. Koon.⁴³

These projects were called “interim projects” because the proposed ACE AFI never formulated properly into the institution that it was meant to be. For unknown reasons, the ACE was never granted adequate initial or ongoing support for its long-term vision of a national film institute. Instead, during and after the interim projects, the attention of those developing and promoting film for educational use turned in different directions and different committees formed. Late in 1935, Zook created a new committee, using the moniker “Committee on Motion Pictures on Education” (hereafter, CMPE-1).⁴⁴ Dr. Gladys E. Palmer, a physical education professor at Ohio State University and a colleague to Edgar Dale, served as the first Chairman while she was working on the Sports Films project. Other notable participants that would become major players in the ACE film projects over the long run include Dr. Mark A. May, director of the Institute of Human Relations at Yale University and Dr. Charles F. Hoban, Jr.

The Hays Commission

After the Supreme Court decision on the 1915 *Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio* case and several well-publicized Hollywood scandals in the 1920s, the Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors Association (MPPDA, now known as the Motion Picture Association of America—the MPAA) was formed in 1922, led by former U.S. Postmaster Will H. Hays. The members of the MPPDA were made up of the major motion picture studios and was formed mainly to act as a self-censorship

⁴³ Saettler, *The Evolution of American Educational Technology*, 234.

⁴⁴ The abbreviation for the *Committee* on Motion Pictures in Education, CMPE-1, has been assigned a number in order to designate the difference between the abbreviation for the *Commission* on Motion Pictures in Education, which is abbreviated CMPE-2 and will be discussed later in this chapter.

organization—a maneuver intended to keep the government from gaining any sort of control over the motion picture industry.

One important figure in the censorship debate and in the quest for a national film governance body was Reverend William Harrison Short. According to Jowett, Jarvie and Fuller,⁴⁵ in order to gain more support for governmentally controlled film censorship, Reverend William Harrison Short would be instrumental in overseeing the Payne Fund Studies (PFS) on motion pictures in order to obtain scientific evidence that they were detrimental to audiences. Like educators who advocated a national film institute, Short also envisioned a national entity, although not quite the same one. Short's idea for such an organization pictured more a governmentally controlled censorship commission. Short's PFS would not result in a governmental organization that would oversee motion pictures; rather, it would begin a field of studies that would eventually grow into a major field throughout higher education. Jowett, Jarvie and Fuller informs us that, "He had lived long enough to oversee the publication of the twelve PFS, but he died without realizing his dream of establishing a federal motion picture commission."⁴⁶

Scholar Dana B. Polan and others have discussed the involvement of Hays and the MPPDA in the shaping of higher education to include film studies. "Throughout the history of film's early entrance into higher education, Will Hays appears in fact to have been a key player in numerous moves to encourage academic institutions to offer professional instruction in film."⁴⁷ Hays and the MPPDA was heavily involved by 1927 in the design of film study programs at Columbia University, the University of Southern

⁴⁵ Garth Jowett, Ian Charles Jarvie & Kathryn H. Fuller, *Children and the Movies: Media Influence and the Payne Fund Controversy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁴⁶ Jowett, Jarvie and Fuller, 54.

⁴⁷ Dana B. Polan, *Scenes of Instruction: The Beginnings of the U.S. Study of Film*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 131.

California, Harvard, Yale and other higher learning institutions. Hays, along with other notable Hollywood producers, such as “Jesse Lasky, Adolph Zukor, Cecil B. DeMille, William Fox, Marcus Loew, and Harry M. Warner,”⁴⁸ even lectured in spring 1927 at the Harvard School of Business, a move considered scandalous by some. The intention by Hays and the MPPDA was to establish motion pictures as a viable, respectable and important subject of study. However, strong objections to the motion picture lectures given at Harvard based on the moral turpitude of the industry resulted in repressing further efforts to forming a major course of study there.

In cooperation with the MPPDA, James Egbert, as head of the extension studies at Columbia University, helped to broaden the courses of film study there, where Victor O. Freeburg, followed by Frances Taylor Patterson, had been teaching photoplay writing since 1915. “The Will Hays Papers from 1927 contain a copy of a survey to members of the film industry signed by James Egbert and Carl Milliken that offered ‘a tentative list of courses and subjects’ for the curriculum and asked for industry feedback. The courses that Egbert and Milliken indicated seem very clearly to have taken into account existing offerings at Columbia.”⁴⁹ Coursework at Columbia would gradually become a full-fledged major. On the west coast, Milliken also followed up by aiding plans for film studies at the University of Southern California.

By 1930, the now well-known and strict MPPDA censorship code was established. The Hays Code was virtually unenforced until 1934, when the Production Code Administration (PCA) was formed to enforce the code, requiring a certificate of approval before the release of a film. Intended mainly for governing commercial motion

⁴⁸ Polan, 114.

⁴⁹ Polan, 83-84. James Egbert was the head of the extension studies program at Columbia University. Carl E. Milliken was the deputy director of the MPPDA, second in command to Will Hays.

pictures produced in Hollywood, the Hays Code would eventually reach into the arena of educational motion pictures, something quite unexpected by some members of the ACE.

Since the Hays Commission had started stringently enforcing the code in 1934, and the ACE was starting to delve seriously into the use of film for primary and secondary educational purposes, it is likely that the commission became involved with ACE film activities early on, as it did with higher education. By 1934, Zook was, in all probability, aware of any Hays Commission movement concerning educational film when Mark A. May and a number of other consultants were called in to meet with the MPPDA commission, and then, very discreetly, with several Hollywood studios to discuss the use of commercial films for educational purposes. May surreptitiously explored, as Saettler tells us, “the possibilities of excerpting theatrical films, with the advice that he avoid using two words—‘16mm’ and ‘education.’”⁵⁰

Lorraine Noble’s 1936 statement that she had “worked on the Hays office a little more”⁵¹ indicated that she, too, knew of the Hays Commission activities concerning educational film and that the interaction she wrote about was not her first. Since Noble’s work was concerned with the startup of an American film institute, the Hays office could not have been unaware of the idea and would later propose their own version of the idea. (This will be discussed later in this chapter). Although there is no indication as to what Noble’s intent was concerning the Hays Commission and the ACE, there is a twofold public perception concern with this combination. First, the Hays Commission was very careful and somewhat secretive concerning any public perception that it would be producing educational films or influencing the education of children or college students.

⁵⁰ Saettler, *The Evolution of American Educational Technology*, 113.

⁵¹ Lorraine Noble to George F. Zook, letter, September 3, 1936, 2, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 109, Folders 5-7 (1936).

Hollywood movies were still considered by many as a negative manipulator of attitudes, principles and morality. Second, in addition to monitoring Hollywood films, the Hays Commission would also attempt to monitor and censor some educational films, an action which would potentially cause some films, such as medical films, to become inadequate, ineffective or downright incorrect in teaching some subjects.

Among those working with the ACE film projects, not everyone knew of the seemingly covert meetings with the Hays Commission. In 1937, Edgar Dale unwittingly discovered unexplained Hays Commission activities and May's involvement after "Miss [Gladys] Palmer and Miss Schultz,"⁵² of the Ohio State University's Physical Education department, attended "meetings of the American Physical Education Association."⁵³ While there, Dr. Jay Nash, the head of the New York University Physical Education Department, tapped these two women to "view reels of film in the vaults of the motion-picture group."⁵⁴ "When they went Mr. Milliken was there."⁵⁵

Dale expressed his concerns with the Hays office to Zook upon discovery from Palmer that "a national committee had been formed and named Doctor Studebaker and Mark May as members of that committee."⁵⁶ Dale seemingly assumed that May was serving a dual role participating on both the Hays Committee and the ACE CMPE-1 without the ACE's knowledge. Dale was alarmed because, "it has seemed like an attempt on the part of the motion-picture industry to head off any work by the American Council

⁵² Edgar Dale to George F. Zook, letter, April 27, 1937, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 109, Folders 9-10 (1937).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid. The motion picture group Dale referred to is not clear. It is most likely the group was either associated with the Hays Office or New York University.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Carl E. Milliken was Executive Secretary of the MPDAA from 1922 to 1947.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

and to get it into their own hands.”⁵⁷ To Dale, it may have appeared that May, Studebaker, Palmer and Schultz were involved with both the MPPDA and the ACE for the purpose of censorship. MPPDA’s Milliken, along with chosen educators going through the film vaults of an educational institution, took on the highly suspicious appearance of censorship attempts and attempts to control educational films in general. The MPPDA, in finding unsuitable treatment of subject matter and subsequently censoring such footage, would also have a good excuse to take over the production aspects of educational filmmaking. Dale expressed his stance, stating, “It is my own opinion that this Hays office move to make educational motion pictures is a serious one, and I think will meet widespread opposition throughout the country, if I know the attitude of the public regarding this office.” Although there had been a call for more wholesome movie content, there were many who resented the power of the Hays Commission for various reasons.

The affiliation with the Hays Commission that Dale reported on would actually transpire in later years. The ACE collaborated with the Advisory Committee on the Use of Motion Pictures in Education (formed in 1939 by the MPPDA and later known as the Teaching Film Custodians). The MPPDA committee was laying groundwork at the time for blending the use of Hollywood motion pictures with the educational field and some educators were furtively involved in investigating the possibilities associated with this venture.

In a reply letter to Dale, Zook informed him that he knew of the connection between the Hays office and the ACE with this statement, “I know a good deal about that activity and will try to find some opportunity to talk with you and [Werrett Wallace]

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Charters relative to it when I am in Columbus on Tuesday.”⁵⁸ Zook continued in his correspondence with Dale with a rather unconcerned, nonchalant, “I am also glad to have your letter concerning Miss Palmer’s work in the field of motion pictures. I am anxious to see her results.”⁵⁹ Zook was to meet with both Charters and Dale on this issue. However, a quick handwritten note on Zook’s copy of his letter to Dale indicates that Zook met with Charters, but that Dale was not present at the meeting. There are no notes indicating what was said at that meeting or if there was any follow-up with Dale.

Further evidence of the ACE relationship with the Hays Commission occurred in documents written in the middle of World War II. In the planning stages of post-war educational films, Mark A. May met with Carl E. Milliken and Will Hays and, in a letter to Zook, stated that the Hays Commission and the industry “feel it important that the industry should not at any time take the lead in education matters but should always follow the guidance of educators. Furthermore, the industry should not use the screen to advocate one side of any controversial issue.”⁶⁰ May further stated, “It seems to me that our problem is to find a formula by means of which the industry can set up a motion picture foundation without laying itself open to the criticism of attempting to influence or control education.”⁶¹ Further discussion on the cooperative efforts between the ACE and the MPPDA will be discussed later in the section on the Commission on Motion Pictures. The plans being made in relation to educational films, both individual and cooperative, by the Hays Commission, the ACE Committee on Motion Pictures in Education and any

⁵⁸ George F. Zook to Edgar Dale, letter, April 30, 1937, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 109, Folders 9-10 (1937). Charters was the director of the Bureau of Educational Research at Ohio State University at the time.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Mark A. May to George F. Zook, letter, March 15, 1943, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 127, Folders 9-11 (1942-43).

⁶¹ Ibid.

other film organizations would be altered by World War II, to which all attention would turn.

The ACE AFI and the Beginning of World War II

The formation of the ACE AFI in the mid-1930s had been sandwiched between the start of the Great Depression and the beginning of World War II. Although little documentation with regard to film and the Great Depression appears in ACE archival papers other than a few mentions of the Works Progress Administration and the Tennessee Valley Authority, there is evidence of thorough cooperation and involvement with the U.S. government concerning the medium of film before, during and after World War II. Both commercial and educational film enterprises worked in alliance with the U.S. government in these efforts. As the war interrupted regular on-going activities of the ACE, the ACE turned its attention to the use of films in education concerning pre-war, war-time and post-war efforts.

The United States took a position of neutrality at the beginning of WWII and quickly “prepared a list of selected motion pictures dealing with war backgrounds and American neutrality, so that documentary material may be presented as a basis for free, intelligent discussion in the classrooms of the nation.”⁶² This 1939 document, entitled *Films on War and American Neutrality*, lists fourteen films,⁶³ compiled by Blake

⁶² Foreword, *Films on War and American Neutrality*, 1939, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 116, Folder 6 (1939), i.

⁶³ *Films on War and American Neutrality*, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, 1-2. The fourteen films listed were listed as follows:

- I. Machinery of Peace and American Neutrality
 - A. THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, March of Time
 - B. U.S. NEUTRALITY AND ETHIOPIA, March of Time
 - C. 1938: A YEAR OF CONTRASTS, Films, Incorporated
- II. Events Leading to the Second World War
 - A. GERMANY INVADES AUSTRIA, Castle Films
 - B. AUSTRIA VANISHES, Pictorial Films

Cochran, from various producers and includes a warning meant for educators that, “Most of these films were primarily designed not for school use, but for the theater. They are not unbiased, objective film documents which educators might hope for, but they do present ideas which would be censored in many European countries today.”⁶⁴ It also lifted the relevance of the information in the films concerning the war in Europe over information provided by other media sources. “The student and teacher should approach newspaper and radio accounts of the war, with a critical and cautious attitude realizing that the skillful shaping of opinion began long before declaration of hostilities.”⁶⁵

The ACE during WWII

Although America had initially promoted neutrality with the “Films on War and American Neutrality” collection in 1939, both Hollywood and the ACE would become directly involved in producing and distributing films two years later in support of the U.S. response when the nation entered the war after the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Film utilization, both national and international, would become an important part of the war effort, from the educating of troops and citizens to keeping theater audiences informed on war activities, which would dominate the direction of the ACE’s film activities.

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- C. LESSONS OF THE WAR IN SPAIN, March of Time
 - D. CRISIS, Garrison Films, Inc.
 - E. INTERNATIONAL MUNITIONS RING, March of Time
 - F. NEWS PARADE OF THE YEAR—1938, Castle Films
 - G. EXPANSION OF GERMANY 1870-1914, College Film Center
 - H. BRITAIN’S UNDERNOURISHED, March of Time

III. War in the Orient

- A. THE 400 MILLION, Garrison Film Distributors, Inc.
- B. JAPAN WARS IN CHINA, March of Time
- C. THUNDER OVER THE ORIENT, Pictorial Films

⁶⁴ Foreword, *Films on War and American Neutrality*, ii.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

One interesting arena that developed in 1941 was toward an interchange of educational films with other countries throughout the Western Hemisphere. The plan may have been cultivated to ward off any possibility of hostilities from Latin American countries. Herman S. Houston's, "A Motion Picture Plan for the Western Hemisphere" proposed a "series of motion pictures to be used in the schools of North and South America, for the purpose of promoting understanding on the sound foundation of carefully selected facts presented both to the eye and the ear through educational motion pictures."⁶⁶ Emphasis and focus was on Latin America, rather than Canada. A useful list of approximately 250 films was compiled by Blake Cochran for the ACE, entitled *List of Films and Recordings Dealing with Latin America*.⁶⁷ Cochran garnered film evaluations from the files of the Motion Picture Project, as well as questionnaires sent to film library directors across the country, and arranged screenings to evaluate films in order to select the best of them for recommendation for classroom usage.

In November, 1942, the ACE, looking to the future, identified a "job to be done"⁶⁸ which was "divided into two parts: (1) promotion of improved conditions in the general field, and (2) implementation of the findings of federal agencies, the armed forces, and industry as they relate to school use of visual aids."⁶⁹ The ten proposed projects included an analysis; a syllabus; surveys in 16mm distribution, city administrative systems, and

⁶⁶ Herbert S. Houston, *A Motion Picture Plan for the Western Hemisphere*, July 25, 1941, 3. Houston was the Chairman of the Institute for the Advancement of Visual Education and Vocational Training, Inc..

⁶⁷ Blake Cochran to George F. Zook, memorandum, December 16, 1941, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 124, Folders 2-3 (1940-42).

⁶⁸ No author, *Proposal for Continued Activities of the Motion Picture Project (Revision)*, November 28, 1942, 1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

government film production; two studies; consultative services; continued evaluations; an exploratory study, and a blueprint for the future.⁷⁰

Yet another effort targeted toward educational media in foreign countries materialized under the Committee for Filmstrips and Slides. “In 1943 the American Council on Education produced filmstrips depicting American life for distribution in other countries. Until the service became inactive in 1947, the host country received ACE educational kits including the projector, screens and accessories necessary for showing the filmstrips.”⁷¹

While the United States was sending cultural educational media to foreign countries, military recruitment films influenced educational film activities within the United States. Robin J. Maaske, President of the Eastern Oregon College of Education, presumably witnessed such a film on the U.S. Nurse Corps program and referred to it in a letter to Dr. Willard Givens, Secretary of the National Education Association. Maaske was “impressed with the various films which tend to, in more or less degree, ‘glamorize’ the opportunity available for serving one’s country.”⁷² He then asked about the feasibility of preparing a film “devoted to the purpose of attracting high school graduates this spring into the preparation for teaching.”⁷³

The earliest film schools in America sprang up in California and New York long before World War II. However, colleges were adding the subject to the curriculum with Hollywood personnel and working with the U.S. government on the war effort as well in

⁷⁰ No author, *Proposal for Continued Activities of the Motion Picture Project*, November 23, 1942, 2-8, 11-12.

⁷¹ Judith A. Pfeiffer, *American Council on Education Archives, 1918-1977*, (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1982), 28.

⁷² Roben J. Maaske to Dr. Willard Givens, letter, February 15, 1944, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 129, Folders 1-3 (1944). Maaske was President of Eastern Oregon College of Education. Dr. Willard Givens was Secretary of the NEA.

⁷³ Ibid.

a blending of the three entities. An example of this was found at Washington Square College. H. W. Chase informed Zook, “In the second place, two years ago we began in Washington Square College, the operation of a special four year curriculum having to do with moving pictures. [sic] with emphasis on writing and production.”⁷⁴ This letter further indicates that Robert Gessner, who previously worked for Warner Brothers, First National Pictures and Frontier Films directed the program and had good success with students who worked on the armed forces motion pictures in “film companies engaged in war work under government contracts” and in major motion picture studios.⁷⁵

Post-World War II

The Commission on Motion Pictures in Education

Anticipating an end to the war, the government’s interest in educational film was to help the country readjust to the postwar needs and changes peace would bring. The ACE and the MPAA would play a vital role in these efforts. In June 1944, the name and the functions of the Committee on Visual Aids dissolved. “It was felt that in view of the recent appointment of the Commission on Motion Pictures in Education and the Committee on Filmstrips, it might be just as well not to continue a committee which now has practically no funds at its disposal to carry on activities in this area.”⁷⁶

The description of one project of the new Commission on Motion Pictures in Education (hereafter CMPE-2) is reminiscent of the pre-war activities Edgar Dale discovered with the MPPDA’s Advisory Committee on the Use of Motion Pictures in Education, which became the Teaching Film Custodians in 1939. It involved eight

⁷⁴ H. W. Chase to George F. Zook, letter, 6 March 1944, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 129, Folders 1-3 (1944), 1.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ George F. Zook to Dr. Mark A. May, letter, 28 June 1944, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 2, Folder 135 (1943-44).

motion picture studios—“Columbia, Loew’s, Incorporated (M.G.M.), Paramount, R.K.O., Twentieth Century-Fox, Warner Brothers, Universal and United Artists.”⁷⁷ The CMPE-2 project began in 1944 and would “evaluate the needs of schools and colleges for motion picture materials in cooperation with major motion picture producers,”⁷⁸ and “plan for the production of new films for courses of study where new pictures are needed.”⁷⁹ The CMPE-2 would also pay special attention to developing a “series of films for education activities connected with postwar reconstruction.”⁸⁰ “Although there was a proposal submission to the GEB for establishing the CMPE-2 requesting a \$208,400 budget for a period of three years,⁸¹ actual financing “was undertaken through a grant of \$125,000 from the Motion Picture Association of America,”⁸² which was “expected to expend \$25,000 a year for five years.”⁸³ “Under the terms of the grant, all materials prepared by the Commission were to be released to interested producers without any charge or obligations.”⁸⁴ The materials prepared were actually a series of scripts. To start with, there was a file of fifty scripts on the subject of geography alone. Other subjects to be prepared dealt with democracy, historical events, music, arts, crafts and mathematics, to name a few. The listing of specific subjects for these films coincide and look to be the preliminary work for what would later become the March of Freedom series.

⁷⁷ Commission on Motion Pictures in Education, press release draft, 23-24 February 1944, 1, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 129, Folders 1-3 (1944).

⁷⁸ Pfeiffer, 27.

⁷⁹ Commission on Motion Pictures in Education, press release draft, 23-24 February 1944, 1.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ No author, *Proposal to the General Education Board of Establishment of Commission on Motion Pictures in Education of the American Council on Education*, no date.

⁸² George F. Zook to Eric Johnston, President, MPAA, letter, 1 December 1949, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 163, Folder 2 (1949).

⁸³ George F. Zook to Dr. Willard E. Givens, letter, 8 February 1944, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 129, Folders 1-3 (1944).

⁸⁴ Gardner L. Hart (Director, CMPE-2), to Lee W. Smith (Pictorial Enterprises), letter, May 14, 1947, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10 (1946-47).

The Teaching Film Custodians were also working with the CMPE-2 on educational films and their films seem to be a separate endeavor from the previously mentioned scripts that were likely to become the March of Freedom series. As previously discussed, the MPPDA/MPAA had been planning on a union of some kind between Hollywood films and education since before Edgar Dale inadvertently discovered the Hays Commission activities in 1937 and reported to Zook.

One film suggested for an educational film project that utilized Hollywood excerpts was recommended by Charles Side Steinberg, the Director of Research & Education for Warner Brothers, who informed Zook that, “Fortunately, we have an unusually fine motion picture on the life of Mark Twain to begin with.”⁸⁵ This movie, never fully named in the correspondence of the day, was most likely *The Adventures of Mark Twain* (Irving Rapper, 1944), starring Frederic March as Mark Twain.

A 1954 handbook looks suspiciously representative of this TFC project. *Films for Classroom Use*,⁸⁶ published by the MPAA’s Teaching Film Custodians, contains many films using excerpts of Hollywood motion pictures, evidenced by identification of those films and some photographs. Other educational shorts available to schools for instructional purposes are also listed.

Except for the replacement of United Artists by the Educational Pictures Corporation, the listing in this book of the studios involved is identical to those listed previously. Mark A. May, who initially investigated the use of Hollywood motion pictures for the classroom for the MPPDA, appears in the Board of Directors listing of

⁸⁵ Charles Side Steinberg to George F. Zook, letter, December 22, 1943, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 2, Folder 135 (1943-44).

⁸⁶ *Films for Classroom Use: Handbook of Information on Films Selected and Classified by the Advisory Committee on the Use of Motion Pictures in Education*, (NY: Teaching Film Custodians, 1954), Archive.org, <http://www.archive.org/stream/filmsforclassroo00virgrich> (accessed October 27, 2008).

the Teaching Film Custodians as the Chairman and as a trustee, along with fellow trustees Willard E. Givens and Carl E. Milliken.⁸⁷

Notably, the Warner Bros. picture suggested by Steinberg, *The Adventures of Mark Twain*, is not in the handbook of *Films for Classroom Use*. Rather, a four-reel version of MGM's film version of Mark Twain's classic, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Richard Thorpe, 1939), starring Mickey Rooney, is included (with a referral for a detailed description in *English Language Arts—Films for Classroom Use*, also published by TFC).⁸⁸

The MPPDA/MPAA Plans for a National Institute

After the retirement of Will H. Hays as president of the MPPDA, Eric Johnston took the position on September 15, 1945. The name changed at some point in 1945 to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA)—news reports discussing Johnston's new plans do not reflect the name change. Evidence shows that Hollywood studios (as members of the MPPDA/MPAA), were definitely planning their own version of a national film institute that would oversee all aspects of film in the United States. According to an article in the October 1945 issue of *Box Office*, there were "five major theses discussed by Johnston,"⁸⁹ named as new goals for the MPPDA under his leadership. The five theses listed indicated 1) no participation on the part of the MPPDA with the government antitrust suits looming over Hollywood, 2) a "better understanding between labor and management,"⁹⁰ 3) a proposal for a new Motion Picture Institute, 4)

⁸⁷ *Films for Classroom Use*, 3.

⁸⁸ *Films for Classroom Use*, 9, 15 (photo).

⁸⁹ Al Sherman, "MPDAA Chief to Concentrate on Labor and Trade Policies," *Box Office* (Washington Bureau), October 6, 1945, 11, http://issuu.com/boxoffice/docs/boxoffice_100645/11 (accessed July 3, 2009).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

the urging of a free international exchange of films and 5) a “wider use of films in the educational field.”⁹¹ The third and fifth points named here are important for this study. *Box Office* reported, “He [Johnston] will construct a building in Washington that will house not only the proposed Motion Picture Institute and the major personnel of the MPPDA, but will be the headquarters of *all* [italics added] motion picture organizations, including exhibitor groups, unions, etc.”⁹² More information concerning the new institute plans crept out in another *Box Office* statement. “One of the more important long-range projects which Johnston has blueprinted is a Motion Picture Institute in which he sees a medium which will mold into a harmonious, smooth-running organization all elements of the industry -- production, distribution, exhibition, unions and guilds. It is the hope of the MPPDA head man that more definite plans for the Institute can be launched within six months.”⁹³ Johnston’s announcements concerning the fight against Hollywood antitrust lawsuits, the pursuit for a better relationship with film labor unions, a widening vision for global film interaction and the planning of a comprehensive national film institute, as well as the broadening interest in film use in education reflects the overbearing objectives in power that the MPPDA/MPAA sought at the time. These goals and objectives could not have been acceptable to the U.S. government trustbusters and others who were participating in non-entertainment film enterprises. In addition, the objective to meddle in educational films could well have interfered in some way in the second ACE proposal of an American Film Institute that occurred in 1946.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ “Easing of Production Code Will Not Be Permitted by MPAA,” *Box Office*, March 16, 1946, 8, http://issuu.com/boxoffice/docs/boxoffice_031646/6 (accessed July 3, 2009). Please note that the web site erroneously states this article is on page 6; the page number is actually page 8 of the periodical.

A Second ACE Proposal for the AFI

The United States was heavily involved with UNESCO post-war reconstruction efforts. Part of those efforts were related to educational film and the ACE was involved, holding several meetings in connection with future reconstruction planning in the educational film arena.

On June 14-15, 1946, the “Conference on the Use of Audio-Visual Materials Toward International Understanding”⁹⁴ was held in Washington, D.C. The purpose was “to explore possible functions of UNESCO in relation to audio-visual materials of an educational character and to formulate recommendations to the Preparatory Commission.”⁹⁵ This conference actually was not an international conference with foreign representatives in attendance; rather, it was an American national conference. One-hundred were invited; eighty-six registered attendees were present for discussions that resulted in recommendations concerning information services, production services, evaluation services, certification services, distribution services, utilization services, research services, and services in relation to the exchange of personnel. One very important outcome of this conference was Zook’s impression that “Mr. James W. Brown, of the State Department of Education in Virginia, was a very useful member of the conference.”⁹⁶ Zook tapped Brown to “set up a national audio-visual institute which would be able to cooperate with UNESCO in the international exchange of audio-visual materials and which would serve as a correlating body for the many numerous

⁹⁴ *Conference on the Use of Audio-Visual Materials Toward International Understanding*, 1, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10, (1946-47).

⁹⁵ *Report of the Conference on the Use of Audio-Visual Materials Toward International Understanding*, 2, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10, (1946-47).

⁹⁶ George F. Zook to Superintendent Dabney Lancaster, State Department of Education, Richmond, Virginia, letter dated 26 July, 1946, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10, (1946-47).

organizations operating in this field in the United States.”⁹⁷ Zook considered it “very desirable to have Mr. Brown draw up the essential feature of such an institute.”⁹⁸ The resulting document was a second attempt by the ACE to form an American Film Institute. Brown’s 1946 document, “Recommendations Regarding Establishment of an American Film Institute,” offered a very different organization than was envisioned in 1934. The ACE had done increasingly successful preliminary promotional work on film as an educational tool, thus, educational films for the war effort and for exchange with Latin America lead to the next step in post-war reconstruction. They would broaden the scope by cooperating with the worldwide efforts of UNESCO.

The proposed AFI would function “through UNESCO [and] in large measure presuppose a need for the existence of similar national film bodies in most member countries.”⁹⁹ The document proclaimed, “It has therefore been resolved that a competent national body (here recommended to be known as the ‘American Film Institute’) be established in this country to cooperate with the UNESCO international organization and with all recognized educational, commercial, and industrial groups in this country in facilitating the free flow of information concerning audio-visual materials of an educational character.”¹⁰⁰

However, between the first draft of the July proposal and the second draft that followed one month later, the name of the institute changed to the “American Audio-Visual Institute.”¹⁰¹ There were eight proposed functions of the new American Audio-

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ James W. Brown, *Recommendations Regarding Establishment of an American Film Institute*, July 26, 1946, 4, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10, (1946-47).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ James W. Brown, *Preliminary Recommendations Regarding Establishment of an American Audio-*

Visual Institute (as opposed to five in the original 1934 AFI proposal).¹⁰² The proposal also provided a staff flow chart, recommending a new AAVI staff of twenty-seven (including two working under fellowships) that would operate under two divisions, research and publications. Initial grants, dues, sales of publications, voluntary contributions and charges for services were suggested as sources of financing for the new AAVI.¹⁰³

There is no record explaining the specific reason for the name change. However, a letter from Norman Woelfel (Director of the Teaching Aids Laboratory) to Zook, in response to the June conference in Washington, D.C., might provide a clue for the name change. The letter, written as Brown was writing his first draft of the AFI proposal, reveals that Woelfel recognized the conference was film-oriented since it was sponsored by ACE and the Film Council of America and had no trouble with the “assumption on the

Visual Institute, August 17, 1946, 1, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10, (1946-47).

¹⁰² Ibid. The eight proposed functions were: (a) To collect, compile, keep on file, and disseminate quickly and in usable form information on all audio-visual instructional materials produced, in production, or planned for production in this country; (b) To stimulate cooperative audio-visual materials evaluation activities among recognized groups in this country now carrying such work, and to suggest improvements where possible; when necessary, to participate directly in evaluation to the extent required to supplement evaluation materials available from other competent groups; to disseminate quickly results of evaluations obtained in this country or from the international body to individuals, organizations, companies, associations, or others desiring help in this area; (c) To facilitate the national and international exchange of audio-visual instructional materials—both those produced in this country and those produced in foreign countries—by all means possible; (d) To carry on (in cooperation with recognized organizations and associations active in this field, and, if advisable, through grants-in-aid) studies intended to determine audio-visual instructional materials of all types which are needed in education and which should be produced and to provide competent advice concerning how they should be produced; (e) To facilitate the national and international exchange of information regarding new and needed developments and research related to all aspects of production, distribution, and utilization of audio-visual materials and equipment in this country and, through the international organization, in countries elsewhere in the world; (f) To recommend to the governmental body charged with the responsibility for attesting to the educational character of audio-visual materials those produced in this country whose evaluations indicate their value for international exchange; (g) To serve in a number of necessary ways as a cooperating organization between the international film body and the U.S. government on the one hand and the audio-visual materials and/or equipment user, producer, manufacturer, or distributor in this country on the other; (h) To encourage, in a variety of ways, improvement in teacher training in the use of audio-visual instructional materials and the training of personnel engaged in their production and development.

¹⁰³ James W. Brown, *Preliminary Recommendations*, 4.

part of some people that films were the only thing of real concern to the conference.”¹⁰⁴ However, others did have trouble with that assumption and “the issue was raised about the apparent omission of people representing radio, recordings, graphics, and other aspects of ‘multi-sensory’ educational materials.”¹⁰⁵ Woelfel went on to say, “Mr. [C. R.] Reagan understands this and is very sensitive to the issue involved.”¹⁰⁶ It was likely that after Brown turned in the first draft, someone mentioned the people who were dissatisfied because the new efforts with UNESCO were so film oriented, and the name was changed. Hence, educators concerned with other audio-visual methods who were not paying attention to the true purpose of the conference, had felt short-changed and quibbled over the name of the institute, thereby redefining the proposal and circumventing the ACE efforts for establishing an American film institute for a second time.

Chapter Conclusion

From the early days of filmmaking, which was concurrent with the movement toward educating the nation, the U.S. government, educators and theatrical motion picture producers have sought ways to use film for the educational use of the masses. Educators have never given up other audio-visual methods of teaching to the exclusive use of film. This chapter has traced part of the path of activities leading to an American film institute and laid the base for the next step in the journey towards an AFI. The journey started with the early combination of oral and visual instruction from lecturers, travelers and other learned people, followed by early educators calling for a national film

¹⁰⁴ Norman Woelfel to George F. Zook, letter, June 24, 1946, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10, (1946-47).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. C.R. Reagan was the head of the Film Council of America (FCA).

institute. Work toward that goal began with international collaboration with the League of Nations, which heightened the number of American national meetings, conferences, proposals, listings, screenings, studies, evaluations, reports and other activities not discussed here. Attention toward an AFI was suspended and turned to World War II before, during and after United States involvement, which is where this chapter ends.

To summarize the specific events of the ACE AFI path, we began with the ACE efforts concerning film, which had started with the 1934 AFI concept and eventually changed in focus and objectives, following a pattern of re-organizing and renaming film committees to match each new function. Likewise, other organizations were forming, disbanding and reforming with a confusing array of purposes. Brown observed, “There are enough new organizations starting up in the country in this field now to cause everyone to consider how seriously they are duplicating each other’s efforts—going over the same ground again and again—instead of getting closer to the solution of problems yet untouched.”¹⁰⁷

Lorraine Noble described to author Paul Saettler the hope everyone had in the beginning days of the ACE AFI during an interview. “The film institute was visualized as freewheeling, that it would be equally controlled by the schools, the motion picture industry, and government: *that it would operate without a profit motive and not become the creature of any organization* [italics Saettler’s].”¹⁰⁸ She also expressed her reasons for the demise of the original ACE AFI (actually, the interim projects), as it was so

¹⁰⁷ James W. Brown, *Reactions to Dr. Nichtenhauser’s Article on I.F.I.*, no date, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10 (1946-47).

¹⁰⁸ Lorraine Noble to Paul Saettler, interview, 12 April 1952, quoted in Saettler, *The Evolution of American Educational Technology*, 237.

fondly called, “When the film institute failed to materialize, a period of boondoggling began and none of the projects finally undertaken was very vital.”¹⁰⁹

However, at least one of the projects (and perhaps more) that were boondoggled could have proved to be vital for film historians—the list of films for a national clearinghouse. In a letter to Dr. Mark A. May, Helen Hardt Seaton gave her opinion on a new project he was suggesting early in 1944. It refers back to the demise of the early ACE AFI and shows that at least this goal was still a vision for May and perhaps others. Seaton wrote, “Frankly, I am rather dismayed by your statement that you plan to prepare lists of useable film materials ‘for each of the subjects in the elementary and secondary curriculum.’ This seems to be a duplication of the work started by the project in 1936 which resulted in a useless file of over ten thousand titles.”¹¹⁰ Seaton commented further as to why the course of the ACE turned away from its original AFI goals and changed direction. “It was after this job was done and the preparation of subject matter lists begun that the uselessness of the results was recognized and the evaluation program undertaken.”¹¹¹

The evaluation program that Seaton spoke of was administered by the newly formed Committee on Motion Pictures on Education, which eventually changed to the Committee on Visual Aids. The Committee on Visual Aids ended, like the original interim projects, because of funding problems. “It was felt that in view of the recent appointment of the Commission on Motion Pictures in Education and the Committee on

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Helen Hardt Seaton, Executive Secretary, Committee on Visual Aids in Education, to Dr. Mark A. May, Director, Institute of Human Relations, Yale University, letter, March 9, 1944, 1, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 129, Folders 1-3 (1944).

