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THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION:
INGRAINED AND OBSTINATE IMAGES FROM DANNY BOYLE

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ABSTRACT

The film and play director Danny Boyle has produced a vital library of work which provides insight into the basic, but profound topics of disgust and money. These themes are wholeheartedly worthy of exploration. Disgust is completely a base reaction which can unwillingly dictate social interactions and human relationships; while the issue of money touches at the very core of a limited list of cultural universals. This makes both topics crucial to the clichéd, but worthy pursuits of understanding and relishing what it is to be human. Boyle has an almost sixth sense for choosing stories with these themes well sublimated into the plot, and he has a seemingly innate ability to violently explode that directed bundle of issues onto the screen with beauty and grace, all while keeping the viewer totally enthralled. Aided by his treatment of disgust and money, Boyle's films make for not only a fascinating and gut-wrenching spectacle, they also quietly ignite discovery about the world and one's self within it.

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Introduction: White Noise and Elevator Music

Danny Boyle's Background

The film and play director Danny Boyle has produced a vital library of work which provides insight into the basic, but profound topics of disgust and money. These themes are wholeheartedly worthy of exploration. This is because disgust is completely a base reaction which can unwillingly dictate social interactions and human relationships, while the issue of money touches at the very core of a limited list of cultural universals. This makes both topics crucial to the clichéd, but worthy pursuits of understanding and relishing what it is to be human. Boyle has an almost sixth sense for choosing stories with these themes well sublimated into the plot, and he has a seemingly innate ability to violently explode that directed bundle of issues onto the screen with beauty and grace, all while keeping the viewer totally enthralled. Aided by his treatment of disgust and money, Boyle's films make for not only a fascinating and gut-wrenching spectacle, they also quietly ignite discovery about the world and one's self within it.

The person who facilitates all of this was born in Radcliffe, London in 1956 to strict, working class parents. His mother, Annie, was a devout Irish-Catholic hairdresser and his father, Frank, was a manual laborer working at a power-station (Walker). He has two sisters: Maria, his twin sister, and Bernadette who is younger. In interviews, Boyle speaks of them highly saying they are brighter than he is and, being school teachers, they work harder, deal with more, but get paid less (Raphael 2). Growing up he found himself in competition with his twin sister Maria. Boyle has said his father used to compare their report cards side by side and that sadly the competition probably benefited him more than it did Maria. (Raphael 2).

It goes without saying that Boyle's childhood shaped who he is today and the work he produces, and so it is interesting to learn how religion seems to have been a molding force in his upbringing. Raised in a strict Catholic household, Boyle was also a choir boy and almost became a priest. For the love and sake of art, thank any possible intervening god which might exist, because a school teacher talked him out of it by explaining that he was simply not cut out for the job (Raphael 9). So instead of the priesthood, Boyle went to Salesian College in Bolton where he received a heavily Catholic, but very solid education (Raphael 6). Boyle's devout Catholic mother, combined with a faith-based education, has definitely contributed to how he views the world. In an interview he has said, "punishment is the key to Catholicism" and that the religion has led him to have a large capacity for guilt (Raphael 2). Perhaps these things have instilled a type of masochism in Boyle which propels him to work the grueling, hard hours demanded of any director and film crew (Raphael xvii). It is interesting to note that despite this robust religious foundation, Boyle does not seem to harbor animosity toward the institution and he has even used it (or the idea of a god) in his movies *Millions* and *A Life Less Ordinary*, and the play *Frankenstein* (and all have something a bit different to say on the topic). Since money and (at least moral) disgust are strong topics in Catholicism, this pupilage must have at a minimum enhanced Boyle's views on the topics and added to his capacity to use them in his work.

It seems that not religion, but story-telling was a dictating force on Boyle, and so, inspired by his English teachers, he went on to study English and Drama at Bangor University in North Wales (Raphael 16). There he directed his first play and loved the work immediately. After Bangor he landed a job in the theatre as an assistant stage manager at Joint Stock where he stayed for several years. In 1982, Boyle left Joint Stock to join the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs where he moved from assistant director to artistic director. Eventually in 1987 he left the "theatre scene" to join the world of television by landing a two year contract as a BBC Northern Ireland television producer. There he directed and produced seven one-hour drama films. Boyle has said

there are large differences between directing plays and directing for a camera and he credits his quick learning and success to various camerapersons and an Irish actor, Ray McAnally who took the time to show him the ropes. After his time at the BBC, Boyle directed a few other (now almost impossible to find) projects, and then around 1992 he began work on his first feature film *Shallow Grave* which received critical acclaim. Nine feature films, several awards, an Oscar, and one Olympic ceremony later, Danny Boyle continues to create, as he puts it, “visceral” experiences which leave the audience, “trapped in a dark room” with “no option to look away” (Raphael 15 & 43). Indeed, Danny Boyle’s films are almost sadistic in their unflinching dedication to the visceral. It is the very guts of the situation that Boyle puts on the screen.

The Critics

Despite Danny Boyle’s success, the critics have not always been kind. To begin, although RottenTomatoes.com currently ranks *Trainspotting* with an eighty-nine percent approval rating, when the movie was first released, critics were sometimes fixed on seeing the film as either pro- or anti-drug and gave little attention to anything else. Some critics missed the point completely, like the late Roger Ebert who wrote, “Does it lead anywhere? Say anything? Not really,” and others like *The New York Times*’ Janet Maslin who simply saw the film as, “Jubilant and fresh,” while not alluding to any kind of deeper meaning. Some of that deeper meaning may be seen in how the film handles both disgust and money since they take central roles in the film. Now the film is a cult classic, so it is wonderful to see that many people have come to appreciate its subtleties.

When it comes to some of Boyle’s films like *The Beach* (the filming of which was fraught with issues), very few critics found anything redeeming (Raphael 142-143). The movie was highly anticipated since it came out during the hysteria over Leonardo DiCaprio following *Titanic*. However, no matter how high the hopes were for this film, it just never made the critic’s

par. The best that Elvis Mitchell of *The New York Times* could say was that it was “Not a terrible movie” (although he took great pains to try to defend the names of those who worked on the film). Similarly, Todd McCarthy of *Variety* said it was, “Moderately compelling.” Although admittedly the film is not Boyle’s best, this could be because it is rank with subject material on disgust.

The Beach’s reception was better than how *A Life Less Ordinary* was received. This film was unjustly slaughtered by critics with Roger Ebert being one of the kinder voices saying it was, “tedious and contrived.” Owen Gleiberman of *Entertainment Weekly* was merciless when he wrote, “We’ve all seen movies that go off the rails. Occasionally, though, a film is so out of balance, so extravagantly misconceived, that it goes off the rails, zooms over the cliff, and crashes into the canyon, laughing all the way. *A Life Less Ordinary* is that kind of disaster.” Stephen Hunter at *The Washington Post* expressed similar sentiments when he said it was, “A failure so absolute and witless it deserves some kind of mention in the Hall of Fame.” *A Life Less Ordinary*, for all of its quirkiness is one of Boyle’s best works, in part because of the typical and clichéd things like its adorable script, amazing camera work, and excellent acting, but especially because of how it questions the issue of gender roles and male and female equality.

After the critics tanked *The Beach* and *A Life Less Ordinary*, Danny Boyle did two television movies, one of which was *Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise* which was well received. Being a television movie, it did not receive a great amount of attention as *The Beach*, but *Variety*’s Derek Elley still felt it was worthy of a review and called it, “sparky” saying, “There’s hardly a dull second.” Fittingly, the lesser known Kirsty Walker of *Inside Out Film* even wrote that, “For anyone who felt Danny Boyle had sold out with *The Beach*, here is a film which sees him back on form.” For many reasons this film is a beautiful piece of work which among many topics also touches on sexual disgust, making this film a wonderful representative for discussion of the issue.

The movie *Millions* was released a few years after *Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise*, and likewise received positive attention, although one would be darned to find a critic who touched on the motives for the main character Damian's wild generosity. It would be difficult to find that type of analysis in a critic's review though, but Roger Ebert comes close to a motivation when he said, "The boys are dealing with the death of their mother, and the money is a distraction." He at least makes a connection between the money and the death of the boy's mother. Another critic to get close to a deep motive for Damian's giving is Manohla Dargis of *The New York Times* who, speaking of the boy's mother, said that, "Her absence shapes their days and nights, driving Ronnie to cuddle the pillows in his big empty bed and sending his children deep into worlds of their own making, one shaped by pre-adolescent tremors, the other by ecstatic faith." It seems obvious that the death of the boy's mother is connected to their current actions.

Trainspotting, *The Beach*, *Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise*, *A Life Less Ordinary*, and *Millions* all contain scenes which stay fixed in the mind's eye well after having watched them. Pieces from each of these films strikingly unfold ideas about disgust and money which warrant further exploration.

Theoretical Framework

Auteur Theory and Neoformalism will be employed to examine disgust and money in these five films. To begin with Auteur Theory, it is an understatement to say that when taken as dogma the theory is completely unfair and negates the contribution, hard work, and vision of the hundreds of other artists who have worked on the films. It is too simple to say that a director alone is the author of a film in the way that a writer authors a book. For instance, Danny Boyle is known for working with many of the same artists on several of his films such as Andrew Macdonald (seven collaborations), Anthony Dod Mantle (seven collaborations), and John Murphy (six collaborations) to name just a few. The repeat use of these other artists definitely

accounts for some of the trademarks associated with Danny Boyle. However, just as the studios advertise actors as products to sell their movies, they now use directors to do the same, and perhaps there is some value in ascribing a larger part of authorship to one person over another, if for no other reason than to sell movies. Other than for the sale of movies, the assignment of authorship can be seen as a tool, in that it reduces the hundreds of people who worked on a movie down to a manageable (for the subject of inquiry) single individual.

