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VIEWING TRAMA: THE ROLE FILM PLAYED IN THE AUDIENCE HEALING
THEIR TRAUMA DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND VIETNAM WAR

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ABSTRACT

This thesis compares the eras of the Great Depression and the Vietnam War through the films of the time. Both eras were burdened with traumatic experiences for the nation and films looked for a way to heal that. The conflict during the eras in real life was portrayed cinematically in creative ways. They discreetly showed the audiences conflict in the films that they would then relate to the real life events. With resolution of the conflict or seeing how the conflict was handled in film, was able to resolve conflict in the audience's own life in a way. There was the sense of home that was taken on by these films. Either the desire for home or desires for something better to make the audience want to improve their own home life or realize they have to look for something better. The portrayal of authority, either good or bad, led the audience to continue their mistrust of authority in real life or start to trust them again. *The films Gone With the Wind, The Wizard of Oz, It Happened One Night, The Maltese Falcon, Philadelphia Story and Pinocchio* are films of the depression era that looked to heal the trauma while *Bonnie and Clyde, Chinatown, A clockwork Orange, The Graduate, One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest and Night of the Living Dead* looked to do the same during the Vietnam War. The main purpose of films of the era was to bring closure to the audience or to leave them with something more desired. If closure was achieved, the audience could leave feeling better about the traumatic time they found themselves living in. If closure was not achieved, this called for them to do something about it so they could reach that closure outside of the cinema. Films had the power during this era to have a cathartic effect on the audience and to provide resolutions to the trauma experienced by each seat filled in the theater.

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Chapter 1

Historical Trauma

Historical trauma is the cloud that loomed over the eras of the Great Depression and the Vietnam War. It is the individual trauma, national trauma and global trauma that were experienced during both eras and those traumas proved difficult to heal. This trauma worked its way into films at the time and films were able to express this trauma in a multitude of ways that appealed to the audiences experiencing it themselves. Films employ Freud's term "Trauerarbeit," which mean work of mourning to explore trauma by "remembering it and repeating it in the form of diagetically meditated symbols of loss" (Blake, 2). By representing trauma as meditated symbols of loss, all genres of film can express trauma in their own way. The audiences relate to different types of loss because to them, they all represent trauma in a time where they know nothing else. The trauma during the Great Depression and Vietnam War era does affect the films selected and how they present this trauma to the audience even if the subject matter itself is not necessarily traumatic. Historically allegory pairs with historical trauma because it has "acquired preeminence in criticism because the accumulation of historical experience related to cultural shock, slavery, repression and violence has shown its central role in the interaction of different cultural systems" (Xavier, 333). Allegories are seen throughout these films through characters or events that are representative of those during the era and being able to identify them is what allowed the films to have this cathartic experience on the audience. The trauma played out in the films were healing to the audiences watching because they could see the characters going through similar situations and if closure was achieved in the films, then the audiences would walk out

feeling that closure as well in their own lives. What makes film qualified to act in the area of trauma resolution is because they are consumed daily “by millions across the globe; either as victims, perpetrators or witnesses to historical trauma” (Blake, 4). These millions that witnessed the films then wanted to act in their own lives to end the trauma that they saw worked through in the films. Trauma affected the masses at these times as individuals and the nation as a whole felt it. To treat the symptoms of this mass trauma, society turned to the mass art of cinema.

Throughout history, its audiences have viewed cinema as entertainment, an escape and a means of expression. During times of turmoil in America though, cinema took on more important roles as an informer, a leader and a problem solver as well as the others it already possesses. Two eras in particular, The Great Depression and the Vietnam War, embraced cinema during the difficult times and audiences began to live through the cinematic plots played out on screen to gain closure on the difficult times around them. Although the times of the Great Depression and the Vietnam War have a multitude of difference, they are aligned in the fact that they were times where American society was put under great pressure. The two eras vary in the type of trauma they are experiencing, they vary in the type of enemy they are fighting against and they vary in the lifestyles being led at the time. However, these differences are insignificant when looking at the uniting factor of the two; they want the turmoil that society is going through to end. Everyone in society during the Great Depression and the Vietnam War is looking forward to the end of the era they are living in and are looking for a way they can help to end the struggles.

Cinematographers latched onto this desire and began cranking out films that would satisfy societies needs during these traumatic times. Films became a pill that society would swallow to experience an adventure for an hour or two and they would come out with hope for their society or with a lack of hope and a desire to change the way they were living. The films *Gone With the Wind*, *The Wizard of OZ*, *It Happened One Night*, *The Maltese Falcon*, *Philadelphia Story* and *Pinocchio* are iconic films of the Depression era that were seen by the majority of society at the

time. During the Vietnam War some of the iconic films were *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Chinatown*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *The Graduate*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest*, and *Night of the Living Dead*. When looking at important films of the era one cannot look back at them for their importance now, but put themselves in the place of the audience at the time and see what they would have seen when they went to the film. Living in times of trauma, the audiences would have interpreted the films differently than society today does and their interpretation at the time is the one that marks the importance of a film and its ability to influence the audience at the time.

Comparing films from each era it can be seen how the commonality of the desire for closure is apparent, but the noticeable differences mark how each era dealt with the conflict of their times different to reach this closure. It is the closure the films bring to the audience, but also how they films end to achieve this goal. The final scenes of the films leave the audience with the lasting message they will leave the theater remembering so the closure of the film had to be impactful.

When films reached their conclusions, they either brought hope to the audience and healed their trauma or they were left with a sense of hopelessness and confusion on what to do next. When pairing up the films *Gone with the Wind* with *Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Wizard of Oz* with *Night of the Living Dead*, *Philadelphia Story* with *Once Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest*, *The Maltese Falcon* with *Chinatown*, *It Happened one Night* with *The Graduate* and *Pinocchio* with *A Clockwork Orange* one can compare films directly that mirror similarities and difference in each other.

Although the pairings may seem unorthodox at first, it is these unorthodox pairings that bring out certain elements in the films that call for closure when comparing them side-by-side. The method of the thesis is to look at these films as one entity instead of different films from different eras.

Looking deeper at two things that were thought to be so different on the surface can reveal just how similar they are by trying to force them together. It may not seem that these film pairings go together at first glance because of how vastly different the films are, but they each have a uniting factor that brings them together across genres, eras and plot points. Bruce Tucker and Priscilla

Walton did a similar examination of the eras pre and post September 11th to discover the different feelings of the nation at the time. They viewed September 11th as a “‘fracture point,’ or a point from which people could look either back or forward and see sharp demarcations between ideologies, outlooks, and worldviews” (Tucker and Walton, x). September 11th was a defining moment in American history, much like the Great Depression and the Vietnam War. It was a time where trauma was at its highest and similarly to this time period, those of the Great Depression and Vietnam War also saw definitive distinctions between ideologies, outlooks and worldviews. However, when looking at the films to compare these eras, the audience sees these differences, but they also see the way films from both eras are able to impact the audience in similar ways and help them cope.

How does mirroring these two eras with film reveal more about them than studying the facts of the era itself? Films were a creative interpretation of the times by those that made the films. They were influenced by the times around them and even if it was not intentional, this influence was apparent in every film made during the time. It is the true feelings of Americans at the time, not some government statement or some historical insight. Sitting in a theater at the time watching these films was taking a look at what it meant to be living during these times. The audience was able to reflect on the films and understand what actions to take themselves and the actions they wanted to be taken by others to right the world should take. Looking at a pair of films highlights the differences, but also the similarities of the eras in the way conflict was handled, the way home was portrayed and how authority was seen during each era all to bring closure to the people at the time or to leave it open ended so that they could find closure in other ways. Films are screen captures of the era, frozen in the time they were made and always will be. The interpretations are endless, but the film will always end the same way, have the same lines and the same characters, which is what makes them qualified to define an era and important to analyze when comparing these two eras in particular. Overall the desire for closure is represented

in each film by the way they deal with conflict; the representation of home and the desire for it in the film and the way authority is portrayed.

So, why the two eras of the Great Depression and Vietnam War? Surely there are other times in American History that were just as traumatic. However, these two eras were unique in a way because the trauma was nationally felt as a nation and the citizens united to heal the nation and themselves. It is not about the economy or the war itself that makes these times traumatic, but everything that is a repercussion of that. To see the true trauma, it is important to look beyond the strict definition of what happened during each time and look at the emotional elements that affected the individuals across the nation. From looking at research from experts on each era, the phrases “the nation felt,” “the Veterans felt” or the “audience feels” are used in this research after gathering this feeling from previous readings of the era. The voices of the nation were expressed in these works as researches gathered personal accounts from each era and were able to capture the tone that the individuals in America expressed. Today we are not qualified to express the feelings of the nation without looking back on other research and accounts of the era because we were did not experience the era ourselves. Looking at books, plays, films and other media outlets that captured the nation frozen in history is what gives authenticity to the feelings of the country at that time period and lets us today be able to feel exactly what they were then and interpret their feelings.

Chapter 2

The Great Depression

Economic struggle, catastrophic unemployment rates and unfathomable living conditions are associated most commonly with the depression. Bread lines, starvation and the dispersing of families for any opportunity to work are the underlying consequences of the Great Depression as a whole and the economic downturn. The Great Depression was truly an inescapable time for many Americans where they were stuck between how they were living and what they could be living like with no way to get there. The Depression stands out among other periods in American history “because there had been nothing in the American experience to prepare its people for the dimensions of what had ripped through the fabric of a nation, and there has been nothing since that truly compares to it. It was the worst of times, a terrible, scarring experience that changed this country and its people forever” (Watkins, 12). Memories of the time are still discussed with a haunting tone as it is looked back on with difficulty. The measures taken to sustain America during the time were drastic and the foundations of a nation crumbled with every job lost and factory closed. Hopes were dwindling as bread lines grew and there was not much to do but wait it out as the traumatic scars left marks over all of those affected.



Figure 1: Next Time Try the Train, Dorothea Lang, 1937

Images such as this one became the focus of the lens during the depression era and truly captured the sense of trauma during the time. It was not only the poor at the time that were affected, but the middle class were also plagued by unemployment and had to scavenge for a job. In the image, two men and suites, clearly middle class, have to walk to search for employment while the billboard reminding them to take the train is just a nagging sense of the luxury they could have been living if the Depression never hit.

Grasping the severity of the Depression and the trauma that it created is gauged by the smaller events at the time that made up the bigger moments of the Depression. Although the statistics show the numbers, 2,294 banks going under in 1931 with deposits reaching \$1.7 billion and unemployment climbing to 12 million, they just show the surface of the issues people had at the time (Watkins, 55). The statistics are just that, numbers and figures to show how bad the depression was, but they do not express the sadness of a farmer in losing his land or a family sending their child to work because they needed extra money. These are the people that are part

of those statistics and each of their stories is one more of trauma that the statistics are really made of. One example of this is families on the move looking for work anywhere they could get it. “The Southern Pacific Railroad estimated its ‘railroad bulls’ had thrown as many as 683,000 transients off its box cars in a single year. At least 200,000 of the transients were adolescents” (Watkins, 60). These are the numbers that speak more truly to the trauma of the depression because it shows the trickle down effect of the number of banks closing and jobs lost. There were not only jobs lost, but also jobs that were never attained. Companies simply were not hiring and for work people took what they could get to provide for their families, which most of the time was manual labor in factories or fields. It did not matter how qualified you were or how much experience you had, “if you were looking for a job at Standard Oil Service Station, you had to have a college degree. It was that kind of market” (Terkel, 27). The market crash crashed the job market and in turn drove citizens deeper into the depression since they could not get jobs to make money and provide for their family like they used to.

The Depression struck hard and fast and although the strike may not have hit everyone directly, its affects were felt throughout the nation. “People took the measures of their era by using the crash as an emotional baseline, and it became the one event on which tens of millions could fix their worry as the full dimensions of the debacle slowly began to be discerned” (Watkins, 51). It was truly a unifying event for all of those affected and it did lead to a separation of the haves and the have-nots. The trauma during this time came from those that lost everything comparing their lives to those that did not lose what they did and looking to the government and banks for the help that they could not provide them. This caused them to rise up and unite as one against the financial institutions that betrayed them and led them into this slump. “Driven by the terrible imperatives of economic disaster, fear combined with anger to produce perhaps the truest expression of grass-roots activism in American history, and the story of the Great Depression is punctuated by moments when ‘the people,’ in one incarceration or another, seized and validated

their own measure of hope” (Watkins 15). The activism was a form of hope and a way to strive for a better tomorrow and they felt they could heal the wounds they felt.