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Filmstrips, it might be just as well not to continue a committee which now has practically no funds at its disposal to carry on activities in this area.”¹¹²

The Commission on Motion Pictures seemingly formed in order to help with and handle the enormous task of post-war reconstruction. However, it did not last very long either, closing officially in 1949 for the same reason as the ACE AFI and the Committee on Visual Aids. “It is my understanding that the funds of the Commission on Motion Pictures have now been reduced to such a point that there is not even enough money to publish the report of the Commission itself, but the Council will endeavor to take care of that matter.”¹¹³

Why was a file of over ten thousand titles considered, as Noble and Seaton stated, “not very vital” and “useless?” They were likely considered outdated and useless as new research methods revealed new findings in the examination of subject matter. New educational films were produced each year using improved subject research and/or because there were improved technical standards in film. The negative opinions of Noble and Seaton on the “useless list” did not foresee their value in that, perhaps, these are the only remaining records of many lost or destroyed educational, instructional and documentary films that scholars would appreciate studying today. Internal boondoggling like this and the conflict over the name “American Film Institute” in favor of the “American Audio-Visual Institute,” along with external competition by others, like the MPPDA to form a national institute helped suppress the formation of such an entity for quite some time.

¹¹² George F. Zook to Dr. Mark A. May, letter, dated June 28, 1944, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 2, Folder 135 (1943-44).

¹¹³ George F. Zook to R. S. Hadsell, letter, February 4, 1949, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 158, Folder 9 (1948).

After the 1946 MPPDA/MPAA MPI and ACE AFI proposals, there would not be an obvious mention about an American film institute until 1961—a fifteen year span. What was happening between the end of World War II and the next mention of an American film institute? That will be discussed later in Chapter IV. First, in Chapter III, we will examine film clubs, societies and other organizations in the United States and in the European/international film arena, as well as movements defining film as art, the rise of widespread film studies in higher education and Hollywood's fight to keep audiences from eroding when the new medium of television became widespread.

CHAPTER III

FILM CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Movies are the biggest game in the world—the BIGGEST game.

—Film Critic Gene Siskel

We begin this chapter not by directly picking up and continuing the ACE activities into the 1950s, but by setting that topic aside until later and backtracking to examine some of the other film organizations formed during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. The array of other film clubs, societies and organizations discussed here were serving various interests that contributed to the popularity of non-theatrical film. These competitors were interested in film preservation, equitable access to films for exhibition, foreign films and the power of independent filmmaking—points that would later convince Hollywood that an American film institute was necessary and that only Hollywood should be the leader in helping to create and control such an institute. Some film organizations competed with and/or complemented the goals of the ACE AFI. We start with early film clubs in France and Great Britain, as some would have member filmmakers that would later influence the art film movement and be studied in American higher education. We then focus on a number of domestic film organizations that, given enough funding and political importance, could have been viable competitors for a very different national film institute that would have followed a very different model. The interplay of these organizations, whether direct or indirect, domestic or foreign, will be the focus of the examination. Thus, as we move into the decades of the 1950s and the 1960s, we also form a base for examining the different directions from whence other views on the model an American film institute should follow might be expressed.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, an educational clearinghouse such as the ACE AFI's goal was not the only purpose envisioned for an American film institute. Neither was an institute envisioned to oversee all aspects of film in the country, as was the purpose of the proposed MPPDA MPI or for the purpose of censorship, as were the wishes of Reverend William Harrison Short and his Payne Fund Studies researchers. The various needs of many film clubs and societies throughout the U.S. that were seeking an alternative to the Hollywood commercial motion pictures would eventually make Hollywood realize that there were some formidable competitors. While educators called for a national film institute in the 1920s and the ACE unofficially set up such an entity in the 1930s, other film factions were forming, with help from some of the same financial resources.

One of the main funding sources for the ACE was the Rockefeller Foundation (RF). However, the ACE was not the only film organization that was being funded by the RF. The Rockefeller Foundation's (RF) General Education Board (GEB) and Humanities Division (HD) were also funding numerous film agencies and organizations across the United States. In addition to the ACE film projects, some of this funding included a fellowship to British filmmaker, historian and critic Paul Rotha, allowing him to work in the United States. Funding was also granted to New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) Film Library, the Association of School Film Libraries (ASFL), the University of Minnesota's Visual Education Service, the Progressive Education Association (PEA) and the American Film Center (AFC), to name a few. In addition to the GEB, other corporations and corporate foundations, such as the Ford Foundation and

the Carnegie Corporation, funded various film organizations and projects—the AFC, for example, also benefitted from all three aforementioned funders.

Simultaneously, small film clubs and societies were developing worldwide and in the United States that were independent of large corporate or governmental funding agencies. While educational and instructional film was one alternative to the Hollywood theatrical film, museums and artists' groups offered other alternative motion pictures considered as a new form of art and a further extension of photography. Groups such as those aligned with the avant-garde, for example, sought after experimental films that dealt with the aesthetics of the medium or explored the personal. These groups would eventually consider the filmmaker as artist in a new viewpoint that emphasized the director as auteur. Museums, clubs, salons, and other screening groups would meet for introductory presentations, screenings and in-depth, post-film audience discussions. Many of the leaders of these various film groups kept in touch with each other in a network that helped distribute and exhibit non-Hollywood films—some even attained widespread recognition in large metropolitan areas across the country.

Technologically, 35mm Hollywood-style filmmaking was prohibitively expensive and cumbersome for independent filmmakers, so the medium of choice was the more portable and accessible 16mm film system. Although some independent screening venues had 35mm equipment or access to it, the majority of them screened their films in 16mm. Scholar Paul A. Wagner predicted, "Four developments during the next thirty years will provide a major force, carrying 16mm films to a new high."¹ The four

¹ Paul A. Wagner, "What's Past is Prologue," in *Sixty Years of 16mm Film 1923-1983, A Symposium*, edited by Forrest Alter, et al. (Evanston, IL: Film Council of America, 1954), 13-14, Archive.org, <http://www.archive.org/stream/sixtyyearsof16mm00filmrich> (accessed December 14, 2008).

included “a Tidal Wave of Mass Culture,” television, an international market, and a picture and sound electronic equipment revolution.²

Because of the growing need for filmmakers in non-theatrical filmmaking roles and the interest in film as a field of study, an ever-increasing number of universities were adding film courses, a move that eventually helped legitimize film as a recognized art and is discussed later in Chapter IV.

Occurring alongside the escalation of film clubs and societies across the nation, as well as the movement toward film as art and the beginning of the widespread institutionalization of university film studies, was the expansion of the television industry, the new medium of the 1950s, and the perceived threat it presented to the film industry. However, as Peter Lev explained in his volume on the film industry during this decade, *The Fifties: Transforming the Screen 1950-1959*, while it has been widely recognized that television was actually a threat to theatrical film attendance, Hollywood also “saw new opportunities in the new technology.”³ Movie studios paid “a good deal of attention to the potential for the film industry to provide programming for the emerging television business”⁴ and “a few of the major studios had grand plans to control television through the ownership of distribution outlets, both individual stations and networks.”⁵ Lev also discusses the development of “theater television” (a direct television feed into the theaters) and early “subscription television” (an early version of pay television, now known as cable and satellite subscription broadcasts), both of which are available today. The threat of television will also be discussed in the next chapter.

² Ibid.

³ Peter Lev, *The Fifties: Transforming the Screen 1950-1959*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 128.

⁴ Lev, 129-132. See these pages for a more detailed explanation of theatre television.

⁵ Lev, 132-134. See these pages for a more detailed explanation of subscription television.

The Art House/Film Society Movement

Although the majority of the masses chose to attend mainstream entertainment movies, there were smaller, select groups of filmgoers that were not only interested in commercial films, but were also (and sometimes exclusively), interested in viewing alternative film choices, which later became generally known as “art house” films. These films were screened in art house theatres that specialized in bringing non-Hollywood films to the screen. Scholar Barbara Wilinsky defines “the term *art film* as a practical and commercial concept within the film industry [that] was (and undoubtedly still is) ambiguous and flexible.”⁶ Here, in general terms, art films include the broad categories of B grade commercial films, documentaries, avant-garde, experimental, alternative, independent, foreign and educational films, as well as Hollywood films pulled from circulation but were in demand for repeat screenings.

The art film movement began earlier in Europe than in America. The French club, *Club les Amis du Septieme Art* (CASA, translated The Friends of the Seventh Art), began around 1920⁷ and is considered the very first film society in the world. Italian theoretician Ricciotto Canudo, credited with naming the club, co-founded it with film directors Abel Gance, Germaine Dulac and Jeanne Janin. Director René Clair was also a member. Canudo died of malaria in 1923, shortly after founding the club. Then, an offshoot of the Friends of the Seventh Art formed. Actor Léon Moussinac, along with film directors Jacques Feyder, Louis Delluc, Léon Poirier and others, founded *le club*

⁶ Barbara Wilinsky, Gyula Illyés & Clayton Walnum, *Sure Seaters: The Emergence of Art House Cinema*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 12.

⁷ Sources conflict as to the foundation year of this club. According to Thorold Dickinson it was formed in 1920. See Thorold Dickinson, “Film Societies,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 3, no. 3, Special Issue: Film, New Media, and Aesthetic Education (July 1969): 86. According to Michael Temple and Michael Witt, the year was 1921. See Michael Temple and Michael Witt, *The French Cinema Book*, (London: British Film Institute, 2008), 14.

français du cinema in 1923.⁸ Later, in 1936, the Cinémathèque Française archive was established by Henri Langlois, Georges Franju and Jean Mitry. Langlois, as we shall see later, influenced the first NEA AFI director, George Stevens, Jr.

The Film Society/London Film Society (Great Britain)

England was not far behind France when actor Hugh Miller, filmmaker Ivor Montagu, Granada cinema head Sidney Bernstein and film critic Iris Barry formed “The Film Society” in London in 1925, which is sometimes referred to as “The London Film Society.” Scholar Peter Decherney informs us that, “The London Film Society was dedicated to screening [experimental] films that had little chance of making it to the British screens, either because they were not commercially viable or because they had not passed British censors.”⁹ Barry, the first woman film critic in Great Britain, began writing for the *Spectator* in 1923.¹⁰ She left London in 1930 and became an important figure in American film while at New York’s Museum of Modern Art, which will be discussed later. The Film Society closed in August 1939 because suitable new films could no longer be found, whether domestic or imported.¹¹

Early American Film Organizations

In America, there is some confusion as to just when the trend toward art house films began. Scott McDonald discusses New York’s Symon Gould and the Screen Guild art programming in 1926 at the Cameo Theatre and the subsequent beginning of the Film

⁸ Glenn Myrent and Georges Patrick Langlois, *Henri Langlois: First Citizen of Cinema*, (Woodbridge, CT: Twayne, 1995), 21.

⁹ Peter Decherney, *Hollywood and the Culture Elite: How the Movies became American*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 2005), 110.

¹⁰ Jennifer R. Scanlon and Shaaron Cosner, *American Women Historians, 1700s-1990s: a biographical dictionary* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 13-14.

¹¹ Dickinson, 88.

Guild Cinema in 1929.¹² Meanwhile, Wilinsky, Illyés and Walnum claim, “The art house movement began in Chicago in the early 1930s with the opening of the Cinema Theatre, which specialized in British Films, and the World Playhouse, which exhibited foreign-language films.”¹³ Also forming very early in Chicago, in 1932, was the University of Chicago’s student organization, the Documentary Film Group, which later became the known as the University of Chicago Film Society. By 1959, film critic and historian Arthur Knight reported that, “There are today some 300 organizations that call themselves either film societies, film clubs, or film study groups; and probably at least another 500 meeting informally and irregularly in schools, museums, and private homes that carry out some of the functions of such organizations.”¹⁴

Iris Barry and MoMA

While Iris Barry was working in London with the London Film Society, the founders of New York’s Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, Lillie P. Bliss and Mary Quinn Sullivan, were in the process of founding and positioning the MoMA as an institution that would be vitally active in presenting the newest and most contemporary art forms. As an extension of the art of photography, motion pictures were included as one of those art forms. In “An Outline of a Project for Founding the Film Library of MoMA,” the MoMA stated that, “The Trustees and the Director of the Museum of Modern Art have planned, since the foundation of the institute in 1928, to develop a department of motion pictures.”¹⁵ The MoMA opened on November 7, 1929,

¹² Scott McDonald, *Cinema 16: Documents Toward a History of the Film Society*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 3.

¹³ Wilinsky, Illyés and Walnum, *Sure Seaters*, 106.

¹⁴ Arthur Knight, “For Eggheads Only?,” *Film Book 1: The Audience and the Filmmaker*, edited by Robert Hughes (New York: Grove Press, 1959), 29, Archive.org, http://www.archive.org/stream/filmbook1001525mbp/filmbook1001525mbp_djvu.txt (accessed December 30, 2008).

¹⁵ John E. Abbott, Iris Barry, Alfred H. Barr, Jr. & Thomas H. Mabry, Jr., “An Outline of a Project for

nine days after the October 29, 1929 stock market crash. Although the Rockefeller Foundation did not fund the MoMA in its formative years, it would eventually become one of its main benefactors.

Iris Barry came to the United States in 1930 after divorcing her first husband, *Spectator* literary editor and poet Alan Porter,¹⁶ in a move that would prove beneficial for the MoMA. Barry began working at the MoMA in 1932 to establish its library and just one short decade after founding the London Film Society in 1925, Barry had also helped establish the MoMA Film Library by 1935, giving this account in an article co-written with Abbott:

Founded in 1935, with John Hay Whitney as its president, and financed by subscriptions from patrons of the museum and a three-year grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Museum of Modern Art Film Library was originally launched auspiciously in Hollywood, and its plans were warmly approved at a party which, with Mary Pickford's permission, the officers of the organization held at Pickfair in August, 1935.¹⁷

The MoMA was quick to recognize the work of the ACE AFI and to differentiate itself from the ACE AFI with this statement, "The American Film Institute will be primarily interested in the teaching and classroom film and will in no way duplicate the services rendered by the museum."¹⁸ However, one of the most important activities that would evolve through the MoMA was film archiving, which would later involve collaborations with the NEA AFI and will be discussed in Chapter V.

The British Film Institute

Founding the Film Library of MOMA," *Film History* 7, no. 3, Film Preservation and Film Scholarship (Autumn, 1995): 326. This report was originally dated April 17, 1935 and reprinted in *Film History*, indicating a 1995 copyright by John Libbey & Company. The 1928 date conflicts with other accounts that date the starting conversations of the MoMA founders in May 1929.

¹⁶ Scanlon and Cosner, 13.

¹⁷ Iris Barry, "Why Wait for Posterity?," *Hollywood Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (January 1946): 131-132.

¹⁸ Abbott, Barry, Barr, Jr. and Mabry, Jr., 334.

National governments were only slightly slower in following filmgoers' informal trends in organizing, with the first governmentally sponsored film institution, the British Film Institute (BFI), forming in October of 1932,¹⁹ focusing on the education of filmgoers and publishing. The British government was the first to recognize and act to organize the powerful new medium for national purposes. Scholar Toby Miller informs us that, "The BFI origins in the late 1920s and early 1930s lay in concerns about the perils and promises of cinema, its twin capacities to curse and to bless, to intoxicate and to educate."²⁰ Other governments began to organize their own film organizations as well. Barry and Abbott reported that, "These organizations are primarily concerned with the teaching film, or the use of films for education, but almost all of them are also interested in the cultural and artistic aspects of the film."²¹ The U.S. was far behind other governments in establishing such an organization, even with the efforts started by the ACE AFI proposals in 1934. Barry and Abbott also reported that by 1935, Japan, Austria, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Czecho-Slovakia, Holland, Poland and the USSR all had a state-sponsored film organization of some kind.²²

The London Film Society and the British Film Institute are important to the development of film organizations in the United States. First, the work of Iris Barry and her eventual second husband, American John E. "Dick" Abbott (later to become the Director of the MoMA Film Library)²³ would be instrumental to the film programs and archiving efforts at New York's MoMA. Second, both the ACE and the NEA would examine the BFI as a potential model for an American film institute.

¹⁹ Abbott, Barry, Barr, Jr. and Mabry, Jr., 335.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Barry and Abbott were married in 1941.

American Film Center

Columbia University's American Film Center (AFC), founded by Donald Slesinger in August 1938, was geared toward documentary-style adult education films inspired by John Grierson and the London Film Centre. According to Hilla Wehberg, it was intended "to stimulate production with the express purpose of bridging the gap between educators and producers."²⁴ The AFC received major support from the RF Humanities Division. Robert Schacht reports that, "From 1939 to 1944, \$263,600 was appropriated to the American Film Center, which was set up as a central agency for promoting and developing the production, distribution, and use of motion pictures for educational and cultural purposes."²⁵ The following statement, concerning the Metropolitan Motion Picture Council (which had an affiliation with the National Public Review) and the American Film Center, further explains the AFC's purpose:

The Production Committee of the Metropolitan Motion Picture Council (New York) hopes to achieve on a local scale what the American Film Center intends to do nationally; that is, "to serve as a connecting link between scientific, educational, social, industrial and governmental organizations which have film ideas and the production and distribution units capable of bringing the ideas to the screen and before the public."²⁶

The AFC goals, although stated somewhat differently from the ACE AFI goals, were closely related. The goal of becoming a national clearinghouse or "link" may have helped squelch any possibility of the ACE's ability to continue the AFI vision, particularly into the field of production. In addition, the GEB also funded a fellowship

²⁴ Hilla Wehberg, "Some Recent Developments in the Educational Film Field," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 12, no. 3, (November 1938): 165.

²⁵ Robert Schacht, "Information Education," in *Sixty Years of 16mm Film 1923-1983, A Symposium*, edited by Forrest Alter, et al. (Evanston, IL: American Film Council, 1954), 85, Archives.org, <http://www.archive.org/stream/sixtyyearsof16mm00filmrich> (accessed December 14, 2008).

²⁶ Wehberg, 165-166.

for noted British documentarian Paul Rotha to work in America during 1937-1938 with Columbia University's American Film Center and the MoMA.

While in the United States, Rotha offered criticism on the state of documentary film administration in America, a problem that the ACE AFI had worked on when they announced and developed their AFI clearinghouse. It is unknown if Rotha's criticism of documentary film administration was directed specifically toward the ACE AFI. However, such a remark may have resulted in developing and/or spreading derogatory attitudes toward any administration dealing in American documentaries and, in particular, the ACE AFI programs. In hindsight, the sheer volume of educational and documentary films (over 10,000) that the ACE AFI was attempting to catalog was a formidable job when considering that listings were prepared with manual typewriters, carbon paper and mimeograph machines, and without the benefit of electric typewriters, copiers or computers.

Just one year before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, announcements for the AFC's new magazine appeared in 1940. "*Film News* is devoted to news about short films, sixteen-millimeter as well as the theatrical thirty-five millimeter films. Complete coverage is given to documentary films and to other instructional films."²⁷ The AFC had a print vehicle and ongoing film production, so, when the United States entered WWII, the AFC, like many other film organizations, joined the war effort easily and quickly, working closely with the American government. The American Film Center, although utilized extensively for the war effort, did not survive past 1946. Part of the reason may have been the competing Film Council of America.

²⁷ Hilda Taba, "Educational News and Editorial Comment: In Paper Covers," *The Elementary School Journal* 41, no. 4 (December 1940): 251.

The National 16mm Advisory Committee/Film Council of America

Formed in 1943, the National 16mm Advisory Committee was a coalition of organizations brought together by the U.S. Treasury Department and the Office of War Information that “helped to organize thousands of volunteer groups all over the country to show films designed to help the war effort.”²⁸ After WWII ended, the committee was dissolved and reorganized in 1946 as the Film Council of America (FCA). Several cities around the nation formed film councils under this national umbrella to carry out two main FCA functions—the voluntary coordination of members’ activities and to act as a clearinghouse, sponsoring and promoting the film council movement.²⁹ The FCA was first funded by the Carnegie Corporation and then by the Ford Foundation. From 1948 through 1950, Carnegie Corporation funding totaled \$36,000.³⁰

By 1954, the FCA’s mission changed to “promote the use of motion pictures as well as other audio-visual materials, primarily on the adult education level.”³¹ “Serving as a clearing house [*sic*] of information for 29 national organizations having 24,000 local organizational groups representing 28,000 members, the FCA seeks to make America audio-visual minded.”³² The FCA also supported the basic ideas of providing meeting places for film gatherings, bringing film into underutilized areas, providing film discussion materials, conducting research and exchange of information and aiding the use of audio-visual materials.³³

²⁸ Glen Burch, “The FCA and the Film Council Movement,” *Hollywood Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (Winter, 1950):138.

²⁹ Burch, 139.

³⁰ Schacht, 84.

³¹ Appendix B, *Sixty Years of 16mm Film 1923-1983, A Symposium*, 220.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

One example of a practical function of the FCA was funded by an \$88,500 grant from the Ford Foundation through the foundation's Fund for Adult Education (FAE). The FCA was awarded the grant for handling the general distribution of films for the FAE's Experimental Discussion Project. Two films, entitled *Great Men and Great Issues* and *World Affairs Are Your Affairs*, were distributed to conduit organizations such as the YMCA, the YWCA and the 4-H Club of America, which were also funded by the FAE, for adult film discussion groups. The FCA was also awarded another grant of \$320,000 "to promote the general use of films"³⁴ for adult educational and discussion purposes.

University Film Producers Association/University Film Association/University Film and Video Association

Founded in 1947, the twelve-member University Film Producers Association (UFPA) served as an exchange between universities and colleges that addressed the technical problems associated with filmmaking. Dr. Katherine C. Stenholm was one of the founding members—the names of other founding members are elusive and yet to be uncovered. By 1954, there were 125 members and that number has grown to over 800 today. The name changed to the University Film Association (UFA) in 1968 and in 1982 the UFA then changed its name to reflect the change in technology toward video—the University Film and Video Association (UFVA). Dr. Betsy A. McLane was the first woman president of the UFVA.

Published by the UFPA, *The Journal of the University Film Producers Association* began in 1949 and held that name until 1967. In 1968, the name changed to the *Journal of the University Film Association* to reflect the name change of the publishing organization. Another representative name change came in 1982—for only

³⁴ Schacht, 86.

about a year—to the *Journal of the University Film and Video Association*. Finally, in 1983, the UFVA shortened the name to the *Journal of Film and Video*, most likely for the sake of brevity, which has held to this day.

Today, the UFVA is one of two significant motion picture organizations that represent teaching and academic research of motion pictures and media in higher education throughout the world. UFVA members convene annually at the beginning of August to discuss issues concerning film in higher education, set instructional agendas, present research papers and screen films that the members and students have worked on during the year.

The Post WWII Art House Movement in the United States

The discussion thus far has begun with the art house movement and early clubs and societies, moved toward the BFI and through to film agencies that became increasingly involved with the U.S. government, particularly during WWII. The war had interrupted almost all of the normal activities in most film communities, turning their attention and efforts toward the war. This interruption melded the film powers toward a national effort and lasted into the post-war reconstruction era, whereupon the once-united organizations separated to return to their individual pre-war goals that had been put on hold and/or redefine goals and directions to be taken in the future. However, after the war ended, as we have seen, some organizations fell by the wayside while others continued and new film groups formed. In the U.S., the art house movement became more widespread than ever in the post-war era. The movement was happening mostly in large cities on the east and west coasts. The influence of those who had immigrated to

America as a result of being displaced during WWII was particularly important on the east coast in New York City.

Art in Cinema

One year after the war ended, in 1946, Frank Stauffacher, an independent filmmaker from San Francisco, and Richard Foster, a staff member at the San Francisco Museum of Art, began a series of screenings at the museum known as Art in Cinema. Scholar Lewis Jacobs informs us that, “With the assistance of the staff of the San Francisco Museum of Art, they were actually the first in this country to assemble, document and exhibit on a large scale a series of strictly avant-garde films.”³⁵ Avant-garde film had become a very popular alternative to theatrical cinema on the West Coast (as well as in Chicago and the rest of the country). Jacobs explains that, “The spirited response to the series resulted in the publication of a symposium on the art of avant-garde films, together with program notes and references, called *Art in Cinema*.”³⁶ The Art in Cinema series lasted until 1954, just before Stauffacher’s 1955 death from a brain tumor. The series was not a regular program after the mid-1950s, but two apparent renditions of it were presented, once in 1960, with Christopher Bishop named as director of the New Art in Cinema series, and then again in a special one-time program, entitled “Art in Cinema Revisited,” held on July 20, 1973.

Cinema 16

The most important independent film club in America was established in New York City in 1947. “The founders of Cinema 16 included Amos Vogel as executive

³⁵ Lewis Jacobs, “Experimental Cinema in America,” *Hollywood Quarterly* 3, no. 3, (Spring, 1948): 278. The symposium volume Jacobs refers to is: Frank Stauffacher, *Art in Cinema*, San Francisco: Museum of Art, 1947.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

secretary, Marcia [Diener] Vogel in charge of organization and membership, Renee Avery, Robert Delson, and David E. Diener.”³⁷ Vogel sought out Art in Cinema’s Frank Stauffacher for help and advice in setting up Cinema 16 and in finding films for programming, forming an early link between the East coast and West coast independent filmmakers.

As a child, Vogel had attended film society screenings “at the Uremia, a miniature Lincoln Center in Vienna.”³⁸ He immigrated to the United States in 1939 after leaving Vienna in 1938, which had been occupied by Adolph Hitler. After receiving an education in agriculture, economics and political science in the U.S., Vogel worked during WWII “in defense factories as an assistant tool-and-die maker”³⁹ before founding Cinema 16. Cinema 16 screening houses included the Provincetown Playhouse, “the Barbizon Plaza Theatre, the Hunter College Playhouse and the Central Needle Trades Auditorium.”⁴⁰ Cinema 16 grew from 150 members to become the largest, most prominent film society in America, “with a membership of over 5,000 in 1953-54”⁴¹ and reaching a peak membership of 7,000.⁴² Cinema 16 lasted until 1963 and the same year Vogel, along with Richard Roud, established the New York Film Festival. Vogel served as the festival’s director from its inception until 1968. “In 1973, Vogel started the Annenberg Cinemathèque at the University of Pennsylvania and was eventually given a

³⁷ Amos Vogel, “Cinema 16: A Showcase for the Nonfiction Film,” *Hollywood Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (Summer 1950): 421. David E. Diener was the brother of Marcia Diener Vogel.

³⁸ Amos Vogel to Scott McDonald, cited in Scott McDonald, *Cinema 16: Documents Toward a History of the Film Society*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 37.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁴⁰ Amos Vogel, “Cinema 16,” *Hollywood Quarterly*, 421.

⁴¹ Jack C. Ellis, “Theatrical Film on 16mm,” in *Sixty Years of 16mm 1923-1983, A Symposium*, edited by Forrest Alter, et al. (Evanston, IL: American Film Council, 1954): 181.

⁴² Scott McDonald, “Cinema 16: An Interview with Amos Vogel,” *Hollywood Quarterly* 37, no. 3, (Spring 1984): 19.

chair for film studies at the Annenberg School for Communication, where he taught and lectured for two decades.”⁴³

New American Cinema Group

One of the members of Cinema 16 eventually came to establish a competing alternative cinema organization, the New American Cinema Group (NACG). Jonas Mekas, a theater owner from Lithuania displaced by WWII, arrived in America in 1949. In America, Mekas also became a filmmaker. Mekas started screening films at Gallery East in 1953. Mekas also founded *Film Culture* magazine, first issued in December of 1954, and subsequently came to write film reviews for the *Village Voice* between 1958 and 1975.

“The New American Cinema Group began meeting in 1959.”⁴⁴ Mekas and other filmmakers formed NACG in order to fight censorship, and to provide an outlet for screening and distribution for those rejected by the three independent distributors, “Brandon, Contemporary Films, and Cinema 16.”⁴⁵ Upon incorporation of the NACG on May 29, 1961, Mekas served as the first president, a position that lasted until 1980. By 1962, NACG had incorporated a catalog and a system of distribution, the Filmmaker’s Cooperative.

Filmmaker’s Cinemathèque, a screening outlet for NACG, began in 1964, with screening venues located over the next few years at various locations—80 Wooster Street, Greene Street and 425 Lafayette Street, before eventually returning to Wooster Street by 1974. At one time, the Cinemathèque operated two screens, one described by

⁴³ “Amos Vogel,” *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amos_Vogel (accessed December 29, 2008).

⁴⁴ Jonas Mekas to Scott MacDonald, cited in Scott MacDonald, *Cinema 16: Documents Toward a History of the Film Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 416.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Mekas as “totally open and permissive”⁴⁶ and the other, which was “very selective, it will be like the Academy.”⁴⁷ Jerome Hill was a major financial supporter; his money was important for the avant-garde filmmaker’s efforts both before and after his death. Hill’s contributions helped keep the Filmmakers Cinemathèque going and provided part of the building on Lafayette Street for screenings and for the Anthology Film Archives, which opened on December 1, 1970. In 1970, the New American Cinema Group also issued a periodic listing of important avant-garde films entitled the Essential Cinema Collection, which was seriously regarded by film school faculties. The Anthology Film Archives eventually absorbed the Filmmaker’s Cinemathèque and today is still screening and archiving films in its own location at 32 Second Avenue in New York, a building purchased by Mekas with money from the sale of another building in Florida that Hill had bequeathed to the organization.⁴⁸

Unlike Vogel’s Cinema 16, MacDonald informs us that, “[t]he focus of the New American Cinema Group was not the audience, but the filmmakers.”⁴⁹ The two differing interests led to now well-known clashes between Vogel and Mekas. In essence, Vogel was a teacher, lecturer and gatekeeper and as such, selected films for screening and influenced his audiences through discussion. Because Vogel had refused to screen or distribute some of the films produced by independent filmmakers (some of them were not avant-garde), the NACG and the Filmmakers Cooperative formed. Vogel warned Mekas that two distribution centers would be detrimental to the avant-garde film field. Vogel’s prediction was correct, as Cinema 16 eventually dissolved after the development of the

⁴⁶ Jonas Mekas, “Interview with Jonas Mekas,” by Brian Frye, *Senses of Cinema*, June 2001, Archive.org, http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/17/mekas_interview.html (accessed December 30, 2008).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ MacDonald, *Cinema 16: Documents Toward a History of the Film Society*, 19.

New American Cinema Group, after which Vogel then turned his attention toward founding the New York Film Festival, as previously mentioned. Unwittingly, the threat that the NACG posed to Cinema 16 and the subsequent change by Vogel to create a film festival was generally detrimental to the American avant-garde filmmakers who wanted to see their films on the screen. “Mekas sat back cautiously for the first few years of the [New York Film] festival, taking notes as the new class of film tastemakers celebrated European auteurs and passed over the avant-garde.”⁵⁰

American Federation of Film Societies

The American Federation of Film Societies (AFFS) was founded in 1955 in Chicago to serve as an umbrella group to the numerous film societies throughout the United States. According to Andre Bazin and Hugh Gray, it had “the basic aim of assisting existing film societies and encouraging formation of new ones.”⁵¹ Ernest Callenbach informs us that, “Bob Greensfelder had been instrumental in the founding of the American Federation of Film Societies.”⁵² Callenbach and Jack C. Ellis were also founding members, and Frank Stauffacher (from *Art in Cinema*) attended the founding convention of the AFFS in Chicago. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the number of film societies, clubs and organizations had reached into the hundreds, and an organization such as the AFFS to unify these organizations into a viable representative body with national goals was much needed. The AFFS published the *Film Society Primer: A*

⁵⁰ Decherney, 181.

⁵¹ Andre Bazin and Hugh Gray, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” *Film Quarterly* 13, no. 4, (Summer, 1960): 9.

⁵² Ernest Callenbach, “Interview with Ernest “Chick” Callenbach,” by Lee Amazonas, San Francisco Film Society Oral History Project, Berkeley, CA, 12 August 2006, http://74.125.47.132/search?q=cache:5Ge18rVV6MOJ:history.sffs.org/media_assets/pdf/Ernest_Callenbach_OH_Interview.pdf+%22American+Federation+of+Film+Societies%22&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=49&gl=us&lr=lang_en (accessed December 30, 2008).

*compilation of twenty-two articles about and for film societies,*⁵³ as well as a periodical entitled the *AFFS Newsletter*, which was the predecessor to the AFFS's later publication, *For Film*. The AFFS, which lasted until 1976, would become a harsh critic of the NEA AFI.

Society of Cinematologists (SoC)/Society for Cinema Studies (SCS)/Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS)

The Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS), as the organization is now known, was formally established in 1959. However, according to a personal recollection by film scholar and historian Jack C. Ellis, a founder of the aforementioned AFFS, it started organizing at least two years earlier, in 1957. Ellis was invited, along with fifteen to twenty other film production professors, to a meeting hosted by the MoMA curator Richard Griffith, and Margareta Akermark, the head of the MoMA circulating collection. The 1958 meeting resulted in the organizing committee of the Society of Cinematologists (SoC). Committee members were Robert Gessner (New York University), Jack C. Ellis (Northwestern University), Gerald Noxon (Boston University) and John Driscoll (Pennsylvania State University). Gessner was highly influential in the formation of the SoC, insisting upon its name and serving to write the bulk of the organizations' statement of purpose and constitution, which he modeled after the French Society of Anthropologists. At the third meeting in 1959, the SoC was formally established. Starting with a count of only thirty-four members in 1963, the SCMS grew to one

⁵³ Cecile Starr, ed., and Carolyn Henig, *Film Society Primer: A compilation of twenty-two articles about and for film societies*, Forest Hills, NY: American Federation of Film Societies, 1956.

hundred members in 1969 and over three hundred members by 1979.⁵⁴ There are over 800 members today.

In 1968, two opposing factions formed, concerned with whether or not to broaden eligibility requirements so the membership could grow. The factions were dubbed “the old guard”⁵⁵ and the “young Turks.”⁵⁶ The old guard wanted the SoC to remain small and select, while the “young Turks” wanted a larger organization. Gessner died the same year, and the following year, in 1969, the SoC membership hastily changed the name to the Society for Cinema Studies (SCS). It was yet again renamed, this time to the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS) in 2002.

The SoC published the *Journal of the Society of Cinematologists* from 1961 to 1965. In 1966, it was renamed *Cinema Journal*, a moniker that has remained to this day. In the journal’s early days, the content consisted of papers from the annual meeting, but later was refereed by the editorial board and finally took its design and present day format under Virginia Wexman’s editorship from 1982 to 1988.⁵⁷

Ellis noted that in the early days of the SoC, membership was primarily male, with only one or two women. This changed during the 1970s when a substantial number of women joined and some started holding officer positions or became a member of the executive council. The first woman president of the SCS was Vivian Sobcheck, who served from 1985-1987. “Chuck Kleinhans was moved to observe that ‘what had been an old boys network had become a young woman’s network.’”⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Jack C. Ellis, “The Society for Cinema Studies: A Personal Recollection of the Early Days,” *Cinema Journal* 43, no. 1 (Fall 2003): 105-112. Project Muse, http://muse.jhu.edu.logon.lynx.lib.usm.edu/journals/cinema_journal/v043/43.1ellis.pdf. (accessed December 14, 2008).

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 6.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 4.