To reduce the argument about the problem with and benefit of Auteur Theory, perhaps it is easier to think of music. It is similar to how Jim Morrison alone did not make up The Doors, but instead Ray Manzarek, Robby Krieger, and John Densmore along with Jim all authored the music; however, when Jim died, the band lost something vital and was unable to reach any amount of *commercial* success with their subsequent music. Though the remaining members still made wonderful songs, they just were not exactly the same and audiences no longer had something charismatic on which to fixate. A better example is Thom Yorke of Radiohead: Radiohead is not Radiohead without Thom Yorke, while Thom Yorke's music as a solo artist is also not Radiohead and the sound loses something vital without the other Radiohead band members Jonny and Colin Greenwood, Phil Selway, and Ed O'Brien. Further still, when Thom Yorke formed a different band, Atoms for Peace, with other equally talented band members, the product is still not equivalent to Radiohead. And so, it is slightly possible to tease out Thom Yorke's contribution to Radiohead and Atoms for Peace and develop a special admiration for his part within those bands. It also helps that he is the most broadcast member of these bands, the most recognizable, and commercially successful within other musical endeavors.

Maybe it comes down to the idea of the whole equaling, or not equaling, the sum of its parts. Either way, it is convenient to ascribe authorship to Danny Boyle since he was the guiding essence to these (or his) films, after all that is what it is to be a director, one guides the process and responsible for an overarching and cohesive presence throughout. It is in this understanding

of Auteurism that the term is applied to the point where it is justified to say “Danny Boyle’s movies,” just as one could also say “Ewan McGregor’s films,” while those same movies also simultaneously qualify under the authorship of hundreds of other artists. It depends on what technical or personal device within a film that one is fetishizing. If a person fixates on actors, they may ascribe the main authorship of a film to an actor, such as Patrick McGilligan did in his book, *Cagney: The Actor as Auteur*; likewise one could even assign authorship to a studio as Jerome Christensen did in his piece *Studio Authorship, Corporate Art*. For the following analysis the fixation is of course on the director Danny Boyle and no discredit is meant to the hard work of the countless others who have collaborated on “his” films.

David Bordwell’s approach to the study of film, called Neoformalism, will also be employed. Just as squiggles on a page make up letters, letters make up words, words make up sentences, etc...and one’s experiences add to the meaning of the whole book, so does Neoformalism approach film. It looks at almost everything that goes into a film such as production, equipment choices, and history in order to derive several types of meaning (such as interior, referential, explicit, implicit, and symptomatic meaning: see Bordwell and Thompson 62-65 and Sarris 354-361 for further elucidation) from a film. The approach takes choices like which lens the cinematographer chose, how long a picture stays on screen before a cut, the color of a costume, etc... and uses them to explain film meaning. David Bordwell and Kristen Thompson are the experts on the subject and it takes a textbook to do justice to shedding light on the approach.

To provide a glimmer, Neoformalism uses the technical aspects of a film, like editing, costumes, lighting, sound, camera angles, makeup, acting, script, time, continuity, etc... and looks at how the movie combines them to produce themes, and how from these themes a film, just as a book, comments on a subject and says something about the world (although granted some films do not have much to say). A major concept of Neoformalism is *mise-en-scene* which

literally is considered everything that, “appears in the film frame” (Bordwell and Thompson 118). Mise-en-scene may be divided into four categories: “setting, costumes and makeup, lighting, and staging” (Bordwell and Thompson 121). An example of setting would be everything shown on the screen that makes up the street alley where Renton gets hit by a car in *Trainspotting* or the isolated slot canyon in Blue John Canyon, southeastern Utah where most of *127 Hours* is set. These settings are not trivially contrived: someone took the time to decide exactly where the shot would be taken and they did so for a reason (while the director gave the go-ahead) which adds to the meanings that may be derived from a scene. If Renton was hit by an unusually tiny, yellow car in a tunnel, the feeling and emotion of that scene would be different than it is now.

To continue with categories of mise-en-scene, costume and makeup entail the choices that were made as to what the actors would or would not wear and how they would be groomed. An example of this is in *28 Days Later* where the choice was made to have Jim, the main character, dress himself in light blue/green scrubs instead of an open backed white gown, or dark blue scrubs, or even the “typical” nurse uniform with little printed teddy bears on the shirt. The makeup choices for that same sequence include Jim’s beard (which could have been longer, shorter, or non-existent), the light brown darkness all around his eyes, the pale lips, and even his haircut. All of these elements add up to visually convey someone who has just woke up from a coma.

Lighting is a third category of mise-en-scene and it can change how a color appears on screen, where the eye goes, and even the texture of objects. An example of this is the use of sunlight in *Slumdog Millionaire* during the outhouse scene where the young Jamal is relieving himself. The light comes in through the cracks in the wall, accentuating the wooden texture of the structure while also giving Jamal a three-dimensional appearance. The fourth category, staging refers to the movements and performances of figures in the shot. The most prominent example of this is an actor’s performance.

These are all elements that a director presides over. The picture on screen resulting from all of these elements helps to produce meaning in a film. These are often things which are not consciously thought about by the viewer, but even so, the brain absorbs them and takes cues from them to create meaning. Sometimes a scene is so well put together that it is an image the viewer cannot forget, even long after the plot has disappeared from memory. To explore the topics of disgust and money in Danny Boyle's work, obstinate scenes that best typify and examine the diversity of issues surrounding those topics will be examined. For disgust, *Trainspotting*, *The Beach*, and *Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise* will be studied and for money *A Life Less Ordinary*, *Trainspotting*, and *Millions*.

Chapter 1

Disgust: The Uncontrollable Recoil

“Know thyself” is an ancient aphorism still cited today. This is because self-growth and examination are hallmarks of education that breed tolerance and understanding. Some of the most difficult pieces of a person to understand and change are the parts that are unknown even unto the person themselves. These buried parts of a person can be unconscious, hidden, or even automatic. If one can tease out these facets of a person, then introspection becomes possible and self-growth may be facilitated. Disgust is one such automatic reaction and emotion that can unconsciously decide situations and personal interactions, thereby changing the outcome of one’s life. By understanding disgust and its tendencies, one may hope to gain further control over oneself, better comprehend social interactions, and promote personal happiness. Comprehending disgust can provide insight into the muck of everyday life and what it means to be the human animal. It can mean a more enriched and fulfilling life, one that is aware of the swaying power of such a recoil, which although strong, is not exempt from reflection and study. The instinctive recoil which defines disgust makes it an emotion that is prone to ignorance (Korsmeyer 51). The feeling is so guttural that disregard becomes safe and habitual. Examining disgust means delving into a world that is consistently passed over in favor of, and desperation to, feel something else, but by taking in disgust, one may move from this fear to fascination (Connelly 128).

In the most basic sense, disgust can be understood as an evolutionary adaptation which protects the self from possible contagions (Chapman & Anderson 300; Chapman et al. 1222; Korsmeyer 3; Menninghaus 1; S. Miller 2; W. Miller 2). There is evidence that the reaction has been co-opted from oral disgust which uses it for the rejection of bitter or toxic foods (Chapman

et al. 1225). Although this evidence exists, there is also evidence that disgust is culturally taught since the reaction (other than distaste) is not seen in children until between the ages of five and seven and was found to be virtually absent in feral children (Haidt et al. 111; Menninghaus 165). The idea that the disgust recoil is taught can help explain why the triggers which cause disgust are different around the world even though it is probably a cultural universal (Rozin, Haidt, and McCauley 648 & 650). Disgust has also not been found in any other animal besides humans, and so the biological function of disgust to help avoid toxic substances seems less important than its role in the social realm (Haidt et al. 111). It is at once a physical and emotional experience that screams for distance from the originating source, and is different from emotions like fear, anxiety, and horror because of immediacy and a sharp physical reaction (Kolnai 516). Disgust is also marked by a strong desire to study its cause and produces uncomfortable curiosity and fascination (Kolnai 525& 556; Korsmeyer 39). It acts as a demarcator alerting one to see the boundaries between the safe and dangerous and the self and other (S. Miller 6). Disgust can also be an indicator of what one is unwilling to accept as a part of one's self and what is considered completely outside of one's identity, while simultaneously exposing one's values and pointing to their anxieties (Kolnai 517; S. Miller 14).

Disgust can also serve as a reminder of our animal origins and place within the wild world (Rozin, Haidt, and McCauley 642). Some of the most highly considered disgusting acts such as eating, drinking, excreting, and sex all remind one of their animal origins, and those who do not pay attention to the culturally constructed ways of performing these functions are considered bestial (Rozin, Haidt, and McCauley 642; Elias 120). Perhaps disease, old age, growths, putrefaction, and decay are disgusting because they all remind one of their animal nature and the inevitability of death itself.

Disgust can play a strong role in moral decisions and it has been found that moral disgust produces the same facial expressions which oral disgust exhibits (Kolnai 563; Chapman et al.

1224). Its cringe can be a reliable starting point for making moral judgments, but the strength of the sensation of disgust can skew morality causing harsher sentences and irrational blame coupled with neglect for the context of the offense (Kolnai 23; Russell and Giner-Sorolla 328). There is even evidence to suggest that certain words arouse feelings of moral disgust when moral transgressions have not been committed (Plakias 264). It seems that moral disgust is another tool in the arsenal of cultural controls that aid in group cohesion and cooperation, but again the offenses that provoke moral disgust differ cross culturally and although the feeling of moral disgust can be a dependable red flag to wrong doing, it is not a definite confirmation of it (Chapman et al. 1226; Haidt 125).