During this time, American needed to look somewhere else for a source of inspiration to tell them that everything was going to be all right and they could get out of this slump. The cinema provided this inspiration and the way it fought against the Depression, not always out rightly, but in a way that spoke directly to the audience member to heal their trauma. “During the most abysmal days of the early thirties, as economic paralysis spread, snuffing out a shot here, a bank there, a factory somewhere else, movie attendance still averaged an astonishing sixty to seventy-five million persons each week (Bergman, xi). Considering the financial insecurity and the budgeting that families did just to feed and clothe themselves, spending money on the movies shows how important they were to the people at the time and their desire to save money just to spend a few hours at the cinema. Also with a smaller population and taking into account that there were less theaters at the time, this number is astounding and shows that movies had an unfathomable affect on the nation at the time because of the sheer number of the population it was able to reach at once. One of the main purposes of film during this time and what made films so meaningful was “because they depicted things lost or things desired (Bergman, xii). Especially during the Depression this became true when millions had lost their jobs, their home, their family and what they desired were the worlds of the films where families were whole, the depression wasn’t existent and people lived luxurious lives that society at the time longed for. Films were made to “satisfy mass desires” and that is exactly what they did during the time to placate the nation that was already anxious and upset during the time (Kracauer, 5). Since it was accessible to the masses, watching films was more efficient at sending a message of hope to audiences than any government speech or mass demonstration could ever be.

Chapter 3

The Vietnam War

The Vietnam war was a time of doubt in America, one where an unwinnable war was being fought and it seemed inescapable for those that lived in fear of being drafted or having their family members sent far away from them to their possible death. This doubt and paralyzing fear is what made every occurrence more traumatic because those involved did not know what repercussions it could hold and they were afraid to find out. War is traumatic regardless and this time may seem more obviously traumatic than the depression because of how the lives were lost, but looking at a micro level for both events, they were equally as traumatic. Just like the Depression, although the event itself was traumatic, the individual trauma was what made the time unbearable for those that were living it. The Vietnam War is thought of as just that, a War, with blood, shots fired and lives lost. What is ignored are the sons, husbands and brothers lost, the mistrust of the government who kept pushing to fight when there was no point and the war at home with movements pushing against the war that were being forcefully shut down. America was torn apart from those supporting the war and those not and then those acting upon it and those who chose to leave it be. This was the rise of a new era of revolutionaries and a way of seeing the world that clashed with other generations and the war was not only taking place on Vietnam soil, but on American soil as well making it traumatic for everyone abroad and on the home front.



Figure 2: Nick DeWolf, Why? 1970

Why is the major question asked during this time? Why are we still in Vietnam? Why are we even fighting in the first place? Why are people at home dying? This poster sums up the Vietnam War by showing that yes there are soldiers dying abroad, but that is expected, the people dying at home are the ones that are unexpected and should be acknowledged. This era was an era of loss and unnecessary loss at that. The Kent State shooting where four students were killed was one that tugged at the heart strings of the nation at the time because students are seen as future and the ones who are going to change the country for the better. This poster does put in perspective that whether you go to war or stay at home, the war affects everyone and lives can be lost by fighting in Vietnam or fighting against Vietnam at home.

This was a difficult time in American history where there were problems to be solved on the home front and it seemed like a waste of resource to get involved in issues elsewhere. Lyndon Johnson is the power figure most associated with the Vietnam War and the one that was the object of distrust for the majority of American citizens, “the war that defined Johnson’s presidency was not his declared ‘war on poverty,’ but rather the bloody stalemate that evolved

half a world away in Vietnam” (Pendergast, 33). What he allowed to happen in Vietnam for so long was what cause such a great divide in America between those that supported the war and those that were against it that lead to the traumatic occurrences of the Vietnam era. The government’s overwhelming involvement in the Vietnam War lead them to ignore more important projects at home such as civil rights, poverty, and Medicare acts that were just in the beginning stages of development and were more important to citizens at the time that needed these acts and projects to better their lives (Pendergast, 33). Although the economic status of the country was at a better state than the depression, the welfare of the country was struggling as citizens tried to better their lives through protests and bill ratifications that governments could not appease at once.

Some political figures became the enemy of the people at the time, however there were others who became inspiration to the people and help to show them what was right and to assist in bettering their lives by appealing to their individual needs. Adding to the trauma of this time, most of these political figures were assassinated at their peak and unable to carry out the rest of their work. With the sadness of John F. Kennedy’s assassination still bringing tears to the eyes of every American, his younger brother and Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. met the same fate years later (Pendergast, 62). With lost leaders by such cruel fates, the people had a mistrust of their fellow citizens for assassinating those in power that they trusted and that were there for them. This era was one of what ifs. What if we never got involved in Vietnam? What if we could stop it? Most importantly, what if someone else was in power? This was a real question to ask during a time when doubt was running wild in the minds of citizens, conspiracy theories were forming and activist actions were occurring daily. It was a time where citizens questioned everything and this is what made it so traumatic. Citizens lost the ability to trust, to have faith in the system and to have hope for something better and this is what was truly traumatic. “The loss of confidence in paternal authority figures, social institutions, and commonly held beliefs,

coupled as it was with a sense of powerlessness in both the foreign and domestic spheres, all had a costly and even traumatic effect on veterans and civilians” (Dittmar and Michaud, 7). This loss of confidence and power is what led some citizens to search for ways to feel this power again. They turned to activism to take back their lives and to turn trauma the trauma they felt into a tomorrow they could be proud of.

Antiwar movements and revolts to support a type of lifestyle were a fad of this era. Everyone wanted to feel like they were a part of something and that they could stop what was happening around them and bring the soldiers home. Some of these revolts were notable and made an impact in gaining support behind the antiwar movement. Other revolts were simply held because it was expected of the generation to search for peace and a way to bring that peace to the nation. As the war raged on, protests gained support as more citizens began to realize they had to act to end the war because there was no end in sight. Nixon took the reins on the War and his moves to send more troops into Cambodia in 1970 spurred outrage in America and led to protests that reacting to this trauma that they themselves became traumatic (Pendergast, 71). This showed the government's unwillingness to back out of Vietnam and willingness to push forward with war no matter the consequences. The nation felt like their voices were not being heard which caused them to push back against the government leading to traumatic fails of protests with traumatic losses abroad and to citizens back home, one of the most devastating being the Kent State Shooting. “On May 4, 1970, Ohio National Guard troops open fire on protestors at Kent State University, killing four students and wounding nine others. The Kent State Killings fueled additional protests –eventually prompting dozens of universities to shut their doors for the remainder of their spring terms- and through May and June millions of people voiced their anger with the widening of the war in Southeast Asia” (Pendergast, 71). The killing of those fighting against the war at home is seen as more traumatic because it brought the war back to America. These students were not sent abroad to war, but they decided to do something about it. However,

standing up for their beliefs and for what was right is what ended their lives. This was a trauma felt by everyone at the time that was now afraid to express their distrust of the government and their desires to end the war. The open fire could have hit any one and now everyone across the nation felt those bullets and they paralyzed them with trauma and the fear. The true trauma is the loss of American freedom at home, not freedom from other countries, but freedom of speech and action as bullets put down those fighting against the war and those fighting in the war abroad.

Films during the Vietnam War differed from those of the depression in that they were not more about hope and happiness for the future, but played on the American mentality at the time and embraced the conspiracies and mistrust of the government. They did not show a brighter future, but showed worse of alternatives to the present to make the audience realize they were not as bad off as they thought. They also indulged in opposing the military involvement in Vietnam, but indirectly considering the only film that was set in Vietnam during the era was *The Green Berets* in 1968 (Klein, 20). This discrete referencing to the Vietnam War was what allowed for interpretation of the audience on ever facet of films and let them either appease their minds with the medias interpretation of the War or led them to call for a change after what they saw on screen. This was a changing time in not only the style of film, but the structure of the industry as well. However, all that mattered to directors were that the audiences saw their films somehow regardless of the format or theater size or revenue the film had at the box office compared to other blockbusters. With the amount of films coming out during the era of the Vietnam War and the diversification of films, this called for an increase in the number of theaters to show theaters that could appeal to every taste. “The result was a steady 7.7 percent annual growth in revenues throughout the decade; with a subsequent boom in the construction of suburban multiplex theaters, or ‘mini-multiples’” (Cook, 4). Since there were more screens, more films could be made and more citizens could see more films at once. They consumed films to satiate their conspiracy theories and to see what could be if things were different in the way the government

was running or in how the war was fought. Since the freedom to do most other things during this time was shut down, films were away to express curiosity without having to worry about the government harming those on the home front. Films were a digital protest, shown to the masses to demand a change in the way life was being lived and to bring troops home without the physical damage of protests.

Chapter 3

***Gone With the Wind* and *Bonnie and Clyde*: Memoirs of the Past, Statements on the Present**

As has been stated previously, what are important about these films are the time periods they are made in not the time periods they are about. This could not ring truer than the films *Gone With the Wind* and *Bonnie and Clyde*. Both films take place in different eras than the ones they are actually filmed in. *Gone With the Wind* is about the trials and tribulations of a family during the Civil War, however the film was made during the Great Depression. *Bonnie and Clyde* is about bank robbers and their crime spree during the Great Depression, however the film was made during the Vietnam War era. For *Bonnie and Clyde*, “the cut and dry dynamics of the early thirties are replaced by a hodge-podge of social lose end.” (Bergman, 171). This is the opposite style of the thirties *Gone With the Wind*, which stuck to the cut and dry dynamics. Although, *Bonnie and Clyde* was a film about the thirties, this change in style distinguished it as a sixties film influence by the eras of the Vietnam War. One would think that because they are about different eras than the ones they are made in that they would be more revealing for their previously lived time periods. This is not they case as many of the events apply to current situations of the times and the audiences interpretation of the film is how it applies to their current life, not the ones lived decades ago.

What is unique about both of these films is that although they take place during traumatic times, they hardly ever show the hard times and instead focus on individuals of the time and how they are affected. *Gone With the Wind*, directed by Victor Fleming in 1939, showed the trauma

of the Civil War through the eyes of Scarlet O'Hara. Although the war is going on around them, hardly any fighting is ever shown and it is not until the war is brought into their own home that the audience sees any soldiers die. *Bonnie and Clyde*, directed by Arthur Penn in 1967, tells the story of the depression through the eyes of the outlaws Bonnie and Clyde and the Barrow Gang. No matter how many banks they rob or where they go, there are hardly ever any signature signs of the depression. They take from the rich to give back to those that are struggling, but there is no struggle to be seen on their adventures. These movies are more about how the individuals are affected than showing a nation destroyed in each film. By associating with individual characters, the audience can identify with them as they go through the film with them and work through their struggles together.

Conflict in these films is multiple; it is about the conflict going on in America with the war and the depression, but also the internal conflict of the characters whose stories the audiences are following. The conflict of the Civil War is the backdrop for *Gone With the Wind*, but it is the strain of the war that enhances the conflict back at Terra. The conflict is personal between Scarlet, her suitors, her family and friends, but the conflict is about the struggle to survive during this difficult time because everyone must look out for himself or herself. *Bonnie and Clyde* is a film about bank robbers trying to make honest money, in their eyes during the depression. The depression itself causes conflict for them as everyone is struggling to survive and looking for ways to earn a living. Without the environment of the depression, there would be no need for Bonnie and Clyde to commit their robberies and wreak the havoc they did on the banks and communities of the depression. The conflict is between them and the nation itself as authorities and the public congregate to catch them. However, Bonnie and Clyde and the Barrow Gang have conflicts of their own that occur while they are committing their crimes.