Back to the ACE

While the bulk of non-theatrical, independent and avant-garde film interests were turning to foreign art films and such in the post-war era, the ACE was busy with educational/governmental post-war film activities. The Commission on Motion Pictures in Education (CMPE-2), also discussed earlier in Chapter II, was a project financed for a five-year period from 1944 to 1949 in order to produce motion pictures for post-war reconstruction efforts. Although thirty-seven film proposals/scripts were created and intended for the production of films targeted to elementary and secondary school pupils, only fifteen were chosen for full script development. These fifteen supposedly concentrated on the arts, music and math education and were known as the March of Freedom series. What is a puzzle, however, is that one outline only mentions subjects that are historical in nature—there are no films on the arts, music or math. The March of Freedom film history series descriptive outline consisted of four main topics, each containing three or more subjects for a total of twenty.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Although fifteen were chosen, the outline includes twenty topics and subjects:

- 1) The Meaning of Freedom
 - a. The Magna Carta
 - b. The Declaration of Rights – 1689 “The Rise of Parliamentary Control”
 - c. Overall Summation
- 2) Freedom in the New World
 - a. The Mayflower Compact
 - b. Roger Williams – “Fighter for Religious Liberty”
 - c. William Penn and the Holy Experiment
 - d. Thomas Paine – “Apostle of Freedom”
 - e. George Washington – “Fighter for American Freedom”
 - f. Thomas Jefferson – “The Forging of American Democracy”
 - g. Overall Summation
- 3) The Growth of Equal Rights
 - a. Unity in Equality – The Northwest Ordinance, 1787
 - b. The End of Landlordism
 - c. Equal Rights for Women – “Freedom from Sex Discrimination in the United States”
 - d. Overall Summation
- 4) Democracy at Work
 - a. Alien and Sedition Acts
 - b. The Haymarket Tragedy – “....And Justice for all”

It appears that some of the March of Freedom films may have been intended for production by educational institutions or may have been intended for viewing by the full range of K-12 schoolchildren. Both of these ideas were problematic, as illustrated with the comments of Mary Irwin. Regarding the March of Freedom pre-production plans, Zook wrote to Dr. Mark A. May that, “Just for the fun of it, I asked Miss Mary Irwin, our editor, to read several of the film outlines in the series entitled ‘March of Freedom’[sic].”⁶⁰ Although Irwin negated herself by stating that she did not have the expertise or experience as a secondary educator, the common sense problems she found in the scripts were well thought out and well stated. Irwin listed “several difficulties in the way of trying to use these outlines for dramatization.”⁶¹ Difficulties noted by Irwin included an emphasis on: 1) scenes impossible to produce in a high school auditorium; 2) the episodic treatment of each subject; 3) a need for a complete rewrite with considerable deletions; 4) readiness of use; 5) authentic props and costuming; 6) long length; 7) appropriateness to certain class subjects, and; 8) levels of writing ranging from elementary level to college levels in the same outline, i.e., assumption of more knowledge by students than is likely.⁶²

Although the Committee on Visual Aids ended in 1947 and the CMPE-2 ended in 1949, the ACE did not suspend its activities concerning visual aids for education. The attention and activities were transformed to meet the changes demanded by new

-
- c. Jane Addams and Social Security
 - d. Louis Brandeis – “The People’s Attorney”
 - e. Pressure Groups – A Challenge to Representative Government
 - f. Overall Summation

⁶⁰ George F. Zook to Dr. Mark A. May, letter, March 28, 1949, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 158, Folder ID 9 (1948).

⁶¹ Mary Irwin to Dr. George Zook, letter, March 28, 1949, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 158, Folder ID: 9 (1948), 1.

⁶² Ibid., 1-3.

technology, television, and the changing needs of the country, which, among others, was to educate the new “baby boomer” generation. Some of the ACE committees that existed, were formed, or were affiliated with ACE during the historical gap where there was no mention of a national film institute, were:

- the Committee on Filmstrips and Slides
- the Committee on Visual Aids in Education
- the Commission on Motion Pictures in Education
- the Audio-Visual Aids Committee
- the Committee on Educational Television
- the Joint Committee on Educational Television and National Citizens Committee on Television
- the Teaching Film Custodians
- Educational Television
- the Educational Television and Radio Center
- the National Citizens Committee for Educational Television
- the Regional Commission on Educational Television
- the Committee on Television
- the Joint Committee on Educational Television
- the Conference on the Study of Motion Pictures as a Contemporary Art
- the Special Committee on Participation of Teachers in Television and Other Media
- the Joint Council on Educational Telecommunications
- the Advisory Committee on Computers in Higher Education (1965)⁶³

Chapter Conclusion

So far, we have examined some of the film clubs, societies and organizations of various dichotomous types, i.e., small/large, formal/informal and heavily/poorly funded. Filmmakers and film organizations of all types produced, distributed, exhibited and/or viewed a wide variety of non-Hollywood films. Some affected each other, some perhaps affected the ACE AFI and some were growing large enough, especially as distributors, to be viewed as a threat to Hollywood entertainment films. As we will see in later chapters, some will affect, however slightly, the NEA AFI.

⁶³ This list was formulated by the author from various pages in: Judith A. Pfeiffer, *American Council on Education Archives, 1918-1977*, (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1982). Names of committees and commissions appear multiple times throughout several pages in the document.

Although Abbott, Barry, Barr, Jr. and Mabry, Jr. had pointed out in 1935 the importance of individuals and groups of enthusiasts working in difficult situations both logistically and financially to find, distribute, exhibit and attend non-Hollywood films,⁶⁴ by 1959 the art film movement was seemingly growing into its heyday as envisioned by Nichtenhauser. “As far as *film art* is concerned, an international system of repertory and specialized theaters and of Film Societies, as well as the other indicated methods of extensive film circulation, would make it economically possible for the creative film worker to work and experiment without shackles and to give his ideas for free expression.”⁶⁵ Art films and non-theatrical films were in their heyday from the post-war era and well into the 1960s and 1970s. Organizations like Cinema 16 and New American Cinema, along with film festivals, which began to take hold across America, were starting to fulfill the vision that Nichtenhauser and others had hoped for in terms of creative freedom and free expression. In this era (and beyond), however, Hollywood did distribute some films by directors considered art film directors, for example, Stanley Kubrick, Robert Altman, Terrance Malick, David Lynch and even Martin Scorsese, in the 1960s and 1970s, but they became more mainstream, or at least well-known, as years went by. The bulk of art film directors seemed to come from foreign directors, thereupon imposing a foreign influence upon “American” social and cultural values, albeit, those that thought this way did not consider the social and cultural influences of millions of immigrants that came to America throughout the years.

⁶⁴ Abbott, Barry, Barr, Jr. and Mabry, Jr., 332-333.

⁶⁵ Adolf Nichtenhauser, “The Tasks of an International Film Institute,” Galley proof for the October 1946 *Hollywood Quarterly*, dated 25 September 1946, located in the Hoover Institution Archives, ACE Collection, Box 142, Folders 8-10 (1946-47): 4.

What also needs to be re-emphasized is that the sheer number of film organizations outside of Hollywood was voluminous—there were probably many more people involved in low-budget filmmaking and in organizing film enthusiasts across the country than in all of Hollywood. There were dedicated organizations that had growing national networks of distribution. All of these organizations had a vision as to what was important in film in America and many, if not most, were working in the shadow of and toward countering the Hollywood entertainment system. The Hollywood studios were beginning to see that perhaps any one of these groups was capable of forming a national film institute with goals and directions that would be out of Hollywood control. What these groups did not have, however, was the financial and political influence that Hollywood had. When Hollywood players and the government realized the need for a national film institute, the possibility would become a reality according to Hollywood wishes.

The non-Hollywood film enthusiasts and filmmakers would need and expect many things in a national film institute, but of all the things that were needed to counteract the power of Hollywood, the problems to be overcome were the preservation and accessibility of all types of films, as well as technologically effortless film circulation. The threat of easy circulation would also appear in the form of television. While the March of Freedom series was marching into classrooms across the nation in the 1950s in an attempt to develop a sense of American values in the growing boomer generation, television was beginning to take hold nationally. Experiments with television broadcasting had taken place in the 1930s prior to World War II. However, these experiments were delayed until after the war, when they were revived and television

programming exploded into living rooms across America. Commercial broadcasting started in 1941 in New York and spread quickly to larger cities while gradually taking hold in the American hinterlands throughout the 1950s. The problem of easy access, distribution and exhibition was satisfied for some independent filmmakers through television, as we shall see in the next chapter, allowing some, but not all, film school trainees to become successful. This would take one more step to solve, which came at the end of the 20th century and followed into the 21st century, where the age of widespread computer usage has afforded cheap uploads and downloads, i.e., distribution, of all kinds of motion pictures.

In Chapter IV, a further examination of the years that separated the two film institutes will encompass a closer look at the television industry and the development of the art film movement through educational programs in American universities.

CHAPTER IV

THE 1947-1967 INTERIM

*WOW! I got color TV, RCA Victor Color
TV! I know what I've been missing now!
WOW! I got color TV! WOW!*

—Jingle lyrics from RCA Color TV
television commercial, 1961.

From the 1920s until the late 1940s, there had been numerous discussions and proposals for an AFI by educators, the ACE and even the MPPDA. The ACE AFI had existed, but fizzled and was replaced by other ACE film committees. There were also numerous film groups and organizations that were spreading nationally. One or more of these groups could have served as a base or foundation for a national film institute, but this never appeared as an option. So, after the 1934 and the 1946 proposals for an American film institute occurred, what happened in the fifteen-year interim until the next proposal by Colin Young transpired in 1961? Further, after Young's proposal appeared, why did it take only six short years for the U.S. to complete establishment of such an organization in 1967?

This chapter covers this fifteen-to-twenty-year interim, delving into the rise of television during the post-war construction era of the 1950s, which continued into the 1960s and beyond. It also covers the growth of the "film as art" movement, when U.S. and foreign universities began integrating the subject of film into various scholarly departments across the nation and throughout the world. Although Columbia University offered courses in photoplay writing as early as 1915, only a handful of departments across the country offered the major. Film was not a widespread subject until the 1960s. The subject expanded into English departments that offered film criticism, art

departments that offered film as a new artistic medium and journalism departments that followed the example of earlier film documentaries. Eventually, the examination of film as a subject gained enough respect to emerge as a separate field of study unto itself, and film departments became more widespread. In addition, there was a change in the attitudes of the Hollywood industry and the U.S. government in recognizing the importance of film with regard to the artistic and cultural aspects of American society that led to the establishment of an American film institute.

The previous chapter discussed some of the many film clubs, societies and organizations that started as early as the 1920s, with some lasting into the 1950s and 1960s. Likewise, the discussion here will begin with the early histories of the television industry and the development of film as a subject in university curricula and follow the continuum of each through the decade of the 1950s and part of the 1960s.

Rise of Television

In 1949, scholar Ray A. Monfort wrote, “The dates of the events and discoveries that brought television into being began sixty-five years ago—neither more or less.”¹ Monfort was talking about “the concept of scanning, which was first arrived at by Paul Nipkow in 1884.”² Monfort’s very apt example of television’s scanning technology likened it with the card sections we enjoy at football games where fans in a designated seating section flip large cards to convey one or more messages. What was Nipkow scanning and how was it being scanned? Nipkow was mechanically scanning images via light shining through holes punched into a large, rotating metal disc. From that point, combinations of other technological and scientific discoveries, inventions and

¹ Ray A. Monfort, “A Brief History of Television for the Layman,” *Hollywood Quarterly* 4, No. 2 (Winter 1949): 197.

² *Ibid.*, 198.

innovations that had preceded and followed would lead to the earliest versions of telephotography, eventually developing into what we now call television. These innovations included, among others, cathode rays (1878), the photoelectric effect (1888), the electrical reproduction of images (1907), the vacuum tube (1907), a combined mechanical/electrical pickup/receiving system (1923), the iconoscope (1923), an all-electric scanning system (1934) and finally, an experimental all electronic “plant” (1936).³ Who knew that the development of the basic, simple idea of flip card scanning would reach such an advanced technological stage that picture scanning could be shared electronically anywhere in the world in an instant?

In a 1923 *Scientific Monthly* article, Alfred H. Lloyd remarked, “Add broadcasting to that! The newspaper, the telephone, the phonograph, color photography and motion photography, the wireless and the radio even as we know these to-day, may soon seem insignificant beside what is coming.”⁴ Lloyd’s statement would not have been so surprising to the first cosmopolitan television-viewing audiences if written in the late 1940s or the early 1950s. However, the 1923 statement was an informed prophetic one as the concurrent development of telephotography progressed into television technology alongside the widespread growth and rise of motion pictures and motion picture theatres.

By 1928, television had progressed to the point of licensed experimental broadcasts in New York City by RCA-owned W2XBT and advanced over the next decade toward special public broadcasts of events such as sports, Broadway plays, the World’s Fair, opera, industrial presentations and appearances by political leaders such as President Franklin D. Roosevelt and King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. These

³ Ibid., 197-200.

⁴ Alfred H. Lloyd, “The Time of Day,” *The Scientific Monthly* 17, no. 6 (December 1923): 556.

broadcasts, mostly experimental, were offered in a variety of ways. Some were received in private corporate meetings or outdoor settings, while others were exhibited in movie theatres—evidence of an early alliance between Hollywood and broadcasting coordination. WNBT (now known as WNBC), aired the first commercially licensed and sponsored broadcast on July 1, 1941. The network was allowed to air 15 hours of programming each week.⁵

Just five months after the first commercially aired television broadcast, the attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent entrance of the United States into the WWII arena caused a national turn in attention toward the war effort, interrupting the path of broadcasting development as it had interrupted and redirected the course of motion picture entertainment. The development of widespread commercial broadcasting, which would eventually reach nearly every home across America, stalled for nearly a decade. After WWII, television-broadcasting entities speedily attained the goal of reaching nearly every household across the United States. The spread of television played a significant role in the post-war era as television stations were established first in large-city major markets and then trickled into the hinterlands, eventually reaching nearly everyone in the nation in a little over a decade.

Paramount TV

As the television industry was taking hold in major metropolitan areas during the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Hollywood antitrust battles began with the *United States vs. Paramount Pictures Corporation* lawsuit in 1938. The government continued trust-busting the eight major and three minor motion picture studios throughout the 1940s,

⁵ See the timeline in “Blazing the Television Trail,” in *The Science News-Letter* 43, no. 19 (May 8, 1943): 298-299.

resulting in the Consent Decree of 1948 that separated the three areas of the movie industry—production, distribution and exhibition. The FCC, the U.S. Justice Department and competitors continued antitrust lawsuits into the 1950s and beyond. Concurrent with trust-busting activities, the competitive threat of the television industry in taking a significant portion, or all, of the movie industry’s audience loomed in the years before and after the war.

In a fine example of how Hollywood attempted to control and utilize television for its own purposes from the 1940s until the early 1960s, Timothy R. White explains in his article, “Life after Divorce,”⁶ how Paramount Pictures Corporation diversified into television. Along with other assets retained after the settlement of the 1938 lawsuit, Paramount held on to the ownership of Los Angeles station KTLA and shares of stock worth \$10 million in DuMont Laboratories, a manufacturer of receivers and broadcasting equipment that also owned the DuMont Television Network (DTN) and television stations.⁷ DuMont may well have been a “fourth network” had Paramount not decided to liquidate the DTN.⁸ Paramount had attempted to purchase more television stations under the Paramount name, but the FCC considered the DuMont stations in the count and ruled that Paramount had reached its five-station ownership limit. Thereby, the FCC denied the applications by Paramount to obtain any additional broadcast television licenses.⁹

Paramount also saw opportunities early on for combining television and movie theatres and targeted companies for acquisition that were viewed as beneficial to its own interests in the areas of theatrical television and toll television technologies. However,

⁶ Timothy R. White, “Life after Divorce: The Corporate Strategy of the Paramount Pictures Corporation in the 1950s,” *Film History* 2, no. 2 (June/July 1988): 99-119.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

whether through trust-busting lawsuits that stopped Paramount from obtaining some companies or through the inability of Paramount to sell the technical systems of companies it did obtain, the paths of these technologies were doomed and Paramount began to turn to producing epic films. Paramount, like other movie companies, finally began selling off parts of their less valued film libraries (short subjects and cartoons) in the mid-1950s to companies that rented programming to television broadcasters. Paramount also began concentrating on producing programming for television.¹⁰

Drive-ins, Smell-O-Vision and 3-D Movies

As the example of Paramount entering into television proved an unsatisfactory solution in combating the threat of television, Hollywood studios adjusted accordingly to explore other possibilities in motion pictures to remain competitive. Television's small black and white screen was no match for the new, successful wide screen color epics or stereo sound that Hollywood offered, so, even though the movie mass audience was shrinking with every new sale of a television set, it did not disappear altogether. In addition to the wide screen epics, other innovative movie attractions included the outdoor drive-in movie theatres and movie-making novelties such as Smell-O-Vision and 3-D movies, two concepts introduced even earlier in movie-making history. Although drive-in movies were introduced as early as June 6, 1933, by Richard Hollingshead in Camden, New Jersey, the number of theatres did not peak until the late 1950s. Drive-ins became a popular choice of the growing number of baby-boomer parents (their children could fall asleep safely in the back seat of the car, thus saving the expense of a baby-sitter), as well as teens who were looking for a more private place to neck than in the back seats of the local movie theatre. Smell-O-Vision's only movie, *Scent of Mystery* (1960), produced by

¹⁰ Ibid., 114.

Mike Todd, Jr., and directed by Jack Kardiff, featured thirty scents but was a failure. The concept was revived later in 1981 when director John Waters brought back Odorama in his now cult feature film, *Polyester*. The 3-D movies had a fair amount of success, enjoying a burst of popularity between 1952 and 1955 as well as subsequent revivals in the early 1970s and early 1980s.¹¹ Now, in the computer age, technological advances have brought them back as a popular attraction in movie theatres again.

Color Television

After the movie industry counter-moved into epic films, stereo sound and 3-D in the 1950s, the television industry brought on another challenge. Film historian William Paul informs us that, “Color television is not a new idea in the history of television and the problem had been before the Federal Communications Commission as early as 1940.”¹² By 1949, in order to keep opposing developing color television technologies more compatible, government proposals required broadcasters to “meet two criteria: (1) [sic] that they operate in a six-megacycle channel, and (2) that the pictures could be received on existing black and white television.”¹³ The result was that, although programs were broadcast in color, black and white only sets were not excluded in receiving the images—they were able to receive the color images in black and white format. In order to receive a program in color, consumers would have to purchase a new color television set. Competing companies such as CBS, RCA and Color Television, Inc. (CTI), vied for technical dominance in the market for television receiver sets. RCA, an underdog at the time, fought against rulings on technical systems favoring CBS as far as

¹¹ William Paul, “The Aesthetics of Emergence,” *Film History* 5, no. 3, Film Technology and the Public (September 1993): 323.

¹² “‘Public Interest’ and the Market in Color Television Regulation,” *University of Chicago Law Review*, 18, no. 4, (Summer 1951): 802, JSTOR, <http://www.org/stable/1598016> (accessed February 22, 2009).

¹³ *Ibid.*

the Supreme Court. To the mass audience, however, RCA won the decade-long battle for dominance in television receiving sets, as their memorable marketing/advertising campaign introduced national color TV availability in 1961 with a jingle that is difficult to forget, “WOW! I got color TV! RCA Victor color TV! I know what I’ve been missing now! WOW! I got color TV! WOW!” Although there had been experimental color broadcasts as early as 1940 and limited color broadcasts throughout the 1950s, it was not until the early 1960s that color became widely available. Everyone wanted to switch from black and white to color television to watch the sweeping vistas that aired on *Bonanza* (1959-1973) and the wide variety of entertainment offered on *Walt Disney’s Wonderful World of Color* (1961-1969).¹⁴

The Movies on TV

Television programmers had been presenting many products produced by the motion picture industry for theatrical presentation, including newsreels, cartoons and B-movies. Viewers were not, however, used to seeing the best of Hollywood motion pictures on the small screen. Television viewers who were around to witness the national merging of the movie industry with television industry will remember the big event, NBC’s *Saturday Night at the Movies*, which premiered on September 23, 1961. The presentation that evening was the Twentieth Century Fox 1953 movie, *How to Marry a Millionaire* (Jean Negulesco, 1953), starring Marilyn Monroe, Lauren Bacall and Betty Grable. To the national mass audience, the idea that they could watch a major motion picture on television was very exciting—those who tuned in would not have to go out and

¹⁴ Disney television shows started in 1954 with *Disneyland*. Since then, Disney-produced programming has aired under several Disney-themed titles with various formats on all three networks, as well as cable and satellite channels. *Walt Disney’s Wonderful World of Color*, however, aired specifically between 1961 and 1969.

spend money to see a movie. Those that had already paid to see the movie in the theatre tuned in to see it again on NBC, while those limited in their movie-going activities, whether by monetary or family restrictions, tuned in as well, giving NBC a large enough ratings share every week to keep the series going until 1978.

Public Affairs and Documentaries

Television in the 1950s was not just a vehicle for advertiser-sponsored entertainment programming designed to attract viewers. The networks also had an obligation to present public affairs programming as well. Prior to television, newsreels and documentaries informed the public in movie theatres, museums, lectures and other venues. Television was a good development for educational, informational and documentary films because the medium needed programs to help fill the on-air hours. Stuart Alan Selby stated in 1963, “[T]he market for documentaries has increased many-fold with the growth of the television network public affairs shows. While few television documentaries have the depth and craftsmanship of the best of the documentaries of the thirties and forties, they are setting a trend in television programming which is returning the quality and poetry of the ‘classic’ documentary to the screen—and before a wider audience than it ever had before.”¹⁵

Politics on TV

Television even had an effect on politics. Although Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first president to appear on television, the broadcast had a limited audience and it was not until the 1950s that television began to have a significant impact upon politics. “With the rise of television, for example, government in general and the President in particular

¹⁵ Stuart Alan Selby, *The Study of Film as an Art Form in American Secondary Schools*, (Educat.D. diss., Columbia University, 1963), 208, ProQuest, <http://www.proquest.com lynx.lib.usm.edu> (publication number AAT6405689 (accessed January 25, 2009)).

have had to orient themselves to, and hence be constrained by, this medium.”¹⁶ New reports were reaching more people than ever before and the national audience became much more aware of what was going on in the political arena with an ever-increasing critical eye. Robert Ross and Graham L. Staines tell us, “About the time of President Eisenhower, policy itself and the presentation of policy became more tailored to the media. Presidents, that is, have tended to shy away from policies that would not look good on television.”¹⁷ The appealing television presence of John F. Kennedy in the 1960 presidential debate against Richard Nixon is a well-known turning point in the use of television for political campaigns. Today, politicians and their staffs are more aware than ever of the beneficial and/or detrimental effects that television coverage and the internet can have upon their careers.

From Educational Films to Educational Television

A 1975 issue of *Film News* states that Stuart Alan Selby concludes in *The Study of Film as an Art Form in American Secondary Schools*, that, “Television has displaced film as the most influential element in education.”¹⁸ Indeed, acknowledgement of the impact of television on children and educational outlets came way before Selby’s statement. The concern was that television would be a detrimental influence upon children. Victor D’Amico wrote in 1951, “With the increased production of visual materials by the commercial firms, many of whom are exploiting the child rather than interested in his creative welfare, and with the rise of television as an effective and indelible means of visual communication, the museum, along with other educational institutions, has a

¹⁶ Robert Ross and Graham L. Staines, “The Politics of Analyzing Social Problems,” *Social Problems* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1972): 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Film News* 32-35, (1975): 42, NY: Film News Co. by Educational Film Library Association, American Film Center, Published by Film News Co.

tremendous challenge and responsibility to meet.”¹⁹ However, recognition of the positive possibilities of utilizing television for education came quickly, much as utilizing film for education had come.

The Ford Foundation website claims that, “On April 14, 1952 the FCC set aside 242 channels (later increased to 258) for educational television, but emphasized that these would be available only until June 2, 1953.”²⁰ The Ford Foundation was instrumental in helping establish educational television in the United States in conjunction with, according to their report, “[t]hree national organizations—the American Council on Education, the Joint Committee on Educational Television and the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, as well as others.”²¹ The Joint Committee on Educational Television was actually the leader in this effort, with cooperation and input coming from the other two, as indicated by John A. Behnke:

The cooperation of educational groups of all kinds has been spearheaded by the Joint Committee on Educational Television. Its sponsoring organizations are: American Council on Education, Association for Education by Radio-Television, Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, National Association of Educational Broadcasters, National Association of State Universities, National Council of Chief State School Officers and National Education Association. This committee assists in engineering and legal problems, in the filing of applications, and in programming.²²

¹⁹ Victor D’Amico, “Creative Art for Children, Young People, Adults, Schools,” *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 19, no. 1, Creative Art for Children, Young People, Adults, Schools, The Department of Education, Museum of Modern Art, New York (Autumn 1951): 20, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4058253>.

²⁰ *Ford Foundation Activities in Noncommercial Broadcasting 1951-1976*, Ford Foundation, 7, eLibrary, <http://www.fordfound.org/elibrary/documents/0303/normal/low/0303norm-low.pdf> (accessed February 27, 2009).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

²² John A. Behnke, “Television Takes Education to the People,” *Science* 118, no. 3067, New Series (October 9, 1953): 3.

In addition, the Ford Foundation funded an ACE group with a two-year \$500,000 grant²³—“The National Citizens Committee for Educational Television was established to help civic groups organize their efforts and raise funds to build the stations.”²⁴

In a move that is similar to today’s online courses made available for college credit, universities also utilized television for instruction and awarded credit as early as 1952, for a psychology course taught by Mary Cover Jones through the extension division at the University of California, Berkeley.²⁵ Behnke reported that, by 1952, “some 15 telecast courses with credit were offered in the U.S.”²⁶ It is not clear if these televised courses were only for college credit or included high school credits as well.

Law scholar, John W. Macy, Jr., states, “The first noncommercial television station went on the air in May 1953, when KUHT, licensed to the University of Houston and the Houston Board of Education, became the pioneer.”²⁷ Experimental broadcasts that began on May 25 from KUHT, the first educational television station to go on the air, were meant for working out any technical difficulties. The official first airing came on June 8, as Geneva Collins reports, for the “formal dedication as the first educational television station in the country to go on the air. Dignitaries flown in from Washington were shoehorned into the cramped studio, carved out of what had been a theater for live shows in the University of Houston’s radio station.”²⁸ Collins went on to inform us that,

²³ “Ford Foundation Activities in Noncommercial Broadcasting, 1951-1976,” 5.

²⁴ Behnke, 3.

²⁵ Mary Cover Jones, "Harold E. Jones and Mary C. Jones, Partners in Longitudinal Studies," an oral history conducted 1981-1982 by Suzanne B. Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1983, Archives.org, http://www.archive.org/stream/haroldjonesmary00jonerich/haroldjonesmary00jonerich_djvu.txt (accessed February 27, 2009).

²⁶ Behnke, 3.

²⁷ John W. Macy, Jr., “Public Broadcasting: A Medium in Search of Solutions,” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 34, no. 3, Communications: Part 2 (Summer 1969): 638, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1190902> (accessed February 27, 2009).

²⁸ Geneva Collins, “Public Television got its kickstart 50 years ago,” *Current*, May 12, 2003,

“Frieda Hennock, the audacious and charismatic FCC commissioner who had persuaded her fellow commissioners to set aside more than 200 channels nationwide for educational television, was to make the opening address.”²⁹

Educational Television and Radio Center (ETRC)/National Educational Television and Radio Center (NETRC)/National Education Television (NET)

Chicago’s Educational Television and Radio Center (ETRC), also established in 1952 with a \$1.6 million grant by the Ford Foundation’s Fund for Adult Education, served “as a clearinghouse for program ideas and recorded programs.”³⁰ In this respect, the ETRC’s clearinghouse activities seemed to have had the same basic function as did the ACE AFI its early days. In addition to holding programs produced by the local educational stations across the country for distribution, the ETRC would also help finance productions that in turn would be made available to other noncommercial educational stations.³¹ With another \$3 million dollar grant from the Ford Foundation in 1953, the ETRC was moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan, and began network operations on May 16th, with “a program package of five hours a week, sent via mail to the four educational television stations then in operation.”³² In 1958, the ETRC became the National Educational Television and Radio Center (NETRC) and moved its headquarters to New York City. In 1963, the name changed yet again to National Education Television (NET) and the radio division and in-school television activities were terminated in order to concentrate further on educational television programming. Although educators were offering courses on television in limited geographical areas,

<http://www.current.org/history/hist0309houston.htm> 1 (accessed February 27, 2009).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Behnke, 3.

³¹ Behnke, 3.

³² “Ford Foundation Activities in Noncommercial Broadcasting 1951-1968.”

national development of the NET network would not occur until January 10, 1967, when “seventy independent, affiliated educational stations interconnected to show a live broadcast of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s State of the Union address.”³³ The NET did not start regularly broadcasting programs until November of 1967. The NET remained in existence until 1970, when funding needs became too great for the Ford Foundation resources, the experimental nature of the NET had proved itself viable as an ongoing entity, and some of its programming became controversial. The U.S. government was stepping in toward a changeover in the direction of educational television and had founded the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) in 1967. Part of the CPB, the Public Broadcast System (PBS) then became the dominant educational television system in America, offering some courses that count toward obtaining a general education diploma. The most successful and long-running PBS educational show, *Sesame Street*, starring Jim’s Henson’s Muppets, premiered on November 10, 1969.

The Art Film Movement, Film Schools and Foreign Films

In an interview conducted by Brian Frye, Jonas Mekas observed the growth of film studies in the U.S., which he credited to the independent film arena:

If you consider how many outlets there were in 1960-61, how many universities had film departments, you could count them on your two hands practically. But in 1970, when the American Film Institute published the first guide to the film courses offered by universities and colleges, there were about 23 or 24,000 different courses in cinema. Within one decade. Now, why did that happen? Because of the excitement about the independent cinema, I think.”³⁴

While Hollywood films and television were working through to a way to coexist and educational film was morphing over into educational television, there was a separate,

³³ “This Day in History, January 10, 1967,” History.com, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history.do?action=Article&id=2844> (accessed February 27, 2009).

³⁴ Jonas Mekas, “Interview with Jonas Mekas,” By Brian Frye, *Senses of Cinema*, June 2001, http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/17/mekas_interview.html (accessed December 30, 2008).

concurrent movement involving film and education in the form of the art film movement and those who usually align themselves with the intelligentsia. John E. Twomey notes that, “An important aspect of the growth of the art film has been its increasing appearance on American screens at the same time that television has been creating Hollywood’s greatest economic crisis.”³⁵

The art film movement, combined with efforts to make film studies more available in colleges and universities, took on a different tack than the route either Hollywood took to keep audiences in the theatres (such as the novel 3-D movies) or that educational film and television had taken.

Barbara Wilinsky points out that, “Although art theatres date back to the ‘little cinema’ movement of the 1920s, it is in the 1950s that the popularity of art film theatres came to the mass public’s attention in the United States.”³⁶ Art films were becoming institutionalized, as museums like MoMA and the San Francisco Museum of Art’s “Art in Cinema” group collected and screened the best of foreign, documentary and experimental films. Private organizations like Cinema 16 and the New American Cinema Group, which grew toward their prime peaks in the 1950s, also helped promote art films and maintained a good business with them as well.

Universities and colleges were also setting up film studies early on and the growth of university courses had been developing over the years, as had the growth of all other film factions. Twomey also informs us that, “Of the many factors that have contributed to the building of American audiences interested in art films, the establishment of film

³⁵ John E. Twomey, “Some Considerations on the Rise of the Art-Film Theater,” *The Quarterly of Film Radio and Television* 10, no. 3, (Spring 1956): 240.

³⁶ Barbara Wilinsky, ‘A Thinly Disguised Art Veneer Covering a Filthy Sex Picture’: Discourses on Art Houses in the 1950s,” *Film History* 8, no. 2, The 1950s and beyond (1996): 143.

libraries and the study of film appreciation in colleges and universities have been important.”³⁷

The first film courses in the U.S. appear to be those started by Jesse Laskey at Columbia University in the 1915-16 academic year. Not far behind the first film course at Columbia University, the world’s first film school, Russia’s State School of Cinematography opened on September 1, 1919, directed by Lev Kuleshov. The name of the State School of Cinematography later changed to the All-Union State Film Institute (VGIK). The VGIK trained directors, writers, cinematographers and designers. There were also two other early film schools set up for engineers working in the industry—the Kiev and the Leningrad Institutes for Cinema Engineers.³⁸

Scholar and Russian translator Jay Leyda writes that, in France, “one institution in particular had been founded with the needs of cinema specifically in mind—the Ecole technique de photographie et de cinematographie [*sic*] (ETPC).”³⁹ Founded by Paul Montel in 1925, the private school was closely associated with Louis Lumière and is now part of the French state educational system. Marcel L’Herbier later founded the first state-supported film school, the Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques, in 1943. Charles Boyer, who had acted in his first film for L’Herbier and subsequently was well known to American audiences for his roles in American films, informed the American public about the new film school France had established. “Subjects covered in the Institute's curriculum include production, direction, acting, film writing, sound and lighting techniques, special effects, costume design, keeping script, animation, the history

³⁷ Twomey, 241.

³⁸ Jay Leyda, “Advanced Training for Film Workers: Russia,” *Hollywood Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (April 1946): 281.

³⁹ Colin Crisp, *The Classic French Cinema 1930-1960*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 203.

and development of motion pictures and allied arts, and courses in the domain of general culture—the background indispensable to worthy film creation.”⁴⁰

Other early film courses and/or schools opening around the world included Italy’s Accademia Musicale di Saint Cecilia (1934) and the British Film Institute summer school (1935). The British Film Institute today supports film education with film school listings that are available across Great Britain. Scholar Astrid Söderbergh Widding informs us that, “In 1964, Rune Waldekranz became founding director of Sweden’s first film school, part of the Swedish Film Institute and established as a result of the film reform, a hothouse with the aim of fostering a new generation of directors. The film school thus was a vital part of the so-called new wave of Swedish cinema in the 1960s.”⁴¹

The School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California (USC) was the first to offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in film in the United States. USC informs us that, “The school was established in 1929 as a collaboration between the University of Southern California and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.”⁴² USC further claims that, “The school’s founding faculty included Douglas Fairbanks, D.W. Griffith, William C. DeMille, Ernst Lubitsch, Irving Thalberg, and Darryl Zanuck, among others.”⁴³ Although USC may have started classes in filmmaking in 1929, it is not clear exactly when USC instituted the Bachelor of Arts degree.

Other notable film programs in the United States were established across the country. The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) film department had formed

⁴⁰ Charles Boyer, “Advanced Training for Film Workers: France,” *Hollywood Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (April 1946): 324.

⁴¹ Astrid Söderbergh Widding, “Rune Waldekranz: Swedish Pioneering Film Historian,” *Screen* 47, no. 1, (2006): 113-117, <http://screen.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/47/1/113> (accessed February 28, 2009).

⁴² “USC School of Cinematic Arts, History,” University of Southern California, <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/history/> (accessed February 28, 2009).

⁴³ *Ibid.*

prior to the late 1940s, although the exact start date is unclear as well. Ernest D. Rose claims that in 1950 he “made the first live-action [Master’s] thesis film to be completed at UCLA,”⁴⁴ and “[t]he Motion Picture division was still in its formative stage at that time.” According to the Northwestern University Web site, NU, in Evanston, Illinois, began film instruction in the mid-1950s—“In 1956, instruction in film was added to the curriculum, under the direction of Jack C. Ellis.”⁴⁵ New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, founded in 1965, established film undergraduate and graduate studies programs that are among the top ten in the nation.

Writing in the same 1946 issue of *Hollywood Quarterly* as Charles Boyer had when he informed the public of the new French film school, Jay Leyda, quoted earlier, wrote a rather misinformed article on the state of film training in America, comparing it to the already twenty-five year old Russian policy of training both audiences and filmmakers alike. Leyda stated, “I have found no evidence that any connection or mutual responsibility exists between the film teachers and the film industry.”⁴⁶ Leyda also stated, “But apparently the American film industry has always felt so confident of its world leadership that it has been content to let both its audience and its personnel learn in the school of hard knocks.”⁴⁷ Leyda’s knowledge of the existence of film studies at USC and Columbia, or of film industry leaders connected to university course instruction, such as D.W. Griffith and his colleagues, was nil, ignored or perhaps Leyda did not think there were adequate film schools. The ACE AFI was another subject of which Leyda was

⁴⁴ Ernest D. Rose, “University Thesis Films: A Step Across the Barrier,” *Quarterly of Film Radio and Television* 9, no. 4 (Summer 1955): 335, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1209854>, (accessed February 28, 2009).

⁴⁵ Northwestern University Radio/Television/Film Academic and Course Files, 1946-1980 listings, 1, http://www.library.northwestern.edu/archives/findingaids/rtvf_acad.pdf. (accessed February 28, 2009).

⁴⁶ Leyda, 279.