A disturbing peculiarity of disgust is its power to enthrall. There are several ideas that can explain this phenomenon. First, Plato saw this curiosity with revulsion as a sign that a person has conflicting desires, which indeed disgust can be an indicator of such hidden wants, so this conflict in itself could be a reason for the strong curiosity (Korsmeyer 40). Second, if disgust is culturally taught, this attraction to the abhorrent is perhaps a questioning of that enculturation. The fascination could be seen as a person searching for a deeper meaning behind taboos and why base desires are forbidden. Third, there is extreme pleasure in the cessation of pain and unhappiness. The fact that disgust is such a strong physical and emotional experience could account for the pleasure one derives from staying their gaze and uncontrollably dwelling on the repulsive, since the feeling of disgust is caught in a flux of repulsion and magnetism, simultaneously drawing one in and expelling one out. Emotions cannot help but bob between discomfort and delight. Fourth, curiosity could be stimulated by the question of what it could have possibly been that caused such a strong reaction. Finally, one definition of pleasure holds that a pleasing object is one which causes intense absorption and continued attention. Both of these sensations occur with disgust which could provide for the pleasure that can be derived from

it (Korsmeyer 124). Of all of these possible explanations, one thing is certain: there is no denying the fascination that accompanies disgust.

Sacred Space in *Trainspotting*

Some of Boyle's work is so visceral that disgust is the only possible reaction. There are many facets from which to approach the topic of disgust. Disgust is at once an emotion, a reaction, and a fascination with something that could end the separation between you and I, between the self and other, between the sacred and the profane (S. Miller 17). Although it is argued that disgust's locus is in the five senses, its deepest root is of course the brain, for no other organ in the body has its powers. It is the brain that translates and puts a value on incoming information; it is the brain that decides what is sacred and what is profane; it is the brain that decides what is safe because it is mine and what is unsafe, but fascinating because it is yours.

The barriers between self and other, the skin and bodily orifices, are central to understanding both the sources and the receivers of disgust in some of Boyle's films. The least disgusting orifice, the eyes (the windows to the soul), will become a point of interest when exploring *The Beach*. The ears, nose, mouth, and genitals produce their own revolting essence, but are not really manifested in Boyle's filmography; and so it is the anus, the orifice in particular for which society has the highest revulsion, and it is shit in all of its glory that Boyle puts on the screen in *Trainspotting*.

The problem (or pleasure) of disgust in *Trainspotting* reaches its zenith when the viewer, who now, seven minutes into the film, has assumed the role of Renton and has adapted his point of view – a masculine world view. From there, the entire upcoming toilet scene can be reduced in terms of the most primitive and private views of the masculine and the feminine. Renton is preparing for war with himself; he is preparing to quit heroin. To do this, he barricades himself into his room, but at the last moment decides to go out and get one final hit. Enter Mikey

Forrester, who gives Renton anal suppositories instead of heroin. Renton shows his anger at the thought, but after little protest, penetrates himself with the suppositories; it is during his anal penetration that the viewer's disgust is perked. In this instance, disgust is generated because Renton has clawed his way out of his apartment and is now doing no less than emasculating himself through the anal penetration. This stems from the idea that the anal is sacred and that what comes out of it is profane. The anal is sacred because it holds no other purpose than defecation (W. Miller 100). The entire body is beholden to and reverent of it. It is perhaps the most personal and off limits area of a person's body. Renton is not just inserting the drugs; he is giving his most personal space away for an addiction. In terms of masculinity and common stigmas, whether anal penetration is voluntary or not, it is the epitome of surrender and domination. Furthermore, it is commonly held that to be penetrated is to be feminine and to be the penetrator is to be masculine.

 Mikey Forrester in this case has just penetrated Renton. This sexual power and symbolism can be seen in the mise-en-scene of the sequence. The room is essentially composed of the two men, a bed, and an end table with candles – the mood is set. The lighting is window inspired with the focus being on the back of Renton (casting heavy shadows on the walls). When given the suppositories, Renton holds them in such a position that they are directly over Mikey Forrester's genitals signaling the connection between the suppositories and Forrester's penis. Renton, outraged, looks at the suppositories and then while watching Forrester take off his coat and sit down on the bed, protests, "I want a fucking hit." Forrester while holding an unlit cigarette in his mouth (the post-coitus smoke) says, "That's all I've got man, take it or leave it." Forrester leans back on the bed (hips up and ready) waiting for Renton to insert the drugs... and Renton does. Then the most revealing shot occurs where all that can be seen is Renton's spread legs, his hand pushing the suppositories into his anus, while Forrester is perfectly positioned

between them looking up in amusement, waiting to light the cigarette (which the audience never sees him do, because the climax of the situation has not yet occurred).

During the next sequence, Renton almost loses control of his bowels and goes searching for a toilet, whereupon he finds the worst toilet in Scotland. Even though this is the worst toilet imaginable, the viewer is still (distressingly) calmed when Renton finds the seat and relieves himself. However, disgust here gets in the viewer's way of deriving any kind of pleasure from watching someone perform the simple human act of voiding their bowels (arguably the climax of the situation). The audience instead feels forced into the filthiest bathroom in Scotland with a drug addict who has diarrhea. Unthinkably though, this sequence contains beauty and infinite interest because it inflicts an inability to look away; art in this case gives this disgusting display a place to exist acceptably (Menninghaus 11).

At this point it could be interpreted that the whole of Renton's bowels are rejecting the defilement of his most sacred, personal space; and fascinatingly, Renton is so self-debasing that he then proceeds to literally go swimming in a tank of his own filth to find and recover the drugs (which shine like stars). This is the grotesque, the abhorrent, the repugnance of the situation: Renton's desperation. A few different vehicles are thus present: disgust is being provoked because of Renton's anal penetration, feces are being expelled, seen, touched, and swam in, and the viewer is identifying with someone who thoroughly encapsulates the meaning of desperate. Perhaps some of the distress felt in this scene is because the viewer may unconsciously fear that Renton's desperation may be catching.

There is an idea that disgust is a self-protecting emotion, possibly evolved to keep people instinctively away from that which can harm them by contamination (S. Miller 6). This need for distance from the contaminating object manifests itself in several self/other defining ways. Disgust sharply informs the recipient about present boundaries and possible boundary violations. Boundaries are a curious thing though as the violation or crossing of which can go in two

different directions. One direction being disgust which calls for distance and the other direction being intimacy which calls for the crossing of the gap between the self/other demarcation; perhaps the occasional fascination experienced during disgust is because the mind is also inquiring as to the repercussions of crossing the boundary and achieving intimacy. Since the movie viewer is constantly identifying with the main character, a type of intimacy is called for and so disgust bobs in between fascination and fright. This can be too close for comfort which is a running theme in Boyle's choice of cinematography.

Boyle achieves intimacy with his audience through the sharp violation of boundaries causing disgust and fascination. During most scenes where these sensations are provoked, Boyle chooses close, tight, in-your-face framing, shot with what appears to be a wide angle lens creating the feeling of a close, never ending expanse. The camera is as close to Renton on the toilet as the door would be to his face: the viewer is literally in the stall with him, in dangerously close proximity to the contaminants. This shot choice is also present in *Trance* while Simon's fingernails are being pulled out causing disgust, the end of *Sunshine* when Capa makes the final jump which begs for intimacy, and almost all of *127 Hours* causing both disgust and intimacy. And these are just to name a few. These filming choices blur the lines of demarcation and force full attention.

Moral Repugnance in *The Beach*

The Beach is somehow different from *Trainspotting*. In *Trainspotting*, Boyle was able to help the audience make a connection with the main character through the use of disgust, but in *The Beach*, disgust gets in the way of the viewer uniting with the main character. This could be in part because disgust takes on a different role in *The Beach*. In *Trainspotting*, the role of disgust is mainly centered on the anal, during one shot sequence, and other feelings of disgust are in relation to the other characters (such as Begbie) who are not the protagonist. In *The Beach*

though, disgust is everywhere, predicated on many different actions, and embodied by the main character Richard.

The Beach is a story about dystopia whose main character, Richard, reveals himself to be no better than the antagonist of the story, Sal, and in fact, is even perfectly suited to be with her. This is true throughout the entire film. The viewer watches, knowing his character flaws, waiting for him to go through the inevitable character change during the climax of the film and show his true colors, but Richard never does and he surprisingly ends up the same way he starts: a self-righteous, immobile, coward, immersed in a fantasy world which grows as the film continues. During this entire experience the audience feels an uneasy attachment to Richard. Watching this film and trying to adopt Richard's viewpoint is akin to wearing snake skin or some stranger's dirty pajamas. It feels gross.

This is because disgust is ubiquitous in relation to Richard. During the course of the film, disgust is generated by orifices, the mouth on two occasions, the eyes, the genitals, and morality. The audience's moral disgust and distaste for Richard starts with the opening scene where Richard essentially announces that he (like the Buddha placed "coincidentally" behind him) is enlightened, knowing and adhering to a philosophy of which the general public is not aware. Boyle chooses a slow sweeping camera shot of the Buddha and reveals Richard in much the same way. This "better than everyone else" value system is immediately confirmed when a merchant provokes him saying, "[you're just] like every tourist, you want it all the same, just like America," to which Richard cannot refuse the invitation to prove himself different and above the rest. To elevate and separate himself from other Americans, Richard contaminates his mouth and gut by drinking snake blood from a bunch a shirtless, eye patch wearing, Bangkokians who congregate in what looks like a cellar. This is the extent to which Richard is willing to go; he is pursuant of these values to the point of possible self-harm.