Gone With the Wind starts off with a perfect home with a perfect family where it seems like nothing could ever go wrong. As the threat of the war grows, so does the tension in the

relationships in Scarlet's life and more conflict arises, as the war grows stronger. The conflicts start off minor at the beginning with the overseer being fired for having a child out of wedlock. It escalates to Scarlet getting into a fight with Ashley on the day the war started. This sets the tone for the struggle of her relationships from there and the fight for her families survival during the war. The social conflict at first seems more important than that of the war. At the ball in Atlanta the triumph of the soldiers is spoken of, but that does not seem to be as important as who the men are picking as their partners for the dance. Rhett bidding on Scarlet even though she is a widow causes more conflict amongst the audience than the current state of the war did. Once the war moves closer and into Atlanta, the social conflicts fade away and it is more about stopping the war than anything else. During this time Scarlet puts aside her issues with Mel and Ashley to work in a hospital and help Mel raise a child. When the war is on their doorstep they have no fight in them and their problems are nothing compared to the dead and dying in the hospital. The war ends after Scarlet killed an officer that broke into her house and was trying to rob her. This brought the war home for Scarlet and her family and now that the war is ended, the conflict now switches back to home and not the war. Her arguments with her family are about what is best for Terra and insuring that they never have to return to the way things were during the war. She marries Kennedy out of false love simply to be able to provide for her family even though it harms her other relationships. When she does marry Rhett, it is an unhappy marriage filled with fights because of Scarlet's pinning for Ashley and inability to make a commitment to her family. Her conflict with everyone stems from the fact that she could never get what she wanted in the first place. She lived her life with the hope that Ashley would always want her and, but when she discovers that he never loved her, it crushes all of her hopes. She feels like this was something that was taken away from her in her otherwise happy life. This is where conflict stemmed from in the depression as well. People feeling that they had been robbed of something that belonged to them and their desire for their old lives that they were holding on to is what made them stir up

conflict during the depression. The conflict was not to create harm for others during the depression, but to make lives better for themselves. What urged this want for a better life during the depression was because “the era was so traumatic also because no one- not even the political leaders, not the ‘experts’ - really understood what was happening or what was in store for the world” (Parker, vii). This same sense range true during the civil war and the film, it was this questioning of what was going to happen and failure of others to know what actions to take that cause individuals to go out and achieve what they wanted because no one else would do it for them. Creating a better life caused conflict with others along the way, but if the end result was worth it there was nothing to do but fight the fight needed to get there.

Where the conflict in *Gone With the Wind* was brought to their doorstep when the war comes to the south, *Bonnie and Clyde* go out looking for conflict with each bank they rob. They were outlaws and robbing banks was the only way they could see to take action against the wrongdoings done to Americans during the depression. Much like the protests of the Vietnam War were had so that the average American could do something about the war, Bonnie and Clyde robbed banks so that average American could help heal the depression. Bonnie and Clyde reason their conflict by saying that they are for the little guy. It is seen in the beginning when they kick off their rampage that it is all started to restore the wealth to the working farmers. They leave a farmer and his family alone as they leave their farm, but not before sticking it to the government and shooting the eviction sign. With each robbery, the conflict gets more and more intense and the shootouts become more dangerous. They start off mild at a bank that is not even operating and along the way the hit more banks and even have gunfire at a bank. Although the conflict with the police is a large part of the issues they are facing, the other is the physical relationship between Bonnie and Clyde, mainly Clyde’s inability to perform sexually. He is only able to perform in the robberies, but not after in the bedroom. However, this pushes Clyde to go further in the crimes and stops him from getting out of the game because it is the only way he can impress Bonnie. It is

only when he knows that he will become infamous that he is able to please Bonnie sexually and they both agree to stop the crime. With each robbery comes a resulting consequence of a stand off with the police and with each shootout they get closer to the doom of the Barrow Gang. The conflict in this film shows that acting out against authority, no matter for what purpose has its consequences. The murder of Buck in a shootout shows the severity of consequences for acting out and becoming an outlaw. During the time of the Vietnam War where soldiers wanted to be renegades and those back home wanted to be outlaws, this film showed the negative side of this. The attempts of *Bonnie and Clyde* to rob the banks to earn money for their families is a way for them to “map and remap the nation through the frontier myth, with its violent conflicts between ‘civilization’ and ‘savagery,’ ‘city’ and ‘country’ (Lowenstein, 130). Death, jail and abandonment were all real possibilities for the out laws of the era that could be seen in *Bonnie and Clyde*. They were trying to find a way to end the trauma they were living in, but it ended up causing more in the long run. This film makes the audience ask the question, is it worth it? Is becoming a rebel worth the loss of their life, as they know it? Conflict is shown as creating nothing but danger for those that cause it and to survive, one must avoid it.

Scarlet and Bonnie and Clyde all long to be their own authority and do not want to answer to anyone. For Scarlet, she is able to achieve this goal later in her life because she has no authority figures left. Her parents are both gone and the government never helped her family out during this time. She is her own authority because she gets what she wants and answers to no one. Bonnie and Clyde try to be their own authority and they act as if one does not exist, but at the end of the day they answer to the police. They pretend they are untouchable and that they can never be caught, but the police always seems to catch up with them. Though they act like the authority when they rob banks, it is only situational and outside of their crimes they are not the highest power.

In *Gone With the Wind*, there is no presence of an overall authority, such as a government. Although there are members of the army that have taken on higher ranks that are present, they do not hold authority over Scarlet and the choices she makes in life. She starts to become her own authority in the beginning before the war. The audience sees that she has always had the ability to make others fawn over her and abide by her every wish. She leverages her ability to be charismatic into marrying up in society and talking other into doing things for her own benefit. She is able to acquire carriages for her ride back home and get others to work for her at Terra under her control. She lets no one stand in her way and she even marries Kennedy as a business move to fulfill her promise to herself that she would never go hungry again. After she makes this promise, everything she does is to make her life better and it is when she makes this promise that she decides she is in control and no one will make her go back to her life during the war. "Personal mastery is rare; it commands respect. But a self-possessed person does more than elicit respect. The one who appears master of himself has a strength which intimidates others" (Sennett, 84). Every move she makes has to be a step in the right direction. She earns enough money to restore Terra and settle down so that she can run the plantation. When she has the wealth and the power, there is nothing to stop her. She has a power that she holds over all of those in her life. To love Scarlet is to be under her power and to do whatever it takes to stay in her life. The sentiments on authority in this film are encouraging. It shows that during the depression, people can act as their own authority and not let anything else be taken away from them. If they take the power into their own hands, they can achieve what they want and get out of the depression with a better life.

The police in *Bonnie and Clyde* represent authority, even though the Barrow gang would beg to differ that the police have control over them. Where Scarlet's path succeeds and theirs fails is in the simple fact that they are involved in illegal acts that require the action of authority where hers were not illegal. Bonnie and Clyde do have the power to shame the authority figures though

and make them look like fools for the majority of the film. They make the authority seem like they are failures at their jobs because they fail at catching Bonnie and Clyde. Bonnie and Clyde seem to be one step ahead of the police at first. They cross state lines so they are out of jurisdiction for the state police and they find places to hide out where they are safe for a while. Even in the first shootout, they are able to escape unscathed and even kill some of the police. "The movie prefigures *Bonnie and Clyde* in several ways: its suggestion that the couple's criminal life begins almost as a game, its skillful depiction of violence and gunplay as a means of sexual excitement" (Harris, 37). It is a game of cat and mouse with authority with one always trying to get the upper hand. The one moment that shames the authority the most is when they tie up Frank Hannah, the Texas Ranger. They take pictures with him and send it to the police to show that they are better than them and they are invincible. They are taking matters into their own hands and trying to make authority afraid of them, however this pushes them to try harder. By shaming authority in this way, it makes them want to catch Bonnie and Clyde even more so that no one else will be shamed or captured by them. After this moment is when the police gain the upper hand, they are able to find their hiding spots and kill Buck in a shootout with them and take Blanche hostage. They get the upper hand and by killing and harming the Barrow gang, Bonnie and Clyde start to realize they have something to fear. The relationship with authority in this film is a game of cat and mouse. They try to hide from one another and sneak around to not get caught, but one eventually has to catch the other. It shows those during the war era that even though they may be taking matters into their own hands with the war, authority always has the upper hand. When matters at home get too out of hand, authority will act with more force and the nation should not let it get to this point or it will become more dangerous at home.

Home in these films is portrayed as something to fight for and defend. Scarlet wants more than anything to restore Terra to its glory before the war. She makes turn her relationships into business deal to do what is best for Terra. Although the audience only sees the home of Bonnie in

the beginning, every time Bonnie and Clyde rob a bank they are doing it to have a better life for themselves and their families. Providing for themselves and their homes is the primary goal of these characters and is the reason they act the way they do. All they want is for home to be a happy place, but the traumas of the eras they are living in put strain on their home life and it is their job to restore them.

Terra is the precious gem of the O'hara family. Scarlet's father was an Irishman who always told her that land remains no matter what and Terra is important. Although in the beginning Scarlet did not care much for plantations or the land, as time wore on she realized it was all she had and that Terra was more important to her than she had ever realized. Defending Terra from the war is just as important to Scarlet as if she was defending the whole south from the war. For her, Terra represents the southern way of life she has become accustomed to and no war is going to take that away from her, no matter who wins. This film shows that the war does not discriminate and no home life is safe. Scarlet sees the destruction of Twelve Oaks and the near destruction of Terra when she previously thought that the war could never touch her home. This also shows to the audience how the depression does not discriminate. The audience viewing this film goes in seeing this perfect family that lives in high society, but when they lose everything during the war it puts them on the same level as the audience during the depression. It shows that even those that thought they would never lose their home did and like those in the depression, they are starved and are trying to make money in any way possible to restore their homes and their life. Scarlet's restoration of Terra was possible because of how hard she fought to make the money and make her dream a reality. However, nothing is the same as it was before and although Terra is restored, not only does its interior look different but the life inside is different as well. The war and the depression change everything and the trauma will always be there. Although Terra looks beautiful, the heartache on the inside is still present. Terra represents the loss of her mother and father to the war, the death of her child in the home and the failed

marriages she had throughout the years. Terra becomes a symbol of the war and there is no way to escape it, no matter how hard she tries to restore it. This statement on the homes during the Civil War is paralleled to homes during the depression where Americans fought so hard to get their homes back only to discover they were destroyed or they were not what they remembered them being. Trauma ruins the home and returning to it and trying to make it better does not always mean it will be better. The trauma will be present in any home, especially the ones during the depression and there is no way to erase it from the home.

Bonnie and Clyde spend the entire film causing damage away from their home so that they do not bring the trauma they have created back home with them. However, all they do and every bank they rob is Bonnie's family back home and to create a future home life after their robberies are through. In the beginning of the film, Bonnie and Clyde visit a farmer whose home and livelihood have been taken by the government because he could not make payments. Seeing the loss of his home is what they fear the most and the loss of home is what sparks their crime spree. Bonnie and Clyde's robberies make them too mobile to have a home and to be able to settle down. When they start to get comfortable in one location is always where the police find them and they are forced to move again. These shootouts with the police are similar to a home invasion where the Barrow gang is minding their own business and then they are attacked. They never find a home on the road because each time they get close it is another opportunity for the police to catch up with them. Home is not seen as a place to start a life, it is seen as a weakness. Although it drives Bonnie and Clyde to commit their crimes, they never get the opportunity to start a home of their own. When Bonnie does reunite with her mom, she says to keep running and not to come home because they will be caught. They will never be able to have a home since they will always be wanted. It is ironic that the robberies they believed would bring them a happy home are the one thing that is holding them back from having one. After the death of Buck, Clyde has lost all of his family and Bonnie lost her family as well because her mom told her to never

come back. This shows how those during the Vietnam War, soldiers were fighting for a return home more than anything. If they were to act dangerously overseas, they may never see their home again. It kept them in line and tactful when they were over there so that they could see their families again. Acting out against authority at home was another way to lose this perfect home life. Disapproval of parents of the actions of their children in protests was one way to lose a sense of home. Also being hunted by authorities and being sent to jail for protesting took them away from their home. Although the fight was to bring troops home, acting out was not the way to do this and in the end was it worth risking everything they had worked for? Soldiers abroad stayed strong by thinking of something nice back home and it was a way to encourage them to fight hard and fight smart. Acting foolish like Bonnie and Clyde would not help them achieve their end goals of a happy home life, but it would help them be remembered.