⁴⁷ Leyda, 280.

uninformed. There *had* been an AFI started in 1934, and proposals *were* again made in 1946, not only by the ACE, but also by the MPPDA. However, the ACE AFI was not properly set up, supported or fully funded by any university or the government. Leyda also remarked, “If a university can push a respectable film magazine, perhaps the same university can pull out of our film people a film institute and related film literature.”⁴⁸ Leyda’s remark that an AFI should be pulled “out of our film people,” (perhaps meaning film professionals in Hollywood) by a university suggests a generalized mindset indicating a mistaken opinion of the power or influence that a university might have over the industry. However, Leyda’s attitude toward not having a national film institute reflects the conflicted indecisiveness and inaction on the part of Hollywood, the U.S. government and universities as to what entities or institutions should be responsible for the growing need for film instruction or a national film institute. Like the growth of television that started in large metropolitan areas and reached into the less populated areas of the country, the proliferation of university film studies would follow the same path. Unlike the nationwide saturation of television however, to this day some states still do not have a four-year film major to offer, thereby forcing students living in those states to leave their home state to pursue a bachelor’s degree in film studies.

Foreign Films in America and American Education

The support for art films in America seems to exist in a circular pattern running between the art film audience and film educators. Selby comments, “The film appreciation movement did not start solely through the efforts of educators operating in a neutral setting. Rather it began in an atmosphere of genuine public interest (albeit a censoristic one) and willingness to support school time devoted to a consideration of the

⁴⁸ Leyda, 286.

film.”⁴⁹ John E. Twomey identifies two reasons for the rise of art films in America. The first was, “J. Arthur Rank’s ability to have his prestige pictures distributed here and the screening of Italy’s *Open City* in New York and later throughout the country.”⁵⁰ Rank was successful in the post-war American distribution of a number of Great Britain’s films in the late 1940s. Some of these films included *Brief Encounter* (David Lean, 1945), *Great Expectations* (David Lean, 1946), *The Red Shoes* (Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1948) and *Oliver Twist* (David Lean, 1948). After the nationwide success of Roberto Rossellini’s *Open City* (1945), other Italian films also became popular. Some of these included Rossellini’s *Paisan* (1946), along with Vittorio De Sica’s *Shoe-Shine* (1946) and *The Bicycle Thief* (1948).

Another reason for the rise of art films in America was the number of professors teaching film studies in the growing number of film courses and film departments throughout the nation. These professors chose to include art films and foreign films in their curricula rather than, or in addition to, mainstream Hollywood entertainment films. The films of Federico Fellini (Italy) and Francois Truffaut (France) were rising in popularity in the art film movement through the increasing popularity of auteur film theory, which had originated from Alexandre Astruc’s “camera as pen” notion and was furthered by André Bazin and Truffaut in France in the 1950s. Andrew Sarris furthered the theory in the U.S starting in 1962. Truffaut’s promotion of auteur film theory in the 1950s was also beneficial for him as others applied this theory to Truffaut’s films as well as other filmmakers. Truffaut’s *The 400 Blows* (1959), *Jules and Jim* (1962), *Day for Night* (1973), *The Story of Adele H* (1975) and *The Man Who Loved Women* (1979) were

⁴⁹ Selby, 200.

⁵⁰ Twomey, 245-246.

widely attended, admired and studied by art house and college campus audiences.

Additionally, Fellini's *La Strada* (*The Road*, 1954), *Le Notti de Cabiria* (*The Nights of Cabiria*, 1957), *La Dolce Vita* (*The Sweet Life*, 1960), *8½* (1963), *Juliet of the Spirits* (1965), *Satyricon* (1969), *Roma* (1972) and *Amarcord* (1973) were favorites as well.

Rossellini, Fellini and Truffaut were not the only directors whose reputations rose from film studies or the art film movement. Jean-Luc Godard (France), Michelangelo Antonioni (Italy), Ingmar Bergman (Sweden), Alfred Hitchcock (Great Britain) and John Ford (United States) were (and still are) popular directors chosen for film studies in many departments.

Part of the popularity (and the problem) with some art films was that they pushed the limits of decency in language, violence, and sexual content, as well as exposing societal ills and other controversial issues of the day. European films have always had a different standard of acceptance on film content than American films and many of them gained a scandalous reputation. Wilinsky informs us that, "The cultural status of art films put them on the same level as theatre, painting and sculpture – media often afforded more leniency when the pushing boundaries of what is considered 'respectable'."⁵¹

Additionally, Wilinsky states, "The Supreme Court settled many questions of censorship when it made its first move to afford motion pictures the status of art protected under the first amendment."⁵² Film was on the way to institutionalization through its inclusion in museum collections as art and, with its newfound protection as art under the first amendment.

⁵¹ Wilinsky, 156.

⁵² Wilinsky, 155.

Selby has neatly summed up where 1950s film audience interests turned to during the post-war years with this 1963 statement:

The ‘mass’ movie audience has declined considerably over the past fifteen years, and the film industry is undergoing drastic changes which began ten years ago and will continue into the future. The era of regular and uncritical movie-going is dead. While these changes have brought economic pressures to the motion picture field, they offer promise to the intelligent movie-goer and film student for a more intellectually satisfying film future. For it is the intellectual bottom of the audience which has splintered, forcing the film industry to produce, to allow new independents to produce, and to import, better films for a more discriminating audience.⁵³

In the early half of the twentieth century, motion picture making was limited to Hollywood studios and to those on the fringes, such as educational, instructional, corporate and documentary filmmakers. The trust-busting of the movie studios, the rise in television, the art film movement and the developing curricula in film studies all helped to open up the motion-picture-making field a little wider in mid-century. Audiences of the first half of the century went out to see moving images; baby boomers grew up watching television in their homes. All, especially the baby boomer generation, were becoming more and more knowledgeable in understanding the intricacies of film language. The baby boomers and following generations would become even more knowledgeable about the process of film production.

Colin Young’s 1961 Proposal

Chapter II pointed out that the last mention found of a proposal for an American Film Institute was in 1946, which acquiesced into a renaming that redirected the purpose of the organization being formed, i.e., the AFI, to the American Audio-Visual Institute. As the nation was involved in adjusting to the post-war era and the film, television and educational industries worked to position and establish new forms of existence and

⁵³ Selby, 199.

cooperation, the idea of a national film institute was seemingly abandoned. Fifteen years passed before another call for an American film institute would appear in 1961, instigated by a 1960 symposium at Antioch College and Colin Young. Another five years would pass before anyone took any real action to begin forming the NEA AFI that would eventually materialize in 1967. What happened in those five years that spurred such a fast turnaround in attitude toward a national film institute?

First, there was the symposium at Antioch University in the summer of 1960. Here, educators, exhibitors and leaders in the independent and foreign film market discussed the problems of distribution and exhibition in America. In Winter 1960, *Film Quarterly* reported, “In the next issue we will present a report on steps being taken as a result of the recent Antioch Symposium, including plans for an American Film Institute and an association of art theaters.”⁵⁴ Appearing two issues later, in Summer 1961, was Colin Young’s proposal for an American Film Institute. Numerous participants from both the east and west coasts were involved in working on the new AFI, as well as three organizations. The problem of distribution was reported in the preface to Young’s proposal as “one reason why such an institution is necessary,”⁵⁵ along with a long list naming a total of over thirty people and three organizations who had been working on the formation of an AFI. On the east coast, individuals included Robert Hughes, the co-editor of *Cinema Journal*, Colin Young, “Richard Griffith, Amos Vogel, Arthur Mayer, Dorothy Oshlag, Dan Talbot, Jonas and Adolfas Mikas, James Card, George Stoney, Shirley Clarke, Helen Grayson, Cecile Starr, John Adams, Frances Flaherty, Gideon

⁵⁴ Preface to Philip Chamberlin, “Art Film and Its Audiences: I,” *Film Quarterly* 14, no. 2, (Winter 1960): 35.

⁵⁵ Preface to Colin Young, “An American Film Institute: A Proposal,” *Film Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (Summer 1961): 37.

Bachmann, Don Frankel, Thomas Brandon and Eric Barnouw.”⁵⁶ One east coast educational/professorial organization, the Society of Cinematologists, (now known as the SCMS and discussed in Chapter III) had members working on the project.

On the west coast, individuals included “Arthur Knight, Kenneth McGowan, Pauline Kael, Denis and Terry Sanders, John Cassavetes, Robert Greensfelder, Christopher Bishop, Henry Breitrose, James Kerans, Ernest Callenbach, Philip Chamberlin, Nick Cominos and Francis Inglis.”⁵⁷ Two west coast organizations, the Hollywood Museum Archives committee and the UCLA Theater Arts Department also had participatory members.

In his proposal, Young stated that, “The purpose of the institute would be to encourage and promote and in part assume a responsibility for a wider understanding of the full treasury of the cinema, and a use of its facilities for study. As such, its role would be *exclusively educational*”⁵⁸ (italics added). The proposed AFI was also to “attempt to work nationally, as well as regionally and locally, collaborating with existing organizations where there is a mutual concern and helping to establish facilities where none exist.”⁵⁹ Its activities came under the headings of “Archive, Catalogue (Information and Research), Education, Exhibition and Circulation, Publications, Production, and Festivals.”⁶⁰ The AFI was to form in three phases consisting of (1) chartering a constitution or charter for incorporation, (2) conducting preliminary affairs, funding efforts, and policymaking, and (3) hire a staff.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Colin Young, “An American Film Institute: A Proposal,” *Film Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (Summer 1961): 44.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

International Film Importers and Distributors Association (IFIDA)

Meanwhile, other organizations were growing and becoming a threat to Hollywood box office dominance. Hollywood paid attention to information provided by Colin Young—“The importers of foreign films, mostly located in New York, formed the International Film Importers and Distributors Association (IFIDA)”⁶¹ and that it “would be clearly in their interest to gather information about the independent art houses and organize them into some loose but mutually beneficial partnership.”⁶² However, the IFIDA, while perhaps a threat to Hollywood box office in metropolitan areas, was not properly materializing for independents in the non-metropolitan areas of the country. A lack of interest in the hinterlands resulted in an impediment to the national effectiveness of the IFIDA. The combined visionary threat of a potential AFI and a successful IFIDA may have spurred Hollywood into participatory maneuvering to head off the aspirations of these two organizations by becoming involved with the governmental formation of a national AFI. Even before the Lyndon B. Johnson administration enacted the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965 with intent to form an American Film Institute, the National Council on the Arts, with Hollywood insiders on the Film Committee, began working on its formation.

Chapter Conclusion

As we have seen in this chapter, the film industry and smaller film organizations turned to post-war era business, settling down and redefining the work ahead to be accomplished, while the television industry picked up where it left off and took moving pictures into the airwaves and into nearly every household in America. Film companies,

⁶¹ Ibid., 39.

⁶² Ibid.

like Paramount devised ways to make the television industry their own, with attempts to buy potential networks, but were separated or limited by the government in numerous trust busting lawsuits. The film industry sought other ways to keep paying audiences coming to the theatre, with widescreen epics, Smell-O-Vision, 3-D movies and drive-ins. They finally found a place for the melding of the two industries in the airing of movies on television and in producing programming for television.

Television had changed the national audience forever—as families cocooned in their own homes to watch together, they no longer looked to the film theaters for entertainment. Television had also provided an outlet for some documentarians and independent filmmakers who produced and directed children's programming, public affairs and such. Television even changed politicians' approaches to the mass audience, as the medium brought them into almost every home, where everyone scrutinized their good and bad qualities and their actions.

However, television was not the only threat to Hollywood dominance in entertainment. There was a growth in the cultural elite audience, brought on and enhanced by film studies in the universities, whose preferences leaned toward foreign and art films over Hollywood commercial entertainment. The popularity of foreign films had resulted in the formation of the IFIDA and a new set of plans for a national film institute.

The next AFI proposal, written by Colin Young in response to the symposium at Antioch College, planned to help pull together the art film system in distribution, preservation and other aspects which would be also be perceived as serious threat to Hollywood.

The Kennedy administration had also realized the importance of defining and

showcasing American culture and the move toward a national cultural organization. Eventually the NEA and NEH was realized after Kennedy's death by the Johnson administration in the mid-1960s. It was through the National Council on the Arts and the NEA that the new NEA AFI would be established, but not in the way that Colin Young and those in non-commercial filmmaking had envisioned.

As the NEA AFI was forming early in 1965 and throughout to 1967, most of the people who had been working since 1960 on its formation would not be included in the planning. Robert S. Birchard observed, "The late 1960s and early 1970s were a curious time for the movies. Interest in film among students was never so enthusiastic before or since—but the film industry itself was dying."⁶³ Hollywood insiders started moving in to form the new AFI.

Those who could remember the ACE AFI, those who were planning a new AFI before the establishment of the NEA AFI and those who were running film organizations that were beginning to have national impact on Hollywood audience, would be surprised, outraged and dismayed with the events that were about to happen in the formation of the NEA AFI. This will be covered in the next chapter.

⁶³ Robert S. Birchard, "Nitrate Machos vs. Nitrate Nellies," *The Moving Image* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 121.

CHAPTER V

THE NEA, THE AFI AND GEORGE STEVENS, JR., 1960-1979

A scheme for a national film institute was put forward by people with the good of the art in mind, but it lay around for a long time without anything happening. The actual American Film Institute with money in the bank arose only because the national government and big foundations (which are less distinguishable than you might imagine) decided it was a good thing, and the big film companies went along.

—Ernest Callenbach, “The Unloved One: Crisis at the American Film Institute,” *Film Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 43.

The decade of the 1960s was turbulent and transformative for the United States.

The decade started with the election of John F. Kennedy (JFK) in November of 1960 and the subsequent appointment of his brother, Robert Kennedy (RFK) as Attorney General. First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy began to remodel, restore and furnish the White House to her high definition of an appropriate place for a President to live and to receive foreign heads of state.

Significant events during the era prior to, during, and in the establishing years of the NEA AFI include the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, the Civil Rights movement, the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. There were also numerous Vietnam War protests, Women’s Liberation movement demonstrations, the moon landing, the killing of four students by the National Guard at Kent State and subsequent college demonstrations across the nation. The first half of the 1970s would continue the turmoil with the Republican Party break-in of Democrat headquarters at the Watergate Hotel, the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon on August 9, 1974, and finally, the ending of the Vietnam War on April 30, 1975, a date that marks the beginning of calmer times for the United States.

This intent of this chapter is to illustrate how, during the tumultuous era between 1960 and 1975, America's national cultural arts organizations, initiated by President Lyndon B. Johnson's (LBJ) "Great Society" policies, were formed. We will cover the establishment of, and personalities involved in, the National Council for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts and the NEA AFI. This chapter will also cover the background of the new AFI director, George Stevens, Jr., the battles he struggled with against numerous detractors and the numerous programs and accomplishments of the NEA AFI during Stevens, Jr.'s formative administration of the institute, which spanned the years from 1965 to 1980.

LBJ's "Great Society" and the Formation of the NEA, NEH and AFI

Despite the turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s, there were positive changes made and instituted by the federal government. The mid-1960s were crucial for the legal institutionalization and governmental financial support for social change, as well as the arts, as the LBJ administration carried out many of the goals that had been formulating during the Kennedy administration. LBJ's "Great Society" administration passed the Civil Rights Act on July 2, 1964, while also making major moves toward helping the impoverished with the "War on Poverty."

Particularly important to our examination here, the LBJ administration founded the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965 to support education, arts and culture. Scholar Donna M. Binkiewicz offers this description of the announcement that there would be a new AFI: "To the delight and surprise of much of the audience, Johnson added a dramatic flourish to the usual speeches and signatures by proposing to create prominent national institutions to showcase

American art, including a National Repertory Theater, National Opera Company, National Ballet Company, and an American Film Institute. (Only the AFI actually came to be a part of the NEA agenda.)”¹ Two years later, on June 5, 1967, the establishment of the American Film Institute was announced, with initial funding granted through the NEA umbrella.

Colin Young’s AFI proposal, discussed earlier in Chapter IV, had appeared in the Summer 1961 issue of *Film Quarterly*, just five or six months after the inauguration of JFK. However, shortly after Young’s proposal, there were filmmakers working on what would become important historical government-produced documentaries produced by the United States Information Agency (USIA) in conjunction with private television and film documentarians. One of these filmmakers, George Stevens, Jr., not affiliated with Young’s group, was working with the government on developing an AFI as early as 1965.

George Stevens, Jr.—A History Leading to the AFI Post

George Cooper Stevens, Jr., was born in Los Angeles on April 3, 1932, to a family with a long line of show business participation. Stevens, Jr., is the son of the well-known and legendary movie director, George Stevens, and his wife, Yvonne Shevlin Stevens (known by her acting name, Yvonne Howell), a daughter of vaudeville comedienne and silent film actor² Alice Howell. George Stevens and his son, George, Jr., were the son and grandson of actors Landers Stevens and Georgie Cooper Stevens,

¹ Donna M. Binkiewicz, *Federalizing the Muse: United States Arts Policy & the National Endowment for the Arts, 1965-1980*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 89.

² The present-day term “actor” is used throughout this chapter, rather than the former definitive word “actress,” which the author recognizes as being in common usage during earlier eras. The term “actor” to denote either a male or female actor came to rise after the women’s movement instigated pressure to change everyday language toward gender-neutral terms.

who also were the owners and proprietors of Ye Liberty Playhouse in Oakland, California. Georgie Cooper was the daughter of actor Georgia Woodthorpe, whose stage name was Georgie Woodthorpe.

George Stevens, Jr., was a teen when his parents divorced in 1947. Little information is available concerning the early years of Stevens, Jr.—the family has stayed out of the national celebrity gossip arena that plagues so many tinsel town celebrities today. However, there is some indication of the family values instilled upon the younger George Stevens, Jr. Father George Stevens joined the Army Signal Corps during WWII and was changed by the experience, so much so that it led him to “the belief that motion pictures had to be socially meaningful to be of value.”³ Additionally, “[t]he major carryover from his prewar oeuvre to his postwar films is the affection the director has for his central characters, emblematic of his humanism.”⁴ The elder Stevens’ concern for the outsider is reflected in some of his most famous films, for example, *A Place in the Sun* (Paramount, 1951), *Shane* (Paramount, 1953), *Giant* (Giant Productions, 1956) and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1959).⁵ There is evidence that this outlook has influenced the younger Stevens, who was well into his career by the 1960s. Stevens, Jr., has appeared to be as socially conscious in his choice of productions over the years as was his father. He has always remained within the respectable parameters of cooperation with government agendas. Scholar Richard Dyer McCann commented on the young Stevens, “Sons of executives, like Plato Skouras and Richard Zanuck, or sons

³ “Biography for George Stevens,” Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0828419/bio> (accessed April 27, 2009).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

of directors, like George Stevens, Jr., happen to be wise and decent and promising young men. But there is hardly a rebel among them.”⁶

Stevens, Jr., worked in television as a production assistant (*Dragnet*, 1952) while finishing college. Stevens, Jr., a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity while at Occidental College, graduated in 1953 and entered the Air Force. Starting in 1955, Stevens, Jr., began directing television episodes for *Peter Gunn* and *Philip Marlowe*. He also worked as a director on other television projects such as *People*, (1957), *The D.A.'s Man*, (Mark VII, Ltd., 1959) and *Pete Kelly's Blues* (Mark VII, Ltd., NBC, 1959). Switching back to movie work, Stevens, Jr., was an associate producer and location director for scenes on his father's production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* (George Stevens, 20th Century Fox, 1959). He later had the opportunity to direct two television episodes of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1960-1961).

George Stevens, Jr. and the USIA

The USIA, also known in foreign countries as the U.S. Information Service, was an agency formed in August of 1953 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower that lasted until 1999. The name was changed to the United States International Communication Agency in 1978, but was reinstated to its original moniker in 1982. The purpose of the USIA, as defined by its archival website, was to function as “[a]n independent foreign affairs agency supporting U.S. foreign policy and national interests abroad.”⁷ The “USIA conducts international educational and cultural exchanges, broadcasting, and information programs.”⁸ The USIA was intended to promote U.S. interests abroad, although some of

⁶ Richard Dyer MacCann, “Independence, with a Vengeance,” *Film Quarterly* 15, no. 4, Films from New York, (Summer 1962): 19.

⁷ United States Information Agency, <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/> (accessed April 19, 2009).

⁸ *Ibid.*

its works were later realized to be historically significant documents domestically.

Famed journalist and newsman Edward R. Murrow brought young Stevens, Jr., to work with the USIA as an executive director in the early 1960s, just as the United States was becoming involved with the Vietnam War. The USIA and Stevens, Jr., are responsible for producing three noteworthy Kennedy-era documentaries. These are *Jacqueline Kennedy's Asian Journey* (Leo Seltzer, 1962), *The Five Cities of June* (Bruce Herschenson, 1963) and the film eulogy of the late President, *John F. Kennedy: Years of Lightning, Day of Drums* (Bruce Herschenson, July, 1966). During his time with the USIA, Stevens, Jr., also worked as an associate producer on his father's production, *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (George Stevens Production/United Artists, 1965), after the first two Kennedy documentaries and prior to the last.

Stevens, Jr.'s, collective work record for the USIA has been heavily praised. McCann began with this statement, "Documentary film production in the U.S. Government had a new renaissance of activity and quality in the USIA during the five-year period 1962-67."⁹ McCann later went on to say, "Who should be credited with this burst of creative work? George Stevens, Jr., to be sure, and Edward R. Murrow, who hired him as executive director of the motion picture service."¹⁰ Murrow, who served as the USIA Director from 1961 through 1964, had a great influence upon the young Stevens, Jr., who named his first child, Michael Murrow Stevens, after the great journalist. Stevens, Jr., even received praise from President Lyndon B. Johnson in a letter to Roger Stevens concerning his upcoming post as the AFI director. Johnson wrote, "In five years of public service, George Stevens, Jr. gave a new vision and excellence to

⁹ MacCann, 24.

¹⁰ Ibid.

government filmmaking as director of the Motion Picture and Television Service at USIA. I am confident that he will provide distinguished leadership for this new venture.”¹¹ Speaking about Stevens, Jr., Gregory Peck stated at the AFI Press Luncheon announcing the new institute that, “Edward R. Murrow said that ‘the stamp of Stevens’ creative imagination and vigor has revolutionized the character and quality of motion pictures produced by the USIA.”¹²

The aforementioned USIA documentaries have a remote connection to the AFI through the work of George Stevens, Jr., helping to later qualify him as a person that could move in two arenas, film and politics—an important qualification for the role of an AFI director. In addition to working back and forth between the USIA film productions and external film productions such as those of his father, Stevens, Jr., was involved in the new National Council on the Arts and the formation of the AFI, even before President Johnson announced it as an institution to be established.

The NCA and the Formation of the NEA AFI

Prior to the formation of the NEA, the National Council on the Arts (NCA), according to its Web site, “was established through the National Arts and Cultural Development Act of 1964, a full year before the federal agency [the NEA] was created by Congressional legislation.”¹³ The number of persons seated on the NCA was set at twenty-four and was comprised of a variety of nationally recognizable, high caliber, cutting-edge artists. The NCA Web site states, “Its first members were appointed by

¹¹ President Lyndon B. Johnson to Roger Stevens, letter, May 24, 1967, 1-2. Located in the Nancy Hanks Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, NC.

¹² Gregory Peck, quoting Edward R. Murrow in an address to the press, “Statement by Gregory Peck, Acting Chairman, Board of Trustees, American Film Institute,” American Film Institute Press Luncheon, June 5, 1967, Washington, D.C., 7. Located in the Nancy Hanks Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, NC.

¹³ “About Us, History and Purpose,” National Council for the Arts Web site, http://www.arts.gov/about/NCA/About_NCA.html (accessed April 28, 2009).

President Lyndon Johnson and included noted artists such as Marian Anderson, Leonard Bernstein, Agnes de Mille, Richard Diebenkorn, Duke Ellington, Helen Hayes, Charlton Heston, Harper Lee, Gregory Peck, Sidney Poitier, Richard Rodgers, Rosalind Russell, David Smith, John Steinbeck, and Isaac Stern.”¹⁴ However, this listing fails to name accurately the twenty-four that served on the NCA starting in 1965 and includes many that joined the board in 1966, and one in 1972, as replacements for those rotating off the Council.¹⁵ Only seven on the previous list joined in 1965.¹⁶ Seventeen that were not named on the first Council included authors Ralph Ellison and Stanley Young, Rev. Gilbert Hartke, fashion designer Eleanor Lambert, actor Elizabeth Ashley, Otto Wittman, Anthony Bliss, news anchor David Brinkley, Warner Lawson, James Johnson Sweeney, Robert Burks, Albert-Bush Brown, René D’Harnoncourt, Ruth Carter Johnson, Oliver Smith, George Stevens, Jr., and architect Minoru Yamasake.

Of the original NCA members, three represented the motion picture field. They were Gregory Peck, Elizabeth Ashley and George Stevens, Jr. In 1966, Helen Hayes, Charlton Heston and Sidney Poitier joined the Council. The Film Advisory Board of the National Council on the Arts, were most likely served by the six motion picture representatives and were certainly instrumental in guiding the direction of the NEA with regard to the AFI.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Donna M. Binkiewicz, “Appendix 1, Members of the National Council on the Arts, 1965-1980,” *Federalizing the Muse*, University of North Carolina Web Site, http://www.uncpress.unc.edu/binkiewicz/appendix_1.htm (accessed April 28, 2009). Listings in this and following footnotes concerning this topic compiled by the author of this dissertation from the *Federalizing the Muse* Web site. Marian Anderson, Richard Diebenkorn, Helen Hayes, Charlton Heston, Harper Lee and Sidney Poitier were appointed to the NCA in 1966. Rosalind Russell was seated in 1972.

¹⁶ The seven in the listing that were appointed to the NCA in 1965 were Leonard Bernstein, Agnes de Mille, Gregory Peck, Richard Rogers, David Smith, John Steinbeck and Isaac Stern.

After recommendations by the NCA, the NEA was signed into law on September 26, 1965, with Roger Stevens¹⁷ appointed as its first Chairman. Developed even before the NEA was legally established, preliminary work formed the AFI through the newly formed National Council on the Arts. In a June 7, 1967, *Variety* article, Les Carpenter wrote:

...the National Council on the Arts, convinced of the growing need for such an organization, had recommended at its first meeting in April 1965 that a study be undertaken to determine existing problems and facilities, investigate the activities of other countries in the field, and outline the structure and functions of the proposed Institute. In February 1966, following intensive preliminary work by individual Council member and members of the film world, the National Endowment for the Arts contracted with Stanford Research Institute to conduct a major study. In October 1966, a Film Advisory Council was established, composed of Arts Council members and film resource people from all over the country; this Advisory Council worked with the Stanford Research team in the fact-gathering, the interpretation of research material, the presentation of final recommendations, and, in essence, the development of the Institute from a concept to the reality.¹⁸

Carpenter also wrote, “[Ninety-one thousand] dollars was given to the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) to advise the Endowment as to how an American Film Institute should be set up.”¹⁹ The Stanford research team produced a report that, summarily, had interviewed one hundred people, researched at least eighteen national film societies/institutes already in existence throughout the world and projected a budget of ten million dollars annually.²⁰

¹⁷ There is no close familial relation between Roger Stevens and George Stevens, Jr.

¹⁸ *National Endowment for the Arts and National Council on the Arts: Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1968*, 45.

¹⁹ Les Carpenter, “Institute Ducks Archives: Will aid those others operate.” *Variety*, June 7, 1967; Michael Straight, *Nancy Hanks: An Intimate Portrait, The Creation of a National Committee to the Arts*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988), 228. This information appears in both references.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

The AFI is Established

Some of the NCA council members were also on the first board of directors of the AFI—Gregory Peck was the first Board Chairman and George Stevens, Jr., was the first CEO/Director. Bosley Crowther, a *New York Times* critic noted, “...the 21-man board of trustees is heavily loaded with personalities from that area”²¹ (“that area” being defined as “Hollywood”). Vincent Canby, another *New York Times* critic, identified the Hollywood insiders the day before Crowther’s comment. The balance of the new trustees were Elizabeth Ashley (actor), Charles Benton, (educational film producer), Francis Ford Coppola (writer/director), Sherrill Corwin (National Association of Theatre Owners president), Rev. John Culkin (Fordham University Center for Communications director), Bruce Herschensohn (documentarian), Francis Keppel (former U.S. Commissioner of Education), Arthur Knight (film critic/historian), Richard Leacock (avant-garde filmmaker), Donald H. McGannon (Westinghouse Broadcasting), David Mallery (National Association of Independent Schools director of studies), Williams L. Pereira (an architect sitting on the NCA), Arnold Picker (Executive VP of United Artists), Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., (historian), George Seaton (director/producer), Dan Taradash (screenwriter), Jack Valenti (MPAA president), Richard F. Walsh (IATSE president) and movie director Fred Zinneman.²² Charlton Heston and Sidney Poitier, who joined the NCA in 1966, later became AFI trustees. Heston would later prove to become a very visible, vocal and active participant in AFI matters, as well as serving as the chair of the board of trustees. As indicated previously, the composition of the initial board was upsetting to critics of the new AFI. Of the twenty-one board members, fourteen (two-

²¹ Bosley Crowther, “Film Institute Outlook,” *New York Times*, 7 June 1967, Section L, 40. col. 2.

²² Vincent Canby, “Agency to Press Artistry,” *New York Times*, June 6, 1967, Section L, 54, col 1.

thirds) could be considered as directly connected to the Hollywood movie industry. To outsiders, this was a clear slant toward the commercial entertainment industry, even though the members were from a broad range of Hollywood sectors, representing directors, screenwriters, union personnel, theaters, actors and producers.

Initial and Subsequent Funding

The total budget for the AFI's first fiscal year, beginning July 1, 1967, and ending June 30, 1968, was \$2.6 million, well below the Stanford Report's projected annual operating budget of ten million dollars. The Ford Foundation provided an unrestricted \$1.3 million to the NEA for the establishment of the AFI, therefore freeing up actual NEA funds for other projects. Thus, the first half of the initial funding for the AFI was actually provided by channeling monies from the Ford Foundation through the NEA. The member companies (i.e., studios) of the Motion Picture Association of America contributed the second half of the budget, another \$1.3 million. The monies provided by the MPAA were intended to be one fourth of the Institute's initial three-year budget.²³ With the MPAA startup funds, the AFI Board of Trustees specifically allocated \$1,210,000 for conservation programs and \$500,000 to a "Short Film Fund."²⁴ Further, according to the NEA and NCA annual report, funding was provided through the MPAA donation by several major motion picture entities:

Subsequent to the establishment and initial activity of the Institute, 13 major corporations, impressed with the AFI operation and planning, each agreed to make available an additional \$400,000 per film for the production of new films under the Institute's management, thereby assisting in the development of new talent, with script approval being their only condition of funding.²⁵

²³ NEA and NCA Annual Report, 1968, 45.

²⁴ NEA and NCA Annual Report, 1968, 46.

²⁵ Ibid.

The AFI was heavily funded by Hollywood in the beginning and has received continued and significant support throughout its existence, some which were direct, like the MPAA grants and some, in rather peculiar ways. In 1974, the AFI was awarded what the institution admittedly called an “Unusual Donation”²⁶ that reveals one of many connections between Hollywood and the AFI. According to an AFI newsletter, a \$15,000 grant was awarded to the AFI from “Irwin Allen, Steven Broidy and Sherrill Corwin in recognition of the efforts of the 20th Century Fox marketing department for enhancing the potential of ‘The Poseidon Adventure.’”²⁷ At the time, the visual effects of *The Poseidon Adventure* (20th Century Fox, Ronald Neame & Irwin Allen, directors, 1972) were state of the art and very impressive—a feature that audiences wanted to see. The movie has stood on its own over the years as a technologically significant film for its time. *The Poseidon Adventure* would later be included in the *AFI’s 100 Thrills* listing, coming in at number 90 and the theme song from the movie, *The Morning After*, was included on the *AFI list of 100 Greatest Movie Songs*.

By the AFI’s tenth anniversary in 1977, the revenues and expenditures budget showed a monetary flow of approximately five million dollars a year. While the General fund showed a liability of \$478,561, restricted funds were valued at \$24,532 and the property fund held \$1,412,460.²⁸ Revenues were gained through NEA grants and contracts, private grants and contributions, events and fundraising, film exhibition and programming services, AFI membership, tuition, royalties and publication sales, donated goods and services and miscellaneous funds. Although the AFI had its money problems

²⁶ “Unusual Donation,” AFINEWS4 3, no. 4, (American Film Institute, September 1974): 2.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *The First Ten Years: The American Film Institute, 1967-1977*, 91. Patterned much like an annual report, this document reports on the AFI’s first decade.

throughout its establishing years and the first decade, it was not in great danger of collapse and would be here to stay.

There were so many programs established by the AFI at the beginning that it is no wonder that there was a perceived and real chaos in getting things done. The first ten years alone included film preservation efforts, the start up of the American Film Institute Catalog, the Film History Program, the founding of the AFI Conservatory (a.k.a the Center for Advanced Film Studies) and the Charles K. Feldman Library (later the Louis B. Mayer Library). Other programs for students and independent filmmakers included grants to independent filmmakers, the Directing Workshop for Women, film internships and the Community Film Workshop Council. Additional programs included National Education Services, the AFI Theater at the Kennedy Center, various publications, and special programs, such as the Life Achievement Award, National Film Day and *America at the Movies*, which the ten-year report described as “a feature length compilation of scenes from eighty-three American films, which illustrate how the American character has been portrayed on the screen.”²⁹ Some of these programs will be covered later in this chapter.

Controversies and Protests/External and Internal

Like the discordant and tumultuous decade during which it was established, the AFI was not to come into existence without controversy as it was forming and in its early years of existence. There was immediate grumbling from outsiders. Film critic Bosley Crowther reported, “The misgivings are that the 21 trustees may be too closely oriented to ‘Hollywood’ or too unknowing of the needs of *all* film interests to give the institute the

²⁹ Ibid., 82.

scope it should have, and that Mr. Stevens is too inexperienced and unfamiliar in all the realms of motion picture to function without prejudice on their behalf.”³⁰

The close association the AFI had with Hollywood players was an important concern for those in educational, documentary and avant-garde/experimental filmmaking. Organizations like the Society of Cinematologists (SoC), the University Film Producers Association (UFPA), the American Federation of Film Societies (AFFS), the American Film Education Association (AFEA), Harvard’s University Film Study Center (UFSC) and the New York Film Council (NYFC) were left out of the interplay. It is understandable why reactions of outrage and concern surfaced over the intentions of the newly formed AFI. Even Colin Young and the group that had been working with him on forming an AFI since 1961 were largely ignored in the selection of the board trustees. The reasons for the snub are unknown. However, it may be speculated that the slant of purpose and focus represented by the Young group, which came out of the Antioch College Symposium, was toward independent and foreign film distribution, as well as educational concerns. Had the board been heavily comprised of members of this group, the direction of the new AFI would have been very different indeed. The only member of Colin Young’s group, film critic/historian Arthur Knight, received an appointment to the new AFI board.

Film critic Kirk Bond wrote to the editor of *Variety* on July 12, 1967—“About the American Film Institute, the thing that stares us in the face is simply that the people responsible have from first to last ignored almost completely the entire American professional film world outside of Hollywood and those few people directly connected with Washington.” Bond’s letter further indicates that there were early protests over the

³⁰ Bosley Crowther, “A Hope For New Images,” *New York Times*, June 25, 1967, Sec. 2, 1, col. 9.

selection of the AFI trustees that have yet to be uncovered—“When professional film people protested at the narrow character of the composition of the board of trustees the Film Institute people went ahead and announced their plans as though the protesters did not exist.”

Callenbach's Vision for an AFI

Shortly after President Johnson announced the NCA's plans for an AFI, Ernest Callenbach, Editor of *Film Quarterly*, in the spring of 1966, drew educators' attention to the upcoming AFI. Callenbach declared, “Now, suddenly, the problem is to make sure that a film institute is formed which will really fulfill these needs; a film institute of some kind there will surely be, for one has appeared on the new National Council of the Arts, and a subcommittee is now at work studying what it ought to be, and how it ought to spend the half-million dollars which the Council has made available.”³¹ As a representative of the academic community in higher education, Callenbach expressed what educators needed in a film institute, as well as opinions of what the new AFI should and should not be. Callenbach warned that the institute, if located in Hollywood or New York, would probably be partial to powerful commercial film entities in those cities and that if located in Washington, D.C., it would be too far removed from film activities. Callenbach proposed that there be an office located on both the east and the west coasts. “What is needed is a film institute that can be *national*: that can meet the needs of east and west coasts, but also of the hinterland; that can look toward the time when film-making is as thoroughly spread over the country as printing now is, and when film activities have proliferated into our smaller cities everywhere.”³² Callenbach also warned

³¹ Ernest Callenbach, “Editor's Notebook,” *Film Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (Spring 1966): 1.