During the snake blood drinking scene, two colors are prominent: black and red. Everything has the hue of darkness with red being featured in three places: the lights, Richard's shirt, and the snake blood. These colors (along with white) are natural symbols, universally significant, with black being tied to darkness, night, and creepy crawly creatures like the snake, and red, almost always being tied to blood (whether in a renewing sense or a dying sense) (Winzeler 89). This color choice sets the scene on Richard and his desperation to be different. The camera views Richard through the glass of the snake pen putting the focus on what he is about to ingest. The entire scene is about Richard's willful contamination of himself. For the healthy human, disgust functions to inhibit the consumption of dangerous substances, but Richard, with something to prove, plows through his revulsion and drinks the blood (Korsmeyer 61). No longer is the *idea* of drinking snake blood disgusting; instead, Richard, having consumed the blood, *is* now the source and center of disgust, since he has been contaminated by it. This is because of the power of disgust to pollute by association. The snake blood, being an impurity, has transferred its toxicity onto Richard, who the viewer is now struggling to maintain boundaries with.

This orally disgusting scene, where the viewer is barely hanging on to its connection with Richard is immediately followed by another horror: bugs. Richard rents a room and he immediately looks under the bed where he finds the half dead bodies of cockroaches. The fear and repulsion of bugs and snakes can be considered another evolutionary adaptation. Many bugs and snakes are poisonous to humans and the avoidance of which would give one person an evolutionary advantage over another (Richet 56-58). All of these toxic things, the superiority complex, the snake blood, and the cockroaches are only three minutes into the film, the credits are still rolling, and these are the audience's first impressions of Richard with whom they are supposed to be able to establish an emotional connection.

Richard's second encounter with bugs comes midway through the film. The entire sequence – one shot – is just Richard's face as he chews and swallows a live caterpillar, but something is off about the scene: Richard is breaking the fourth wall. He is eating the bug while staring directly into the camera, unflinching, and his eyes are black as coal, hidden in shadow. By doing this, Richard is again, just as with the snake blood, voluntarily contaminating himself, except this time he is not doing it to prove something to strangers from Bangkok, he is doing it to prove something to the audience. This scene seems to genuinely communicate that Richard wants to be separate, superior, and invincible to desecration. He is saying that his sacred, separate self is above, even immune to the profane and that boundaries do not matter and contamination is not an issue; but, contamination is always an issue and the audience instinctively knows this. So, instead of identifying with Richard, the audience is instead put off and desperately seeks distance from him in order to preserve themselves. The viewer is not on a journey with Richard, but simply a voyeur witnessing the intimacy of his desecration through contamination.

Darwin argued that emotional facial expressions evolved because they once functioned as a way of regulating sensory intake; and that these ancestral expressions were later useful as a way of interacting in social situations (Chapman et al. 1222). The facial expression of moral disgust mimics the expression of physical disgust – it makes the nose curl and the shoulders lift. Physical disgust has in a sense been co-opted by moral disgust for further use in social situations (Chapman et al. 1222). It is involved in moral judgments and functions in much the same way as it does in the physical domain by working as an immediate trigger to expel or reject something that could be harmful (Plakias 261). Moral disgust, although not objective, still demarcates the safe from the dangerous.

In *The Beach*, Richard's actions trigger the viewer's moral disgust mechanism on several occasions making it harder to identify with the protagonist. Richard proves himself as slimy as

the creatures he has mucked with. One instance of moral disgust is midway through the film when Richard kills a shark and recounts the killing to his table of friends. Richard clearly lies and recounts himself as having a calm and collected demeanor, although it is revealed to the viewer how he truly reacted. By the end of the tale, even the viewer believes his lie as the once factual flashback account of the killing turns artistic to reflect Richard's lie. Another instance of moral disgust is Richard's reaction to Daffy's dead body and the mangled Christo. In both instances, Richard's reaction is to ingest the moment and experience it for what it is worth, as though these occurrences were for his self-growth and reflection. Christo is in desperate need of medical attention and Richard just sits down next to him pondering his own issues, unable or willing to help. Other examples of times when Richard provokes the audience's moral disgust are when he joins the group in moving Christo away from the community, during his final killing of Christo, at the end when he hisses like a cat to scare the girl who is running from the farmers rather than encouraging her to get away – ultimately causing her death –, and finally in his infidelity to Françoise and his apathy toward it. Richard proves himself to be a self-righteous, immobile, coward, immersed in a fantasy world.

To focus on Richard's mercy killing of Christo, the audience's moral disgust is particularly brutal during this scene. Richard is playing Dr. Kevorkian while doing a necessary evil for the good of the group. This necessary evil is particularly unsettling because, "it means that the boundaries that separate vice from virtue, good from evil, pure from polluted are permeable, and worse, necessarily permeable" (W. Miller 185). It is the idea that this horrible act is necessary which elicits the strongest disgust because it shows how vulnerable virtue really is (W. Miller 185). For how could it possibly be tolerable that such a horrible act be committed except that something so morally reprehensible be justified? To further complicate the morality issue, Étienne, the moral compass of the film, is never rewarded for being honorable. Instead the reward system is inverted and Richard gets the girl and the narrative's attention. It is perhaps this

“inverted reward system” that is the most morally disgusting for it reminds the viewer that the evil do prosper and bad deeds are rewarded, both things that people would rather forget and not be reminded of (W. Miller 185).

Another facet of disgust worth exploring is Richard’s sex life and his alignment and matching as a character to the antagonist Sal. Richard is so distasteful a character that he should actually be with Sal, and their sexual attraction and mutual compatibility are hinted at during the film. Richard and Sal are both the leaders of their group, they are staged together when critical decisions are made, they both are willing to sacrifice their morals for the sake of being a part of something different and they both cheat on their significant other with indifference. Freud and others have suggested that disgust has evolved to not only keep dangerous contaminants away, but to also serve as a boundary to keep people from indulging in unrestrained sexual activity with each other (this disgust can be seen in a child’s reaction to the idea of sex) (S. Miller 60; Menninghaus 10; Freud 151). Richard, who prides himself on being different and immune to disgust, has no problem with unrestrained sexual activity and cheats without protest, but perhaps his cheating is the actual romantic focal point of the movie. In the film, Richard begins a relationship with Françoise and has intercourse with her, but the act never occurs on screen. Richard has pursued Françoise during the first half of the film and all the audience gets to see is a kiss and naked chests, which could be chalked up to the film being modest, but this is not the case with Sal. Richard and Sal have an actual sex scene complete with moaning and post-coitus pillow talk. This is because they are compatible characters.

This compatibility is also mirrored in the climax at perhaps Richard’s most disgusting moment. Richard has just killed Christo for the good of his group and now Sal is posed with the same dilemma. She proves herself to be Richard’s true pairing by trying to kill him to save her group. At the critical moment, Richard attempts to turn the tables though and begs Sal to kill him in such a way as to test her resolve, but at the same time, he is also asserting himself above her to

prove his superiority. This superiority is unwarranted though as Richard has just done the same thing, and so he is being hypocritical – more than worthy of the audience’s disgust. Richard’s hypocrisy is morally repugnant not only because it poses as sincerity, making it harder to recognize the truth the next time, but also because he actually is being sincere and is not aware that he is being a hypocrite. This is truly disgusting. Richard is so corrupt that he believes himself honest. To add another disgusting dimension to the mix, Richard has sustained an injury to his eye, an area of the body that is normally the least distasteful. He has a burst blood vessel which interestingly enough is blocking the audience’s view to the windows of his soul further hinting at his corrupt nature.

All of these elements and instances, Richard’s ideas about self-grandeur, the drinking and eating of contaminating substances, his moral shortcomings and hypocrisy, and his similarities to the antagonist, combine to make Richard a source for disgust. The audience cannot help but separate and guard themselves against the main character with whom they are supposed to identify. Disgust is so prevalent and close at hand that boundaries are put up between the viewer and Richard to avoid contamination. This all makes for a disgusting and difficult to watch film, which although alarming and demanding for space, simultaneously draws the viewer in to watch the disaster of Richard’s life, like the scene of a crime or a nasty car wreck.

Sexual Pleasure in *Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise*

Another film of Danny Boyle that elicits disgust while also arousing curiosity, is the made for television film *Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise*. It is a film about the despair of pushing oneself to the limits in order to attain one’s goal, while in the final moments it turns out that life is stacked against oneself, and all the hard work and hard won ground is all for not. It is a peculiar movie because the protagonist is not clearly defined and it could be argued that it is either Pete or Tommy Rag depending on the view one takes. The entire film is shot too close for

comfort and constantly pushes at the boundary between audience and screen. Here again Boyle agrees to a wide angle lens which creates an expansive closeness that has the viewer wiggling in their chair begging for space and an ease to the constant nearness.