Closure in these films leaves the audience hopeless as they watch the characters they instilled so much hope in abandoned and defeated. For a film during the depression *Gone With the Wind* ends more hopeless than most. Scarlet loses her husband after coming to term that she does love him instead of Ashley and she is left to herself to care for Terra. She abandoned by everyone in her life for the way that she treated him or her and now her only hope is to return to Terra because it is all that she has left. Although she still believes that she will win Rhett back, the audience does not know if it will ever happen. Rhett leaves Scarlet by saying “frankly my dear, I don’t give a damn” in regards to how she will live her life from now on.



Figure 3: *Gone With the Wind* (Victor Fleming, United States, 1939)

In the end of the film, Scarlet looks over Terra alone and she continues her life with the land, the only constant in her life. The ending is more open for interpretation than most because the audience does not really know where Scarlet will go on from her speech. “Open Story films generally pursue more engaging ways of signifying a somehow more honest or immediate fictional world. In fact, films with an inconclusive termination often raise problems that the author or narration present as unsolvable” (Nuepert, 76). The film leaves it up to interpretation because they want the audience to decide what paths to take next for themselves. The audience feels the trauma of Scarlet’s heartbreak, but is inspired by her drive to keep going. Her return to the land and to Terra is a message to those of the depression the return home is the most important thing they could do. For most of the farmers during the depression, they lost their land and their homes, but they have to go back to their land and their livelihood. It encourages them to go on and have the same strength that Scarlet has. The ending of *Bonnie and Clyde* is far more traumatically hopeless than the end of *Gone with the Wind*. Where audience interpretation still gives them some hope for Scarlet’s future in *Gone with the Wind*, Bonnie and Clyde’s lives are brought to an abrupt end when they are shot to death in an ambush by the police. Although Bonnie and Clyde’s lives come to an end, the ending is still open to interpretation about why it happened, what will happen with the other characters and how Bonnie and Clyde will be

remembered. They are brutally attacked and hunted down, as the ending scene is one the most brutal acts witnessed on screen.



Figure 4: Bonnie and Clyde (Arthur Penn, United States, 1967)

After their death, the screen cuts to black, not even a fade to black, as the film ends just as abruptly as their life did. The audience leaves with a bleak outlook on the future of the war, and the status of the nation. Bonnie and Clyde had become heroes to the underdogs and seeing them die was traumatic to the audience because they lost hope in the underdog. There closure in this film was made to shock the audience and leave them appalled at what they just saw. It gives two warning to the audience. One being that to prevent violent acts like this one from happening overseas, they must do something about the war. However, it also warns them from going to far, because if they are labeled as an outlaw, it could be them next. Although both films end with a bleak outlook on the future, they still encourage the audience to keep fighting and to finish what the films started.

Chapter 4

The Wizard of Oz and Night of the Living Dead: Genre Icons Turned Film Icons

Gone With the Wind and *Bonnie and Clyde* were iconic films of their respective eras.

Chances were that those during the depression and Vietnam War had viewed both of these films because of their popularity and impact they had on the audiences. Also during these respective eras there were cycles of films that gained popularity. These included musicals and gangster films during the depression and the appearance of a multitude of horror films during the Vietnam War. These cycles were so common that it was believed if you saw one film in the cycle you had seen them all. However, there were some that stood out amongst the rest and *The Wizard of Oz* and *Night of the Living Dead* did just that. They were able to capture the audience more than others in their respective cycles and gained a large following during the time. During the different eras, certain genres had a cathartic experience for the viewer.

Musicals were that genre during the Great Depression, while horror films seemed to do the same for the Vietnam War. Musicals were thought to bring hope and the make the audience feel like they were seeing a show, when no one during the time had the money to do so. *The Wizard of Oz* gained popularity because of this and became one of the most popular musicals and films very easily during the depression because of this. The success of musicals, filmed primarily by Warner Brothers earlier in the 30s showed “the pulling power of that dead model during the worst years of financial hardship” it was a universal genre that appealed to all and was able to gain a wide audience viewing to get its point across (Bergman, 168). Horror films achieved this therapeutic effect in a different way. The films were not happy or hopeful in any way, but they did show the audience a horror besides the war going on around them. In the theaters it was not

the trauma of soldiers dying, but the trauma of zombies attacking, like in *Night of the Living Dead*. Both genres gave the audiences something else to focus on besides the actual trauma of their time. For the musicals it provided hope and for a brief period of time made the audience feel like they were living a life of luxury again. For horror films it was about taking their mind off the actual war and giving characters other horrific events to conquer that the audience wanted to see defeated like they did the Vietnamese.

The Wizard of Oz, directed by Victor Fleming, made its premier in 1939 as a fantastical musical where the audience was easily caught up in the wonderful world of Oz. While *Night of the Living Dead*, directed by George Romero, had audiences in 1968 terrified of the world that laid within this film where people were coming back to life and no one was safe. Both of these genres were indicative of the time and put the emotions of the nation on the screen. *Wizard of Oz* showed a nation that was lost and recovering and needed the guidance of the yellow brick road to get back on track. “What happens in the depression movies is that traditional beliefs in the possibilities of individual success are kept alive in the early thirties under various guises” (Bergman, xvi). This belief in possibility was kept alive in *The Wizard of Oz* and they searched for the Emerald City and the success of Dorothy and her friends became the success of the audience as they watched. The fear encapsulated in *Night of the Living Dead* is the same fear that the audience is having about the war around them and those abroad making it back alive and being normal upon their return. Horror film, “is uniquely situated to engage with the insecurities that underpin such conceptions of the nation; to expose the terrors underlying everyday national life and the ideological agendas that dictate existing formulations of ‘national cinemas’ themselves” (Blake, 9). *Night of the Living Dead* take on these aspects of a horror film as it highlights the terrors abroad and at home as these individuals face their worst nightmares and make the audience face them right by their side. Since *Night of the Living Dead* was a homemade film, it is the average American’s view of the war and how they feel about it and their traumas.

The conflict, portrayal of authority and sense of home in these films is vastly different because of the differing genres, but these elements still reveal how trauma should be dealt with in each era through these iconic genres.

The conflict in these films is with an enemy that the characters unite against to achieve their goals and also an inner conflict in the case of *The Wizard of Oz*. For Dorothy and her friends, the conflict is preventing them from getting home and their inner conflicts with their character is what is preventing them from living up to their true potential. Simply surviving for everyone in the house in *Night of the Living Dead* is the main goal and engaging in conflict is what is preventing them from this survival. With *The Wizard of Oz*, the main conflict is with the Wicked Witch as she tries to stop her and her band of misfits on their way to Oz to meet the Wizard and get what they desire. The conflict is also inner conflict in the characters and gaining confidence in themselves instead of doubting their lack of characteristics. In *Night of the Living Dead* the conflict is between those taking shelter in the house and with the zombies trying to attack them waiting outside. In both films, the characters are trapped in a location or situation that they cannot escape and the conflict with the enemy or themselves is preventing them from their escape.

The conflict in *The Wizard of Oz* starts in Kansas and transfers over to Oz because it is an inescapable conflict that needs to be solved in Oz in order for Dorothy to return to her farm successful. The conflict in Kansas is with the neighbor taking her dog Toto and the struggle of the family farm. In Oz, the neighbor becomes the Wicked Witch and in order to save the family farm, they must all go on inner journeys to find what they need the most to make the farm successful and make it through the depression. This translation of real life issues into issues of a fantasyland made it easier for audiences to digest. Although the farm in Kansas showed a replicate of issues that were common in the lives of those during the depression, translating it to mythical characters made it seem as if the audience was not watching a movie directly about their issues and made it

more enjoyable for them to watch. Audiences were seeing their traumas of the depression played out on screen without realizing it because it was being told through the stories of a lion and a scarecrow in the mythical Land of Oz. The Wicked Witch is the depression itself as she causes traumatic events to transpire for Dorothy and her companions and they look to solve their own issues. The Wicked Witch, on their journey to solve their inner conflicts, continuously interrupts the personal conflicts that Dorothy, the Lion, the Tin Man and the Scarecrow have. Much like the depression would create endless obstacles for citizens to overcome when they were already struggling, the Witch interrupts their journey and creates more issues for them to overcome. The breadlines, droughts and unemployment were just a few of the obstacles set before those of the depression that were already struggling to find a way to provide for themselves and their families. However, the characters show that these conflicts make them stronger and that the Wicked Witch cannot stop them. Citizens that were overcoming the depression paralleled this and were coming out on the other side stronger than ever before because of the adversities they faced. It was only when the Wicked Witch was defeated when Dorothy and her friends realized that they were able to achieve this goal all along even though they had lost faith in themselves. Americans during the depression had the qualities of intelligence; courage and heart to work their way through the depression and defeat it like the Wicked Witch and this film gave them hope to do that. *The Wizard of Oz* gave the audience hope that the conflict resolution for the depression was inside of them and if they kept fighting, they would find a way to make it out. However, it was not always about fighting the depression directly and creating more issues for themselves, but earning their way out of the depression by having a high standard of character and working together with other citizens and government agencies to defeat the depression together.

Night of the Living Dead has a clear conflict with the zombies outside of the house, but also between the characters trapped inside as they try to determine what their right course of action is to survive. The conflict is two fold; it is conflict against a common enemy, but also

conflict within the home amongst the living in order to defeat the enemy. In most cases, fighting against a common enemy unites a group and makes them stronger, however in this case it tears them apart as different members of the group fight to be the leader and have others follow their instructions. The inner conflict between those in the house is distracting to the true conflict of the zombies attacking the house and makes it harder for them to defeat the zombies and get to safety. The conflict within the house shows how American's during the time of the Vietnam War are dealing with the conflict happening outside of the United States. It is haphazard and a constant fight between the casts of the house because they each believe that they know the right thing to do about the epidemic outside. Different anti-war support groups during this time had a similar model as they each would put on different demonstrations to show that they knew the best way to get the troops out of Vietnam. Each person in the house is looking after themselves and their safety instead of working as a group to unite against the common enemy. On the home front the enemy was the government because they were failing to bring troops home. However, the failed protests at home and the failed attempts to fend off zombies in the house shows how little planning these protests were, which caused them to have little effect in bringing troops home. The film shows that conflict during this time is needed to fend off an enemy and fight for survival, but to end the conflict abroad unity, as a nation was a must. The physical conflict in this film, both internally and with the zombies is representative of the Vietnam War itself because this film portrays a miniature war in itself between the house and the Zombies.

Authority in these films comes from an anonymous omnipotent source about the situations that the characters have found themselves in. In *The Wizard of Oz*, the authority is the Wizard himself. The wizard knows how to solve every problem and runs emerald city. Everything that the characters do is to find the wizard and to please him to achieve their goals. He seems to have powers to fix all of the problems and to give the characters exactly what they desire. In *Night of the Living Dead*, the media serves as the authority and voice of reason for the

characters. Although Ben in the house tries to take on the role of the leader, there is too much defiance of the other characters for him to be a true authority. The entire time they are trapped in the house, they are trying to do what the radio and television broadcasts are telling them to as the police serve as a physical manifestation of this authority as they are acting how the broadcasts are telling everyone to. Everyone in the nation is answering to the same media broadcasts during the scare making the media the authority for not just the people in this house, but everyone hiding out everywhere. This distanced relationship with authority in both cases is a statement about how citizens must act under authorities rule, no matter how distanced they feel.