³² *Ibid.*, 2.

that, “A major hazard for any film institute is that it might be brought under the sway of the film industry,”³³ and that the board should be made up of representatives of many film factions that were not connected with Hollywood players and their allies.

Callenbach ended with the statement that an AFI “must not become a trade association or a ‘service organization’ to the industry.”³⁴

Although Callenbach was generating a kind of wish list for the AFI, not everything educators wished for would be accomplished. The AFI was in a phase of trial and error in setting up many programs that would take time to develop and accurately carry out. Callenbach would later join in with a number of others in his criticism of the AFI (discussed later in this chapter). Whether the AFI perceived the criticism as constructive or not, George Stevens, Jr., would repeatedly defend the AFI throughout his time as AFI director against a number of detractors.

The Women’s Movement and the AFI

Token Woman

The rights of minorities were not particularly important issues in the formation of the AFI. While those working in favor of civil rights issues were not an apparent threat to the AFI, the second-wave women’s movement of the late 1960s did indeed make a critical impact. Two days after the formation of the AFI was announced, *Variety* announced in a headline that reveals the sexism of the era, the appointment of “Elizabeth Ashley, Girl Trustee.”³⁵ In addition, Bosley Crowther failed to acknowledge a woman on the “21-man board.”³⁶ Many people questioned Ashley’s appointment, wondering why

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 3.

³⁵ Robert J. Langley, “Elizabeth Ashley, Girl Trustee,” *Variety*, June 7, 1967, page number unavailable.

³⁶ Bosley Crowther, “Film Institute Outlook,” *New York Times*, June 7, 1967, Section L, 40. col. 2.

she had been chosen. A popular Broadway actor and Tony Award winner in the early 1960s, Ashley was not a girl—she was a grown woman and married to actor George Peppard at the time. One possibility suggested was that perhaps Ashley’s selection had something to do with the fact that she was often a guest at the White House and considered a favorite of the Johnsons.³⁷

The Directing Workshop for Women

The Directing Workshop for Women was a major accomplishment that the AFI reluctantly agreed to in 1974, four years after protests and requests from activist women began in 1971. This was only a small part of the struggle for women to gain adequate access to the grants and programs that the AFI offered and other rights to filmmaking positions as well. AFI response was slow and apathetic and the resulting Director’s Workshop for Women was even threatened with extinction in later years.

Like most institutions in the late 1960s, the AFI was a very male-oriented establishment. Kay Loveland, an AFI assistant and “right hand” to George Stevens, Jr., reported that, initially, “women weren’t even allowed in the seminars.”³⁸ Additionally, the Institute granted few opportunities to aspiring women filmmakers until pressure from women’s movement activists became too strong to ignore.

The first indication of women demanding equal opportunity from AFI programs appeared as a small blurb in *Variety* on Wednesday, December 16, 1970, reporting that the day before:

A panel of 10 women, representing Women for Equality in Media, met with American Film Institute to discuss a list of 12 demands group presented AFI that ought to end what WFFM [*sic*] called sex discrimination practiced by the

³⁷ Robert J. Landry, “Elizabeth Ashley, Girl Trustee,” *Variety*, 7 June 1967, no page number available.

³⁸ Kay Loveland to the author, written notes from telephone interview with the author, no date recorded.

partially federal-funded institution.

Institute's director George Stevens Jr., agreed to the panel discussion a "starting point for solving these problems and insuring more female participation in the Institute and in the process, strengthening it."

Demands included one that 51% of all grants, scholarships, internships or other awards distributed by the Institute be given to women; that such grants and other be given to non-white women in proportion to the population and that a permanent board of five women be established to review and combat discrimination and stereotyping of women in the film industry.³⁹

It was difficult for women to gain respect for their causes in the late 1960s. The news blurb announcing the women's panel suspiciously looks as if their acronym was blundered intentionally. The article referred to them as the WFFM instead of the WFEM—the "E" for Equality was changed to an "F." The WFEM, led by its president, Francine Schoenholtz Parker, the director and co-producer of *F.T.A.* (1972), the controversial anti-Vietnam documentary featuring Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland, would pressure the AFI for four years before their demands were met. The WFEM picketed the AFI in August of 1971. Some of the known pickets, according to Kay Loveland, were Marcia Greenwald, Judy Reidel (*F.T.A.* post-production supervisor), Estelle Changas (writer for *Film Quarterly*, *Film Comment* and the *Los Angeles Times* "Calendar" section) and Susan Martin (editor/producer).

At this writing, the names of other members are unknown. However, an anonymous source on Salon.com describes that contentious first meeting with the AFI:

Forty years ago, I helped form "Women for Equality in Media" in LA. We faithfully monitored all TV and radio shows for sexism and produced a show for KPFK titled History of Women and Media.

Another project was to get the AFI (American Film Institute) to create a Center for Women in Media (and to admit more women to their program). I and five other women were chosen to meet before their Board to present our case. Among the 30 at the table were Charlton Heston, Gregory Peck, George Kennedy, and George Stevens Jr., and President Johnson's film censor man.

I was the only non-media woman, but a teacher and teacher Organizer, and

³⁹ "Women Ask 51% Of Institute Grants," *Variety*, December 16, 1970, 4.

was very sensitive to being politely listened to and "TABLED". The women friends presented their brilliant credentials.

When they had finished, Mr. Stevens, the Chairman, said, "We are so pleased to have heard your statements and you can be sure when the next vacancy occurs on this board we will definitely consider a woman."

I was so angry, I really lost it. I pounded the table and replied, "WE DON'T WANT A TOKEN WOMAN (like Shirley MacLaine). We are a majority in this country and have been since its inception and we want a Center for Women in Film."

Then Gregory Peck said, "But we need qualified women..." Then all the media women hit the ceiling. Had they even listened? We met with them several times later and then began the first "Women in Film" festival on our own.⁴⁰

Although occasional grants for filmmaking funds were awarded to women filmmakers from the beginning, no woman received an AFI internship until 1974, four years after the initial WFEM meeting and seven years after the AFI's formation. Educational filmmaker Jan Smith (later known as Jan Haag), a 1954 graduate of Reed College, became the first female intern at the AFI in January 1974 and was subsequently hired as an AFI office assistant, replacing Kaye Loveland. Shortly thereafter, the Director's Workshop for Women (DWW) was summarily "dumped"⁴¹ into Haag's lap when no one else at the AFI thought it was worthy of their attention.

Dr. Mathilde Krim, the wife of Arthur Krim, the Chairman of United Artists, has been credited with starting the DWW. Her role was as an important founding financier. With \$35,000 from Dr. Krim, arranged through the Rockefeller Foundation to start the program, the DWW was established and continued with a grant from the RF of \$100,000 in the second year. The Markle Foundation would award another grant of \$150,000 to the

⁴⁰ "back290s," blog comment in response to "Angry White Women," on Salon.com blog, http://www.letters.salon.com/mwt/broadsheet/2008/06/16/women_voters/view/index10.html?show=all (accessed June 17, 2008 and August 26, 2009). Minor grammatical and spelling mistakes, which were numerous, have been corrected by the author of this dissertation for ease of reading. This blog could not have been written by Francine Parker, who died on November 8, 2007. Attempts at contacting this blogger through the Salon.com administrators have been unsuccessful.

⁴¹ Jan Haag, e-mail message to author, March 15, 2005, 1:44 pm.

DWW in the third year, at the urging of future AFI Director Jean Firstenberg, who was then working at Markle.⁴²

Jan Haag actually did the day-to-day, long and hard legwork to bring the DWW to fruition and keep it going. By 1979, Haag had also become the supervisor of the AFI Independent Filmmaker Program and the AFI Internship Program. There was apparent animosity over credit for the formation of the DWW. Haag, the DWW's first Director has stated that Firstenberg "tried to steal all credit for the dww [*sic*] and in as far as possible erase my memory."⁴³

Out of sixty candidates considered by committee for participation in the newly formed DWW, nineteen high-profile women were chosen.⁴⁴ The Directors Workshop for Women suffered quite a bit of criticism in the early years. Several charges of unfairness were leveled at the program. One was the failure to publicize the workshop as an open competition for participation—recipients were chosen by committee instead of being chosen through a more egalitarian application process. Another charge was that there was an elitist favoritism toward already high-profile and mostly well-funded women. A

⁴² Lee D. Mitgang, *Big Bird and beyond: the new media and the Markle Foundation*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 137.

⁴³ Jan Haag, e-mail message to author, March 15, 2005, 1:44 pm.

⁴⁴ The nineteen women participating in the first DWW workshop are listed below. Names and other information provided were compiled by the author from: 1) Jan Haag, "Dream of the Marble Bridge: The Founding of The Directing Workshop For Women of The American Film Institute—A History," Jan Haag Web site, <http://janhaag.com/ESTheDWW.html>, and; 2) Mary Murphy, "AFI Women: A Camera Is Not Enough," *Los Angeles Times*, CALENDAR, October 27, 1974, 1, col. 4. In alphabetical order, participants were: 1) poet/writer Maya Angelou; 2-3) directors Karen Arthur and Juleen Compton (Later the DWW program excluded feature directors like these from eligibility.); 4-9) actors Ellen Burstyn (Academy Award nominee and winner), Lee Grant (Emmy winner and Academy Award nominee); Margot Kidder (long before her *Superman* fame); Kathleen Nolan (Emmy winner, first VP and subsequently first woman President of SAG); Susan Oliver (also an award winning pilot, who, upon her untimely death, bequeathed funding for the DWW) and actor Nancy Walker; 10) Neesa Hyams (VP and casting director for Columbia Pictures); 11) television writer/director and Emmy winner Joanna Lee; 12) producer Lynn Littman; 13) editor-producer, Susan Martin; 14) script supervisor Marjorie Mullen; 15) Giovanna Nigro, stage manager for television's *Match Game*; 16) writer Gail Parent; 17) producer Julia Phillips (later a DWW funder and author); 18) editor Marion Rothman and; 19) comedienne Lily Tomlin (who never did a tape but later directed a feature).

third criticism was that none of the forty-eight women who were members of the Director's Guild of America (DGA) were chosen. A final criticism was that individual projects were severely underfunded. All this culminated in articles featured in the *Los Angeles Times*⁴⁵ and in a December 1977 issue of *Ms. Magazine*.⁴⁶ While the AFI now chooses women to participate in the workshop who are not well-known to the general public, some names that are arguably considered high profile and privileged can still be found on the list. For example, rocker Frank Zappa's daughter, Moon Unit Zappa, best known for the 1982 pop song, *Valley Girl*, recorded with her father when she was fourteen, attended the DWW. Ms. Zappa is listed by the Internet Movie Database as the director of the film short *Ugly*, in production in 2003 although her own website does not mention it at all.⁴⁷

Women who attended the DWW have proven their worth. Many have successful careers in major film and television productions, as well as receiving nominations and/or winning numerous awards. For example, Dyan Cannon, one of the first of the DWW attendees, received an Academy Award nomination for her project, *Number One* (1976). Producer Lynn Littman won an Oscar in 1977 for her Best Documentary Short, *Number Our Days* (1976)⁴⁸ and in 1988, Matia Karrell received a nomination for an Oscar for her short, live action film, *Cadillac Dreams* (1988). The AFI DWW continues to provide an opportunity for getting women into the director's chair and the AFI continues to keep

⁴⁵ Murphy, *Ibid*.

⁴⁶ Marjorie Rosen, "From the Folks Who Are Taking over Hollywood," *Ms. Magazine* 6, no. 6 (December 1977): 50+.

⁴⁷ Moon Zappa Web site, <http://www.moonzappa.com/index.html> (accessed April 30, 2009).

⁴⁸ Gary Arnold, "'30s Musicals Series," *The Washington Post*, March 31, 1977, Style, Film Notes, Sec. D, 11.

women in the running for the AFI Independent Filmmaker's Award grants, which were, in the beginning, solely distributed to men.

The Palace Revolt

Shortly after the WFEM protests and panel discussions, trouble that had been previously brewing in the Educational division erupted. Internal protests were plaguing the Institute, with a central controversy reported in the February 17, 1971, edition of *Variety*, which dubbed the events as a “palace revolt”⁴⁹ The *Variety* article reported, “A series of firings and resignations had all but eliminated the Institute’s research and critical studies faculty.”⁵⁰ George Stevens, Jr., was put on the defensive in what would be a long and ongoing controversy over Education Services (not specifically related to the Conservatory—that would always be on the AFI agenda) that would last into the 1980s and the next AFI administration. *Variety* also reported, “American Film Institute George Stevens Jr. [*sic*] denied the allegation of AFI ex-staffers that programs of film restoration, film education, archives, critical studies and historical research were at a virtual standstill, due to funds being concentrated in film production.”⁵¹

One of the actions of the AFI administration was to fire Jim Kitses (head of Critical Studies), the Critical Studies research staff and Richard Thompson (Research Department Head). This action met with opposition in the AFI staff. Among those who resigned in protest over the firing were Ronald Sutton (Education Director), Kaye Loveland (assistant to production head Toni Vellani), and Michael Barlow (AFI film programmer).⁵² Even those who stayed were problematic to AFI’s internal atmosphere.

⁴⁹ “Root ‘N’ Shoot at Institute: Stevens Denies Exitees’ Claims,” *Variety*, February 17, 1971, 7, col. 3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 7, 24.

“[Thirty-five] staff members signed a petition to ‘express our solidarity with those recently fired from AFI, those who have resigned in protest, and the research fellows who have lost their department.’”⁵³

The actions of the staff were to no avail and only seemed to determine the resolve of the administration. At a board meeting following the firings and resignations, “The 24 members of the board and several subcommittees heard the dissident staff members at length and, according to Stevens and a few board members polled, the board was unanimous in support of Stevens and the present program and emphasis.”⁵⁴ Adding to the trouble, the board added two new members—Warner Bros. board chairman Ted Ashley and Deane Johnson, a lawyer, for a service period of six years each. Many felt these two new trustees, perceived as “‘Establishment figures,” only added to overabundance of this type already employed at the institute.⁵⁵

In addition to the firings, the debate continued and questions arose over funding concerning “the two-year \$800,000 grant recently awarded the American Film Institute by the Ford Foundation.”⁵⁶ The argument here was whether the Ford grants were to be used only for the Center for Advanced Film Study or shared with Education Services. The AFI took the stance that the funds were only for the Center, which was “contradicted by McNeil Lowry of Ford, who says that *the grant was based on center which included the education, research and critical studies faculty members who were recently fired*”⁵⁷ (italics added). Whether the funds were withdrawn or not, is not clear in follow-up news

⁵³ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁶ “Stevens-Ford Dispute,” *Variety*, (April 7, 1971), 5, col. 4.

⁵⁷ “Stevens-Ford Dispute,” *Variety*, (April 7, 1971), 5, col. 4.

articles. It is likely that the funds were retained, however, they were in danger of being pulled from the institute.

The next month, from March 23-25 1971, the Society for Cinema Studies (SCS) met in Montreal, Canada, at the National Film Board facilities. Two motions were passed at this meeting, one to “censure the director of the American Film Institute”⁵⁸ and another to “draft and circulate a proposed statement to the membership”⁵⁹ that was later approved and mailed to the AFI trustees and officers as well as scholarly publications.

Ernest Callenbach continued the argument with an article criticizing the AFI in the 1971 Summer issue of *Film Quarterly*.⁶⁰ Callenbach addressed issues concerning independent filmmaker support, distribution, the Center for Advanced Film Study, regionalism, research and publications, education and control and administration. Callenbach also offered suggestions on how to resolve some of the issues.

The letter from the SCS that had been written as a response after the March Montreal meeting appeared in the Autumn 1971 issue of *Cinema Journal*. It made four requests. The first was to review and clarify AFI policies and priorities and make a statement to the public that would hold management accountable. The second demanded consideration of “the capabilities of the present management to implement these goals.”⁶¹ The third request was for an annual publication of financial accounting and the fourth was to “[m]ake certain that the scholarly, critical and educational film community is

⁵⁸ “Annual Meeting,” *Cinema Journal* 11, no. 1, (Autumn 1971): 1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Ernest Callenbach, “The Unloved One: Crisis at the American Film Institute,” *Film Quarterly* 24, no. 4, (Summer 1971): 42-54.

⁶¹ “An Open Letter to the Board of Trustees of the American Film Institute,” *Cinema Journal* 11, no. 1 (Autumn 1971): 72.

adequately represented on the Board of Trustees, and provide some mechanism by which the members of that community can help choose who will represent them.”⁶²

Stevens, Jr., replied to Callenbach’s article in the Winter 1972 *Film Quarterly* with a rebuttal that ably defended the AFI’s activities, refuting Callenbach’s “factual errors and misrepresentations.”⁶³ The AFI adjusted to real problems that were pointed out, which included a new guidebook for employees and perhaps adjusting planning (where appropriate) that was already in formative stages, but for the most part did not veer from their normal course of planned actions. The critics did not veer from their criticism of the AFI either.

Despite Stevens, Jr.’s, defense of the AFI in 1971, the controversies over the AFI continued into January of 1973, when the “American film Institute was the prime target of a large and disgruntled segment of the some 225 filmmakers and educators who attended the third annual N.Y. Film Council Seminar...at the Ford Foundation Building.”⁶⁴ Complaints about the AFI included lack of proper funding for film production grants, distribution problems, unfair distribution deals with filmmakers, high tuition, lack of living stipends and misspending of the annual AFI budget.⁶⁵ One well-known filmmaker received press coverage for her participation. “Shirley Clarke, an indie filmmaker, seemed to reflect majority view of the audience when she asked Vellani what distinguishes the AFI from film departments at universities across the country. Vellani

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ George Stevens, Jr., “About the American Film Institute,” *Film Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (Winter, 1971-1972): 36-44.

⁶⁴ “AFI Prime Target Of Large, Disgruntled Segment of N.Y. Film Council Seminar Group,” *Variety*, January 30, 1973, 1, col. 2.

⁶⁵ Ibid. Also see, “Fire When Ready at Institute: N.Y. Delegates Prove Critical,” *Variety*, January 31, 1973, 5, col. 3.

replied that the query could not be adequately answered in a brief period, but invited her to AFI headquarters in D.C. to see for herself.”⁶⁶

Another sequence of opposition followed— this time it was an important new opposition, which would later change the rather somewhat arrogant attitude of the AFI toward its old detractors, the educational and independent film communities. According to reporter Gregg Kilday, in a December 7, 1975 *Los Angeles Times* “Calendar” article,⁶⁷ this attitude lasted only as long as NEA Chair Roger Stevens was in power. Clashes with the NEA’s next chair, Nancy Hanks, appointed by President Richard M. Nixon, concerned her reigning in of NEA AFI budget allocations and were a new problem that became a major controversy for the AFI. Kilday informs us that:

[W]hen Nancy Hanks took over the NEA [in 1969], the AFI became a truant son who must be taught how to behave.

Hanks instituted structural changes at the NEA, creating a Public Media Program to oversee all film activities, including those of the AFI. Stevens rankled under the new controls. ‘In our view, it duplicated our own board’s function to too great an extent in terms of detail,’ he explains. The Public Media Program further tightened the screws by separating the archives and independent filmmaker programs from the AFI’s general budget and reassigning them the status of NEA contracts to be administered by the AFI.⁶⁸

In Hanks’ biography (mentioned in the first chapter), Michael Straight explains in further detail the “relentless political pressure”⁶⁹ brought upon Hanks and her office by the AFI. Straight also explains that it was only a matter of time before President Lyndon B. Johnson’s structural set-up of the AFI would lead to inevitable confrontations between the institute, educators and others; Straight indicates this set-up—“that the government

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Gregg Kilday, “AFI—The Battles Give Way to Détente,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 7, 1975, CALENDAR, 1-5.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 5.

⁶⁹ Michael Straight, *Nancy Hanks: An Intimate Portrait* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988), 227. Straight was Deputy Chairman of the NEA from 1969 to 1978 and worked closely with Nancy Hanks.

would impose its chosen instrument upon the industry, the educational establishment, and the young filmmakers—was misguided.”⁷⁰

Kilday continues to inform us that the power struggle between the NEA and the AFI became so intense that the AFI sought to split from the NEA in order to become a private institution that would enjoy federal funding of two-thirds of its budget. In hearings before Congress, the AFI sought to convince legislators to allow the institute to split from the NEA and become a private agency. The AFI also wanted the Congress to fund two-thirds of its budget.⁷¹ Although the AFI had its supporters, like poet/filmmaker Maya Angelou and director Terrance Malick,⁷² opponents opinions were too strong. Most took a stance similar to that of the Association of Independent and Video Film-Makers president, Ed Lynch. Lynch pointed out that, ““Since its inception in ’67, the AFI had focused its energy and money on the Hollywood commercial film industry, failing to carry out its responsibility to the much larger and frankly much needier film community existing across the country.””⁷³ Other detractors included Harvard’s director of the University Film Study Center, Peter Feinstein, film critics Pauline Kael, Roger Ebert, Gary Arnold and Norman Mailer.⁷⁴ The AFI failed in its attempt to separate from NEA rule. Additionally, as Kilday points out, the AFI was no longer a sole entity of governmental support as its foreign counterparts were. New film organizations, some of which were covered in Chapter III, were competing for funding from the NEA. This situation resulted in a better cooperative effort toward the non-commercial film

⁷⁰ Ibid., 227.

⁷¹ Gregg Kilday, “AFI—The Battles Give Way to Détente,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 7, 1975, CALENDAR, 1.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 1-2.

community by the AFI.⁷⁵ However, the anti-Hollywood community would still keep a watchful eye on the institute for years to come and the AFI was subject to criticism into the 1980s and beyond, which will be covered in the next chapter.

In defense of the AFI, charges such as Lynch's—that the institute did not help the film community outside of Hollywood—either lacked or ignored opposing information. The AFI had established the Community Film Workshop Council in July of 1968 to help disadvantaged youth. Only working with limited funds in 1968 (\$50,000), by 1971 the AFI's Community Film Workshop Council had received a large \$675,000 grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity to continue training programs in film and TV for young people of minority groups and low-income areas in seven cities—New York, Chicago, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Whitesburg, Kentucky, Jackson, Mississippi and Washington, DC.⁷⁶ Although the vision was that there would be “a sweeping movement in filmmaking”⁷⁷ promising to “actively involve at least 100,000 young people”⁷⁸ by 1974, funds were limited and only a few received aid. There were just too many needy film communities requiring more funding aid than the AFI could possibly dole out. Today, many of the programs, started so long ago, are still in operation.

Selected Accomplishments and Programs

Starting a national film institute, even with specific goals in mind, is a formidable task, both logistically and ideally. Despite all the criticism the new NEA AFI and George Stevens, Jr., suffered, there were many positive accomplishments. The new AFI would

⁷⁵ Ibid, 2.

⁷⁶ “\$675,000 Is Granted For Training In Films,” *New York Times*, 14 January 1971, 44, col. 4.

⁷⁷ Cliff Frazer, “Community Film Workshop,” *Newsletter: Program in Ethnographic Film* 1, no. 2, (May 1970): 4, Temple University, http://astro.temple.edu/~ruby/wava/temple/Newsletter1970_1_2.pdf (accessed July 15, 2009).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

establish grants for individual filmmakers, found a conservatory to teach film, establish a library of film-related holdings, create a publishing house for works related to film, and promote and involve itself in film preservation. The AFI would also create a yearly Life Achievement Award to honor one person of distinction in the film industry, as well as set up screenings and festivals to celebrate significant American films and even important foreign films. Although the NEA AFI was created to promote and preserve American film, it surprisingly brought in foreign films of note, as did film organizations that had threatened Hollywood box offices before the AFI formed. As we will see later in this chapter, the study of foreign films was not excluded from AFI activities.

Independent Filmmakers Grants

Two days after the establishment of the AFI was announced, another announcement appeared as a small blurb, urging independent filmmakers to submit outlines for film projects to be developed with a yet to be defined film program.⁷⁹ The film program would eventually take on two forms in the early years—the Independent Filmmaker Grants program, which helps finance independent filmmakers’ projects, and the Center for Film Studies (discussed later in this section). Of the more successful early grantees, Barbara Kopple, who received \$10,000 from the AFI Independent Filmmakers Program in 1973 to help finance her documentary on a Kentucky coal miners’ strike, *Harlan County, U.S.A.*, won an Oscar for that film in 1976 for Best Documentary.⁸⁰

Screenings and Festivals

The AFI was quick to begin screenings and festivals, mostly in an effort to promote film preservation projects. Along with the screenings of selected film treasures

⁷⁹ “Proposals for Institute,” *Variety*, June 7, 1967, no page available.

⁸⁰ Gary Arnold, “‘30s Musicals Series,” *The Washington Post*, Style, Film Notes, Sec. D, March 31, 1977, 11.

from America's past, the AFI also sponsored and screened foreign films, some of which caused a great deal of controversy. In 1972, the AFI Theater at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., attempted to screen Cuban films banned the week before at another Washington theater, causing a ruckus in the nation's capital. The government stopped the screening and tried to seize the films and discover how they were acquired—there was concern over whether “the enemy,” i.e., Cuba, would be benefitting from the screening—against the provisions in the Trading with the Enemy Act.⁸¹ A year later, George Stevens, Jr., decided to withdraw the film *State of Siege* (1972), directed by Greek-born Costa-Gavras, from the inaugural AFI Film Festival at the Kennedy Center. The reaction was that almost one third of the scheduled films were withdrawn in protest by the filmmakers or their distributors.⁸² Although the AFI wanted to promote the screening of foreign films, this particular film was inappropriate for two reasons. First, the subject matter was highly controversial politically—a story about urban guerilla warfare and the kidnapping and death of U.S. agent Dan Mitrione, who was training foreign police in Uruguay to handle attacks by leftist Tupamaro urban guerillas. Second, it was deemed a tactless choice as the opening film for the Kennedy Center when considering the assassination of the late President Kennedy.⁸³ Although it had been almost a decade since the Kennedy assassination, the subject matter—assassination—was in direct conflict in hearts and minds as to its appropriateness for the opening of the AFI Festival that located in an arts center named after and honoring the late president. Even then, many individuals in Washington, DC, and across the nation were still reeling from the ramifications of that event as well as the Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert

⁸¹ *New York Times*, March 28, 1972, 50, col. 4.

⁸² *New York Times*, April 4, 1973, 34, col. 1.

⁸³ *New York Times*, April 6, 1973, 35, col. 1.

Kennedy assassinations. While bumps in the road like these plagued the AFI screenings in its early years, for the most part, AFI screenings and festivals now continue constantly without much controversy on both the east and west coast.

Center for Advanced Film Studies

The Center for Advanced Film Studies (CAFS—the AFI school about which Shirley Clarke posed the challenging question at the NY Film Council Seminar in 1971.), began in September of 1969, eventually growing into what is now known as the AFI Conservatory and which was once a location set for *The Loved One* (Filmways Pictures, 1965).⁸⁴ The Center was housed in Greystone, the estate name for what was also described as “the Doheny Mansion, a 55-room stone pile, donated by Beverly Hills.”⁸⁵ “In March of 1966 the City of Beverly Hills formed a Greystone Advisory Committee to study the possible uses for the house. After considering many alternatives, the committee recommended that the newly formed American Film Institute rent the mansion for \$1.00 a year in exchange for AFI paying for repairing the mansion. The American Film Institute leased Greystone from June 1969 to 1982.”⁸⁶

Some of the students attending the CAFS in the first few years received financial assistance through donations awarded to the AFI. For example, in 1971 alone, donations were received from the E. J. Noble Foundation (\$15,000),⁸⁷ the Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Academy (one-half of its yearly scholarship fund),⁸⁸ the J. Schlitz Brewing

⁸⁴ Steven V. Roberts, “Young Filmmakers Find Study Haven,” *New York Times*, September 30, 1969, Sec. L, 40, col. 1.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Katherine Timme, “The History of Greystone,” *Friends of Greystone Mansion and Park*, <http://www.greystonemansion.org/history.html> (accessed July 3, 2009).

⁸⁷ *New York Times*, August 12, 1969, 30, col. 4.

⁸⁸ *New York Times*, January 15, 1970, 41, col. 3.

Company (\$30,000 for two fellowships)⁸⁹ and the Motion Picture Pioneers (a two-year \$15,000 grant in memory of J. Cohn, late chair of Columbia).⁹⁰ The CAFS was also supported by an \$800,000 general matching grant from the Ford Foundation in 1971.⁹¹

The Center started with a small group of students—only fifteen “fellows” were appointed to the first two-year program. Caleb Deschanel, Jeremy Paul Kagan, David Lynch, Terrence Malick, Matthew Robbins, Paul Schrader, Frank Dandrige, Stanton Kaye and Kenneth Lubner are reported to be among the first and more successful fellows. While Lynch, Malick and Schrader are among the more well-known fellows, names like Frank Dandrige, Stanton Kaye and Kenneth Lubner, who were first fellows and featured in an early newspaper article about the Center,⁹² are not. Of the three, Dandrige shows participation as a writer in the most projects, yet there are none listed after 1989. Kaye shows only two projects in the early 1970s and Lubner, a theatre-based fellow who, while at the Center stated, “I really want to be a poet,”⁹³ has remained relatively true to his dreams. Although his IMDb shows only one screenplay for the *Tony Randall Show* entitled *Phantom of the Poconos* (1978),⁹⁴ Lubner’s website claims he is a writer, director and producer, listing four novels, six screenplays and seven poems.⁹⁵ The names of the six other “first fellows” remain undiscovered at this writing.

Students studying at AFI have been fortunate to learn from some of the best working professionals in the industry, whether American or foreign. Roberts reported

⁸⁹ *New York Times*, June 19, 1970, 25, col. 1; *New York Times*, 7 October 1970, 41, col. 2.

⁹⁰ *New York Times*, March 31, 1971, 32, col. 5.

⁹¹ *New York Times*, February 24, 1971, 35, col. 2.

⁹² Roberts, 40.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ “Ken Lubner,” Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm3372063/> (accessed April 30, 2009).

⁹⁵ “About Ken Lubner” Ken Lubner Web site, <http://www.kenlubner.com/about/about.html> (accessed April 30, 2009).

that Elia Kazan was among the first guest lecturers to appear at the CAFS.⁹⁶ The Filmmaker-in-Residence Program, started in 1972, brought in John Cassavetes, the first filmmaker named to the program. Ján Kadar, a Budapest-born director and Czechoslovakian ex-patriot who immigrated to the United States after World War II, also served as a Filmmaker-in-Residence in 1975. Kadar won an Academy Award in 1965 for Best Foreign-Language film, *The Shop on Main Street*, which was co-directed with Elmar Klos. (Another Czech filmmaker, Frantisek Daniel, also worked on staff at the AFI Center for Film Studies.)⁹⁷

The Charles K. Feldman/Louis B. Mayer Libraries

Along with the Center for Film Studies, the AFI established a library in 1969, first called the Charles K. Feldman Library and now known as the Louis B. Mayer Library. The library began a collection of books and other materials that concentrated on the subject of motion pictures. On February 19, 1969, the AFI announced an oral history program, funded by a grant of \$150,000 from the Louis B. Mayer Foundation.⁹⁸ The LBM Library now holds over 14,000 books, 100 periodicals, 5,000 unpublished scripts, 1,600 seminar transcripts, 40 oral transcripts, rare film journals and special collections holdings from Martin Scorsese, Charles K. Feldman, Robert Aldrich, Fritz Lang, Richard Levinson and William Link and reprints of drawings done by Sergei Eisenstein.⁹⁹

AFI Publishing

The AFI has become a prolific publisher of film-related materials that range from reference volumes to popular culture magazines and books documenting the experiences

⁹⁶ Roberts, 40.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ *New York Times*, February 19, 1969, 26, col. 5.

⁹⁹ "Louie B. Mayer Library," American Film Institute, <http://www.afi.com/about/library.aspx> (accessed August 27, 2009).

of those working in the film industry. The first publication of note was a particularly useful reference volume, the first *AFI Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States*.¹⁰⁰ Subsequent updates have followed and it is now an important reference material for libraries, researchers, and film archivists.

American Film, the popular culture magazine for cinema buffs, was introduced in 1975 and lasted until 1992, when it was purchased by *Entertainment Weekly* and publication ceased. During its run, a free subscription to *American Film* was offered to all AFI members.

The AFI has also published a guide to American film schools and colleges, the transcripts to seminars with filmmakers, interviews with Hollywood personalities and others working in the film industry, program books from awards ceremonies and many other film-related tomes, including compilations of academic papers and essays.

AFI Life Achievement Award

The AFI Board of Trustees established the AFI Life Achievement Award on February 23, 1973. Director John Ford was the first recipient. A total of thirty-seven recipients have received this award to date.¹⁰¹ Approximately 75 percent of the awards were presented to actors, with the balance going to directors. Women are under-represented as award winners, with only six recipients, as are African-Americans, with

¹⁰⁰ *AFI Catalog of Motion Pictures Produced in the United States*, (NY: R.R. Bowker, 1971).

¹⁰¹ According to the American Film Institute Web site, <http://www.afi.com/tvevents/laa/laalist.aspx> (accessed April 30, 2009), recipients are: John Ford (1973); James Cagney (1974); Orson Welles (1975); William Wyler (1976); Bette Davis (1977); Henry Fonda (1978); Alfred Hitchcock (1979); James Stewart (1980); Fred Astaire (1981); Frank Capra (1982); John Huston (1983); Lillian Gish (1984); Gene Kelly (1985); Billy Wilder (1986); Barbara Stanwyck (1987); Jack Lemmon (1988); Gregory Peck (1989); David Lean (1990); Kirk Douglas (1991); Sidney Poitier (1992); Elizabeth Taylor (1993); Jack Nicholson (1994); Steven Spielberg (1995); Clint Eastwood (1996); Martin Scorsese (1997); Robert Wise (1998); Dustin Hoffman (1999); Harrison Ford (2000); Barbara Streisand (2001); Tom Hanks (2002); Robert De Niro (2003); Meryl Streep (2004); George Lucas (2005); Sir Sean Connery (2006); Al Pacino (2007); Warren Beatty (2008) and ; Michael Douglas (2009).

only one recipient. The Life Achievement Award has been presented annually on television since its inception, first airing on CBS from 1973 to 1985, then rotating from NBC to ABC to CBS from 1987 until 2000. It was picked up by Fox Television in 2001 and was aired on the USA cable network between 2002 and 2008.¹⁰² The most recent award ceremony, for actor Michael Douglas in 2009, aired on TV Land PRIME.¹⁰³

Preservation Efforts

Early in film history, there was some forethought as to the significance of preserving film footage. Scholar Peter DeCherney, writing about preservation, stated, “Plans for an American national film collection had been proposed as early as the first Kinetoscope demonstrations. But suggestions from [*sic*] W.K.L. Dickson, Vachel Lindsay, and even Will Hays failed to produce such a collection.”¹⁰⁴ Although Will Hays of the MPAA was interested in preservation, those who were producing films for the entertainment industry actually had little interest in preservation. For various reasons, the studios and producers shelved numerous motion pictures and other film reels after their initial use and never distributed some films for screening at all. Iris Barry criticized the industry for this attitude as early as 1946. “For, though the producing companies all scrupulously preserve their negatives, since in their physical possession and through the copyright act the legal ownership of story rights is thus assured, nothing has ever been done by the industry itself to make it possible to *see* the screen classics of the past.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² “2009: Michael Douglas,” American Film Institute, <http://www.afi.com/tvevents/laa/laa09.aspx> (accessed August 27, 2009).

¹⁰³ “AFI Press release,” American Film Institute, <http://blog.afi.com/main/index.php/2009/07/18/afi-honors-michael-douglas-at-37th-afi-life-achievement-award-gala/> (accessed August 27, 2009).

¹⁰⁴ Peter Decherney, *Hollywood and the Culture Elite: How the Movies became American*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 2005), 153.