Disgust in this film is sexual and begins when Tommy Rag, desperate for another sale, visits the Spaniard with whom a conjugal encounter is always certain, but a sale is not. Tommy is an overweight, crooked-toothed, rude, swindler whose redeeming quality is sheer (almost sadistic) honesty, but only outside of work. Immediately upon his arrival at the Spaniard's house the two go upstairs in a giggling rush leaving Pete downstairs with "the Slow Girl." The editing then switches between the events of Tommy and Pete interacting with the different women creating a dichotomy where the viewer feels safe during the scenes of Pete and the Slow Girl and disgusted and desperate for separation from the scenes of Tommy and the Spaniard. It is as though the cuts to Pete are a safe haven from cringing and distaste because Pete has proved himself to be a sweet lad and even though a sex scene is imminent, there is no way it will be between him and the Slow Girl no matter how sensual she is trying to be – the girl is simply too far outside of a normal film's sexually acceptable world. The Spaniard and Tommy, although unattractive, are better candidates (everyone knows that people with handicaps are off limits). A sex scene feels like it is incredibly close to occurring because upstairs Tommy and the Spaniard are playing silly sexual games by dancing for each other, flirting loudly, and flopping up and down on each other while folds of flesh and unflattering camera angles appear. Every indication is given that the audience is about to see something gross, but only between Tommy and the Spaniard.

During this sequence the Slow Girl is often shot from below with the camera looking up at her giving her an important presence despite her disability. The shots of Pete however are neutral and commonplace, but with a slight Dutch angle showing him deep in thought and barely present. It is as though any advance the Slow Girl attempts will never be fruitful, especially

given the commotion upstairs. Then there is a final sequence of Tommy and the Spaniard where sex is fully imminent between them. Tommy stops dancing, jumps on the Spaniard, and moaning begins, but the shot has changed, and it is Pete and the Slow Girl having sex. The viewer is completely caught off guard here as emotions have been jumping around between sheer hilarity at Tommy's dancing, cringing disgust at his sexual encounter, and pity for Pete's depression. Perhaps it is this hodgepodge of emotions that facilitates the viewer being caught off guard by Pete "drilling" the Slow Girl.

Other than the jarring shock that the viewer is seeing Pete, and not Tommy having sex, there is also sharp disgust for their sexual act, but this disgust is marked by an uncomfortable curiosity at their pleasure. Here Boyle challenges the status quo by exposing that everyone enjoys and wants to partake in sex no matter how ugly, fat, or even disabled they may be.

Sex is a pleasurable part of the human-animal experience no matter how unattractive someone is. In fact, as Freud argued, these drives are so intense and biological in nature that disgust can act as a dam against inappropriate sexual activity (151). This implies that disgust could often be a signal that there are hidden or animalistic desires present (Freud 151). So perhaps some of the disgust the audience feels during this scene comes from the possible sexual arousal that could be experienced by the viewer...and why not? It is just sex after all.

Attractiveness and beauty are strange things, constantly defined in relative terms and relative to Tommy and the Spaniard, Pete and the Slow Girl are attractive (Kant 213). Further complicating the emotions in this scene is the matter that intercourse involves the breaking of boundaries, both emotional and physical, making it likely that one will begin to identify with the other person (S. Miller 105). This has the implication that since the audience is emotionally yoked to Pete, and Pete is in sexual union with the Slow Girl, then the audience is in close proximity to a disability (an aversion that laws have been passed to try to eradicate). Film scenes like this are vital to art because they beg the viewer for introspection, a process that can lead to

greater happiness and understanding of the world. Danny Boyle is not only being visceral and disgusting by filming this coupling, he is begging the audience's analysis of the situation, and he is saying that the fat and disabled are no different from the average person. This can be seen in the following scene where Tommy joins the crying, hysterical Pete in the car. Pete expresses his shame for the sexual act saying, "I shagged a slow girl," to which Tommy replies, "So what." Indeed, so what: "so we're different colors and we're different creeds...people are people" (Depeche Mode).

Further present in this scene are challenges that disgust makes to the idea of beauty itself. The Slow Girl is not only disabled, she is also overweight. At one point, she flaunts her breasts at Pete saying she has a sexy bra and did he want to see it. Most movies, pornography, and art in general portray the human body in such a way that disgust is omitted, so that the body is free of folds, excess fat, wrinkles, warts, and age. *True* nakedness itself is something that conventional art often tries to overcome (Menninghaus 70). Large, soft breasts go against traditional and aesthetically pleasing ideals, ideals which hold that virginity is appealing and the mature woman, capable of breastfeeding is disgusting as she represents a taboo on sexual and oral pleasure (Kolnai 544; Menninghaus 67). Boyle does not care about the taboo and he is demanding the audience's reflection on it, so he puts the image on screen to force the world to see that this can still be sexually arousing despite disgust (or once one has examined it).

In many ways, *Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise* questions the norms of beauty and sexual arousal. This is done in one way through Danny Boyle's choice in cinematography which creates a story that is told quite loud and emphatically with most scenes being composed of tight, close-up shots and editing dichotomies. This all creates a mixing pot of emotions that culminate in the viewer being caught off guard by a sexually disgusting, but arousing scene that solicits reflection and ultimately self-examination.

Danny Boyle's depiction and use of disgust shows not only some of the abhorrent sides of life, but also reveals the curiosity behind disgust that demands the viewer examine the feelings which go along with disgust as an automatic response to the offending stimuli. This curiosity can be seen in the fact that no matter how visceral the depiction or how disgusted the viewer is at the spectacle on screen, they still pay their attention to the images that are whizzing by. Curiosity and the pleasure of disgust keep them enthralled. Boyle is exhibiting pieces of life that are so base and encapsulating of the human condition that they demand disgust and further contemplation. This is seen in *Trainspotting's* Renton who struggles with sheer desperation and the need to change, *The Beach's* Richard who is so common a person that his self-defeating nature is a trait with which many people fight, and Pete's sexual drives in *Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise* which are so base that everyone has had to contend with such physical and evolutionary demands.

To briefly touch on other works where Boyle has used disgust, the film *28 Days Later...* extensively exploits the basic revulsion for corpses. Here he uses disgust for the corpse as a way to comment on social interactions. In the film, the zombies are actually people who have been infected with a virus called Rage. The victims of the virus are essentially walking vessels for an anger so strong that it incapacitates any type of human interaction other than violence. In other films like *Sunshine*, where the character Pinbacker is missing his skin and in *127 Hours* where Aron has to saw his own arm off with a bacteria infested blunt piece of metal, disgust could be seen as a simple desire to avoid disease (although Pinbacker's rant to play God also causes moral revulsion). One last example is Boyle's return to directing theatre which proved brilliant when he chose to retell Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, whose monster is the fountainhead of disgust. In Boyle's version though, it is not so much that the sight of the monster is disgusting, but rather the way he acts, moves, speaks, and drools. As the play progresses and the viewer comes to

understand the monster, the actors lessen these mannerisms and they become more refined and “normal.” Instead of slurred, fragmented speech, he begins to form articulated original sentences so that the more the audience learns about what disgusts it, the less it offends. The issue of the reverse cast is also noteworthy since it symbolizes how reversible the characters really are. This is because by the end of the play, it is Frankenstein who is the true monster since he has proved himself heartless having abandoned his creation and the monster is simply a cast out child begging to be loved.

Suffice it to say the theme of disgust is nothing new to the unconscious and Boyle’s choice to bring it to the forefront of awareness is a necessary step toward the growth of human culture. If the audience can get a cringing look at, or have some inkling of, their darkest most depraving, disgusting selves then there is little other choice than growth, improvement, and precious understanding. Ultimately, Boyle’s unapologetic rendering of the repulsive may be revolting; but, the magnetism of disgust demands that one watch despite all efforts to turn away.

Chapter 2

Money: Avoid the Boring Clichés about Cash

It is possible to spend an entire page quoting the plethora of adages concerning money. To spare one the boredom, it is sufficient to say that money is a cultural universal which almost everyone will have to deal with at some point in their lives (Zelizer 349). The fact that money is as prevalent a piece of one's life as ingestion, excretion, and sex makes it a topic of vital importance in understanding the human condition. Danny Boyle's choice to produce several films constructed on the topic make his movies an incredible addition to the compendium of art which comments on how money affects self-worth, a person's lot in life, the potential power they hold over others, and even happiness.

Money has psychological symbolism attached to it (Lindgren 5). In this regard money resembles language and is the basis for establishing certain types of relationships such as when money is borrowed or paid back, when goods are purchased, or when someone provides for another person (such as parents for children) (Lindgren 6; Crump 12). How money is used, the amount one has, circumstances surrounding the acquiring, spending, or saving of it, and virtually all things adjoined to it (emotions, thoughts, objects, and so forth) form the personal psychological meanings which are attached to money for each person (Crump 16-20; Goldberg and Lewis 54; Vries 81). This is part of the reason that money is such a hard topic for conversation – each person has a strong and individual meaning attached to it. The psychological implications of this are many. To begin money has an influence on one's sense of self-worth. This means that earning, spending, saving, etc... all have the capacity to alter one's self-esteem whether for the positive or the negative (Gardner 307; Waters 171). In fact, money not only stirs

one's emotions, but it also has the power to elicit actual physical arousal responses (Lindgren 9; Leary 635).

Another psychological implication of money is that it imparts power on those who possess it and sometimes even a feeling of invulnerability. Someone who has a lot of money is seen as a person who knows the secret to "winning the game of life"; these people are looked on as though they have a special knowledge that others do not (Vries 86-87). This is because money can buy almost anything and can give those who have it a substantial advantage in life. Money has the ability to take childish rage and tantrum and turn it into power and strength (Goldberg and Lewis 126). It can also take idealism and compassion and turn it into practical and effectual welfare to those in need. In the past, the rights to save money and have property were used as a tool to keep anyone other than white males away from power (Zelizer 354). The power that money imparts to its holder also has implications for personal relationships as it can have the ability to capsize equality in the most intimate of connections (Vogler 687). Money also has dire or stupendous outcomes on one's quality of life. Money gives one access to the best health care, schools, and living environments, as well as providing a means to travel or escape one's current situation.