The Wizard and the President of the United States are parallels as they both act as the overall authority of a land and are turned to when problems need to be solved. While the President was looking to solve the problems of the depression, the Wizard had to solve issues of character for Dorothy and her crew. The Wizard is a man of mystery and even the people of Oz do not know exactly who he is. He is distanced from his land and hides behind his curtain to create a true barrier between him and his people. He creates an illusion of power without truly possessing any power. Although he instructs Dorothy, the Lion, the Tin Man and the Scarecrow in what to do to earn their goals, he in fact does not give them what they desired. They never needed to get a brain, a heart or courage from him because it was in them the whole time; the Wizard just helped them realize it and gave them the authentication as an authority figure. When they do finally meet the Wizard, they pull back the curtain and realize that he is not as powerful as he pretends to be. He is an average citizen and there is nothing spectacular about him. This humbles the President in the eyes of the audience and shows that he is an average American that is also thrown into this difficult time of the Depression. The audience must come to their own realizations and find the qualities within themselves to get through the depression because authority cannot accomplish this for them. Although authority during the time is distanced, the

government still provides as much as it can for the country, but if Americans do not act for themselves the government will not be able to assist them.

In *Night of the Living Dead* media is directing the actions of the characters and becomes an authoritative force inside the home along with the police and government enforcers seen on the television giving instructions. Since authority is coming from a distant source in this film, the characters feel that they have the ability to take some liberties with the instructions given on the radio or television. They make decisions for themselves rather than what is being told by the media. Instead of making it to a safe house, they barricade themselves inside the home and this defiance of authority is what led to their ultimate downfall. The characters are lost without the media and need this guidance to tell them when the epidemic is over and where it is safe. During the time of the Vietnam War, media also played a major authoritative role because it broadcasted the war itself. It reminded viewers that the war was occurring and brought it into their homes. "As the US Military's saturation bombing, burning and deforestation of Vietnam in the name of freedom became public knowledge via the news media, as thousands of American men were forcibly conscripted into the military, many returning home in body bags, millions took to the streets to protest at their own government's traumatic distortion of the meaning of American freedoms" (Blake, 72). Authority in this film was used as a tool to help those in the house, but they did not obey it when necessary. Although the government's presence is felt in people's homes with the constant reminder of the war on the television, acting out against the government was a more popular activity during the time than listening to their instructions and updates about the war. While the government was trying their best to end the war, Americans had ideas of their own and took different paths to ending the war with their protests. The film shows that even though authority may be brought into the home through the television, it is still too distant to make an impact on citizens and it gives them free reign to take their own paths.

During both of these films, the majority of the time is spent in an alternate home that is not their own, but they must claim it as their home because they cannot escape. In *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy is stranded in Oz until she can find her way back home. However, family members and friends make their way into Oz making it her surrogate home. The entire journey in the film is Dorothy's journey to get home to her struggling family farm. The home in *Night of the Living Dead* is nothing more than a safe house. The characters have invaded some one else's home when they were displaced by the zombie attack, but they must make it their own because they have no other option. The sense of home in these films and the desire to return to their true home is a display of the importance of home during each era and what it means to come home after a long journey such as the depression or the war.

Dorothy's true home in the film is her family farm in Kansas. Like many farms during the depression, it was hit hard by economic struggles as well as drought. However, it is a home filled with love and the family supports each other during this difficult time. When Dorothy wakes up in Oz, her journey from there on out is to find a way back home to her loving family. By her friends and family members appearing in Oz, the film shows that although family members had to leave home during the time of the depression, they always carried the thoughts of their families with them and all of the action they did while they were gone were for them. Dorothy assisting her family members in guises as the Lion, Scarecrow and Tin Man in Oz shows the selflessness of those during the depression as they looked to provide for their families to create a better home. Oz becomes her home away from home; since it is in her mind it is created entirely by herself as she dreams of a better future for her home in Kansas. By having her family earn the qualities they desire in Oz, she hopes they can do so back home and that by possessing these qualities, they will be able to find success on the farm. This film truly shows that returning home can heal trauma and no matter how traumatic the depression has become, one can always return home and will be welcomed by those that love them. The mantra Dorothy repeats "there is

no place like home” shows the audiences that not matter where they go or how hard times get, their lives at home will be there to make them happy and feel loved. Home is the one place where the depression cannot touch them because at home there is no trauma and at home the depression does not exist because all a person needs to get through the depression is a happy and healthy home.

All of the characters in *Night of the Living Dead* spend their time in someone else’s home and the audience never gets to see the home they came from. The audience knows about Barbara’s home life and even a bit about Ben’s and the other characters are with their families or the one’s they love. Although they are not in their own homes, they brought the important parts with them for those that could and those that had not family with them had none. Taking over someone’s home during this zombie war shows a fear of returning home from the Vietnam War for soldiers and seeing that their homes have changed and others are in their place. Or if they were to pass away abroad, coming back as a zombie is similar to returning home and seeing how those around them have moved on without them. Although they are not in their home during this film, the characters still have a desire to protect it simply to protect themselves. The Vietnam War was a time where being at home, any home, in America meant that you were already safer than those that were drafted. The people in this home were lucky to escape the war outside and find a shelter for the chance of survival, but no matter what home they came from or what home they are currently barricaded in, there is no sense of safety. Home has to be protected, much like those on the home front felt that they had something to protect at home and fought the war with protests abroad like they are fighting the zombies outside their door. No one in the film and no one in America at the time could feel safe until the war was over. Home during this time was traumatic regardless of the fact that the war was taking part on Vietnam soil. However, home is worth protecting, home must be kept safe so that America does not turn into a war zone itself.

Closure in *The Wizard of Oz* and *Night of the Living Dead* is achieved, but *The Wizard of Oz* has a hopeful ending for its audience while *Night of the Living Dead* has a discouraging ending that leaves the audience shocked and disappointed. The two differing genres operate in different ways to achieve their closure and to leave the audience in a way each film genre sees fit. “The more classical genre films constantly reaffirm viewer expectations, even if they play at threatening the eventual likelihood of the typical ending; many other less formulaic films, however, really do overturn our expectations and even baffle us” (Neupert, 31). *The Wizard of Oz* is the more classical of the genre and works to instill hope in its viewers and give them sound evidence for their beliefs going into the films, while *Night of the Living Dead* looks for this shock value and wants audiences to call into question what they believed going into the film and what they will continue to believe after leaving. In *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy is able to solve all of the problems in Oz by helping all of the characters get from the Wizard what they came for. The Lion gets his courage, the Tin Man his heart and the Scarecrow got his brain. After they melted the Wicked Witch they realized that all of theses qualities were in them all along and it only took overcoming a challenge to get them to come out. It is only at this time that she is able to return home to heal her family. When she comes out of her daze and finds her self back in Kansas, her family is watching over her and they will be able to grow from there and fix the farm together.



Figure 5: *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, United States, 1939)

This closure is hopeful, it shows that when the depression ends, the world could be like Oz, but there is still no place like home. The luxury of the Emerald City may be something that the audience strives for, but in the end it was still not better than the traumatic depression riddled home that the audience have to go back to after the movie is over. The closure in *Night of the Living Dead* does not have the same sentiment about how great the audiences current lives are, instead it shows that everything they are doing and fighting for is pointless. The film ends with, as far as this house goes, the zombies winning. They have all been defeated besides Ben as he stands there alone looking for a way to defend himself. When he sees the police he has a sense of hope, hope that they war is over, hope that he will be safe when he goes outside of the home. However, he is mistaken for a zombie and killed then burned along with the rest of the zombies that he spent the whole film fending off. Mistaken for what he spent the whole film protecting himself from, killed in the home he spent the whole film protecting.



Figure 6: Night of the Living Dead (George Romero, United States, 1968)

The irony of the end of the film is that the police that were trained to protect him kill him. It is a traumatic because he made it to the end; he survived the war and then was killed at its end because he was mistaken for a zombie when they had all been defeated. It shows the audience that they are fighting for nothing because in the end, they will be defeated. This is a call for them to end their protests against the war because authority will put them down. Those in the house in the film defied the wishes of the authority on television and they were punished, those in the audience will be treated the same way if they continue to defy authority. This quick and blunt ending to this film has the audience walk out in shock about the traumatic ending and they have no time to recuperate after its ending. Closure for the depression is hopeful in most cases because there is more hope for the future and what it could be like with a little bit of work. However,

during the Vietnam War, the closure is hopeless because bringing the troops home and ending the war seems hopeless. Fighting for this cause has not reaped any rewards at the time the film was released and this film is an encouragement for the audience to lose that hope even further. *The Wizard of Oz* heals the trauma of the depression, while *Night of the Living Dead* shows that things could get more traumatic if they continue to live how they are.

Chapter 5

The Maltese Falcon and Chinatown: Film Noir Across the Eras

that things could get more traumatic if they continue to live how they are.

The cycling of the depression era continued, but instead of the musical cycle in *Wizard of Oz*, *The Maltese Falcon* is an example of the gangster cycle that gained popularity opposite of the musical cycle. The gangster films were seen as the horror films of the depression, but when compared with a film like *Night of the Living Dead*, the horror in *Maltese Falcon* does not hold a candle to any kind of horror film. It shows how tame the traumas in the depression themselves were compared to the horrors of the Vietnam War by looking at the interpretations of horror during each era. *Chinatown* fits into the same cycle as *Maltese Falcon*, but it is not viewed or classified as a horror like it would have been if it were to be released during the depression. However, the noir film of the Vietnam War would be a horror comparable to *Night of the Living Dead* in the depression because it shows actual violence that would shock the audience the same way a horror film would, while in the war era this violence is considered tame.

Film noir is a classic film genre with a mystery being solved, a damsel in distress and certain cinematic traits being portrayed. It is a by the book genre where certain cinematic elements are expected and the plot is the same but the variety of the storyline and the characters is what made each new noir film exciting for the audience. Film noir is classified as a “dark film” that dealt with “hard boiled detectives, gangsters, or ordinary people tempted into crime. Often a seductive femme fatale lured the protagonist into a dangerous scheme for hidden purposes of her own” (Bordwell and Thompson, 409). Two classic film noirs are *The Maltese Falcon* and *Chinatown*. With similar plot lines, the films from the two different eras carry on the tradition of film noir even if they are decades apart. *Maltese Falcon* being a more classic film noir in regards

to style and plot, while *Chinatown* would be considered by most a neo-noir since it takes on new techniques in both cinematography and story telling. Comparing films of the same genre and style shows how different these two eras are simply by the way the characters behave and what about each era is reflected in the film, specifically the endings. The films operate along the same noir path which emphasizes the similarities of the eras, but when one film deviates from this path, it is easy to be cognizant of the glaring difference in the filmmaking that are reflections of the era and what was viewed as traumatic.

The film noir genre started to gain popularity in during the depression era as the crime and mystery film cycle was going full force in the studios. *The Maltese Falcon*, directed by John Huston, premiered in 1941 and was a mystery film that was released at the solution of the depression. *Chinatown*, directed by Roman Polanski, also came at the resolution of the era in 1974 with another mystery film wrapping up the era and another case closed for detective Jake Geddies. The primary storyline in film noir was a mystery where a femme fatal was rescued by the investigator themselves. Film noirs provided a sense of normalcy for the audience members because they knew what to expect and what characters they would see going into the film. In a time where the nation was rebuilding, both after the depression and after the war, the normalcy provided by this structured film genre was soothing to the audiences dealing with tumultuous times around them.

Conflict in these films stems from the mysteries and crimes that are being solved. Conflict ensues as other characters get in the way of the investigator solving the crime or if the investigator gets in the way of others working on the same case. These films operate in the classic pyramid style by having an inciting conflict, a climactic conflict followed by the closing conflict. The inciting conflict is what kicks off the investigation by the investigator and where Sam Spade and Jake Geddies meet the femme fatales that caused conflicts to arise later in the film. The climax is typically when the private investigator solves the crime and the ensuing conflicts from there

where those that committed the crime are brought to justice in some way. The conflict in these films is physical, but also mental where one group is trying to gain more information than another.