¹⁰⁵ Iris Barry, “Why Wait for Posterity?,” *Hollywood Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (January 1946): 131.

The argument for preservation was a large part of the original mission of the NEA AFI. George Stevens, Jr., personally and heavily influenced by Henri Langlois while at the 1963 Cannes Film Festival as to the importance of American film preservation, made this issue a priority during the formative years of the NEA AFI. Stevens, Jr., subsequently sought the help and advice of Richard Kahlenberg, whom he had met in the Foreign Service, making him a consultant on the preservation division of the new AFI. Kahlenberg had worked briefly on films with Stevens, Jr., while at the USIA, had studied at the University of London with Thorold Dickenson and obtained his Ph.D. from Northwestern University, writing his dissertation on the British Film Institute.¹⁰⁶

From its inception, the AFI has been credited with, or taken credit for, important work in the area of film conservation. In its early years, the preservation efforts at the Institute were rather admirable. However, efforts of others to preserve and archive film had long been established before the AFI was formed. After the AFI entered the field, controversy developed concerning the proper attribution for conservation work. Film scholar Anthony Slide noticed, “Because National Endowment for the Arts preservation funding is channeled through the American Film Institute rather than given directly to the archives active in the preservation field, the Institute is able to claim some credits for which it had no involvement.”¹⁰⁷ When donating to the Library of Congress a number of “pre-1948 Warner Bros. features and short subjects,”¹⁰⁸ United Artists made sure, contractually, that no credit was to go to the AFI.

Another archival controversy arose with AFI attempts to include the archiving of television programming in the preservation program starting in 1972. The NEA

¹⁰⁶ Anthony Slide, *Nitrate Won't Wait*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2000), 76.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 74.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 78.

discovered this attempt when an AFI deputy director for operations, Richard Carlton, requested the use of monies reserved for nitrate film restoration for archiving television programming instead. The resulting reaction from the NEA was negative and that there were already other archives for television. Although the AFI pursued this archival avenue further, initially, nothing really came of it other than the Television Archives Advisory Committee (TAAC) and that area of motion picture preservation remained and grew with other institutions.¹⁰⁹

The AFI, under the jurisdiction of the NEA, also follows recommendations of the Archives Advisory Committee on the granting of archival funds. Slide stated, “In the mid-1970s, the Institute was criticized by the Archives Advisory Committee, consisting of representatives from the Museum of Modern Art, the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House and the Library of Congress, for its insensitivity, its interference in internal affairs of other archives, and its appointment of non-archivists as archivists.”¹¹⁰

The AFI helped to expand the film collection at the Library of Congress. Slide wrote, “The founding of the American Film Institute in 1967 further enhanced the work of the Motion Picture Section in that the Library was charged with the storage and preservation of films gathered by the new organization. Further, in its early years, the Institute provided funding for much of the work of the Motion Picture Section.”¹¹¹

The AFI also helped to create a cooperative working relationship among those who were concerned about film preservation but were at odds with each other. Slide commented on the opposition between film preservationists with this, “A feeling of

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 82-85.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 81.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 43.

mutual suspicion developed between collectors and archivists. The situation changed somewhat with the establishment of the American Film Institute and the appointment of David Shepard as its acquisitions manager from 1969 to 1971.”¹¹² Shepard helped to bridge the gap of distrust. Yet, at times, the AFI overstepped its bounds when trying to preserve some film titles. In a dispute over D.W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation*, Slide tells us that, “Epoch filed a copyright infringement suit against the American Film Institute in 1973, and sent federal marshals, with a seizure warrant, to the Motion Picture Section of the Library of Congress.”¹¹³

The AFI budget for film preservation was ample and grew between 1968 and 1970, dipping in 1971 and then nearly doubling in 1972. The expenditures for those years were \$168, 592 (1968), \$339, 488 (1969), \$351, 056 (1970), \$285, 384 (1971) and \$488, 235 (1972).¹¹⁴ However, the following years found little growth and the trend toward preservation spiraled downward after 1972, shortly after David Shepard left. Anthony Slide has noted, “The number of films acquired by the Institute for the Library of Congress was bound to, and did, diminish, as the years went by. As of May 1971, the Institute had acquired 5,000 titles. A further 3,000 were added in 1972, and 1,500 in 1972. From that year onwards, the figures were never more than 1,000 a year: 500 in 1973; 1,000 in 1975; 337 in 1975-76; 800 in 1976-77; 700 in 1978-79; 617 in 1979-1980; and 719 in 1980-81.”¹¹⁵ Since the number of films being preserved was declining, Slide also notes that, “For reasons which are still unclear but which possibly indicate a worsening in the relationships between AFI and the National Endowment for the Arts, the

¹¹² Ibid., 45.

¹¹³ Ibid., 49.

¹¹⁴ Stevens, Jr., “About the American Film Institute,” 39.

¹¹⁵ Slide, Ibid, 80.

two organizations created the National Center for Film and Video Preservation in September 1983.”¹¹⁶ However, one could make the assumption here that this was an opportune time for the AFI to relieve itself graciously of some of the preservation responsibilities, as Jean Picker Firstenberg took the helm and began reorganization of the AFI. Although the AFI had started out with a strong sensibility in archiving and preservation in 1967, by the time George Stevens, Jr., resigned in 1983, the budget for this activity had dwindled and the program was weakened, especially when considering the thousands of reels of nitrate film that succumbed to deterioration because of the slow and expensive pace of restoration.

After turning over the AFI to Jean Picker Firstenberg, Stevens, Jr., remained active in AFI endeavors, as well as other projects in film and television. He has been the recipient of many Emmy awards, two Peabody awards, several Writer’s Guild of America awards and seven academy award nominations.¹¹⁷ Recently, President Barack Obama appointed George Stevens, Jr., along with Broadway Producer Margo Lion, as Co-Chairs for the Committee of the Humanities and Arts.

Chapter Conclusion

At the beginning of the 1960s, there were many film people, like the Colin Young group, who were attempting to organize an American film institute. It turned out that the

¹¹⁶ Slide, *Ibid*, 86.

¹¹⁷ Honors received by George Stevens, Jr., include seven Academy Award nominations for *The Five Cities of June* (1963), eleven Emmys for *The American Film Institute Salute to James Cagney* (1974), *The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of Performing Arts* (1983, 1985, 1988, 1993, 1995 productions), *The Murder of Mary Phagan* (1988), *The American Film Institute Salute to Gregory Peck* (1989), *George Stevens: D-Day to Berlin* (1994) and *Separate But Equal* (1991). Writer’s Guild of America honors include an award for *George Stevens: A Filmmaker’s Journey* (1984), as well as several for yearly productions of *The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of Performing Arts*. Two Peabody awards were received for *The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of Performing Arts*, most likely in 1962 for participation in *A Tour of the White House with Mrs. John F. Kennedy* and again in 1986 for *The Kennedy Center Honors: A Celebration of Performing Arts* (1986). Other honors received include an International Documentary Association Award for *George Stevens: A Filmmaker’s Journey* (1984) and a Humanitas Award for *Separate But Equal* (1991).

people interconnected with George Stevens, Jr., were the ones that actually had the timing, the political influence and governmental backing to plan and form such an institute, even amid the growing turmoil of the mid-to-late 1960s. We have followed the timeline to the development of a national AFI while also examining the background of Stevens, Jr., that made him the choice for its first director. We have also examined the committees and numerous people who formed the NCA, NEA and AFI, as well as the people and organizations that participated in the controversies that surrounded the new institute. Yet, the new NEA AFI achieved many accomplishments, some of which were selected for examination in this study.

The NEA AFI, unlike its predecessor, the ACE AFI, was characterized in a more negative manner at its inception than the institute started in the 1930s. While the ACE AFI and its basic goal of listing educational films in order to create a national clearinghouse was met with a positive outlook by many educators and then sadly fizzled because of insufficient funding, the NEA AFI met with immediate criticism shortly after the announcement that it would finally be created and backed by the government. The criticism set the arena of external and internal fighting between those connected with Hollywood who would defend NEA AFI actions and those who were Hollywood outsiders who felt their needs and wishes for an American film institute were ignored and not met. Only when the AFI was disallowed to break away from the NEA did the arguments begin to taper off, ever so slightly. The AFI, regarded as arrogant, backed off and started to cooperate more with the needs of the educational film community, in particular, and with other independents. It had been a long and arduous series of battles to define and establish the AFI and its programs.

By the end of the 1970s, George Stevens, Jr., was ready for a change. Gary Arnold reported in a June 8, 1979 *Washington Post* article that, “Stevens asked for the change in order to ‘work on long-range AFI programs, as well as engage in outside projects.’”¹¹⁸ However, Stevens, Jr., was not ready to part completely with the AFI. According to Aljean Hartmetz, in a June 9, 1979 *New York Times* article, Stevens, Jr., became, “at his own suggestion, unsalaried co-chairman of board.”¹¹⁹ Stevens, Jr., had been working on the AFI since 1965 and it had been nearly fifteen years of struggle, controversy and growth. Stevens, Jr., tolerated and survived many maligning remarks, such as this one by Tim Hunter: “The AFI was not an ideal situation in those days. It purported to offer a great deal of freedom, but the political reality of the place was very different: George Stevens, Jr. seemed to run it as a PR front to perpetuate his own reputation in Hollywood and Washington.”¹²⁰ However, Stevens, Jr., already had a good reputation in Washington when selected for the position of the AFI director.

The AFI as an institution also suffered much criticism. Nearly ten years after the AFI formed, Charlton Heston recognized the dichotomy of the early debates concerning the AFI. *The Economist* observed, “And the AFI has been in trouble all the way. As its chairman, Mr. Charlton Heston, the actor, said, ‘We are discerned by the professional film makers as too academic, by the academics as too Hollywood, by the underground film makers as too traditional, by the traditional as too esoteric.’”¹²¹ Film critic Bosley Crowther predicted the future of the AFI two days after the announcement of the new

¹¹⁸ Gary Arnold, “Stevens Takes New AFI Post,” *The Washington Post*, June 8, 1979, Style, Sec. B, 4.

¹¹⁹ Aljean Hartmetz, “Stevens Resigns as Director of American Film Institute; Refused to Wait,” *New York Times*, June 9, 1979, A20, col. 5.

¹²⁰ Tim Hunter, “An Interview with Tim Hunter,” By Gregg Rickman, *Film Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (Autumn 1993): 10.

¹²¹ “Museum-piece Movies,” *The Economist*, (January 17, 1976): 75.

institution appeared. “Needless to say, it will be closely watched, consulted, challenged and criticized by the diverse elements that make up our film culture. But it should profit by criticism—and it should grow.”¹²² Moreover, it grew immensely. Slide noted, “There can be no argument that the American Film Institute was created by a sincere group of men and women with high, almost visionary ideals.”¹²³ The decades of the 1960s and 1970s were decades filled with idealistic dreams. The 1980s loomed on the horizon. The board, unhappy with the resignation of the man who had led the way in establishing and settling the AFI into its programs, received help from him. Stevens, Jr., would aid in the selection of a new director for the AFI and to make sure the transition was a smooth one. On November 26, 1979, Charlton Heston and George Stevens, Jr., held a press conference at the AFI screening room in the Kennedy Center to announce the newly chosen director, Jean Picker Firstenberg.¹²⁴

In the next chapter, we will examine the AFI under the direction of Jean Firstenberg, who would remain at her post for nearly twenty-seven years, expanding the AFI into an even larger institution that would meet many of the goals set forth by the Stevens, Jr., administration, and add many new goals as well.

¹²² Bosley Crowther, “Film Institute Outlook,” *New York Times*, June 7, 1967, Sec. L, 40.

¹²³ Slide, 75.

¹²⁴ Gary Arnold, “New Chief at AFI; Firstenberg is Chosen,” *The Washington Post*, November 27, 1979, Style, Sec. B, 1.

CHAPTER VI

A NEW AND LASTING AFI DIRECTOR—JEAN FIRSTENBERG, 1980-2007

Do you think she woke up one morning and said, “I think I’ll go to law school today?”

—Professor Callahan (Victor Garber)
asking Emmett (Luke Wilson) about
Elle Woods (Reese Witherspoon)
in *Legally Blonde* (Robert Luketic, 2001)

The choice the AFI board made for the new director of the AFI, Jean Picker Firstenberg, was an opportune one for the future of the NEA AFI. Although the AFI was well established when Firstenberg came to its helm, she would prove, throughout her twenty-seven year management of the institute, to be an effective leader in guiding it through a number of significant programs and projects that would expand the AFI into a very large institution. This reflects a combination of her ability to lead the organization through this expansive growth while dealing with important liaisons in the government, the commercial film industry and with some non-commercial film organizations, although there has always been, and remains, a division of sorts between the AFI and non-commercial film interests.

This chapter will begin with a background history on Firstenberg and then cover yet another controversy over Educational Services early in Firstenberg’s administration—actually, a reshaping of the services, and follow with brief examinations of nearly twenty programs initiated under Firstenberg’s guidance. These programs consist of a mix of fundraising events, awards, promotional listings, honors, festivals, partnerships, new physical sites, and new directions in educational services. Following Firstenberg’s background history and the Educational Services controversy, there is a short section on the AFI Associates, then a three-part breakdown. First, we will examine the major

awards, move on to AFI projects and finish with AFI partnerships and new physical sites. Please note that, in some cases, some activities may not appear in the obviously prescribed area, as categories are imprecise because projects can fall into more than one area because of overlapping interests and/or functions. The chapter will conclude with the end of Firstenberg's career at the institute, as the third director of the NEA AFI, Bob Gazzale, assumed his new position.

Background History of Jean Picker Firstenberg

Although neither George Stevens, Jr., nor the AFI search committee recruited Jean Picker Firstenberg for the new director and CEO of the AFI, their selection of her for the position would prove to be a long-lasting move for the AFI. In a similar fashion to Elle Woods, the character referred to by Professor Callahan in the epigraph on the first page of this chapter, Firstenberg just seemed to wake up one day and, as reporter Louise Sweeney explained, "decided to become the director of the American Film Institute."¹ Firstenberg announced her intentions to her shocked family and friends and "began going after her goal."² Exactly why Firstenberg wanted this particular post so much is unknown, although for most anyone in the movie business, the director of the AFI is a one of the top pinnacle posts that one can attain. Sweeney also reported, "The Film Institute didn't contact her; she contacted it. For two months in a series of interviews she met with all the members of the selection committee and the board -- including Hollywood superstars like the chairman of the AFI board, Charlton Heston. Still, she was

¹ Louise Sweeney, "American Film Institute's Jean Firstenberg: From would-be sports announcer to president," *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 26, 1980, Christian Science Monitor, <http://www.csmonitor.com/1980/0626/062654.html> (accessed May 18, 2009).

² Ibid.

considered an underdog in a field that included 60 candidates. Up until the last minute she was really fighting for it.”³

Firstenberg came to the AFI with many accomplishments that made her right for the job. “At the time of Mrs. Firstenberg's appointment Stevens explained that the institute was looking for someone with experience in ‘three essential areas: a person who could relate to Washington and the political world, educators and independent filmmakers -- they're an important constituency -- and the film and TV industry.’”⁴

Firstenberg's relationship to the film and TV industry is closer than some might have thought, in the sense that she was “unknown” to the industry. She was part of a family involved in the movie industry starting in 1913. In contrast to the higher profile Stevens family, which was solidly entrenched in the Hollywood arena of directing and production of motion pictures, Firstenberg's family was involved in the other end of motion pictures—theatrical exhibition—and was not as high profile in celebrity or reputation. Few, if any, in Hollywood knew who she was.

Firstenberg's grandfather, David, “started with a nickelodeon in the Bronx and turned it into a chain of theaters in 1913 that eventually merged with Loew's Theaters.”⁵ Loew's had even once owned Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer before the Hollywood trust-busting lawsuits. Firstenberg's father, Eugene Picker, was an executive of Loew's Theaters during her childhood, and her uncle, Sidney Picker, worked as an associate producer in the movie industry. Firstenberg's older brother, David V. Picker, a Dartmouth College graduate, also became involved in the industry, eventually serving as president of

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ronald Sullivan, “Eugene Picker, 89; Originated Strategy for Releasing Films,” *New York Times*, Obituaries, October, 19, 1993, Section B, 10, Variety, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/19/obituaries/eugene-picker-89-originated-strategy-for-releasing-films.html> (accessed May 18, 2009).

Paramount Pictures, United Artists and Columbia Pictures. Firstenberg's husband, Paul, was vice-president for the Children's Television Workshop (1973-1983).

At the time of her appointment to the AFI, Firstenberg not only had familial connections to the film and television industries but also a good amount of impressive professional communications experience. Firstenberg was educated at the School of Public Relations and Communication at Boston University, graduating summa cum laude in 1958, hoping to become a sports anchor. However, her professional work path would lead her in a different direction that would prepare her for the three essential areas Stevens, Jr., mentioned. Her experience included working in the arenas of radio, politics, television, advertising, education, and philanthropy. Firstenberg served as the assistant to the president of WMGM-AM radio (New York), worked on the Democratic National Committee (1964), organized U.S. participation in the 1965 Moscow Film Festival, and worked for WRC-TV television (Washington, DC) as an assistant producer of public affairs programming. She also worked for J. Walter Thompson Advertising (1968-1972) and was a communications office director for Princeton University and a director of media projects for the Markle Foundation (1976-1980).⁶

Firstenberg assumed her post as the director and CEO of the AFI on January 1, 1980. One of Firstenberg's first responsibilities, which took her nine months to accomplish, was to relocate the AFI Conservatory from Greystone Mansion, where the lease had expired, to its present location at 2021 North Western Avenue in Los Angeles, on property the AFI purchased that was once known as the former Immaculate Heart College. Tucked away on a hill on North Western Avenue, near the corner of Franklin Avenue, the campus is compact, difficult to see from the street and easy to pass by

⁶ Sweeney, Ibid.

unnoticed if one has never been there before. Regarding the move, Firstenberg stated, “It was a very dramatic initial year. It was also a traumatic year because everyone loved Greystone, and all the fellows who went there said, ‘Oh, my God, we’re leaving this great place. What will the new place be like?’”⁷ Firstenberg answered the question in her statement, “It’s proven to be a wonderful environment. It’s a little bit like an oasis, symbolically. It’s a watering hole that nurtures you, and then it prepares you to go out into the rest of the world.”⁸ Firstenberg also managed to gain degree accreditation for the AFI Conservatory by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) in 1984 and the Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC-ACSCU) in 2002.

Educational Services Controversy

To begin with, it should be pointed out that when a new administration takes over, there is usually some type of reorganization and a concern for cost-cutting measures. Additionally, for this discussion, we must remember George Stevens, Jr.’s administration, which was plagued with controversy in 1971 over the Educational Services department cutbacks and firings, which resulted in the “palace revolt.” Like the previous administration, Firstenberg’s administration was fraught with controversy over the direction the AFI was taking on education.

In records from the Summer 1985 *Cinema Journal*, SCS president Bill Nichols informs us that, “In the summer of 1982, the administrators and trustees of the American Film Institute decided to appoint a trustee education committee to help shape the

⁷ Variety Staff, “AFI’s Departing Chief Looks Back,” *Variety*, June 6, 2007, Variety Web site, [http://www.variety.com/index.asp? layout=print_story&articleid=VR1117966388&categoryid=2592](http://www.variety.com/index.asp?layout=print_story&articleid=VR1117966388&categoryid=2592) (accessed June 29, 2009).

⁸ Ibid.

education program's priorities."⁹ Following that decision, Nichols reported that newly appointed Education Liaison Ann Martin took over and cuts were made, "catalyzed largely by financial problems and targeted at sectors the AFI saw as most expendable."¹⁰ The process took a year and resulted in actions that were not well received. "In midsummer [of 1983], The American Film Institute released a number of full-time employees, including the Directors of Public Services, Exhibition Services, and Education Services."¹¹

In SCS's *Cinemat Journal* (Summer 1983), editor E. Ann Kaplan expressed in her "Professional Notes" article, surprise and distress over the perceived dismantling of the AFI's Education Services, especially in light of the perceived AFI support of Educational Services during Firstenberg's first three years. Kaplan claimed, "educators and education have always been an expendable item on any list of priorities the AFI has."¹² Kaplan also compared the AFI Educational Services budget to that of the smaller budget of its counterpart at the British Film Institute, pointing out that "despite economic conditions considerably worse than those in the United States, the BFI has supported an effective and independent education program."¹³ She blamed the cuts on "close industry ties and financial dependence on a highly commercialized sector of society with vested interest," i.e., the AFI was too connected to Hollywood and dependent upon large financial contributions received from Hollywood players.

⁹ Bill Nichols, "Report on the American Film Institute Education Services," *Cinema Journal* 24, no. 4 (Summer, 1985): 59.

¹⁰ Bill Nichols, "Report from the President," *Cinema Journal* 23, no. 1 (Fall 1983): 5.

¹¹ Nichols, "Report from the President," 4.

¹² E. Ann Kaplan, "Professional Notes: E. Ann Kaplan," *Cinema Journal* 22, no. 4 (Summer 1983): 74.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Because of Kaplan's professional notes, the new president of the SCS, Bill Nichols, in an investigatory move, met in August of 1983 with Firstenberg to discuss the AFI's reorganization. Discussion on Kaplan's professional notes were published in the following issue of *Cinema Journal* (Autumn 1983), with replies by Nichols, SCS member Gerald Mast, BFI editor Edward Buscombe, and Firstenberg herself.

Gerald Mast supported Kaplan's ideas with his criticism of the treatment of the AFI Educational Services, stating, "This official termination is merely the final figure in a pattern that has remained consistent since the founding of the AFI."¹⁴

Edward Buscombe, an editor at the British Film Institute, who had been compelled to join in the debate because of the comparison of the AFI to the BFI, pointed out the main difference between the two, which is also representative of the AFI's difference with most other film institutes worldwide. Buscombe explained that, "A straight comparison between the AFI and the BFI could be misleading,"¹⁵ especially in context to other film organizations (and their work) in the field. Buscombe pointed out differences in "governmental involvement in the funding of cultural activity"¹⁶ and that British compensation should be taken into consideration since "university involvement in film studies is only a fraction of that in the U.S."¹⁷

Like her predecessor, who had been skilled in defending the first cutbacks in Educational Services in 1971, Firstenberg adeptly defended the AFI's position:

I would like to clarify The American Film Institute's position with regard to the recent *staff reductions* in Education Services. The American Film Institute

¹⁴ Gerald Mast, "The AFI and Film Education I: Gerald Mast Replies to E. Ann Kaplan's Editorial Statement on the Closing of the AFI Educational Film Services Program (*Cinema Journal*, Summer 1983)," *Cinema Journal* 23, no. 1 (Autumn, 1983): 57.

¹⁵ Edward Buscombe, "The BFI and Film Education: Edward Buscombe replies to E. Ann Kaplan's Editorial Statement," *Cinema Journal* 23, no. 1 (Fall 1983): 62.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

recognizes its obligation and responsibility to the education community, and we are as distressed as you are over the recent cutbacks in service. I wish to point out that the restructuring of various institute programs, Education Services among them, was a difficult decision necessitated by harsh economic realities and made with the intent to position those programs in such a way that they would be able to re-evaluate individual goals and perhaps design program activities of greater usefulness to their constituencies, during the brief time that they will be working with reduced manpower.¹⁸

After investigating the situation, Nichols wrote a reply in the Fall 1983 *Cinema Journal* and assuredly reported to the SCS, “There does exist, however, a willingness to rebuild an effective liaison with the academic community, which I believe we ought to test and support to our mutual advantage.”¹⁹ Nichols also reported that, “The AFI wishes to preserve selected projects.”²⁰ Those projects were identified as professional development workshops/seminars and information dissemination services (such as scholarly writings). Although the Conservatory was not in jeopardy—a new campus had just been purchased—other unidentified services certainly were.

As a result of Kaplan’s criticism and Bill Nichols subsequent investigation and white paper, AFI Education services, although on shaky ground in 1983, has been retained over the years. Unlike Stevens, Jr.’s administration, which was perceived as arrogant and defensive in the early administrative years, Firstenberg’s administration seemed more relaxed in the early administrative years. The difference was the era within which each worked. Stevens, Jr., was working in the midst of a very volatile decade where heavy criticism, picketing and protests were the norm. In the 1980s, the atmosphere was more relaxed and Firstenberg seemed to be an administrator who was willing to listen to and work with educators to retain and improve this division of the

¹⁸ Jean Picker Firstenberg, “The AFI and Film Education II: Jean Firstenberg Responds to E. Ann Kaplan’s Editorial Statement,” *Cinema Journal* 23, no. 1 (Fall 1983): 60.

¹⁹ Nichols, “Report from the President,” 5.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

AFI. Out of the AFI and the SCS deliberations, a series of committee meetings, phone surveys and discussions resulted in a plan for the institute. In 1985, a white paper was published in *Cinema Journal* on the role of the AFI in relation to education, which had been written by the AFI staff and trustees and “prepared by Education Advisory Committee member Bill Nichols.”²¹ This paper laid the groundwork for the AFI for the remainder of Firstenberg’s administration. While not all ideas suggested in the paper have come to fruition, many have, and the AFI, besides having specific services for education, remains an educator and promoter of American films. At present, in relation to education services, the “AFI trains the next generation of filmmakers at its world-renowned Conservatory, maintains America's film heritage through the *AFI Catalog of Feature Films* and explores new digital technologies in entertainment and education through the AFI Digital Content Lab and K-12 Screen Education Center.”²²

The following sections cover many, but not all, activities that have continued or been initiated during the Firstenberg administration from 1980 to 2007.

Selected AFI Accomplishments, 1980-2007

The AFI Associates—Helpful Volunteer Fundraisers

Although the AFI was generally successful with fundraising in the past, efforts in this arena were increased and expanded by Firstenberg and others, bringing in a larger budget for the institute to work with. In 1984, the AFI Associates, a volunteer organization, formed to function as a host for AFI film premieres and help with other fundraising efforts. The four main fundraisers held by the AFI Associates are The

²¹ Bill Nichols, “Report on the American Film Institute Education Services,” *Cinema Journal* 24, no. 4 (Summer 1985): 60.

²² “TV & Events, AFI Associates.” American Film Institute. <http://www.afi.com/tvevents/associates/default.aspx> (accessed June 27, 2009).

International Film Series, the Classic American Film Series, the Annual Premiere (of a new film) and the Platinum Circle Award Luncheon (discussed later in this chapter).

The AFI's International Film Series (IFS) joined with the Arclight Cinema Company to "establish a new theatre concept as the preferred venue for movie lovers and the presentation of film."²³ In addition to the International Film Series, there is also a Classic Film Series at the two Arclight Theatres, located in Hollywood and in Sherman Oaks, California. Both Arclight Theatres present an excellent selection of movies representing a monthly range of genres and themes. For example, the June 2009 presentations were "Misfits and Mysteries" movies at Arclight Hollywood and movies from the *AFI 100 Thrills* list at Arclight Sherman Oaks. For July 2009, "Glamour" was the theme at Arclight Hollywood and "Crime and Punishment" movies were the fare at Arclight Sherman Oaks.

The Annual Premiere is the premiere of a major motion picture selected especially for the AFI Associates fundraiser. *The River* (1984) was the first premiere hosted by the AFI Associates. More recent premieres include *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King* (2003), *Meet the Fockers* (December 16, 2004), *The New World* (2005), *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006) and *Leatherheads* (2007). The premieres are like most other Hollywood premieres, with appearances by the stars, producers, directors, crew and other Hollywood notables and are well attended.

²³ Kevin Mortesen, Chandler Hayes & Rachel Peller Hefron, "Arclight and AFI Launch Joint Programming Initiative: New Theatre Concept to Serve as Home for AFI International Film Series, AFI Fest 2002 Programming," *Arclight/AFI Press Release*, March 19, 2002, 1, American Film Institute, <http://www.afi.com/Docs/about/press/2002/arclight.pdf> (accessed June 25, 2009).

AFI Awards and Recipients

The AFI has recently and frequently been criticized as an organization that exists to give out awards. The criticism may exist in the notion that there is an overabundance of awards not only in the film industry, but also in popular media and culture in general. Every performing arts entertainment medium (such as film, television, music and stage performance) has more than one organization that honors the efforts of many talented participants in numerous categories—some pass out well-known major awards that are recognized nationally; others are known only in the smaller circle of local arenas. In the motion picture industry, there are not only the high-profile award organizations, such as the Academy Awards, television’s Emmy Award, guild awards (producers, directors, editors, cinematographers, writers, etc.) and major film festival awards, there are also awards passed out by many other non-film-industry organizations that recognizes a particular film that has significance particular to their own interests.

An example of a film that has received many awards and honors from a regional, special-interest organization is Kentucky director James D. “Dewey” Pope’s *Bataan: The Harrodsburg Tankers, A Time for Heroes...A Time for Courage*. The film received, among twelve awards, an Award of Merit from American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)²⁴ and an individual honor went to director Dewey Pope—the Historian’s Certificate of Achievement, received at a Kentucky National Guard Command Historian Awards program on June 24, 2008.²⁵

²⁴ “Two Kentucky Historical Society Projects Receive Awards,” *Kentucky Historical Society* (press release), June 3, 2009, Kentucky.gov, <http://migration.kentucky.gov/Newsroom/history/Two+Kentucky+Historical+Society+Projects+Receive+Awards.htm> (accessed October 21, 2009).

²⁵ *Kentucky Department of Military Affairs, Annual Report, State Fiscal Year, 1 July 2007-June 30, 2008*, 44, Kentucky.gov, <http://kynghistory.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/256EBE39-1E34-4BCF-8D847E1770D445F8/0/DMA2008AnnualReportPt1.pdf> (accessed October 21, 2009).

The AFI has gained a reputation as a prolific award giver that rivals only the Academy Award in the number and national scope of their awards. As we shall see later in this chapter, the array of awards presented by the AFI are at times confusing, perhaps because of similarity in award names or the morphing of an award into a different form or ceremony, as well as the various locations of awards ceremonies.

AFI awards and honors include, among others, the Life Achievement Awards (beginning in 1973), the Conservatory's AFI Honorary Degree (1989), the Franklin J. Schaffner Alumni Award (1991), the Platinum Circle Award (1997), the yearly AFI Almanac (consisting of ten Movies of the Year, ten Television Shows of the Year and the year's Moments of Significance [2001]) and the AFI Silver Legacy Award (2003).

AFI Life Achievement Award (1973). The AFI Life Achievement Award was the first award established by the AFI, during George Stevens, Jr.'s administration. Under Firstenberg's management, the award presentations continued and now have accumulated a long list of honorees (thirty-seven to date). The award ceremony was first broadcast on CBS from 1973 to 1985 and then on NBC, ABC and CBS on a rotating basis from 1985 to 2000. Fox picked up the ceremony in 2001 for one broadcast only and the ceremony finally has a found a steady spot in the USA Cable network lineup since 2002.²⁶ In 2002, the location for the award ceremony also changed—from its long-standing traditional location at the Beverly Hilton Hotel to the Kodak Theatre. Director John Ford was the first recipient in 1973. The latest recipient was Michael Douglas (2009).²⁷

²⁶ "The AFI Life Achievement Awards," American Film Institute, <http://www.afi.com/tvevents/laa/laalist.aspx> (accessed June 28, 2009).

²⁷ According to the AFI Web site, <http://www.afi.com/tvevents/laa/laalist.aspx>, recipients of the AFI Life Achievement Awards between the John Ford's first honor in 1973 and Michael Douglas's award in 2009 are: James Cagney (1974), Orson Welles (1975), William Wyler (1976), Bette Davis (1977), Henry Fonda, (1978), Alfred Hitchcock (1979), James Stewart (1980), Fred Astaire (1981), Frank Capra (1982), John Huston (1983), Lillian Gish (1984), Gene Kelly (1985), Billy Wilder (1986), Barbara Stanwyck (1987),

AFI Honorary Degree (1989). The AFI Conservatory began awarding honorary academic degrees in 1989,²⁸ five years after gaining its first degree accreditation. The AFI Honorary Degrees are bestowed upon recipients during commencement ceremonies. The AFI Board of Trustees selects the honorary degree recipients.

AFI Franklin J. Schaffner Alumni Award (1991). The Franklin J. Schaffner Alumni Award recognizes an outstanding alumni or alumna of the AFI Conservatory. The first award, given in 1991, went to the now well-known director David Lynch. Other recipients, in chronological order of receipt, are Edward Zwick (1992), Randa Haines (1993), Martin Brest (1994), Jon Avnet (1995), Carl Franklin (1996), John McTiernan (1997), Amy Heckerling (1998), Mimi Leder (1999), Terrence Malick (2000), Darren Aronofsky (2001), Todd Field (2002), John Dahl (2003), Patty Jenkins (2004), Paul Schrader (2005), Marshall Herskovitz (2006), Gary Winick (2007) and Mark Waters (2008). In addition to recognition of their outstanding alumnus by the AFI Conservatory, the AFI also publicizes the names of alumnus who have earned industry awards other than the AFI's own awards. The AFI also promotes the Conservatory as a place that regularly graduates students who become successful award-winning film professionals, whether it is an internal or external award.

Jack Lemmon (1988), Gregory Peck (1989), David Lean (1990), Kirk Douglas (1991), Sidney Poitier (1992), Elizabeth Taylor (1993), Jack Nicholson (1994), Steven Spielberg (1995), Clint Eastwood (1996), Martin Scorsese (1997), Robert Wise, (1998), Dustin Hoffman (1999), Harrison Ford (2000), Barbra Streisand (2001), Tom Hanks (2002), Robert De Niro (2003), Meryl Streep (2004), George Lucas (2005), Sir Sean Connery (2006), Al Pacino (2007), Warren Beatty (2008) and Mike Nichols (2009).

²⁸ Degree conferees include—along with a few others that remain undiscovered—Robert Altman, Michelangelo Antonioni, Steven Bochco, Richard Brandt, David Brown, Kevin Brownlow, Ken Burns, Marcy Carsey, Roger Corman, Robert A. Daly, Caleb Deschanel, Roger Ebert, Nora Ephron, Kay Fanin, Jean Picker Firstenberg, Horton Foote, Lee Grant, Ray Harryhausen, Norman Jewison, Chuck Jones, James Earl Jones, Quincy Jones, Charles Kuralt, Akira Kurosawa, Sherry Lansing, John Lasseter, Karl Malden, Daniel Petrie, Jr., Fred Pierce, Frank Pierson, Tom Pollock, Gena Rowlands, Richard Schickel, Thelma Schoonmaker, George Stevens, Jr., Howard Stringer, Jack Valenti, John Warnock, Haskell Wexler, John Williams, Robert Wise, Alfe Woodard and Paul Zaentz. List composed by the author from a variety of Internet and printed sources.

AFI Platinum Circle Award (1997). Beginning in 1997, “the Platinum Circle Award honors a family whose talent and artistic achievements have made an outstanding contribution to the entertainment community.”²⁹ The awards ceremony, hosted by the AFI Associates, serves as one of their fundraising events to “help further the mission of the American Film Institute.”³⁰ The luncheons at which the Platinum Circle Awards are given have been referred to as the “Family Values Luncheons”³¹ as early as 2003 and perhaps earlier—an influence of the George W. Bush presidential administration. The Walter Matthau family was the first recipient to be honored in 1997, followed by the Debbie Reynolds family (1998), the Henry Fonda family (1999), the Daniel Petrie family (2002), the Leo and Eileen Penn family (2006) and the Clifford Arquette family (2008). Most movie fans will recognize one or more members of the Matthau, Reynolds, Fonda, Arquette and Penn families. The Petrie family, comprised mostly of actors and a very well-known father and son director duo (Daniel Petrie and Daniel Petrie, Jr.), has so many members listed in the Internet Movie Database that it is difficult to ascertain how and if they are all members of the same family that was honored. The earliest Petrie listed is Walter Petrie, who appeared in the 1929 movie *The Battle of Paris*.³² Director Daniel Petrie and his wife, Dorothea, accepted the 2002 award on behalf of the Petrie family. The Petrie children, Daniel Petrie, Jr., Donald Petrie, June Petrie and Mary Petrie Lowen were included in the honor.