The exploration and understanding of money is integral to living. Almost anything that can aid in its understanding is a vital resource. Danny Boyle's choice to use it as a dominant subject for many of his films makes his movies into significant reflections of life. In *A Life Less Ordinary*, Celine has it and Robert does not, in *Trainspotting* Renton steals it to start a new life, and in *Millions* it is a means for Damian to connect with his mother. In all of these films, Boyle does not shy away from the taboo topic of money, but instead uses it as a plot device to question what it means to be human and operate in a world where the cultural rules were set long before one was born. Make no mistake, money is important and has many cultural meanings ascribed to

it, some are strangely ubiquitous like money equals power, and some meanings are more subtle such as money's tie to self-worth.

Gender Jiving in *A Life Less Ordinary*

In *A Life Less Ordinary*, money helps highlight the story's lack of adherence to stereotypical (and culturally learned) ideas of what it is to be feminine, masculine, and a part of a "normal" heterosexual relationship. Money is able to do this because of the psychological implications that permeate the institution. One such effect is its ability to sway the balance of power in a relationship to the point where the dominant person in a relationship is usually the one who brings in the most money (this has typically meant that the male has had more power in relationships) (Klebanow and Lowenkopf 52; Zelizer 357; Vogler 687). In *A Life Less Ordinary*, Celine, the main female character, has the most money as she is the daughter of a wealthy businessman and privy to a life of affluence and privilege. Robert, the male lead, is a janitor at Celine's father's workplace and has just been fired. This flips the "traditional" power balance of relationships and puts Celine in the power seat...from where she metaphorically kicks power back to Robert during their meeting scene by physically kicking a gun into his hands. This flip-flopping of power and dominance occurs throughout the film until the characters are able to achieve a new male and female balance that is typified by their costumes in the final marriage scene where Robert is wearing a kilt (or skirt) to their wedding and Celine is wearing pants.

Celine's dominance in the beginning of the relationship stems from the fact that she has substantially more money and Robert is penniless, having just lost his job and he is being visited by a repossession agency. Money's ability to create a power imbalance is nothing new, even Karl Marx wrote about money's oppressive power and association with the authoritarian (Doyle 10). Robert's loss of his job also reflects on his current state of mind because Robert has just lost what stereotypically is a defining characteristic of masculinity – to make money and have a profession

(Yablonsky 30). Robert's current situation is dire and his sense of self-worth is in jeopardy as many see their money as an extension of themselves, just as being robbed or having one's property damaged is deeply wounding and seen as an affront to the self (Yablonsky 32; Lindgren 92). So from the very beginning of the film there is an imbalance between the characters, but one that is flipped from what the traditional, archaic gender roles are, where the female is supposed to be powerless and dependent on someone else for their sense of self and the male is powerful and independent.

This power imbalance and flipping of gender roles is also reflected in the color of the actor's costumes. Celine wears a baby blue coat, the same color that has been culturally assigned to men and boys, while Robert wears a light fuchsia colored undershirt (straight out of a box of Crayola crayons) with an almost floral patterned over shirt, both very femininely decorated articles of clothing. Celine's position of power is also reflected by the camera angle in the elevator as Robert ascends to the top floor to confront Mr. Neville who is Celine's father and the owner of the company who has just fired Robert. The camera views Robert from above and slowly zooms in on him until he looks up, almost as though he were staring straight up at Celine and her father. Ordinarily, Robert would be staring down the elevator doors trying to psych himself up to confront his ex-boss, but instead he is symbolically viewing his position below Mr. Neville and Celine, and hence showing the power disparity. Other instances of traditional gender role switching occur when Celine chops wood while Robert reads a romance novel, during the scene when Robert cooks dinner for Celine, during Robert's rant about just being the latest kidnapper, when Robert faints at the sight of Celine's blood, when Celine saves Robert from being shot and buried (the damsel in distress), and numerous other occasions.

The power of money and its link to self-worth are also glaringly present in the bank robbing scene. Celine has just lost her link to her father's money and is now essentially as poor as Robert. Her frenzy and panic are quite the fitting reaction as it demonstrates how linked

money is to one's sense of self. This movement of Celine as a character to the same power level and financial status as Robert is accomplished by what is typically viewed as discontinuity. Essentially, discontinuity occurs when something on screen happens that interferes with the sequence of events, breaking the illusion of film, and alerting the viewer that they are watching a movie (Bordwell and Thompson 236-268). In this case, during the credit card cutting and entering the bank sequences the two actor's positions on the screen switch back and forth from right to left and to right again. Described more completely, in the same sequence of shots, Celine is on the left side of the screen and then in the next shot she is on the right and in the shot after that she is back on the left. This is equivalent to seeing an actor drinking from a clear glass and watching the amount of liquid change from full to empty back to full, but instead in this instance, Boyle is using this discontinuity as a device to show Celine moving to the same power level as Robert. This instance of discontinuity causes the viewer to subconsciously mix up the two characters in their minds essentially for a fraction of a second, mistaking Robert for Celine and Celine for Robert which is whimsically fitting as the two characters are joining each other on the same level of desperation, self-worth, and now mutual respect. It is doubly fitting that the same discontinuity technique is employed a third time during the actors kiss following the robbery.

Ultimately, money serves as icing on the cake with Robert and Celine finding the lost ransom bag during the Claymation scene at the credits. *A Life Less Ordinary* proves to be a film about accepting and loving people for who they are while not relying on stereotypes to do the work of explaining a person. Money augments the plot by moving the characters from states of lonely power and hectic desperation to a union of equals.

A State of Fluidity in *Trainspotting*

Money plays a different role in *Trainspotting* where although it does create a power struggle among the friends at the end (with Begbie ending up in main control of the bag), it ultimately pushes the plot in a different direction than *A Life Less Ordinary* by offering the possibility of a new life for Renton and thus drives the climax of the film. Roughly, midway through the film, Renton decides to make a go of getting clean and tries to start a new life for himself, but ultimately is tempted back to his noxious environment by his old friends where they do a drug deal. They make £16,000 which would be split four ways, but Renton decides to steal the entire amount and "choose life." The four character's reactions to the money demonstrate its ability to arouse deep, primal emotions in people (Knight 13; Lindgren 9; Burnham and Phelan 113). Money has this ability to act as a stimuli and cause physical arousal sensations (such as pupil dilation and increased heart rate) perhaps because of its ability to purchase the necessities of life such as food and shelter and it is thereby tied to one's sense of wellbeing and self (Lindgren 9; Knight 13 & 22; Leary 635). This again speaks to the power of money and its importance in life.

The group's friendship ties throughout the film are unhealthy to say the least. All of the characters are almost completely unredeemable with the friends all betraying and stealing from each other to some extent. Yet given this, the film still spotlights how a group of people like that could stay together; it dramatizes how the culture one grows up in can powerfully lock them into a world of their own that is barely escapable. The inescapable nature of the group is best exemplified by Renton's comment that it does not matter what the person does or is like, their "a mate, so what can you do?" Their "friendship" and bond is further accentuated at the end of the film, during the hotel entering scene where the group crosses the road in a way that is reminiscent of The Beatle's *Abby Road* album cover. This album is such a huge piece of pop culture that it is doubtful Danny Boyle would have missed the similarity and was most likely using it in the hopes that people would make a parallel between the two images, thereby contrasting how people felt

about the bond of The Beatles with the bond between the characters in the film. Another curious mise-en-scene choice is the round hotel room, which brings to mind the myth of Arthur's Knights of the Round Table. The overarching similarities in these comparisons are that they are both instances of close friendships that eventually broke; in the case of *Trainspotting*, it was money that was the final catalyst for their disbandment.

During the final bar scene when the group is celebrating the drug deal's success, the money drives them apart and has a stimulating effect on all four members of the group. From Spud's dialogue, it is evident that the money has allowed him to exercise his generous nature and indulge in the simple pleasures of life such as a girlfriend. This is different from Sick Boy and Begbie, where money arouses their violent sides as they both threaten violence or murder to anyone who tries to run off with the money (this is also the scene where Begbie is at his most brutal). For Renton, the money arouses dreams of a different life and inspires him to betray his friends thereby making a situation where he could never return to them. The lighting in the final bar scene reflects this sentiment since the light is primarily coming from outside and seems to be the diminishing light of dusk – as though the sun is setting on their friendship.

From the moment the drug deal is successful, Renton sees the money as a whole and does not seem to accept that he will only have a fourth of it. This is evident in the narrative as soon as the deal is done, where Renton says, "But it doesn't last long, not like £16,000." He is clearly not thinking of the money as a shared sum (this is also seen in his question to Spud - "Going to buy a wee island in the sun?"). This is contrasted by Spud, who from his financial plans, seems to have immediately accepted that the money is to be divided, and by Begbie, who at least to begin with, acknowledges the fact that the money will be shared as he corrects Renton's overestimation of the money's purchasing power when he says, "What, for four fucking grand?" Once the bar scene is over and the viewer sees the group of friends sleeping for the night as Renton psyches himself up to steal the money, it is clear that Begbie has become possessive of the entire sum of money.

As Renton prepares to steal the money, he looks deeply into the mirror for the second time in the film. The first time this occurs is just before he quits junk, but Renton is looking at the camera through the mirror. It is as though he is not completely committed to quitting and is instead almost waiting for encouragement or some type of aid from an external source (such as the audience). When he looks in the mirror for the second time during the climax, he is only staring at himself. This juxtaposes the two mirror scenes, so that now, as opposed to the first time, it seems as though Renton is disregarding his entire environment (including the camera) and is only focused on what he wants – the hope and happiness which money can bring.