Sam Spade is pulled into the conflicted world of Ms. O'Shaughnessey, when he partner Miles Archer is killed in the film shortly after she makes an appearance in their office. This case creates fission between Spade and the local police that are put on the case as he continues without their help on his own with the help of Brigid. As the case moves on, the audience discovers more about preexisting conflicts that occurred between Spade and Archer over Archer's wife, which makes the police believe that Sam is to blame for his death. However, all of the early conflict with Archer's death dissipates when the conflict surrounding the Maltese Falcon picked up. As they delve deeper into the conspiracy surrounding the falcon, the conflict becomes more intense with a full cast of characters that are concerned with the whereabouts of the falcon. Cairo and Gutman are two of the mob men who want the falcon for themselves and they will do whatever it take to make sure that spade does not find it first. This includes drugging Spade, having him followed and attacking him in his office. The climax conflict is when the boat carrying the falcon goes up in flames and the captain shows up at Spade's office and dies moments after giving him the falcon. This lead to Spade solving the mystery of the falcon and determining who would take responsibility for the crimes that took place in the film and before the inciting action of Archer's death. The final stand off between Spade and the band of people that want to posses the falcon is when he addresses who will be arrested for the crimes that happened which resolves most of the issue. However, when they all find out that the Falcon isn't real they realized that all of their crimes were for nothing and now they are going to jail for crimes that had no purpose. When all of these conflicts are resolves, Spade realizes that the falcon was just a distraction for the true crimes that Brigid committed. The falcon was a cover up for the murders she performed and a guise she could hide behind. Conflict during the depression was similar to the conflict in the film,

it was a distraction and it was for nothing. Unemployment marches were held during the depression to try to get some equality back for the unemployed. However most of these failed and were not worth the effort to continue fighting for the cause. Those that marched “had come to petition Hoover, to give them bonuses before it was due. And Hoover refused this. He told them they couldn’t get it because it would make the country go broke” (Terkel, 18). These marches showed that the riches to solve the marchers problems simply were not there much like the riches of the falcon did not exist. Conflict would not get American’s anywhere during the depression because they could not gain any of the riches they desired from fighting. The falcon being fake was traumatic to those in the film because it was what they worked so hard for and they could not possess the riches that it promised. To those in the depression this film showed that riches could not be their end goal because at the end of the day, there may not be any to attain. American’s could not get rich easily, they had to work for it and conflict in no way helped them attain their goal, this film strayed them from conflict because it would only lead to more traumas.

Conflict during *Chinatown* is more violent than the conflict that took place in *The Maltese Falcon*. Although this film starts off with a less severe conflict between Evelyn Mulwray and her husband, it escalates from there as what was thought to be an affair turns into unearthing one of the biggest scandals going on in the city of Los Angeles. The inciting conflict is the death of Hollis Mulwray that sparks Jakes investigation into the crime as he believes it is a murder. As the film continues, he uncovers more about the Mulwrays and the secrets they have been covering up and for every secret he uncovers, the more conflict he creates for himself. The conflict that takes place goes from the death of Hollis to Geddes getting his nose cut, getting shot at in the orchard to him being attacked in the nursing home. The conflicts here occur because Geddes is uncovering the lies and conspiracies that are the reasons Mulwray was killed. The conflict with the water companies drying out Los Angeles and the Citizens it is affecting is a traumatic instance for everyone in the county. This shows how something as big as the Vietnam War can cause

conflict amongst those that are not directly involved. Although the conflict between Geddes and Mr. Cross does not have a direct impact on the citizens Los Angeles, his solving of the crime does because it brings the water back to them. Just as one soldier killing another is a small part of the war, in the long run it will have a larger impact when the war is able to end because of that one smaller action. The conflict in this film is multiple small events and with each case of conflict the audience gets closer and closer to solving the mystery with Geddes. It shows that conflict is needed to get things done because it helps issues get solved. It shows conflict in a positive light because Geddes gets the answers that he needs, the conflict gives him clues that he is headed in the right direction and there is something being covered up to be fought for. This is saying that during the war, all of the little protests that are being held are pivotal because they are being heard and they are exposing the lack of initiative of the government to take action on the Vietnam War. It is also saying that those fighting abroad are fighting for a reason and their fights will all be for something. Conflict plays an important role in solving trauma and at the end of all the conflict the mystery is solved and the audience and characters got the answers they needed, but there were multiple tragedies along the way to achieve this.

The police that are working against the investigators portray authority in both of these films. Sam and Geddes both operate under the radar of the actual police, they do not answer to anyone and take matters into their own hands. The police operate under government's laws and take the proper steps in solving a crime where the private investigators skip steps and cross boundaries that should not be crossed. Both *The Maltese Falcon* and *Chinatown* show the private investigator solving the crime and having the police aid them in their final solving of the crime. "The false leaders have all the power; the true leaders have only moral weapon as their weapon" and Spade and Geddes seem to be these false leaders with all the power in these films (Sklar, 210). When they cooperate with the police it is to feed them information and get back up, but they

are always the ones to get the information first. It shows that authority does not always have the power and sometimes acting out gets you what you want.

The Maltese Falcon is a series of undercover trades and actions that are taking place right under the nose of the police. They seem to always be one step behind as Sam and Brigid work to find the falcon. While the falcon to the viewer connects all the crimes, to the police they are random unrelated acts because they are unaware of the falcon's existence. Authority is missing the key part in the puzzle of the mystery, which leads them to false accusations and the crime is solved by Spade. "A viable state commands a viable law, and the law depicted, at its best was never more than something to beat. At its worst, it scarcely seemed to exist" and beat the law they did in this film by keeping information from them and solving the mystery first (Bergman, 13). Despite the lack of knowledge of the crime by the police, Spade does hand over the criminals to them to be put in prison and to take responsibility for the crimes that that police are aware of. Spade and the falcon followers create a story of who will cover what crime and why they did it before they turn themselves in so that the true story of what happened will remain a mystery to the police. The film shows the audience that the authority may not have all the answers. The government operating under the depression had to deal with daily struggles where they could not always figure out the right way to solve it. They followed all the rules that needed to be followed to pass bills and come up with plans to deal with the depression, but it was not always right. Sometimes the laws or legislations passed by the government were misfires that did not improve the situation or help the problem that they wanted to direct. This was similar to the failure of these police officers to correctly identify Archer's killer and blame it on Spade in the beginning. Authority is left out of the loop in this film much like government during the depression is left out of the depression. They may think they know the whole story, but they do not because they are not living the lives of those that are directly affected by the economic struggles. They are not living in Hoovervilles and experiencing the same traumas. The government is fed, has

employment and housing while they try to solve traumas that they cannot feel. It is for this reason that they struggle to solve these issues because they are not living those lives and experiencing it for themselves so they do not know how to solve them. The misguided attempts at the police in *Maltese Falcon* and the government in the Depression show that without knowing the whole story and experiencing the life of the depression or knowing the secrets of the falcon, the traumas and the mysteries cannot be solved.

In *Chinatown* the audience gets more back-story on the life of J.J. Geddies and the audience discovers his history as a former police detective. The audience discovers his former life working in Chinatown where no rules applied and the lawlessness was never ending, the events there could never be unseen and it was this life in Chinatown that turned Geddies away from the life of law enforcement and go into business for himself. This allowed him to make decisions on what cases he could take so he would never have to see what he did in Chinatown without his choosing. This was his defiance of authority so that he could act independently instead of under an organization, “we have a freedom to disbelieve in authority, and more importantly to declare this disbelief” by taking his own path he is disbelieving in authority, he does not believe that they can accomplish what he can on his own and Geddies questions the motives of authority (Sennett, 119). With authority failing to solve Hollis’s murder, Geddies goes off on his own to determine whom the true culprit is. *Chinatown* shows that authority fails to see the bigger picture when it comes to solving issues. In this film they are only focusing on the murder of Hollis Mulwray, they fail to see that he is involved in a cover up with the water company because they are redistributing the water in Los Angeles to orange groves and causing a drought. No matter how many times Geddies tells the other detectives that there is something more to the story, they do not believe him and think that he has gone too far to create a story. This failure to see the bigger picture and listen to others shows how the government is seen at the time of the Vietnam War and the reason behind the trauma of the time. The audience and other Americans feel like their voices

are not being heard and the government is shutting them down. No matter how hard they try to send signals to the government that they want the war to end, they continued it because they failed to see the bigger picture of the war. They failed to see the trauma at home that the war was causing, they failed to see that the war was not working; they failed to see the death tolls rising. The government's sole goal was to win the war and they would do anything to achieve this goal. *Chinatown* expresses how the government is failing the country by not looking at the bigger picture and how looking at the whole story is the only way to see what is important and to not get distracted by one focus.

The sense of home in these films is almost non-existent because of the lack of time spent in any home. However, it is not always the physical location of home but a sense of belonging to someone or some place that can make one feel at home. In *The Maltese Falcon*, it is the falcon themselves that gives the characters their sense of home. It is something that they have been searching for the entire film and most of them for years before Spade entered the story. It has been their life's work and until it is found, they will never be at rest. In *Chinatown*, the home life that is focused on is not that of Giddes, but that of Evelyn Mulwray and the traumatic life of her family. Home and family in mystery and crime films is not as stable in other genres because it is the personal life at home that is being invaded by these detectives to solve the mysteries in the films.

Having an object as a sense of home may seem a bit obscure since it is not a location or even a family or person, but for this film it is the most important thing in the lives of many of the characters. The connection they have formed with this bird has kept them from their homes as they have pursued it. The falcon itself has found itself in many a home over the years and the characters in the film are just waiting until it becomes part of theirs. However, the thing that they strive for so much and long to have to put in their home and gain them the riches they desire to create a better life is what has kept them out of their homes for so long. The falcon becomes their true

home because of the connection they have to it and the fact that they have gone wherever it goes instead of staying in one place. This comments on the nomadic nature of those during the depression. It is not a falcon that those during the depression have substituted as their home away from home, but the promise of riches that lead them elsewhere. The search for jobs and for a better life elsewhere is what tempted people during the depression to leave their homes and find somewhere else where they could achieve this success. However, the same irony applied here that applied to the falcon where the very thing that kept Americans during the time away from home was the very thing they wanted to bring back to their home the most; money.

Home in *Chinatown* is a wrecked place where relationships are broken and secrets are kept. The Mulwray/Cross family is as unstable as they come and the further Geddes dives into the mystery of the water company, the more secrets are unleashed about this family. Evelyn and Hollis had a marriage that was more of a business move between her father and Hollis than about love. Hollis's death was thought to have occurred in the dam, but as facts about the crime are discovered Geddes has a realization that he was killed at Noah Cross's home. Hollis's death, in the home of the man that worked with him and treated him like a son, shows that a sense of security is never promised and to not trust those that are closest to you. The relationships in the homes of this film are detrimental to the characters as they strive to keep them a secret, but that pushes them further into disrepair. The most shocking revelation about these relationships is when Geddes discovers whom the other woman was that Hollis was supposedly having an affair with. When Evelyn reveals that past relationship with her father and that the girl is in fact the child that she bore from her father, the audience feels her pain and understands how terrible her home life must have been and will continue to be. Feeling unsafe in ones home is one of the biggest fears of anyone during any era and Evelyn shows the repercussions of this and the traumatic effects the terrible relationships at home have. Home is somewhere that none of the characters want to return to because it means returning to a place that caused them so many

traumas. For Evelyn, she wants to get her daughter as far away as possible from that type of home life and to keep her safe from her father that caused all of these problems. In this film, home is relatable to Vietnam itself, it killed soldiers and their relationship with Vietnam was filled with tragedies like Evelyn and even when they returned these traumas were still present. The desire of Evelyn to escape from her father is the same desire as the soldiers have to escape from Vietnam, but much like the daughter Katherine still being with Evelyn, the soldiers will always carry this trauma with them.

The closure in these films is not as solid as the audience would like it to be. Although in both films the crime itself is solved, but there is more to the story that is left unresolved and leaves the audience unsatisfied with the final outcome. In *Maltese Falcon*, Spade assigns everyone to a crime to take responsibility for after they discover that the falcon is fake and all of their searching was for nothing. Although Gutman and Cairo go off to Istanbul to continue their search, Spade tells the police where they are headed and to bring them. Although Spade solved who committed the crimes and where the falcon came from, he then reveals to the audience after all the others have been arrested that Brigid was the true killer of Archer. Spade does turn Brigid over to the police after some internal struggle because he does have feelings. That combined with the mystery of where the real falcon is leaves the audience with unanswered questions and leads them to keep searching for what will happen next and if Spade will be able to find the true falcon and if he will forgive Brigid.