²⁹ “TV & Events, The AFI Associates,” American Film Institute, <http://www.afi.com/tvevents/associates/pc.aspx> (accessed May 18, 2009).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ *Daily Press* Staff, “Buy movie memorabilia , jazz it up and support a local film institute,” *Santa Monica Daily Press*, August 8, 2003, 6, <http://www.smdp.com/pdf/080803.pdf> (accessed June 28, 2009).

³² “Popular Results,” Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/find?s=all&q=petrie>, (accessed October 21, 2009). An imdb search was conducted by inputting the surname “Petrie” in the search box.

AFI 2000: The AFI Almanac, Movies of the Year, Television Programs of the Year, Moments of Significance and AFI Awards 2000 (2001). Awards granted by the AFI started the new millennium with a new set of awards that were more comprehensive in nature and another set of awards that would be patterned loosely on the Academy Awards structure. “On January 9, 2001, AFI announced the official selections of AFI 2000, a new annual program designed to recognize, preserve and honor excellence in the moving image during the 21st century. Selections include 10 AFI Movies of the Year and five AFI Moments of Significance.”³³ The name of the program was dubbed “The AFI Almanac.” The AFI Almanac, having grown to include television programming, is the AFI’s choices for the best movies, television and significant people and events of the year. The Movies of the Year (note the plural here, “Movies”) and Moments of Significance are chosen through a nominating committee and then a one-hundred person jury selection process, as is the singular award, Movie of the Year. Among the other AFI Awards presented are the AFI Actor of the Year (Male and Female), the AFI Featured Actor of the Year (Male and Female), as well as awards for Director, Screenwriter, Cinematographer, Editor, Production Designer, Digital Effects Artist and Composer. Notably, as if in competition with the AFI Movies of the Year Award, the Academy Awards, in 2009, has expanded the list of available nomination slots for Best Picture to ten.

The criteria for “The Moments of Significance” may include accomplishments of considerable merit; influences with either a positive or negative impression; trends, either new or reemerging; anniversaries or memorials of special note; and/or movements in new

³³ “TV & Events, AFI 2000,” *American Film Institute*, http://www.afi.com/Docs/about/press/2008/AFI_Awards_moments.pdf (accessed June 28, 2009).

technologies, education, preservation, government or other areas that impact the art film, television and digital media.”³⁴

AFI Projects, Events and Programs

AFI Publishing (1983)

In the same year as the Educational Services reorganization discussed earlier (1983), the AFI published *Filmmakers on Filmmaking: The American Film Institute Seminars on Motion Pictures and Television, Volume I*, edited by Joseph McBride, and also started working on the abandoned *AFI Catalog*. The return of the *AFI Catalog* was a welcome one for the SCS and those who needed and wanted such a reference. The AFI has continued to add to the catalog yearly since then and now has quite an extensive database, rivaled only by the Internet Movie Database and Box Office Mojo websites. Access to the *AFI Catalog* online is free for AFI members.

AFI FEST (1987)

AFI FEST, held in Santa Monica, California, in the fall of the year, is a presentation of “the year’s most significant films.”³⁵ “AFI FEST emerged in 1987 when the American Film Institute adopted FILMEX. Founded in 1971, FILMEX dramatically expanded the audience for alternative film events in Los Angeles and was, in the mid-1970s, the largest film event in the world.”³⁶

Participation in the AFI FEST qualifies feature and short films for possible Oscar nominations by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The AFI FEST holds

³⁴ “AFI News Release, December 28, 2008,” *American Film Institute*, http://www.afi.com/Docs/about/press/2008/AFIAwards_moments.pdf (accessed June 27, 2009).

³⁵ “AFI FEST, Festival Information,” *American Film Institute*, <http://www.afi.com/onscreen/afifest/2009/att-gi.aspx> (accessed June 26, 2009).

³⁶ “AFI FEST, History,” *American Film Institute*, <http://www.afi.com/onscreen/afifest/2009/20x.aspx> (accessed June 26, 2009).

a distinguished position as the only film festival in the United States accredited by the Federation Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films (FIAPF-- known in the U.S. as the International Association of Film Producers). The distinction given to the AFI FEST by FIAPF is a globally important one, as the “the “FIAPF's mandate is to represent the economic, legal and regulatory interests which film and TV production industries in four continents have in common.”³⁷ The “FIAPF is also a regulator of international film festivals, including some of the world's most significant ones.”³⁸

The American Film Market, produced by the Independent Film & Television Alliance,³⁹ also partners with AFI FEST as the place to make production and distribution deals on movies. Held at two hotels, the Loew's Santa Monica Beach Hotel and the Le Merigot Beach Hotel, the AFI Fest showcases the films on 23 screens located up and down the Santa Monica Promenade⁴⁰ The AFI FEST also features films made under the AFI Project: 20/20 program, as well as domestic and international films. Works from AFI Digital Content Lab's two-day long AFI DigiFest are also presented. The AFI FEST is capped off with the AFI Golf Classic.

The AFI 100 (1998)

The most well-discussed AFI program by the general public is *the AFI's 100 Years...Series*. The listings⁴¹ are a popular base for critical examination and discussion

³⁷ *International Association of Film Producers*, <http://www.fiapf.org/pdf/directoryFIAPFv3.pdf> (accessed June 26, 2009).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ “About the AFM,” American Film Market, <http://www.ifta-online.org/afm/about.asp> (accessed June 26, 2009).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ The specific titles of the *AFI's 100 Years...Series*, as recognized on AFI.com, are: 1.) *AFI's 100 Years... 100 Movies* (1998); 2.) *AFI's 100 Years...100 Stars* (1999); 3.) *AFI's 100 Years...100 Laughs: America's Funniest Movies* (2000); 4.) *AFI's 100 Years...100 Thrills: America's Most Heart-Pounding Movies* (2001); 5.) *AFI's 100 Years...100 Passions* (2002); 6.) *AFI's 100 Years...100 Heroes and Villains* (2003); 7.) *AFI's 100 Years...100 Songs*, (2004); 8.) *AFI's 100 Years...100 Movie Musicals* (2005); 9.) *AFI's 100*

each year, as film enthusiasts argue for and against its merits, usually over the films that should have been included in the list and those that should not have been included. Some who challenge the list may not be aware of how the list is compiled. A list of movies, nominated by an AFI panel, is put up for consideration and sent out to the AFI membership, who then vote for their favorite one-hundred movies and return the ballots. The ballots are tallied and then the final list is compiled. Because of this process, those who are displeased with the absence (or ranking) of their favorites must check the ballot list and the final list to determine how their movie may fared. If it was not on the ballot, then their movie was not considered worthy of being included by the panel. If the movie was on the ballot, then other movies were favored by those in the voting membership, outnumbering some individuals picks.

There is some confusion as to whether there are other programs in this series than the ones listed in the footnote below, as there are additional listings in the Internet Movie Database. Either the AFI has purposely eliminated some listings on its website, or the Internet Movie Database has some erroneous information that needs fact checking and correction.

AFI K-12 Screen Education Center (1999)

The AFI has been criticized for its lack of dedication to educational programs; however, the evidence shows that it has continually offered educational programs from the beginning, starting with the AFI Conservatory and inner-city programs for underprivileged youth. More recently, the AFI K-12 Screen Education Center, an online

Years...100 'Movie Quotes': The Greatest Lines from American Film (2005); 10.) AFI's 100 Years...of Film Scores: Honoring America's Greatest Film Music (2005); 11.) AFI's 100 Years...100 Cheers: America's Most Inspiring Movies (2006); 12.) AFI's 100 Years...100 Greatest Movies: 10th Anniversary Edition (2007); 13.) AFI's 10 Top Ten (2008).

tutorial, prepares teachers across the country for instruction on film and media to students, as well as providing a website, entitled AFI ScreenNation, for students to view digital motion picture lessons. It has been so successful, by 2006 it offered “a nationwide curriculum available to 60 percent of American schools.”⁴²

AFI Digital Content Lab/AFI DigiFest (1999)

“For the past 10 years, the AFI Digital Content Lab has identified, encouraged and celebrated cutting-edge examples of digital media.”⁴³ The AFI Digital Content Lab (AFI DCL) is a volunteer effort on the part of both those who are learning and those who are mentoring. Five to nine projects that include film, television, gaming, broadband and mobile entertainment—anything with a screen—are chosen each year for development. Since 1999, more than ninety projects have passed through the AFI DCL to date. The first set of projects, eight in all, included the *Academy Awards*, the *Eddie Files*, *Expedition 360*, *From a Whisper to a Scream: The History of Irish Rock*, *Liquid Stage: The Lure of Surfing*, *News Center 4 Nightbeat*, *Space Station Odyssey* and *Talk Soup*. Both domestic and international projects in digital media are exhibited during the two-day AFI DigiFest held concurrently with the larger AFI FEST in Santa Monica, California, near the end of October each year.

AFI’s Expansion—Partnerships and New Physical Sites

The AFI, firmly entrenched as an institution, was first based in Washington, DC, and Los Angeles. The institution later expanded with several projects in the form of partnerships with strategically located affiliates. These help keep the AFI actively visible

⁴² Allison Deknatel, “AFI Chief Executive Jean Picker Firstenberg to Retire in 2007,” *AFI News Release*, June 8, 2006, 2, http://www.afi.com/Docs/about/press/2006/AFI_release_JPF.pdf (accessed June 29, 2009).

⁴³ “Education, About the AFI Digital Content Lab,” *American Film Institute*, http://www.afi.com/education/dcl/about_dcl.aspx (accessed June 29, 2009).

in heavily populated cities and areas that are the most likely to attract and accommodate large numbers of people interested in the respective film activities offered.

The National Moving Image Database (NAMID) (1984-2004)

Anthony Slide has surmised that, “For reasons that are still unclear but which possibly indicate a worsening relationship between the AFI and the National Endowment for the Arts, the two organizations created the National Center for Film and Video Preservation in September 1983.”⁴⁴ In 1983, Jean Firstenberg had been at the AFI for three years and it is unlikely that her administration worsened the situation with the NEA. It was more likely this was an opportune time to create the NCFVP and be rid of the heavy responsibilities and resentment from archival organization that had plagued the AFI in the past, or that this was part of a planned reorganization of the AFI. The NCFVP would remain under the umbrella of the AFI, but operate independently with its own board. The next year, the AFI, in conjunction with the NCFVP, helped establish the National Moving Image Database in 1984, “a union catalog intended to facilitate moving image preservation and shared cataloging by centralizing information on film and television holdings.”⁴⁵ The AFI connection to NAMID came in that it was a likely extension of AFI combined preservation and educational services, since “[t]he Center researches and publishes the AFI Catalog of Feature Films, decade-by-decade filmographies of feature-length motion pictures produced in the U.S.”⁴⁶ The intent of the NAMID was to serve as a tool for those in the preservation of moving images and as a catalogue that would identify and aid in access to research materials. However, like the

⁴⁴ Anthony Slide, *Nitrate Won't Wait*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2000, 85-86.

⁴⁵ “Milestones that Paved the Way,” *Moving Image Collections*, http://mic.loc.gov/milestne_1.htm (accessed June 29, 2009).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

ACE AFI of the 1930s, the attempt to catalogue film-related information did not last because of the lack of “funding and other issues, and the project came to an end in 2004.”⁴⁷ The author speculates that one of the “other issues” may have been in the form of competition from other database efforts, such as the Amazon.com owned companies, the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), created in 1990 and Box Office Mojo, created in 1999. While the NAMID boasted over 200,000⁴⁸ archival records, the IMDb now boasts 1,454,493⁴⁹ titles and grows every day. What neither IMDb nor Box Office Mojo does not do, however, is focus on preservation concerns and needs, while the NAMID was focused on archives.

AFI Showcase at DisneyWorld (1996)

One of the earliest collaborations was the 1996 addition of a “7,000-square-foot AFI Showcase at DisneyWorld in Orlando, Florida.”⁵⁰ Meant to attract both young and old film aficionados, the Showcase exhibits movie memorabilia such as props, costumes, sets and other items and is subject to change with current trends in movie and television. *Frommer's* description states that part of the exhibit “looks at the efforts of the editors, cinematographers, producers, and directors whose names roll by in the blur of credits. It also showcases the work of the American Film Institute's Lifetime Achievement Award winners, including Bette Davis, Jack Nicholson, and Elizabeth Taylor. A special exhibit here, **"Villains: Movie Characters You Love to Hate,"** [*sic*] features the costumes and

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ *Experimental Television Center Video History Project*, http://www.experimentaltvcenter.org/history/preservation/preservation_level1.php?id=1&id2=10&id3=17 (accessed June 29, 2009).

⁴⁹ “Statistics,” *Internet Movie Database*, http://www.imdb.com/database_statistics (accessed June 30, 2009).

⁵⁰ D. Jae Alexander, “American Film Institute,” in *Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film, Volume I, A-G Index*, (New York & London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), 35.

props of several notable bad guys, including Darth Vader.”⁵¹ The AFI Showcase ends at the AFI Showcase Shop, where movie and television related items such as miniature Oscars, t-shirts, books, postcards and other memorabilia can be purchased.

AFI Golf Classic (1998)

A golf classic is an unrelated and unlikely event for an organization that emphasizes motion pictures. However, the AFI Golf Classic is a popular fundraiser for the AFI. Held annually in the fall at only two southern California area country clubs since its inception on November 2, 1998, the golf tournament features celebrity players. The Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, California was the home of the AFI Classic for its first ten years.⁵² “The [first] format of the golf classic [was a] modified scramble/two best-ball net of fivesome.”⁵³ On October 13, 2008, the 11th annual tournament, dubbed the AFI MadMen Golf Classic, moved to the El Caballero Country Club in Tarzana, California and featured John Hamm, star of the American Movie Classic show, *Mad Men*, as one of the celebrity players.⁵⁴

AFI Cinema’s Legacy at Skirball (2002)

Skirball is one of the nation’s foremost Jewish heritage and cultural centers. “Its mission is to explore the connections between four thousand years of Jewish heritage and the vitality of American democratic ideals. It seeks to welcome and inspire people of every ethnic and cultural identity in American life. Guided by our respective memories

⁵¹ *Frommer’s*, <http://www.frommers.com/destinations/waltdisneyworld/A24455.html> (accessed June 25, 2009).

⁵² “Eleventh Annual AFI Golf Classic,” American Film Institute, <http://www.afi.com/tvevents/golf/default.aspx> (accessed June 28, 2009).

⁵³ “American Film Institute to Host Eastwood, Nicholson, Schwarzenegger, Poitier, Others At Celebrity Golf Classic at Riviera on Nov. 2,” *Business Wire*, October 22, 1998, The Free Library, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/American+Film+Institute+to+Host+Eastwood%2c+Nicholson%2c+Schwarzenegger%2c...-a053115944> (accessed June 28, 2009).

⁵⁴ “Eleventh Annual AFI Golf Classic.”

and experiences, together we aim to build a society in which all of us can feel at home.”⁵⁵

A partnership between the AFI and the Skirball Cultural Center began in 2002 to present the AFI Cinema’s Legacy, a throwback to the conversations with filmmakers that began during the George Stevens, Jr., AFI administration. “Cinema’s Legacy is an ongoing series of conversations presented in partnership with the Skirball Cultural Center.”⁵⁶

AFI Silverdocs (2003)

The story of the Silver Theatre in Silver Spring, Maryland, and now home of the AFI SilverDocs Film Festival, is representative of many old movie theatres throughout the nation that went dark because of declining cinema audience numbers. Opening on Thursday, September 15th, 1938, with an admission price of thirty-five cents, an 8:30pm screening of Warner Brothers *Four Daughters* (Michael Curtiz, 1938) starred the Lane Sisters (Priscilla, Rosemary and Lola), Geraldine Page and Claude Rains and introduced John Garfield to audiences. The Art Moderne styled theatre enjoyed a forty-seven year run before it closed in 1985.⁵⁷ It fell into disrepair until the Silver Spring/Montgomery County community recognized that it should be saved as part of an historic district and efforts were made to preserve it. County Executive Douglas M. Duncan “and the Montgomery County Council in 1998 selected the American Film Institute, with its mission of advancing and preserving the art of the moving image, to operate the Silver Theatre as the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center”⁵⁸ in an “unique public-private

⁵⁵ “About the Skirball,” *Skirball Cultural Center*, http://www.skirball.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14 (accessed June 27, 2009).

⁵⁶ “Cinema’s Legacy: How Great Filmmakers Inspire Great Filmmakers,” *AFI Annual Report 2005*, 31, http://www.afi.com/Docs/about/annualreport/AFI_AR_05.pdf (accessed June 28, 2009).

⁵⁷ “A New Voyage: AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center,” *AFI Preview*, 2, http://www.afi.com/silver/new/nowplaying/preview/archive/4_11_5_8_03.pdf (accessed June 25, 2009).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

partnership with Montgomery County.”⁵⁹ Efforts were made to “rehabilitate [architect] John Ebersson’s original theatre and expand the complex to include two new state-of-the-art 200 and 75-seat theatres.”⁶⁰ The new theatres’ projectors were updated with Barco D-Cinema digital projectors to accommodate digital films.

The AFI’s three-screen Silver Theatre and Cultural Center opened with great ceremony and ribbon-cutting on April 4, 2003. The ribbon was not the usual red ribbon, but rather uniquely, a strip of film spanned between two film reels. There were many dignitaries and high-profile industry celebrities, dignitaries and attendees, including Jack Valenti, Douglas M. Duncan, William Cohen (former Secretary of Defense), Cokie Roberts (close friend to Jean Firstenberg), Clint Eastwood, Murray Horwitz (AFI Silver Director), AFI Co-Director James Hindman, Ray Barry (AFI Silver Deputy Director), John “Jack” Clarke (patron), Bob Mitchell, Keith Pierce and Richard Player (former ushers) and Richard Schickel (*Time* magazine film critic)⁶¹ The ceremony was screened live to a packed house. *The Ox-Bow Incident*, one of Clint Eastwood’s favorite films, was the first movie screened, followed by an appearance by Eastwood and Richard Schickel. Eastwood was also presented “the first AFI Legacy Award, which honors artists whose respect and appreciation for the heritage of the American film enriches their work and advances the moving image.”⁶²

The first regular nightly screening began on April 11, 2003, at 6:20pm with the French film *Le Cercle Rouge* (*The Red Circle*, Jean-Pierre Melville, 1970), starring Alain Delon, André Bourvil, Gian Maria Volontè and Yves Montand. It was followed ten

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “The Doors Re-Open: AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center,” *AFI Preview*, 9 May-15 June 2003, 12, http://www.afi.com/silver/new/nowplaying/preview/archive/5_9_6_15_03.pdf (accessed June 26, 2009).

⁶² Ibid., 13.

minutes later with the next screening, at 6:30pm, of *Four Daughters*, then by a documentary, *Last of the Mississippi Jukes* (Robert Mugge, 2003), at 8:00pm and finally, Frank Capra's classic comedy, *You Can't Take It with You* (1938), at 8:30pm. The cost of a ticket, up from 1935 prices, was \$8.50 for general admission and \$7.50 for AFI Members, students and seniors. Regular screenings usually present two to five movies each evening and boasts an impressive variety of film genres.

Along with screening classic domestic and foreign films, the Silver Theatre is also the home of the SilverDocs Film Festival. "Created by AFI in alliance with the Discovery Channel,"⁶³ and commonly referred to as the SilverDocs, the film festival was announced on May 20 of 2003, shortly after the theatre opening, and held from June 18th through the 22nd. Awards presented at the Silverdocs included the new Sterling Award Snow Globe and the Audience Award. Winners were *My Architect* (Nathaniel Kahn) and *This is a Game, Ladies* (Peter Schnall), respectively. The 2009 Silverdocs awards went to Michael Palmieri and Donal Mosher for *October Country* for Best U.S. Feature and to Lucy Bailey and Andrew Thompson for *Mugabe and the White African*, Best World Feature. There was a \$10,000 cash prize to accompany each award. Other awards were presented and recipients were also given cash prizes and grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000. The Animal Content in Entertainment Grant of \$25,000 was awarded to David Grabias for *Cinema Chimp*, a film about Cheeta, the famous chimpanzee that starred in the *Tarzan* films and the ethics involved in the use of primates for film production.

⁶³ "Silverdocs: AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival (June 18-22, 2003)," *AFI Annual Report 2003*, 28, <http://www.afi.com/Docs/about/annualreport/afi2003annualreport.pdf> (accessed June 28, 2009).

AFI Catalyst Workshop (2004)

The AFI held its first Catalyst Workshop in 2004. “The mission of the Catalyst Workshop is to provide a means for scientists and engineers to become more knowledgeable about the initiation of motion picture projects. The Catalyst Workshop encourages those scientists and engineers interested in working in entertainment to learn how to write and submit scripts.”⁶⁴ The workshop was formed because it can be more difficult to train a screenwriter to be highly knowledgeable in a scientific field that takes years to learn than it would be to train a scientist in the basics of screenwriting. Information on the workshop and/or participants is particularly difficult to find--some projects worked upon in the Catalyst Workshop are purported to be in development. However, there has been no press on a forthcoming completed project nor have participants names been publicized. “The Catalyst Workshop is supported by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research and headed by Martin Gundersen, Professor of Electrical Engineering and Physics at USC.”⁶⁵

AFI Project: 20/20 (2006)

“Announced in September, 2006, at the White house by First Lady Laura Bush as a component of the Global Cultural Initiative, AFI Project: 20/20 was an outgrowth of the President’s Committee’s ‘Symposium on Film, Television, Digital Media and Popular Culture,’ which was held in May 2006.”⁶⁶ AFI Project: 20/20 partners are the U.S. Department of State, the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities (PCAH), the

⁶⁴ “Education, Catalyst Workshop,” *American Film Institute*, <http://www.afi.com/education/catalyst/default.aspx> (accessed June 27, 2009).

⁶⁵ “AFI’s Catalyst Workshop,” *AFI 2004 Annual Report*, http://www.afi.com/Docs/about/annualreport/AFI_AR_04.pdf (accessed June 28, 2009).

⁶⁶ “AFI Project: 20/20 FAQ,” 1, *American Film Institute*, http://www.afi.com/onscreen/afifest/2008/pdf/2020_FAQ07.pdf (accessed June 27, 2009).

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). “AFI Project 20/20 is a filmmaker program that is designed to enhance cultural exchange and challenge stereotypes through collaboration among filmmakers from around the world.”⁶⁷ The filmmakers, and their films, made and/or listed in 2006 represent seven from the USA, and one each from China, Egypt, India, Israel, Iran, Japan, Pakistan, Rwanda, South Africa, the United Kingdom and Venezuela. The films are a mix of documentaries and comic and dramatic narratives. Filmmakers’ participation in the program are by invitation and determined by their excellence in filmmaking and the ability to connect in a positive manner with fellow filmmakers, officials and audiences within their own culture and with those of other cultures.

AFI Dallas (2007)

AFI Dallas is a partnership/affiliation between the Dallas Film Society (DFS) and the AFI formed in 2007 by Liener Temerlin and Michael Cain. Both men are closely connected with the AFI, as well as the DFS. Termerlin, a DFS founder and former Board Chair, also served on the AFI Board of Trustees. Cain, a graduate of the AFI Conservatory, serves as the DFS CEO and Artistic Director.

The DFS holds the AFI Dallas International Film Festival annually near the end of March. The latest festival was held March 26th through April 2nd, 2009. As is usual for film festivals, there was a host of awards bestowed upon festival participants and others. Target, the nationwide department store, sponsored two competitions, granting a \$25,000 award each to the best narrative and the best documentary. The first AFI Dallas

⁶⁷ AFI Project 20/20 press release, 2006, 1, <http://www/pcah.gov/pdf/AFIPROJECT2020.pdf> (accessed June 29, 2009).

Star Award, given to “a select group of film artists in recognition of their unique contributions to cinema,”⁶⁸ was presented to director Kathryn Bigelow, Academy-Award-winner and actor Adrien Brody, and Academy-Award-winning writer Robert Towne, as well as a posthumous award to the legendary actor Rita Hayworth.

Chapter Conclusion—From Firstenberg to Gazzale

In an article on mall movies written by William K. Paul and appearing in the Winter 1994 issue of *Film History*, a quote from Firstenberg, writing in the November 1986 issue of *American Film*, appeared. Firstenberg noted that, “The multiplexes greatly increased the number of small venues that could support—without filing a Chapter Eleven—experimental films, artistic films, foreign and independent films.”⁶⁹ Video was changing the way films were distributed and the AFI had to change with the times. Firstenberg recognized this and other changes and chose a timely year to leave. The AFI was coming upon its fortieth anniversary and digital formats were gaining momentum in the choices of new generations. In a June 8, 2008 press release discussing her upcoming retirement, Firstenberg stated, “The world of film and television has gone through many transformations these past decades, and I am particularly proud that AFI has been at the forefront throughout, especially with the advent of new media. AFI understands that the digital world offers many new dimensions to storytelling, and we will continue to recognize and celebrate these storytellers no matter what form their stories are told.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ John Wildman, AFI Dallas press release, March 4, 2009, <http://www.afidallas.com/uploaded-files/879-AFIDALLASFullSchedule.pdf> (accessed June 29, 2009).

⁶⁹ Jean Picker Firstenberg, “A Renaissance in Film and Video,” *American Film* 11, no. 88, Intersections: Film and Video, (November 1986): 73. Quote cited in: William Paul, “The K-Mart Audience at the Mall Movies,” *Film History* 6, no. 4, Audiences and Fans (Winter 1994): 501, Footnote 34.

⁷⁰ Deknatel, “AFI Chief Executive Jean Picker Firstenberg to Retire in 2007,” 2.

Firstenberg's accomplishments were many. She expanded the AFI educational efforts with accreditation of the AFI Conservatory, re-launched the AFI Catalog and established the K-12 Screen Education Center and DigiFest. Firstenberg also transformed the AFI from a non-profit organization to an entity that no longer needs government grants to operate. This was accomplished with the *AFI 100 Years...Series* franchise and a host of annual awards events, as well as the development of mutually beneficial partnerships with other film organizations.

On Tuesday, June 26, 2007, in an AFI press release, AFI Board Chair Howard Stringer announced the new Director of the AFI, Bob Gazzale. This was a promotion for Gazzale, a producer/writer and senior executive at the AFI for fifteen years prior to the appointment. Gazzale was chosen from among twenty candidates considered for the position.⁷¹ Gazzale and Firstenberg appropriately posed together for press pictures at the AFI's 40th Anniversary Celebration held on October 3, 2007, where, symbolically, the post and the responsibility for the AFI was passed from Firstenberg to Gazzale.⁷² Nearly one month later, on November 1, 2007, Bob Gazzale officially took the helm from Firstenberg as the third Director and CEO of the AFI.⁷³

California-born Gazzale was a 1987 graduate of the University of Virginia, majoring in English. After graduation, he became one of the first directors of the Virginia Festival of American Film (formed in 1988 and now known as the Virginia Film Festival), where he met Firstenberg. Gazzale came to the Los Angeles branch of the AFI

⁷¹ "Gazzale to head AFI: Producer replaces Firstenberg in fall," *Variety*, June 26, 2007, Variety Web site, posted Tuesday, June 26, 2007, 12:00pm PT, <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117967657.html?category id=30&cs=1> (accessed June 29, 2009).

⁷² "Target Presents AFI 40th Anniversary Celebration," American Film Institute, October 3, 2007, <http://connect.afi.com/site/PhotoAlbumUser?view=UserPhotoDetail&PhotoID=14740&position=10&AlbumID=8123>, (accessed June 29, 2009). This particular photograph was found in a section of the AFI Web site, which is accessible only to those who register and log in.

⁷³ Alison Deknatel, "AFI Board of Trustees Unanimously Select Bob Gazzale as new President and CEO."

in 1992 at Firstenberg's invitation and spent two years there before moving to the New York branch where he worked for five years before returning to Los Angeles for a second time. Gazzale then was the Head of Production for eight years prior to his appointment as AFI Director.⁷⁴ Early on in his employment at AFI, Gazzale helped develop the *AFI 100 Years...Series*, also serving as a producer and/or writer on fourteen of the productions. He received three Emmy nominations for his participation in the 2002-2004 series before becoming head of the AFI and two after (2007-2008). The nominations were for the *100 Thrills* (2002), *100 Passions* (2003), *100 Heroes & Villains* (2004), *100 Cheers* (2007) and *100 Greatest Movies: 10th Anniversary Edition* (2008).⁷⁵

So what will the future of the AFI hold under Gazzale's leadership? This remains to be seen. However, other questions concerning the past remain to be answered: "Did the NEA AFI usurp the ACE AFI? Was the Hollywood support of the AFI meant to undermine efforts of educators of the past who wanted to form an AFI? Did the United States even *need* an AFI? These questions and more will be covered in the next chapter, the conclusion to this study.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ "Awards for Bob Gazzale," Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0311137/awards> (accessed June 29, 2009)

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION—THE AFI: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

We now have a simple answer to our question: what is an institution? It is a collective pattern of self-referring activity.

—David Bloor, *Wittgenstein, Rules and Institutions*, 1997

Briefly, What Happened?

In the U.S., it took approximately forty years (from the 1920s to the 1960s) of discourse and at least four proposals by three film groups before a permanent national film institute came to fruition. Over the years, a good number of proposals came from three of four major film arenas—educational, entertainment and the government. The fourth arena—artistic—found in art houses or film clubs and societies that screened foreign, artistic, experimental and avant-garde films, did not call for such an institute. However, members of this arena were attempting to organize their own nationwide network for exhibition in the 1960s, threatening the Hollywood industry, and participants in the artistic film community did express their views on the NEA AFI.

While educators led the way with the first calls for an AFI in the 1920s educational periodicals, Will H. Hays and the MPPDA shortly followed with liaisons to some of the country's highest educational institutions, working on implementing college courses to train film industry workers. For a few years in the 1930s and concurrent with early MPPDA activities, the original and makeshift ACE AFI struggled to survive, plagued by underfunding and other projects that interfered with focus on their clearinghouse and network goals. The ACE tried to revive their AFI after WWII with yet another proposal, but were promptly sabotaged by their own educators who were

concerned with other audio-visuals forms. The result was a morphing of the proposal that ended in the foundation of an audio-visual institute instead.

Concurrent with the second ACE AFI proposal, the MPPDA publicly announced a planned Motion Picture Institute in 1945. Like the ACE AFI, it never got off the ground on a national level, perhaps because the comprehensive goals it listed included overseeing every film entity in the United States, which was a rather threatening idea in the aftermath of World War II. In a series of trust busting lawsuits that would limit its power, the government made Hollywood a target, weakening rather than expanding its power.

With the exception of the historical scholarship of the young Paul Saettler, the issue of a national film institute laid forgotten and dormant in the 1950s, as both the education and film entertainment fields turned their attention and focus upon the effect the television industry had upon their own industries and the nation. The entertainment film industry first dabbled in ways to enter and control television, such as feeds into movie theatres, but these goals were set aside and the focus went toward epic films and producing programming for the new medium. McCarthyism and blacklisting in the 1950s also plagued the entertainment film industry. Meanwhile, educators turned to using television as an instructional tool for students that ranged from small toddlers to adults. The artistic community enjoyed a growing heyday of viewing foreign, independent, documentary, avant-garde and experimental films usually screened by film clubs and societies.

After the television industry had saturated into nearly every home across the country causing a huge drop in movie attendance, the movie industry responded with epic

pictures and then with movies on TV. As the result of the Antioch College symposium, Colin Young's bicoastal group of educators, film industry players and organizations gained brief attention in 1961 in the academic journal, *Film Quarterly*, in yet another call for an AFI. Yet, there were others who were in the same frame of mind concerning an American film institute. Always with the intention of preserving films for posterity, Frenchman Henry Langlois was urging the young George Stevens, Jr., to form an American counterpart to his Cinémathèque Française archive, even though archives like MoMA, and others, already existed in the United States.

Academic institutions and the artistic community were turning to foreign films and alternative films as the medium gained recognition and respect as an art form. The influx of foreign films and a significant move toward non-Hollywood films in the 1960s art houses and educational institutions threatened not only the movie industry's economic power—there was a perceived threat to the American heritage and cultural values. Because of this and other reasons, the Johnson administration followed through with plans that had formed in the Kennedy administration and made the governmental commitment to create the NEA in 1965 and the AFI in 1967. Thus, throughout the years, recognition in three of the four arenas that there was a need for a national film institute finally brought a lasting institution to be established by the most powerful of the entities—the federal government.

Reasons for an American Film Institute

Why did all these groups want a national institute? Why did the United States need an American Film Institute at all? There were many reasons for an American film institute, but the reasons were as varied as the people and the groups that called for one.

The broad categories have to do with education, access, preservation, economic competition, domestic and international ideals and values, and even technology.

Education

Concurrent with the efforts of the U.S. government's establishment of nationwide education for all citizens, film was also proliferating across the country, first recognized as a novelty and entertainment medium. As lecturers crossed the country, using slides for travelogues and other subjects, the next obvious step was to use film in this capacity as well. Educators soon recognized the power of the medium to help educate the masses, yet, there was resistance to it because it was also considered a frivolous pastime that could lead to immorality. Despite early objections to using film as an educational medium, educators like Carlos E. Cummings, George E. Stone, George A. Skinner and Edgar Dale advocated film as an educational visual aid and made strong arguments as to its usefulness.

In the early-to-mid 1920s, the MPPDA and the ACE were working together on the union between film and education, while other nations were planning their own systems. While the MPPDA needed courses to train new film industry employees, the educators were working on the logistics of using film as an educational visual aid. When Carlos E. Cummings hinted at a national visual aids institute in 1922, the technology needed to screen films in elementary and secondary schools was not economically, logistically or safely feasible.

The idea of an international educational film institute came from Swiss students in 1923 and may have even spurred some of the first educators in the U.S. to write publicly about establishing such an institute in 1925—George E. Stone and George A. Skinner.

While heavy cameras and 35mm film stock had become the professional standard for the entertainment industry, smaller competitors were developing and competing for other uses with portable cameras and projectors that used film stock formats of 8mm, 16mm, 17.5mm, 22mm, 23mm and 28mm. Kodak, the largest producer of film stock settled on the 8mm, 16mm and 35mm standards and other film stock sizes became obsolete. It was the smaller portable systems that the education field was interested in for their classrooms.

By 1927, the MPPDA and Will Hays had a hand in establishing film courses in the top universities in the nation. The ACE team of George F. Zook, Cline M. Koon, Lorraine Noble and Edgar Dale and later, James W. Brown did correspond and work with the Hays office in the 1930s and perhaps even earlier. At that point, the Hays office must not have had any objections with the formation of an AFI that was not under its jurisdiction. According to Noble, she did have conversations with Hays and several others in Hollywood about the new AFI. It would be later that the MPPA's Eric Johnston would propose its own national institute in 1945 and control of an AFI would fall into Hollywood and governmental hands in the 1960s.

Education and Access

For educators in the 1920s and 1930s, a national film institute would serve to categorize the thousands of films used for curricula across the country and select the best for utilization in classrooms across the country, thereby homogenizing instructional visual aids. The ACE AFI organized around the idea of access to the best materials available and a network that would work for proper distribution and exhibition. Lorraine Noble described the activities of the first AFI, "The first year was devoted mainly to

informal fact gathering, the holding of meetings of educational leaders, and the obtaining of a consensus of opinion as to the desirability of setting up an organization such as the American Film Institute.”¹ The ACE AFI also surveyed educators across the U.S. about the films in they had been using, then listed, reviewed, rated and selected films for their quality and usefulness as a visual aid in educating K-12 children across America. The initial list had over 10,000 titles and it was a daunting task to screen and weed out unacceptable films and recommend exceptional films for classroom use. For the ACE, an AFI was an essential organization which would help equalize educational opportunities across the nation with visual aids provided not only to the large cities that usually had access to better educational tools, but also the hinterlands of America.