This is predicated on a somewhat disturbing assumption though, that money could buy happiness, but not if taken in the context of the film, especially since the symbolic meaning of money is different in different social contexts (Vries 81; Knight 11-12). For those of limited means, such as Renton, money can mean a deliverance from current circumstances or a way to independence and self-sufficiency, which all facilitates happiness (Vries 82). Empirical evidence shows that money can buy happiness, but not beyond a certain threshold (Compton and Hoffman 62). That is, once one reaches a certain income level, happiness peaks and additional amounts of money have no further effect (Compton and Hoffman 62). It seems that money can help those most, who have the least of it. In this case, money allows Renton to leave his past and start a future.

Renton's progression from the past to the future, or from choosing death to now choosing life, is visually conveyed in two of the last few scenes. The first scene begins as soon as Renton leaves the hotel with the money bag in hand; the camera views him, literally sideways, walking through an underpass. The audience watches him walk toward the camera and then without cutting, the camera flips over to capture him walking away from it while the money bag acts as a transition and facilitates the camera flip. This visually communicates Renton's journey from death into life. He is walking away from his old friends and way of life as the money itself tips

the odds in his favor, and allows him to move forward and away from the past into something new. The second scene that completes the idea of Renton's journey into life is the last one where he is walking across the bridge. Only the middle portion of the bridge is visible; the viewer cannot see the road that Renton came from or what road he is going to. For Renton all that exists at this instance is the liminal stage of his progress. He is in between worlds and in between identities. This is a beautiful rendering of a state of fluidity where Renton can construct a new way of being and approach to life.

Maternal Giving in *Millions*

In *Millions*, money takes a central role and provides a means for the main character Damian to understand life and come to grips with his mother's death and the world in which he lives. In the movie, Damian's playhouse (made of cardboard) is smashed to pieces by a bag of money that is thrown from a train. Damian believes the money is sent to him directly from God so that he can alleviate the suffering of the world by giving it to those in need. It is Damian's incredible conviction to give the money away that takes center stage during the film. Tangled in his desire to give the money away is Damian's need to honor the memory of his mother and what she has taught him about being good.

The film sheds light on a motivation for giving money. This motivation comes from an idea by Dr. Ernest Dichter, who through his research found that when people give money, they feel empowered because of their ability to do so (137). He even goes a step beyond this and says that in giving, people are "playing God" (137). That is, people look at their financial situation and either decide to feel empowered by giving and changing the circumstances of those who are less fortunate, or they decide not to give, and voluntarily withhold their power to help, which still leaves the giver in an empowered position because they could give, but simply decide not to (137). Dichter links this empowerment phenomenon to the parent-child relationship. He says

that in deciding to give or not to give to the parent, “the child maintains power over the parent” (138). This is because giving in to the parent’s will entails giving up the child’s power to do as it pleases, which can lead to the child either feeling a new sense of power through a gained skill, such as potty training, or feeling disempowered because of a loss of autonomy (Dichter 138-139; Knight 139; Goldberg and Lewis 49). So it follows that motivations and attitudes toward giving lead back to one’s childhood experiences.

In *Millions*, the only thing that is sure is that Damian is stuck inside his own head grappling with the death of his mother and the one way that he has found to deal with her passing is through religion. From the start, a link is made between money, giving, and the boy’s dead mother. The first mention of this is in Damian’s opening remarks where he states that, “Money’s just a thing. And things change. One minute something’s there and you can cuddle up to it. The next minute it’s gone. Like a Malteser” (a Malteser is a type of candy). This is Damian associating the lack of permanence of money with the absence (or lack of permanence) of his mother. The next linking of money, giving, and his mother follows these lines almost immediately when Damian finds a piece of mail addressed to his mother saying that she has been entered in a draw and may have already won ten thousand pounds. Damian then saves this piece of mail and eventually gives it to the vision of his dead mother at the end of the film. A final coupling of money, giving, and mother occurs several times throughout the film when the boys realize that if they tell people that their mother is dead then people will give them things (usually candy like the Malteser mentioned in the opening speech). Anthony, Damian’s older brother, proudly instructs Damian on how this works by saying, “You tell them your mum's dead and they give you stuff, every time.”

These themes of money, giving, and mother are all closely linked to Damian’s fervor toward religion. Damian looks to the Catholic Saints for advice about what to do with the money and the first thing he does is buy birds and set them free; thereby emulating Saint Francis of

Assisi who appears near Damian and says that Damian need not do what St. Francis did and could simply help the poor. The scene is accompanied by angelic music and bright summer sun which gives the image a heavenly appearance. This type of mise-en-scene is repeated throughout each encounter with the Saints. Other instances of the Saints helping Damian give are when Damian gives to the Mormons (whom he thinks are poor), during which he is aided by Saint Nicholas, and also when a Martyr of Uganda suggests that he give the money to fund the building of wells in Africa (this suggestion to build wells is also the basis for the ending scene of the film, which sadly is only a part of Damian's imagination). It seems that in the film, Damian's desire to please his mother is the cause of his driven need to give money away, and religion, through the Catholic Saints, is the facilitator.

Damian's linking of religion, giving, and his mother are also clearly seen in the conversation he has with his father while Damian is in bed toward the end of the film directly after his father pours the money out on the kitchen table. The conversation involves Damian's dad, Ronnie, trying to rationalize with Damian that the money is theirs to spend as they please and immorality does not enter into the equation. This is the beginning of the end of innocence for Damian and his introduction to a world which can be greedy and selfish. Damian tells his father that God says it is wrong to spend the money on themselves and keep it, and he asks his father, "Don't you want to go to heaven?" Ronnie replies that they need to look out for themselves because there is no God to do it for them. This is when Damian interjects, "But mum," and Ronnie cuts him off by saying, "Is dead." Damian is left to cope with the authority of his father asserting that there is no God, no divine calling to help those less fortunate, and ultimately, he will never see his mother in heaven, because heaven does not exist (things which in the world of the movie are proven wrong). Later, Damian's desire to please his mother through giving is finally shattered when he sees his father in bed with Dorothy and realizes that he, like his father,

must move on. This promotes Damian's decision to give up and burn the rest of the unchanged money.

The money burning scene brings the issues of money, giving, religion, and mother all together. To begin, the importance of this scene is hinted at when two separate instances are shown of Damian lighting the pile of money before the actual scene itself plays. Once the actual scene is in progress, Damian is shown lighting the pile once more, and then, there are at least thirteen different quick cuts of Damian watching the money burn while the sound of it burning in the wind takes auditory presence. The extreme sound of the money burning along with the multiple shots and angles portray Damian's contemplation and mental struggle with the film's issues. Of the many cuts during this sequence, the most memorable is one that is taken at ground level, between the railroad tracks, facing Damian. The camera's odd angle and line of vision which the tracks produce, coupled with an ever so slight Dutch angle convey how Damian's world is off-kilter and falling apart. As the flames flare, they threaten to burn Damian's pants while he stands watching them mesmerized. His concentration is then broken by the train which he dodges to escape. This is fitting because it was the train that brought the money and the trouble, and now it is bringing Damian's mother to sort everything out. When his mother appears, Damian expresses his happiness to see her and then immediately brings up the money and her letter from *Reader's Digest*, which also deals with money. During their conversation, his mother combats Damian's fixation on the money and giving, and constantly reorients him toward the things which matter most in life, like caring for his brother and having faith.

Ultimately it seems there are ample instances where giving, religion, and mother are all jumbled together in a kind of morality soup. Throughout the film Damian is trying to keep a connection to his mother by being a good child and giving in (i.e. giving away money). He hints at how the act of giving money can be motivated by childhood experiences. His choice to give away the money to those in need empowers him during a powerless time in his life. Damian's

loneliness and loss of his sense of place in the world are eased by religion and trust in the existence of his mother's soul. This is how in *Millions*, Boyle demonstrates that giving money can be a way of empowering oneself and how ultimately one's attitudes toward giving are tied to the parent-child relationship.

Self-interest is another motivation for giving money which the film touches on in a roundabout way. It does this by making Damian's giving away of the money suspicious and the other character's spending of it on themselves as "normal." Never is Anthony's spending of the money to have his friends do his bidding called into question, nor is his buying of toys and gadgets. It is only when Damian begins to give the money away that problems arise. This suspicion surrounding charity could stem from the fact that in the past religious giving was done for personal profit founded on the idea that charity (despite the motive) brought on the blessings of God (the fear of Hell has also been a motivation for giving) (Knight 137). It is also worth noting that voice inside oneself that cannot help but ask what the millionaire is getting out of their charitable contributions. Another reason for suspicion is the idea that there are no acts which are completely devoid of self-service. It seems that giving is always suspect no matter the difference it makes, and obvious self-interest, such as spending the money on oneself, is utterly rationalized.

Another instance in Boyle's current filmography where the desire to do good by giving away money is considered has to do with the movie *Sunshine*, where granted the issue is highly sublimated and metaphorical. One may make this connection of giving money away and the movie *Sunshine* through the central fact that the bomb the crew is carrying to reignite the sun and save the world is always referred to as "the payload." Never is the bomb called, say, "the big one," or "the explosive," nor is it referred to by its technical name other than when its composition is discussed. Instead the bomb is always denoted as "the payload" and it is the color yellow like gold itself – a once common form of money. In fact, gold is a thematic and reoccurring color device within the film. Of course it is the color of the sun, but also the space

ship, the space suits, and it is peppered in the same hue in minor props all over in the background. Admittedly, whether it denotes the sublimated issue of money or it is just a way to highlight the additional character of the sun in the movie, this reoccurring color of gold is a brilliant choice to constantly remind the viewer of the crew's omnipresent goal. One final thought is that "the payload" is the thing which will bring back the resource of the sun's functions, and what else is money's main function other than a ritualized means to acquire resources (Crump 4; Douglas 69).