Figure 7: *The Maltese Falcon* (John Huston, United States, 1941)

This comments on the trauma of the depression in saying that issues were left unsolved. Although people are working again and making a living for themselves, they cannot just leave the depression in the past. They carry this trauma with them and still have a continuous search to find what they were looking for, wealth, family and a stable life just like the endless search for the real falcon. They cannot leave what happened to them in the depression it goes on with them.

Although the depression itself ends, the mentality of the depression continues on. In *Chinatown* the closure in the film has two levels as well, the solving of the crime and the aftermath of solving the crime. The audience discovers that the mystery girl is the daughter of Noah and Evelyn and that it was Noah who killed Hollis because he was trying to stop him from rerouting the water. This facet leaves the audience satisfied because Geddes solved the crime and they know the reason behind all of the acts committed in the film. However, what happens in *Chinatown* is what leaves the audience shocked and angry about the ending. In *Chinatown*, Evelyn tries to escape with her daughter, but is murdered by one of the detectives because they believe that she killed Hollis. Evelyn's death could have been avoided if the detectives would have believed Geddes that there was more to the story and this is what disappoints the audience the most. They see Geddes

upset because of her death, but also upset because he could not stop it because no one listened to him. After her death, the daughter must go with her father, the one person Evelyn was trying to keep her from.



Figure 8: *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, United States, 1974)

The ending is traumatic because of Evelyn's death and Katherine's return to her abusive father, but also because of how it ends. It is a quick shocking ending with many open questions and the only solution that any of the characters can provide is "forget it Jake, it's Chinatown." The film wants the audience to forget the past and forget what happened on screen, but there is no possibility for this. "The Vietnam War is presented as something that happened, not as something that was done," much like the actions in *Chinatown* were presented as something that happened in the past and that had no significant impact rather than actions that were done to another person (Dittman and Michaud, 12). The traumas of *Chinatown* and the traumas of the Vietnam War will live with the audiences as they move on. American's look to the nation and ask what now? However, the war was something that was done, the government got us involved and like Evelyn's death, it all could have been prevented. As they move forward in recovering from the war. Looking at *Chinatown* it is impossible not to wonder what will happen next with Katherine

and her father and Geddes. They cannot move on from Chinatown, their lives will continue with this trauma because it changed everything. The Vietnam War changed the lives of every American and cannot be forgotten like Chinatown. The war will be remembered as a traumatic episode for those abroad and at home as they move forward, but they make sure to never return there much like Geddes never wanted to return to Chinatown.

Chapter 6

***It Happened One Night* and *The Graduate*: Romance Run Wild**

Not all of the films during the depression played on the dark traumas of the time, there were love stories and romantic films that gave them home, but even during the Vietnam War the romance films were still darker than the ones of the depression. Audiences did transition from the darkness of noir in *Maltese Falcon* and *Chinatown* to the lighter side of *It Happened One Night* and *The Graduate* regularly as they watched the films that suited their needs at the time and longed for a certain outcome to films. Although the outcome of the noir films were known because of their set structure, the romance films had unexpected twists and turns that the audience loved. Romance films were typically feel good films that let the audience escape the trauma of their lives during the time and get wrapped up in the romance of the characters in the film. Romance was unexpected and took a variety of paths in these films unlike the structured crime and noir films.

It Happened One Night and *The Graduate* are both stories of love, escape and self-discovery. They show what one act of defiance can do to a person and in both cases, the main characters are able to discover their true selves as the audience views their path of self-discovery. During both eras, one's true colors showed through the traumatic times because they had to do everything in their power to provide for their families during the depression or to fight for their country during the Vietnam War. Many were lost during both times in regards with how to handle their current situation. Both of these films show characters that were lost in the lives they were living, but eventually discover ways to cope with the situation around them and act for themselves. Their families control them each and look for ways to act out and deviate from the path to find their own happiness that is separate from the happiness their families believe they

should have. Although different outcomes were achieved based on the era the film was made in, the audience is able to reflect on their own decision and chose to either to act how they are supposed to in accordance with everyone else or have an act of defiance like these characters to discover what could be.

Both of these films were made in the thick of the traumatic eras and therefore the message that they carried was pivotal in getting the audiences through the rest of each era. *It Happened One Night*, directed by Frank Capra in 1934, was a romance that inspired and did not even mention the depression going on around them. For this film that was not important because it was about the escape of the audience with the lovers and in their world the depression was not a factor. “There were, from the early 1930’s to the mid-1940s, well over 200 screwball films, almost all of them dedicated to the celebration of eccentric, unconventional behavior and attitudes and the proposition that life could be a lot of fun in spite of war and fouled-up economy” (Pendergast and Pendergast, 343). It was a film with the sole purpose to bring happiness to the audience and leave them with the same bliss that the lovers felt at the end. *The Graduate*, directed by Mike Nichols in 1967, was a tale of lust and love as well, but set against the Vietnam War it was a traumatic love. Both films feature a first lust that exists simply because it represents freedom and danger that the characters crave after being stuck in a mundane life. However, it is the second love that is the one that is meant to be and these characters will do whatever it takes to make their second love theirs. The audience follows their adventures and roots for each character and they search for what they really want on their road to self-discovery.

Conflict in these films occurs between the relationships between the families and the relationships between the lovers. The conflict with the families is because they have been suppressing their children and pushing them towards a life they do not want to live. For Ellen, she was raised in a certain environment that she was never able to experience the world. Her father wants her to stay inside of this high-class bubble and her rebellion of running away is the only

way she knows how to get out of it and experience a life that she wants to live. For Benjamin, his parents groomed him to be an Ivy League graduate and to go on continuing his education and settle down with a good girl in the suburbs. However, this life hold no excitement for him and the thrill of an affair with Mrs. Robinson is all that is keeping him sane. The relationship conflict between Ellen and Peter is because of her inability to blend into society out her perfect home. Ben's relationship with Mrs. Robinson causes conflict because it is breaking social rules and his relationship with Elaine cause conflict because he is fighting to return to normal. The overall conflict is the fact that they are each defying their parents wishes and societies expectations and it is their desire to keep going no matter what issues they cause.

In *It Happened One Night* the audience is introduced to Ellen who seems to have everything her heart desires in terms of material wealth. However, it is easy to see that she feels trapped in this life of high society, yet she knows nothing better. Her desire to rebel is apparent from the beginning as her refusal to eat aboard her fathers ship turns into a shouting match about her elopement to a man that her father disapproves of. When he slaps her for her refusal to annul the marriage, that is her last straw and running away is the only way to go out and find her love and experience a world away from her father. The conflict here is a finding the world in which she belongs and by making certain decisions she moves away from one world into another. Peter teaches her about life outside of her high society bubble and the banters they have are a new kind of conflict that she is unfamiliar with. When they argue it is because she is not fitting in and acting like she is still under her father's rule. Each time Peter and Ellen battle, it is a teaching moment for her and she is one step closer to leaving the life a socialite behind and becoming an average bus rider with the people. Her struggle is that being a part life outside her pampered home is against the way she was raised and her mistake of thinking life would be the same is what causes her minor conflicts along the way. The walls of Jericho in their hotel rooms are the physical representation of the divide and conflict between the two life styles that she wants to

live. They are present when she is still wavering about what side she wants to stay on, but when she crosses the wall there is no going back, She feels that she is acting against her father when she assimilates into everyday life, but it is the life that she wants for herself. This includes getting scolded at the shower because she skipped the line and having the bus leave her because they could not just wait for one person. Conflict in this film is seen as a learning experience since Ellen's minor issues created along her trip are ones that teach her how to leave the life of being served behind and lead a life where she serves herself. This showed the audiences to think of conflict during the depression as a strengthening of character. Jobs lost during the depression were not just in the lower class, middle and upper classes also struggled and by going through the depression, it was a humbling experience for them. This films showed how to use the depression to build character and to become happy in the life they were handed. The films wants the audience to use the depression to their advantage and use this moment where everyone is on the same level in society to embrace the experience and learn how to grow from it.

Conflict in *The Graduate* builds throughout the film and erupts at key moments in Benjamin's path to self-discovery. Like Ellen, the conflict takes place as Ben moves further and further from the life his parents thought he would be living and he gets closer to the life he wants for himself. Ben wants to do something else with his life after graduation that is not grad school, but his parents already have a life plan set for him where he continues as a scholar and then goes on to have a high power job. "The youth culture of the 1960s exhibited the tragicomic contradictions of proclaiming its liberation from the bourgeois culture of its parents" and Ben was no different from them (Sklar, 197). He feels trapped in his life at home and his only way out is to defy his parents and to do this he starts an affair with one of their friends. Ben goes into this knowing that it would create conflict for him, but it does not scare him instead he sees the risk of getting caught as a rush and he feels free finally. Ben's affair with Mrs. Robinson is a bomb waiting to explode and it does which leaves the Robinsons and the Braddocks to clean up the

mess after it explodes. Ben is finally found out for his affair when Elaine comes to town and he falls for her. When he admits the affair to her, argument ensues with her and the rest of the Robinson family. When Ben decides that he is going to marry Elaine, Mr. Robinson approaches him about the affair and they argue about what he did to their family, but neither seems to be able to stand up for themselves. This was a conflict of the old generation versus the new. Ben was taking what belonged to Mr. Robinson when he had an affair with his wife and then taking his daughter when he decided to marry her. The younger generation of the Vietnam War lived more freely and not by a strict set of rules like the older generation did. They were the ones leading the protests and questioning the war, while the older generation obeyed the war and the governments instructions during the time. Mr. Robinson's argument with Ben shows him that his actions have consequences and he is ruining families by acting freely. During the war era, the free spirit hippies lived without consequences, but *The Graduate* shows that operating this way leaves a broken society behind.

Authority in both of these films comes from a parental figure and the expectations that the children are bread to live up to. Ellen's father in *It Happened One Night* had her life picked out for her from the beginning. Being a wall street executive meant that she would be raised in high society and would be in the spot light. She was expected to be the perfect child and make every move in life that would benefit her family. Ben's family was a classic example of the typical suburban family. They wanted what was best for Ben and made sure that he got the best education possible so that he could settle down in the suburbs and provide for his family like his parents were able to. This life seemed mundane to Ben and he wanted nothing more than to get away from his parents and the high standards they set for him. In both cases, the parents just want what is best for their children, but they pushed them too far and that pushed them out of the house.

Ellen's father believes that his daughter's life should be planned out and that to act rebelliously should not be rewarded. Her marriage to King Westly was against her father's wishes and he takes over the relationship by mandating an annulment. His authority applies to her personal life when he makes her annul this marriage, it shows that he is not interested in her happiness, but having control over her life so she lives it to his standards. It is only when she runs away that she is able to gain some authority over her father. Richard Sennett remarked on how power and paternalism overlap in his book *Authority*, "The belief that power ought to have something to do with nurturance is one which religion traditionally championed in adult social life. [...] I Suppose one might say that the joining of power and care is 'only' idealistic now because this critical conscience is moribund. But we are also coming to see in modern society just what power without nurturance looks like" (Sennett, 83). Nurture is part of the authority in this film and the relationship with her father is more pacified because of it. He still calls the shots because he controls her finances. To get money for her adventure, she would have to call him to get money and that would mean ending her journey. He communicates with her through the newspaper and uses different ploys to bring her home. He sets a reward to bring her home so that maybe others will see her and bring her back to him. This is still an authority that is not concerned about her happiness, but one that is concerned about getting what they want. His next device is to agree to let her marry King Westley if she returns. This ploy is a step in the right direction because he is compromising his own happiness and his own plans for his daughter's future when he agrees to this. This is an authority figure that is working for the people and interested in the feelings of others and an authority that Ellen is willing to work with. During this time, Americans had a new relationship with their president and government that was more intimate than they were previously accustomed to (Watkins, 18). Ellen's adventure made her father realize how important she is to him and that he needs to get her back regardless of the compromises he needs to make. Without being supplied money from her father, he basically put

her in her own form of a depression. She lives off rationed food and is on a budget, much like American's during the depression did while the government held the purse strings. The authority of the depression had to make compromises to please Americans to earn their trust back. If American's turned against the government, it would create an unstable relationship and nothing could ever be accomplished and the depression would continue on with no happiness to be achieved.