For the MPPDA, a national film institute was desirable only if it was administered by the Hollywood industry, albeit, it could be in conjunction with the federal government. For the industry, an AFI meant holding on to the control and power of the product, control of all other things filmic and subsequent economic control in all film arenas, even those outside the specific Hollywood entertainment industry. This general idea held for the early MPPDA during the days of the ACE AFI, as well as during the 1960s with the NEA AFI. Their early version of an AFI, the Motion Picture Institute planned by Eric Johnston, never gained national power, although its descendent, the NEA AFI became a national institution. Although there are references to a “Motion Picture Institute,” a “Hollywood Motion Picture Institute” and a “Motion Picture Institute of America” in the 1930s and as late as 1971, it is not known at this writing if the MPPDA or another group actually initiated these organizations (more study in this area is warranted) or what

¹ Lorraine Noble, “Modernization, By Way of the Educational Film,” *Journal of Educational Sociology* 10, no. 3, The Motion Picture in its Educational and Social Aspects (November 1936): 152.

happened to them. In the 1960s, the federal government bestowed control of the NEA AFI upon a board of trustees who largely represented Hollywood interests, much to the ire of educators and artistic film people.

The NEA AFI would approach educational needs in a very different way from the ACE AFI. As a blended arm of the MPAA and the federal government, and with minimal input from educators, documentarians and/or the avant-garde, the NEA AFI's mission was to preserve films for the sake of heritage and culture, train the filmmakers of the future and educate the public to become more discerning motion picture consumers, not as a clearinghouse of academia.

For the U.S. government, a national institute would preserve and protect the national heritage and the culture—the American way of life—as well as disseminate and promote American ideals worldwide through distribution to foreign countries. The AFI would do this by selecting, promoting and educating the public as to which American films were valuable to the nation and the world and explaining, in an entertaining way, why. The films that represented American values across the years, which include the capitalist system, those that made social statements important to American ideals and values, and were most influential in the representation thereof, were generally ones that reached the largest segment of the mass audience—Hollywood commercial entertainment films. The melding of films that entertain and instruct at the same time can often creep up and teach an audience something without the supposed tedium of a classroom lecture. The most treasured of these films are repeatedly promoted and discussed as American classics, whether they come in the form of commercial entertainment, documentary, instructional or artistic. Some important films that have been named as national treasures

are documentaries used for educational/instructional purpose (director Ken Burns' films), others were historic in nature (the Zapruder film of the JFK assassination) and those of the artistic community (the films of Maya Deren), who experimented with the medium and its content.

Education of the Masses

Whether a governmental, commercial/theatrical, artistic or educational venue, the film screenings of others were competitive and objectionable and remain so even today. Thus, film history is bereft with innumerable opposing factions attempting to control the production, distribution and screenings of motion pictures, even when the dominant arenas, such as entertainment, documentary, experimental or instructional/educational films, are far removed from the arena of the party, or parties, attempting the subjugation.

Lorraine Noble observed, "It may come as a surprise to educators in general to know that Hollywood is interested in films for the schools"² and "Hollywood would be willing to forego the handsome profit for the pleasure of making educational films, provided the production cost could be returned."³ Saettler noted, "There has been abundant evidence over the years that the motion picture industry is antagonistic to the idea of educators producing their own films."⁴ Hollywood was interested in, yet antagonistic toward educational film for a couple of reasons that are circular in nature. Hollywood needed the educational system to train new students (i.e., personnel) as the film medium expanded, albeit it was in higher educational venues like Columbia, Harvard, USC and UCLA. Educators needed films to aid in instruction on a variety of

² Noble, "Modernization," 151.

³ Noble, "Modernization," 151.

⁴ Paul Saettler, *The Evolution of American Educational Technology*, (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2004), 238.

subjects. For education, just having the skills to make a film was not enough—one also needed to know the subject on which one was making the film. Here the demand was for trained filmmakers who could also produce films that were adequately correct in their instructional claims. Hollywood also had the ulterior motive of control behind their interest in educational film which was always related to the bottom line—monetary concerns. Had educational film been as profitable as entertainment film, Hollywood players would have sought participation even more vigorously. As it was, Hollywood tiptoed quietly behind the scenes, influencing the educational system where it could without the knowledge of the public, instigated by a fear that the public would meet with alarm if knowledge of Hollywood participation in the educational field were discovered. Throughout the history of the NEA AFI, the institute has tried to separate itself from education, yet, educators called upon the institute to keep the Educational Services division, in a push-pull symbiotic relationship.

A third party in the form of the U.S. government complicated the relationship between the two film arenas of education and entertainment—the government had always been interested in film a medium for mass communication. Noble explained, in 1936, that, “Nearly three years ago the writer came out of Hollywood and journeyed to Washington, that mecca of people who want somebody ‘to do something about’ things—this time educational films.”⁵ Thus, the inter-relationship and the dance for control between commercial entertainment motion pictures, non-commercial motion pictures and the U.S. government were already evident. However, at this time the government and funding foundations did not provide the adequate financial support for a film institute in the early days—that would come later in the 1960s.

⁵ Noble, “Modernization,” 152.

Economic Competition and Cooperation between Film Organizations

When compared to the history of oral and dramatic/comic theater traditions, as well as the written word and the printed page, the history of film is a new, fresh history, just a little over a scant one-hundred years old. Although it is a two-dimensional view, the phenomenon of moving pictures allows us to witness a given performance or event repetitively, if the physical elements of a film are properly taken care of and preserved without transformation. The power film has to attract and influence an audience was almost immediately widely recognized by entertainers, educators and the government. This influence, serving as a potentially unifying sway in the collective psyche of a mass audience, is a valuable commodity. Film is something that could make the audience happy, sad, educated and informed, buy a product or move to action.

Worldwide and in the United States, jockeying for control of film production, distribution and exhibition began early among huge numbers of players. They mostly represented and fell into one of the five large special-interest categories consisting of commercial entertainment, artistic (experimental/avant-garde), educational/instructional, governmental and industrial/corporate. It was becoming clear in many countries that a national authority to handle the medium was of critical importance—if a medium that could affect the masses was not controlled, then its influence may cause the masses to eventually become uncontrollable.

Film institutes in most countries frequently sanction and monetarily support all or part of the national film industry. Because of this, limitations, restrictions, censorship and self-censorship occur in the choices one has on making a film that will receive monetary support for production, distribution and exhibition, but the ones that do get

made are financially supported. U.S. educators and Hollywood both recognized the need for an American film institute about the same time as other countries, such as Great Britain, recognized and established the earliest film institutes. However, a general reluctance on the U.S. government to step in to establish such an institute left competing organizations to their own devices in the definition, development and establishment of such an entity.

Even the first national film institute of all, Great Britain's British Film Institute, met with objections early on in its history. Butler tells us that, "despite the strong educational bias of its early years there were fears among the industry that it might encroach on commercial pastures, and among the film societies that it might interfere with their own activities in the raising of public appreciation of film as an art form."⁶

Competition continually occurred behind the scenes in the national arenas of education, theatrical, governmental and artistic film, but it played out on the stage after filtering down into the smaller arenas of local exhibition—theatrical houses, film clubs/societies and art-houses. For example, art-houses objected to film societies and university screenings. Philip Chamberlin observed in 1960 that, "In Los Angeles recently, one art-house exhibitor has spent a considerable part of his time organizing opposition to alleged 'competition' of film programs sponsored by local film societies and universities. He has protested what he has called the unfair advantage which [*sic*] nonprofit and tax-supported institutions have in film exhibition. As a businessman and taxpayer he feels himself in the position of one forced to subsidize his opposition."⁷

⁶ Ivan Butler, *To Encourage the Art of the Film: The Story of the British Film Institute*, (London: Hale, 1971), 18.

⁷ Philip Chamberlin, "Allies, Not Enemies: Commercial and Nontheatrical Experience on the West Coast," *Film Quarterly*, 14, no. 2 (Winter 1960): 36.

Although mainstream commercial entertainment houses received the bulk of the movie-going audience, they perceived a threat and complained against art houses and film cooperatives. Colin Young tells us that, “as a reward for forming such a cooperative, it is usually possible to see films more cheaply than at a regular theater. This is where the commercial houses shout ‘Unfair!’.”⁸ Further, commercial houses and non-commercial art houses were not the only businesses to object to screenings. Chamberlin explains, “Early in 1960, a new film society sprang up in Santa Barbara, California. Attendance was impressive and a howl of ‘unfair competition’ immediately went up. This time, though, it was not the theaters who spearheaded the attack, but their friends the merchants.”⁹ Evidently, the merchants felt that movie going was cutting into their profits as people chose to attend a movie rather than shop.

Instead of working together against the threat of increasing television viewing to keep audiences interested in attending the screening of motion pictures of any and all kinds, the infighting between film organizations, in abandoning cooperation and promotion, may have contributed somewhat to a gradual demise of film-going. Scott McDonald suggests other reasons for the downward spiral since the 1960s, one reason being touted by the avant-garde itself that “many moving-image makers have moved on to video and digital work, fewer interesting films are being made and as a result, there is less audience support for alternative cinema.”¹⁰ Contributing reasons are blamed on exhibitors—McDonald notes the lack of willingness on the part of programmers to commit to screening alternative films or to build an audience for them. However,

⁸ Colin Young, “An American Film Institute: A Proposal,” *Film Quarterly* 14, no. 4, (Summer 1961): 38.

⁹ Chamberlin, 37.

¹⁰ Scott MacDonald, *Cinema 16: Documents Toward a History of the Film Society*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 29.

McDonald does believe that the “production of interesting avant-garde films has remained at a consistently high level.”¹¹ Today, the demise of the art houses and second run theatres may have only been a physical location problem solved by the ability of the audience to find their niche market product in special cable and satellite channels, as well as computer downloads, that caters to their tastes.

Where does the AFI factor in this?

Preservation, Access and Orphans

Although those involved early in film, such as W.K.L. Dickson, Vachel Lindsay and Will Hays, had been interested in film preservation, many, many silver nitrate films and low-budget films were lost forever because of a lack of forethought on the part of neglectful owners. However, a national film collection was materializing here and there across the country at the Library of Congress, MoMA, Eastman Kodak, other archives and in private collections. Decherney confirms, “As we know already, Hollywood won the battle for government, museum, and foundation film support in the 1960s as it had won a similar battle in the 1940s with the help of Iris Barry, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Rockefeller Foundation.”¹²

Henri Langlois’ influence concerning film preservation on the young George Stevens, Jr., and the subsequent inclusion of film preservation as part of the mission of the NEA AFI helped museums and archivists, despite their conflicts with the AFI. In the end, they gained more monies and their own National Center for Film and Video Preservation (NCFVP) for preservation. What has resulted in the system is that public monies, coming from NEA, AFI and other grants, are being utilized for the preservation

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Peter Decherney, *Hollywood and the Culture Elite: How the Movies became American*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 2005), 178.

of films for the privately owned and operated studios and film conglomerates. In addition, now there is a regional effort to archive films of great local importance in smaller towns, as well as important orphan films that have no one left alive in relation to their production, but have been “adopted” or designated by local archivists as films to be rescued.

In her dissertation, Caroline Jane Frick reminds us of Iris Barry’s earlier statement concerning access. Frick emphasizes that, “National film heritage became defined, enshrined and properly maintained through moving image collection and preservation, rather than by promoting access.”¹³ In a statement to the NCFVP entitled “Preservation Without Access is Pointless,”¹⁴ the Committee for Film Preservation and Public Access has pointed out that the classic moving images that are nearing public domain are preserved, changed somewhat in the restoration process by editing or adding new footage or audio. They are then shelved or made accessible at a cost, resulting in the denial of public access to the original.

Frick has also discussed the already well-known dichotomy between preservation and access. She points out the also well-known fact that although many films have been preserved, they are often reworked anew and the originals made inaccessible. This is to prevent old films from going into public domain so that Hollywood can gain new copyrights for what is basically the same material. Access to originals can be difficult, particularly those in the hands of archives that are unwilling to grant access.

¹³ Caroline Jane Frick, *Restoration Nation: Motion Picture Archives and “American” Film Heritage*, (PhD Diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2005), 122, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/etd/d/2005/frickd15921/frickd15921.pdf>. (accessed July 20, 2009).

¹⁴ “Preservation Without Access is Pointless,” *Committee for Film Preservation and Public Access*, 12, posted February 12, 1993, Cinema Web, http://www.cinemaweb.com/access/pre_stmt.htm (accessed July 20, 2009).

Thus, the problems of the costs of public access are twofold. The two problems take form in the physical availability and economic availability. For example, if the public wants to access a Hollywood produced public domain original in its original format, there are the logistics and costs of locating and borrowing a 35mm print (perhaps from the Library of Congress) and finding access to a 35mm projector for screening, not to mention the delicate condition of the film stock. This is cost prohibitive to the individual enthusiast. A second problem is that, if a particular title is available through a company that specializes in producing a copy of the public domain film, there is a charge for the copy. The charge can be anywhere from a few dollars to hundreds. The quality of the images can range from poor to excellent, depending on whether or not said company has applied restoration processes to the film. Restoration processes make the film “new” again and higher purchase or rental fees can be charged to the customer. Yet, our national film heritage cannot be accessed by the masses unless the films are first collected and preserved properly and *then* made *economically* accessible to the largest audience possible.

The sorely needed physical preservation of rapidly deteriorating film stock that held the nation’s moving images was then, and even now, continues to be a race against time. In preserving the images that have finally gained recognition as art and artifact, our heritage, our culture and the values of the society and the nation in which we live are also preserved. Repetitive presentation of selected American classics helps to unify the masses into a basic agreement about our core American values. These values, however much the government intends them to remain constant, frequently change in an

undulating wave of transformation. Now, splintered niche markets have made the nation's citizens more individualistic than ever.

One of the purposes for a national film institute would be to provide access to films other than the commercial entertainments that Hollywood produced, as well as a place for intellectual discussions concerning what they had screened. However, films from this leg of the film arena were placed low on preservation lists and were not a priority until this decade, according to Frick, who discusses the newly developed issues of the “orphanistas,” those who care about “orphan” films—the ones that have been “abandoned by its owner or caretaker’.”¹⁵ Not only have old Hollywood movies that have fallen in public domain fit into this category, but the definition includes some of the very films that art house audiences might be interested in. These would include films that were produced independently, experimental films and historic footage from local professional and home filmmakers. Frick's discussion points out the ensuing copyright debates that have developed and the schisms in archiving, a concern for Hollywood. In a positive turn, some of the films that fall in the orphan category are now receiving serious attention from archivists and are being included on the yearly roster of films to be preserved. This turn toward archiving more obscure films is not without the help of the AFI. Although the preservation arena, well established before the AFI, split apart from the AFI in 1983 into its own National Center for Film and Video Preservation organization, the AFI continues to help promote the *idea* of preservation, even as we move into a technological age full of new and ultimately possible orphan footage.

¹⁵ Frick, 188.

Technology

When films were stored on bulky and large nitrate and acetate stocks, access for the general public was highly limited. One might see an old film only if there was a special screening. Now, although Hollywood tries to control old product, control is slipping and will continue to slip. Control is difficult because of the sheer volume of numbers. Now, any one of a million or more people with a DVD copy of a film can make it accessible, if so inclined. A few cannot control masses without some very special means to do so and Hollywood is trying to figure out how to combat and control the Wild West tendencies of the Internet.

The problem of difficulty in accessing certain film titles—at least the ones that have been saved—has marched along slowly toward a technological solution. Historically, the change technology afforded to the increasingly easier access of motion pictures did not come fast enough for many titles. Each revolutionary change in motion picture recording format moving further and further away from dangerously combustible nitrate film stock afforded greater and greater accessibility to film titles. Developments progressed from nitrate to acetate stock, polyester stock, then to 2”, 1”, ½” and ¼” video tape, and finally to digitally mastered DVDs that lose no quality in picture or sound with repeated duplication.

Not only has the Hollywood audience dribbled away since the days of television, the education of film students and the inaccessibility of opportunity in Hollywood productions has forced independent filmmakers to stand on their own if they want to continue in the filmmaking business. The change in technology toward smaller and cheaper cameras with excellent picture quality, in combination with computer editing

capabilities and the Internet is a big threat to Hollywood production and distribution channels. Now anyone with a film camera and a computer can produce a movie and distribute it without the heavy financial backing that was so necessary in the past. Even this generation of cameras are being threatened, with a new generation of cell phones, such as a recently advertised iPhone, which now has the ability to record and edit.

The AFI is also changing with the times and embracing the Internet as well. Like any large business, an internet website is necessary and the AFI has an excellent one. The AFI has also started programs that deal with digital technology, as discussed in the chapter on Jean Firstenberg's AFI administration. It is certain that Bob Gazzale will follow through as the change to digital marches along through the timeline of history. Along with the change in technology, the AFI has changed its vision to reflect the nation's change toward globalization. The addition of the Digital Content Lab, the K-12 Screen Education Center, DigiFest, the Catalyst Workshop and the Global Cultural Initiative is the next phase of promotion of American ideals that will need preservation someday in the far future. The AFI can, at this point work to promote and educate the public on the importance of preservation to all moving images, particularly those that are critical to potential transformative events.

Film Organizations and Ideals

Along with an examination of the ACE AFI and the NEA AFI, this study has also investigated numerous film organizations, including those that were educationally oriented, those that represented governmental agendas, those that represent the artistic community and the Hollywood commercial entertainment industry. They were always in competition with each other. Upon reading this study thus far, one may have asked about

several topics of discussion, “What do these secondary, comparatively obscure film organizations have to do with an American film institute?” In order to understand the need for an American film institute, one must also understand the confusion caused by competitive and duplicative organizations that have existed throughout the years. What these organizations worked for, and what they stood for individually, were of dissimilar but equally relevant importance (at least to them), depending on the mission of the organization.

With every American film institute proposal, (and there were many, authored chronologically throughout history by Stone, Skinner, Dale, Brown, Johnston, Brown, Young and the NCA’s Stanford Report), there was a myriad number of directions that a successful American Film Institute could have taken. Agreeing on the definition of the functions of such an institute was not so easy. Once the government had financed the AFI in 1967 and it would surely become a permanent institution, the direction of the institute was revealed and there was a fruitless debate that plagued its formation and early growth. Had the financial backing and collective mindset of those forming such an entity been so inclined, the AFI could and would have been a very different model from the governmentally backed European models. It could have been an educational clearinghouse, as originally intended by educators and the ACE AFI or, had the AFFS emerged as a dominant entity, it could have been the primary umbrella organization for numerous small film societies across the U.S.

The formation of the NEA AFI came down to the economic health of those in the film arena. Of all the film organizations, the Hollywood studios ultimately had the most money and the most influence. They had invested the most money in the making of their

films, had reached the widest audience and well-known entertainment films were, therefore, the first in line for preservation monies offered.

For the United States, establishing an American film institute that would be recognized as *the* foremost and primary representative body for the nation was perhaps hampered by a capitalist-based structure that values the rise to the top of the economic system through competition. Adding to this was the long-awaited recognition of the U.S. government that it should sanction and support the arts and humanities as a way to define and support the cultural fabric of the United States. Although specific documentation has not been discovered that any one Hollywood organization or person implicitly stated the ACE AFI should not be allowed to develop into a national entity, there is plenty of evidence that appropriate and inappropriate funding or that increased or decreased sources of income could make or break the plans of any number of film organizations. First, the ACE AFI was clearly oriented toward education and the smaller, less lucrative segment of the film industry, namely, the documentary and instructional leg. Second, the plans of the ACE AFI, once funded and underway, did not retain or gain proper funding to keep its clearinghouse goals ongoing.

While the possible squelching of the ACE AFI by competing organizations and their representatives who were on the right (or wrong) committees may have occurred, logistics, underfunding, an excessive number of projects and the 1945 redirection of the ACE AFI proposal toward an audio-visual institute also contributed to its final demise. The MPPDA's announced plans for a national institute in 1945 were squelched for some reason as well. The formation of the Motion Picture Institute by the MPPDA may have been a good idea, but the timing of the announcement and the planned comprehensive

nature of its reach into every aspect of American film was not. World War II was ending and there was a widespread belief that the power of the motion picture media was formidable. We can only surmise that the government would not have been open to the MPPDA and Hollywood having control of every aspect of the film industry. This is a point that calls for further detailed study.

Definitions and Functions of an AFI

How did the definitions and functions of an intended national AFI change and why?

Definitions and functions called for early in film history were concerned with the ACE educational film needs of access and distribution. These definitions and functions changed somewhat with each new proposal and most distinctly when those researching and founding the new NEA AFI in the 1960s were influenced by the goals of the FIAF and the governmentally set-up models of long established film institutes in foreign countries. Other countries that set up film institutes did so for the protection and preservation of their heritage and culture in the aftermath of the Great War (WWI)—they recognized the threat long before the U.S. Frick recognizes that, “U.S. film product became American film heritage not during wartime, an era which featured films as past and future history, but rather when the nation’s own motion picture industry was threatened with foreign invasion (i.e., investment) in the waning years of the Cold War.”¹⁶ The influence of the foreign film institute model is not surprising—since the U.S. government, through the NEA, was backing the new AFI, and the governmentally sponsored institute was about preserving national ideals. This was at a tumultuous time in America, which was coming out of the Cold War and McCarthyism when strong protests against the Vietnam war, demonstrations for civil and women’s rights and the

¹⁶ Frick, 84.

questioning of government policies and social practices and mores were at an all time high. Although the government meant to hold on to American ideals of the past, those ideals would morph into something better—the further interpretation as to what equal rights exactly were. As an institution, the AFI meant to reflect and promote American ideals. The point is to refer to the national activities that make America American. Like the British Film Institute and other European models, the U.S. government created the AFI to protect American heritage and culture from encroaching foreign ideals. However, those ideals do change from internal and external pressures and the new AFI would learn to adapt and change with the times.

One of the primary functions of the European film institutes was the archiving and preservation of the respective nation's films as part of their respective national heritage and culture. The new NEA AFI would be no different in this area from preceding film institutional models, making part of its mission statement—"to preserve America's fast-disappearing film heritage."¹⁷ The word "heritage" is the important point here. The threat of the Cold War and American protests for societal change in many different aspects of American life—civil rights, anti-war, women's rights, environmentalism, etc., was an incentive for the American government to protect its heritage and influence the preservation of the culture in ways that would not fundamentally change the status quo. What was not foreseen, and was actually embraced, was that some of the ideals and aspirations of the protesters would actually become important additions in the development of American ideals, such as civil rights, women's rights (think of the Director's Workshop for Women here) and environmentalism, to name a few. The AFI would adapt and include these ideals as films

¹⁷ "History of AFI," *American Film Institute*, <http://www.afi.com/about/history.aspx> (accessed June 26, 2009).

were selected as “classics” that would hold on to the heritage, the culture and the values of the U.S. After all, the definitions and function of any organization can and will change with the times and with the personnel who run it and it was the up and coming generation that would be running the AFI. In this way, the NEA AFI would be defined and redefined throughout its history.

The Lack of Connection between the Two AFIs

Saettler has posed a series of questions concerning the startup of the ACE AFI and the subsequent obstacles the ACE met in establishing a film institute. His final question asks, “[W]as there any pressure from the theatrical motion picture industry on either the council or the foundation, or both, that led to the ultimate failure of the film institute proposal, or even doomed it from inception?”¹⁸ This question was similar to the same basic question that was brought up in a very early stage of this study—why was it that the original AFI, once established, failed to remain in existence? What happened to it? Saettler’s work was found only after the author started researching—answering his line of questions was not the instigator of this examination. Following are the reasoned answers to the questions of both researchers.

First, while we may not be privy to the historical facts of conversations never recorded nor artifacts remaining in the form of specific written evidence of squelching the ACE AFI efforts, we can surmise there were others who had their own designs on creating and running an American film institute. The Hays office knew of the ACE AFI in the 1930s. Although initial funding was offered, it was never adequate and was eventually withdrawn and efforts were redirected toward other film arenas. Scholar William J. Buxton reasons that, “While it was not entirely clear why the GEB decided not

¹⁸ Saettler, 238.

to fund this organization, there is some evidence that a centralized directive body of this kind was not acceptable to the representatives of the film industry, who were concerned that such an agency would have been a powerful competitor.”¹⁹ Based on Buxton’s report, Peter DeCherney has surmised this happened “in order to set up smaller, distinct organizations that corresponded to the stages of production, distribution, and exhibition studied separately by the Rockefeller Foundation’s communication theorists.”²⁰ Buxton also brings in another reason—“To some extent, the [American Film Center] was very much in line with the American Film Institute that had been proposed to the GEB by the ACE a few years earlier.”²¹ The AFC may have even been an alternative, new “AFI,” however, it was based out of an educational institution, Columbia University, and it too was disbanded in 1946. The Rockefeller Foundation, along with the Ford Foundation and other foundations and perhaps even the MPPDA, which also funded projects, had exerted influence in the granting of funding and in the under-funding of these various film organizations in order to prevent a powerful centralized film institute, yet continued efforts toward its goals through a series of smaller projects. “In this way, the [Rockefeller] foundation could exert precise influence at each stage in the circuit of mass communication.”²² A likely explanation to Saettler’s question is that the American Film Center (AFC), started in 1938 and a MPPDA proposal that lurked in the wings, finally

¹⁹ William J. Buxton, “Rockefeller Support for Projects on the Use of Motion Pictures for Educational and Public Purposes, 1935-1954,” *Rockefeller Archive Center for Research Reports Online*, April 1, 2001, Rockefeller Archive Center for Research Reports Online, <http://www.rockarch.org/publications/resrep/rrofflinesub.php> (accessed November 19, 2008). Permission for citations received from Dr. Buxton in an e-mail to the author, July 14, 2009, 11:04:33AM.

²⁰ Peter Decherney, *Hollywood and the Culture Elite: How the Movies became American*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 2005), 147.

²¹ Buxton, “Rockefeller Support,” *Rockefeller Archive Center*.

²² Decherney, 147.

appearing in 1945 at the same time as the ACE AFI's second proposal, are perhaps two reasons for the declining lack of funding for the ACE AFI.

There does not appear to be a direct historical thread between the ACE AFI and the NEA AFI other than the MPAA and large funding foundations that have major influence upon which institutions receive support in the United States. Of course, substantial and continual funding is a make-it-or-break-it situation that is important to the success of any given organization. While the ACE AFI enjoyed some funding that was initially inadequate and eventually waned, the NEA AFI had substantial and continuing backing. Even with continual funding, however, there were shaky times for the NEA AFI when there were internal shakeups with personnel and financial backing was pulled away from them at various times throughout the years. There were also funds redirected toward other motion picture entities that the AFI hoped to control (i.e., the split from television archiving in 1974 and film archives in 1983).

Second, the actions of the government in the 1960s toward forming a national film institute and appointing those connected to Hollywood were not to spite educators or to leave them out of the equation intentionally. Rather, it was likely Hollywood people were favored because they were the best in the business of production, distribution and exhibition, an idea set forth by George Stevens, Jr., in his *Film Quarterly* article, "About the American Film Institute."²³ The international stars involved, Gregory Peck and Charlton Heston, for instance, were beloved public figures and quite influential. The choice of George Stevens, Jr., was because he was known and able to work with both the Hollywood film industry, the governmental film arenas and even had international

²³ George Stevens, Jr., "About the American Film Institute," *Film Quarterly* 25, no. 2, (Winter 1971-72): 36-37.

experience in the film arena. In consideration of their usurping the former ACE AFI, this did not happen. They went about forming the NEA AFI quite unknowingly with concern to the former organization and in no way meant to hurt the educational field which was now solidly entrenched in the process of turning out new filmmakers with every graduating class and had long been using films as a visual aid in elementary and secondary classrooms. According to accounts of George Stevens, Jr. and Richard Kahlenberg, Stevens' inspiration for an AFI came from Henri Langlois and Kahlenberg helped him develop the preservation leg of the NEA AFI. Nowhere do they mention the idea of an AFI came about with intent of any kind to usurp or take away the AFI from education. Nor do they mention they would be better at forming an AFI than another competing organization, even though that was the feeling educators first had when they saw that they and other film arenas, such as documentary and artistic, were under-represented. The memory of the original AFI was long in the past and the seemingly only person that was keeping its memory alive was Paul Saettler, who was a foremost expert on the development of educational audio-visual technology, but hardly a Hollywood or governmental player, especially in the formation of the NEA AFI. Educators and the American Federation of Film Societies (AFFS), who protested the NEA AFI's direction certainly did not bring up the former ACE AFI in their complaints.

AFI Controversies

The original ACE AFI seemingly had no systemic controversies with the educators across the nation or with the public. The atmosphere was that of excitement and cooperation among educators toward the goals of the ACE AFI. They willingly cooperated in its mission with little real objection. It was a different situation with the

NEA AFI, however. Although a crucial part of the NEA AFI mission was education, the application of the educational program was what caused controversy. Challenges of the decision to create a school at the AFI when there were already a number of established and degreed film programs and a growing number of new ones was one pesky problem. However, the fact that the institute was creating its own program rather than trying to oversee all the film programs in the United States was a point that protesting educators missed. If this had occurred, backlash over the new AFI would have been tremendous indeed. The AFI was stuck in a difficult situation on educational issues. When starting a school and an educational program, criticism came, but when there were cutbacks in the AFI education divisions, there were also loud protests. However, the constant watchdogging of the AFI and the objection to the dropping of the educational services division by very vocal educators in 1983 probably preserved it as an essential function that could not be dropped.

The AFI-sponsored theatres, such as the ones in Silver Spring, MD, and in Los Angeles, contain one very important preservation element—that of providing an outlet for those who wish to experience films with a feel of the film society screening or the heyday of the second-run theatres. However, the AFI regular screenings are limited to only a few theatres in large or strategically located cities convenient for the AFI administrators—Silver Spring, Maryland, Washington, DC, Hollywood and Sherman Oaks, California. The AFI has failed to spread their mission across the country into the hinterlands. As the movie manager of one small town's renovated historic theatre, the author suggests that the AFI could help by developing a nationwide AFI affiliate program that would sponsor low-cost film rental programming that would continue the tradition of

classic American movies and movie going. The backing of the AFI in name alone might help pull in movie patrons in cities that are too small to bring in huge the numbers that completely support such a venue, but would like to cater to a niche audience. These theatres need help against a world full of gadgets that has increasingly isolated people from one another. First, the family was isolated by gathering around the television together instead of viewing a movie with a large audience. Next, the family split apart within their own home with multiple televisions in different rooms and finally, each person can download programming on their cell phones wherever they are. The reduction of social interaction has exponentially increased and this trend needs reversing. Paul M. Hirsch states, “One of the most important functions of the mass media in urban societies, in addition to helping citizens relate to the outside world, may be that they so effectively transport people ‘outside’ of themselves and thereby continually reinforce the power of our national culture.”²⁴

On the other hand, Toby Miller has made two statements about the AFI that are troubling. The first: “I laugh and say that the AFI is a joke, a public relations arm of Hollywood with minimal academic, cultural, theoretical, political or intellectual credibility.”²⁵ The second: “SCMS should follow that lead and start a ginger group in the United States to push for the AFI to get real and perform a serious function for U.S. and world screen culture.”²⁶ One wonders then, what exactly, would Miller and other naysayers have the AFI be? What constitutes academic, cultural, theoretical, political and intellectual credibility? Is the AFI not performing a real and serious function for the

²⁴ Paul M. Hirsch, “Public Policy toward Television: Mass Media and Education in American Society,” *The School Review* 85, no. 4 (August 1977): 849.

²⁵ Toby Miller, “In Focus: The British Film Institute: Who Are These People?,” *Cinema Journal* 47, no. 4 (Summer 2008): 121.

²⁶ Miller, 125.

U.S. and world screen culture? What is so objectionable about the myriad of programs that promote U.S. films and celebrate other foreign films in an exchange of values toward better understanding between nations? Is the AFI not protecting American ideals as the BFI or the Cinémathèque Française would protect British or French ideals? Is it not promoting, educating and reminding our citizens of the films that best represent, at least, generalized American ideals of democracy, social mores, equality and peace in living with our individual differences?

Motion Pictures and the Computer Age

In the past, entertainment film seriously threatened the place of live theatrical dramatic and comic performances that varied with each presentation, stage venue and actors, while documentary film threatened lecturers and the print industry as a new way to educate, inform and instruct. For moving pictures in the future, we can draw a comparison between the invention of the computer to the invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg, the subsequent printing of the Bible in 1456 and the boom in religious interpretation by individuals who challenged the wisdom of the clergy. The availability of the printing press, along with the growing education of more and more people, afforded the translation and acquisition of an affordable copy of the Bible to people in all countries. Concerning the translations of Luther, Alexander Carson stated, “This enabled every man to judge between the doctrines of Rome and those of the Divine word, and fixed a preacher in every house.”²⁷ The simile to moving pictures can be found in that there is a similar visual language among all peoples of the world—the smile, the frown, the embrace. The education of a growing number of students in film

²⁷ Alexander Carson, “The God of Providence, the God of Bible,” in *Providence Unfolded*, (NY: Edward H. Fletcher, 1851), 189, Archive.org, http://www.archive.org/stream/MN41371lucmf_9/MN41371lucmf_9_djvu.txt (accessed July 20).

production techniques and the advent of digital technology have destroyed the technical magic that once belonged exclusively to Hollywood films and filmmakers. Instead of holding on to the secrets and magic of cinema, filmmaking education has enabled “Everyman,” now “Everybody,” the ability to make their own magic, recording and uploading their own digital motion pictures to the Internet for all to see. The digital camera and computer editing is to the new millennium of filmmaking what the printing press was to the Renaissance. Like Alexander Carson’s “preacher in every house,” we now have the potential of a *scriptwriter/producer/director* in every house. The motion pictures of “Everybody” seen on Internet websites such as YouTube range from the simple recording of people doing everyday things (much like the widespread first motion picture by Melies of workers leaving a factory) to quite sophisticated dramatic narratives. These all compete online for attention from mass audiences, award grantors and those capable of awarding major motion picture deals, such as the half million-dollar deal given by Steven Spielberg to the winning filmmaker of the television series *On the Lot* that aired in 2007. *On the Lot* began with making an application on the Internet for the competition, which included uploading of the applicant’s own motion pictures.

The Need for Further Research

It is possible that the 1960s era proponents of an American film institute knew of the ACE AFI. Paul Saettler had begun writing as early as 1953 on the subject of educational audiovisual aids in his USC doctoral dissertation, *The Origin and Development of Audio-Visual Communication in Education in the United States*.²⁸ Colin Young came to Los Angeles in 1952 and, failing to secure a job in the Hollywood film

²⁸ L. Paul Saettler, *The Origin and Development of Audio-Visual Communication in Education in the United States*, (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1953).

industry, ended up as a student at UCLA. The possibility lies in that Saettler and Young may have crossed paths or that Young knew of Saettler's scholarship. Neither Saettler's dissertation nor his 1961 report prepared for the National Educational Association and published by the Education Department at UCLA²⁹ were available at this writing and needs to be researched. This is an important point—Colin Young was the Chair of the UCLA Theatre Arts department at this time in the early 1960s. However, Saettler did write about the ACE AFI, George Zook, Lorraine Noble, the Motion Picture Project or a national film institute in his 1967 work, *A History of Instructional Technology*.³⁰ This connection raises several questions that the writer is presently pursuing within correspondence with Colin Young. Did Saettler's work, in addition to the Antioch College symposium, spur Colin Young's AFI proposal? Was there talk around Hollywood of a new AFI when Young wrote the proposal? Did he have any connection to George Stevens, Jr.? Correspondence with Young has been established, but no answers are forthcoming at this writing, although there may be answers forthcoming at a later date.

This and many other questions and issues remain in the history of the American film institute. It was a long history of proposals and discussion before one was ever established. In this examination, many stories were shortened or left out altogether. Some factors and issues may even need revisiting for further contemplation. In recent years, more and more research has appeared here and there on the AFI, from different perspectives and points of view. However, these research findings stand as part of an

²⁹ L. Paul Saettler, *History of instructional technology: a report prepared for the Technological Development Project of the National Education Association of the United States*, (Los Angeles: School of Education, University of Southern California, 1961).

³⁰ Paul Saettler, *A History of Instructional Technology*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).

examination on another larger aspect of film history and not as a specific examination of the AFI itself. This is the goal of this researcher—to provide a complete examination of the AFI onto itself. This is only the beginning of what will be a continuing inquiry into the history of this American institution. Further research and inquiry into the future will follow Bob Gazzale and his administration of the renewed American Film Institute.

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