It is plain to see that Danny Boyle's films often center on money, but that does not mean he is advocating for money to be the center of life, nor that it is the most important thing in life. It seems instead that he is stating money's importance without over fetishizing it. Each of his films on the topic has stunning insights into the institution.

To review Boyle's many dealings with the subject of money and see what conclusions may be drawn from it, it is useful to quickly mention money's role in each of his films that center on it. In *Shallow Grave* Boyle explored how money means power and how it can take an overarching presence in people lives and cause them to become wrapped up in something which misses the point of life. Money may be a means to a better life, but it is not the meaning of life. In the film, money rips the group's friendship apart and causes them to go for a desperate power grab, which if there was any doubt before, truly reveals the deficient character of Juliet, David, and Alex. In this case, money has the ability to reveal the baser nature in people and their capacity for selfishness and greed. With *Trainspotting*, Boyle accentuated how money enabled Renton to leave his toxic friends and start a new life. Here Boyle allows it to be seen that money is not an easily dismissed or trivial issue, but instead can mean the difference between two different types and qualities of life. This also speaks to the promise of something better which surrounds money and makes it something to be coveted. In *A Life Less Ordinary*, money is seen to have strong effects on a person's self-worth. It is no small thing that holding a job and earning your own living is liberating and creates a sense of self-sufficiency. This movie enacts how

losing one's access to a job or one's cash source can leave a person desperate and searching for their identity. It also illustrates how money influences the balance of power in intimate relationships and how joint investment in the care or obtaining of money can bring two individuals closer. In the television movie *Strumpet*, the focus on money is portrayed as a possible hindrance to true art and expression. It gets in the way of Strayman and Strumpet being able to produce something meaningful and genuine, while also skewing the true goal and purpose of their work. Certainly the acquiring of wealth should not be the goal of life or one's work as it leads to obsession and fixation (Vries 75-78). *Strumpet* does an eloquent job of reflecting how ideally, one's sense of purpose should not be subject to the demands of money. Additionally, the movie *Millions* has a lot to say about morality, giving, and the hypocrisy which some people are plagued with once money enters the picture. The movie does this all while simultaneously affirming how one's attitude and habits toward giving are grounded in parent-child relationships. To continue, it is a bit of a stretch, but *Sunshine* may have something to say about the necessity of money to a human's current way of life on Earth and that the sharing of the resources which it brings would improve the lives of everyone. The main tenets of the group's mission to deliver "the payload" could be interpreted as the sentiment that if everyone were willing to sacrifice something for the greater good then almost everyone's quality of life would increase. To finish, the Oscar winning *Slumdog Millionaire* dramatizes the wish that one's suffering in life will righteously add up to some good in the end, and perhaps even make one's life better. That is, the sum of Jamal's heartbreaking experiences with life eventually earns him, or rather gives him, the insight needed to win the money. Money in this film is something which someone deserves fundamentally – a logical hang up which arrests the ambitions of many people.

Throughout his career, Danny Boyle has successfully used money to comment on human interaction, purpose, and desires. He shows that money is a complex topic which reveals hidden and base urges within the psyche such as greed and the desire for power, but it can also divulge

human's capacity for altruism and charity. Boyle's ability to sublimate these issues makes them easier to contend with and so his works on the subject are indispensable tools to better understand one's self and the world in which one lives.

Final Words

Danny Boyle's work on the topics of disgust and money leave an indelible mark in one's memory. Whether it is *Trainspotting's* Renton diving into a toilet, the trail of saliva during Robert and Celine's kiss in *A Life Less Ordinary*, or a pixelated Richard running through the jungle in *The Beach*, the mind cannot let these pictures go. The emotions they elicit have made a deep enough impact to solidify a memory. Exploring these scene and films has meant struggling with base human reactions and inescapable institutions.

When it comes to disgust and Boyle's work, the viewer, although abhorred, is fascinated by the picture and relishes the chance to feel something so guttural and base. Through his direction and careful sublimation, Boyle has made taboo topics widely acceptable and even enjoyable. Susan Miller said it beautifully when she wrote that people look, "for moments in which boundaries are blurred or abandoned, moments that bring the outside in and cast doubt on the salience of the demarcated self" (16). It seems as much as disgust makes one beg for distance, it simultaneously draws one in while revealing hidden desires and unacceptable offenses.

The idea that disgust could be a pleasurable object for cinephilia could not seem more farfetched, and yet as described, *Trainspotting's* toilet scene, the epitome of it, has helped make the film a cult classic. This is not simply because it contains an outrageous scene, but also because that scene has so much to say about base human urges so powerful that one would sacrifice their most sacred space to satisfy them. In the case of moral disgust, *The Beach's* Richard is so engulfed by it that the entire film is hard to watch. In particular, Richard's "mercy

killing” is so sickening that it blurs the lines between vice and virtue. This violation of boundaries is unsettling and unforgettable because it reminds one of how muddled morality can become, and that notions of black and white, cut and dry moral judgments are archaic to say the least. *Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise* shows that human sexual urges can be so strong that they will satisfy themselves, sometimes without discretion. In the case of this film, Tommy Rage answers the audience’s revulsion perfectly when he says “So what.” Boyle’s treatment of these subject matters displays a boldface courage and determination for his art to reflect life and life to reflect his art.

The manipulation of the ritual of money in Boyle’s films is equally noteworthy. *A Life Less Ordinary* used it successfully to cite how empowering it is to earn a living and have money. The film also turned the tables and reflected on gender inequality through the careful manipulation of wealth. *Trainspotting’s* Renton illustrated how money can be the difference between an old and a new way of life. Essentially that money can provide the means for a way out. It argued the hard fact that money can buy a measure of happiness. Finally, *Millions* provided a psychological motivation for charity, the understanding of which could be exploited to increase fundraising and financial altruism. Money is something that must be dealt with in life and the understanding of the institution could help to tip the odds into one’s favor.

Danny Boyle’s films reflect that secret urges and hidden thoughts and desires are something common to all cultures. No one is alone in their disgusting thoughts and habits which, if sublimated, can become something useful and even prized. All of this implies that through careful study and understanding there is nothing shameful or wrong with what it means to be the human animal. Disgust can be a dictatorial reaction and money a feared topic of limitless repercussions. Given how difficult and omnipresent both topics are in life, it is a privilege and a source of joy to be able to watch someone else, like Danny Boyle, try to make sense of them.

It seems that Danny Boyle often chooses to make movies about characters that are, on the surface, as unremarkable as say a drug addict, janitor, bicycle courier, or hypnotherapist. He then shows that even the average Joe/Josephine is capable of the remarkable. He tells stories about drug addicts who leave everything they know and start a new life; he lets janitors land hot blonde bombshells; he puts bicycle couriers up against trained soldiers; he compellingly justifies a hypnotherapist's breaking of their Hippocratic Oath. "Ordinary," down-to-earth people make the best friends and colleagues, but they do not necessarily make for a visceral, two hour film that people are going to pay hard earned money to go see. And there is more to it than simply putting the ordinary into an extraordinary situation, because affecting that kind of character transformation would be difficult to pull off convincingly.

Appendix A

Filmography

- 2013 Trance
- 2012 London 2012 Olympic Opening Ceremony: Isles of Wonder
- 2011 National Theatre Live Presents Frankenstein (Satellite Broadcast Play)
- 2010 127 Hours
- 2008 Slumdog Millionaire
- 2007 Sunshine
- 2004 Millions
- 2002 28 Days Later...
- 2001 Strumpet (TV Movie)
- 2001 Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise (TV Movie)
- 2000 The Beach
- 1999 Alien Love Triangle (Short)
- 1997 A Life Less Ordinary
- 1996 Trainspotting
- 1994 Shallow Grave
- 1989-1993 Screenplay (TV Series) (3 episodes)
 - Not Even God Is Wise Enough (1993)
 - Arise and Go Now (1991)
 - The Hen House (1989)
- 1993 Mr. Wroe's Virgins (TV Mini-Series) (3 episodes)
 - Hannah's Story (1993)

- Joanna's Story (1993)

- Leah's Story (1993)

1990-1992 Inspector Morse (TV Series) (2 episodes)

- Cherubim & Seraphim (1992)

- Masonic Mysteries (1990)

1991 For the Greater Good (TV Movie)

1989 Monkeys (TV Movie)

1989 The Nightwatch (TV Movie)

1987 Scout (TV Movie)

1987 The Venus de Milo Instead (TV Movie)

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Spanier International Education Endowment Scholarship
The Mike Ross *WHTM-TV* Broadcasting Scholarship

Association Memberships/Activities:

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi
Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges (2010)

Study Abroad: *The Australian National University*
Canberra, Australia 2011

Judicial Board Member: *Lehigh Carbon Community College*
Schnecksville, PA 2009–2010

Professional Experience:

Brentwood Communications International Incorporated

Full-time Television Production Intern
North Hills, CA
Summer 2013

ABC27 –WHTM

Full-time Paid News Photojournalist, Editor, and Production Intern
Harrisburg, PA
Summer 2012