Ben's parents hold their authority over him by making his future plans for him and sharing it with others so it is harder for him to act differently than expected. They host a party when Ben returns from school and make him go even though he refuses. At this party they brag about him and tell of their friends of his plans to continue his schooling and then find a successful career. The more people that hear this, the more it becomes a reality for Ben's parents and when he does not act on it, they try their best to force this life on him. They try harder and harder to make him fit into their suburban lifestyle so he will want one for himself. They buy him a scuba suit for his birthday, but he has nowhere to use it. It is a tool they use to show Ben that they are on his side. When his relationship with Mrs. Robinson starts they ask him what he has been up to at night to find out his secrets and learn what has been distracting their son from his future. They push Elaine on Ben and make him go on a date with her even though Ben declined multiple times. When his parents question his future plans he responds that he is "just floating." His parents feel that Ben needs to accomplish something so that he does not waste his potential. They spent hefty sums of money on his education so that Ben could make the best life for himself, but when it is not the life they wanted for them they begin to question if it was worth it. The only time they are happy about Ben's course of action is when he decides to marry Elaine. They approve of this union because it shows that Ben is settling down and will become a part of the cookie cutter suburban life that they had hoped. However, they do not know the secrets behind his choice to wed Elaine or where he goes at night. Authority is a thing to defy in this film and to

keep secrets from, but it does not matter how much it is pushed against because for Ben there is nowhere else to go and no other life plan. The relationship during the Vietnam War was much like that of Ben and his parents, there was a plan that the government was trying to carry out for the nation but with secrets, conspiracies and protests, the nation did not stay on the right path. Trying to make American's stay on the right path was not easily done and the suburban life style with a good job and healthy family was not a way to placate everyone. There were those that wanted something more in life and craved an escape from the bubble the government want to keep everyone in. However, the government made this life seem like the American way and that to defy it was to be un-American.

Home in both of these films is a place of confinement. It is where a certain lifestyle is lived and social norms dominate the scene. For both Ellen and Ben, home is filled with pressure to live to a certain standard and it is a pressure that they cannot handle. Escaping from home is the main goal of Ben and Elle in these films. Ellen is a full-blown run away and Ben looks for an escape through his affair. They each look to form their own homes with their loved ones and they hope that it is a different lifestyle than the one they became accustomed to at home. Both of these films show the whole family as a united group and to break that up would be more shameful than anything else.

It Happened One Night has home as a connection to a person more than a physical location. Since the majority of the film is spent on the road, the audience never sees Ellen's real home until the end. Running away is her way of finding a new home and originally it was to form a home with King Westly. Her connection to him was the closest thing she had to home and a future life with him that was different than the home she left behind. She believed that their ideas aligned and they would be able to have the life she imagined always having with King. However, when on the road she discovers a new home for herself with Peter. He gives her a sense of home in the way that he protects her and teaches her about the new lifestyle she has

found herself living. She is on her way to find a new home in New York, but does not even make it there before she decides that she wants to settle down with Peter on this island he plans to whisk her away to. The home the Peter describes is the one that she desires, one where she can live freely and be able to go where she pleases with Peter and not have to worry about being the perfect socialite the she is expected to be back home. Her father still cares about her though and wants her to return home safely. When she does he is in full support of her living her new life with Peter because it will make his home happy along with his daughters future home. For films of the depression a happy home is all that matters. The adventures that everyone went on during the depression were so they could return to a happy home and create the home they wanted after the depression. This film showed audiences to think of the depression as an adventure and that no matter what they encountered, home could bring them happiness whether that be an old home they were coming back to or a new one.

Unlike *It Happened One Night*, *The Graduate* spends a significant amount of time inside the homes of the Braddocks and the Robinsons. Immediately the audience senses Ben's disdain at returning home from college. He is "the scion of an apparently WASPy family" and he could not resent it more and this becomes more apparent as the film goes on (Harris, 26). As the plane lands in Los Angeles he is not excited, but indifferent and wears no emotion on his face. He never shows any emotion in his home that gives the audience a sense he is happy to be there. He is only excited to be home when he begins his affair with Mrs. Robinson and that is because it gets him out of the house and is something to look forward to. Ben is welcomed into the Robinson's home multiple times and has to keep the relationship hidden while he is there. He is in the home that he is tearing apart, but he cannot stop or he will never be able to escape his home. The Taft hotel becomes the only place where he is most comfortable and is able to be his true self. Here, the outside world does not matter and he can continue his relationship with Mrs. Robinson without having to worry about getting caught. His decision to marry Elaine is a

compromise between the new sense of home that he wants and the home his parents provided for him. Elaine is the type of woman that his parents would approve of and she comes from the same lifestyle he does. However, she is still a Robinson and represents that sense of escape that her mother did for him. Ben and Ellen both want to escape their homes, but unlike Ellen, Ben never leaves his physical home. During the Vietnam War, soldiers longed for the boring home life that Ben believed he had at the time. Ben's search for excitement was much more pacified than the soldiers search for excitement in the war. But his rebellions are along the same lines of the rebellions of the time against the war. They are rebelling against the normalcy of the whole situation of the war and the way people were acting like it was normal.

Closure in each of these films ends with the characters starting a new life with the love they have found in the film. *It Happened One Night* ends with the symbolic wedding in screwball comedies of Peter and Ellen. But the most important signal of their new life is not the wedding and her father's approval of it, but the tumbling of the walls of Jericho after their wedding. "The overwhelming attractiveness of the screwball comedies involved more than the wonderful personnel. It had to do with the effort they made at reconciling the irreconcilable. They created an America of perfect unity: all classes as one, the rural-urban divide breached, love and decency and neighborliness ascendant. It was an American self-portrait that proved a bonanza in the mid-thirties" (Bergman, 133).



Figure 9: It Happened One Night (Frank Capra, United States, 1934)

The walls of Jericho represented their separation their entire film and the barrier she could not seem to break from her old life into the new one that she wants. When the wall tumbles, her father is the one that says to let them down. The walls falling shows the acceptance of her father of her new life and the start of a new home for her and Peter. She leaves the life she thought she wanted behind when she leaves King at the altar and goes after one that suits her more that is filled with adventure. The ending of this film gives audience hope for the rest of the depression and makes them believe that they may get something good out of it. They believe that they will be able to get something they desire out of the depression and for most of them that is a happy life that the ending of this film shows. In *The Graduate*, no true closure is achieved. Elaine also leaves her husband at the altar to peruse a life with Benjamin. At the time it may have seemed like a good idea, but it was far too impulsive and their relationship was still destroyed

from Ben's affair with her mother.



Figure 10: *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, United States, 1967)

They leave the church excited about their future and they believe that they can live happily together. However, the reality finally hits them when they get on the bus to drive away. They have nowhere to go and did not think any of this through. Ben's expression is the same as it was when he flew into Los Angeles, it is a look of passivity as he blindly goes into the next adventure in his life with no clue what the next move will be. The lack of closure in this film creates a hopeless ending. One where the future of their relationship seems to be short lived and their efforts to escape their home seems to be impossible. During the Vietnam War the ending did seem hopeless and like it would never end. Although Ben and Elaine thought that they had been able to get out, the chances are they will go right back to where they started from and have to solve a mess of issues that are waiting for them. Their fight to be with each other and escape was brought to an astounding halt when they realized the plan was not thought through. They acted rashly like the youth protestors at the time. College demonstrations were very popular for the youth at the time to show their anti-war stance. "1,000 students took over five buildings on the

campus of Columbia University in New York City. They held the buildings for ransom, demanding an end to the war for their return. Eventually police stormed the facilities with clubs flying, arresting nearly 700 students” (Pendergast, 106). The plans of Ben and Elaine were similar to the student protestors; over the top, but highly impractical and eventually pointless. It is a pointless war and all it is doing is creating messes that later have to be cleaned up. Closure of these films shows to alternatives to leaving a lifestyle behind. *It Happened One Night* shows the success of Ellen and the happiness and new sense of self she was able to find and the success that those during the depression could have if they attempt to find a new life. *The Graduate* shows that Ben’s attempts at escaping were a failure much like the war itself and in the end there is no way to deal with the failure but to return to the life he wanted to get away from the most.

Chapter 7

The Philadelphia Story and One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest: Possibilities for Audience's Lives After the Trauma

It Happened One Night and *Philadelphia Story* show the variances of romance films during each film. Each romance takes its own path and it takes both of the women the longevity of the film to discover their true love. While the romance films brought hope and happiness to the audience, *The Graduate* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* had the opposite effect. They both showed what happens when one pushes to far to act out. Ben acted out against his parents be being with Mrs. Robinson and Mac acted out against the institution to get home. Both characters ended up hopeless and lost. No matter what genre was made during the Vietnam era, hope was not easily achieved and it was the lack of hope that characterized the films of this era.

The Philadelphia Story and *One Flew over the Cuckoos Nest* show highly conflicting settings, one set in a rich Philadelphia home while the other takes place in a mental institution. During the depression, audiences longed for the Philadelphia home that the Lords inhabited. They could picture themselves living there back in the life of luxury that they had lost during the economic crash. The Lords seemed to be unaffected by the depression and they discussed their lives of horseback riding and boats. They did not have to worry about earning a paycheck or giving up material good to provide for their family, they lived as if the depression did not exist. On the other hand, audiences were frightened of the world *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest* painted and did not long for this life in the way they longed for the one in *The Philadelphia Story*. This was not what they were hoping for after the war was over, they wanted to be able to earn freedoms back they had lost during the war, not to be locked up in an asylum with no freedom at all. *Cuckoos Nest* takes the lives people are living during the depression and shows that it could

be worse, they could be locked up in jail or sent to an institution like this one for their paranoia and actions of rebellion during the war. These films each show audiences what could happen after their current era, one good the other bad, but both possible for the audiences viewing them.

The Philadelphia Story, directed by George Cuckor, was a star studded romantic comedy that left audiences craving more that ever to live the lives of those on the screen. Since this film was released at the end of the depression in 1940, Americans were starting to gain back the assets they had lost during the depression and were working towards a better life for themselves and their families. Watching films such as *The Philadelphia Story* pushed them to work hard and to live better when they saw that what they were doing was not enough. Showing these screwball comedies during the audiences of the time was to show “improbability and incongruity were never allowed to disturb the social order, but, rather, to show how well it worked. More often than not, the characters in screwball comedies were wealthy, and their wacky behavior showed audiences how funny and lovable and harmless the rich could be” (Sklar, 188). The keeping up with the Joneses mentality was prevalent when families were starting to do better after the depression, but there were others doing better and recovering faster. These films showed the wealthy were not intimidating, but they were just like them. America was still dealing with the trauma of the depression and having competition amongst those recovering almost made the recovery easier because they were trying to be bigger than better than the rest and focused on this rather than how much they had lost. The release of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, directed by Milos Forman, in 1975 was also released to a recovering nation. One where soldiers were coming home traumatized from Vietnam, one where families were struggling with the loss of their loved ones and one where citizens were struggling with gaining trust in their government back. It was made during a time where “realness was demanded but hallucinations were endemic” so the perfect setting was a mental institutions where they let these hallucinations run wild, but the patients felt more real than the world around them (Cook, 335). This film showed the internal

psyche of a nation where those in the institution were struggling with their sense of self and Americans were looking for themselves after they were hit so hard by this trauma. The films released during the recovery era of America had the most impact because it was a time where the audiences were looking for guidance most from the films.

Conflict in these films is handled differently because of the circumstances they take place under. In *The Philadelphia Story*, the conflict is harbored from familial and relationship issues along with arguments against the reporters. The conflict is about doing what is best for the family, but also doing what is best for ones self and where these ideas clash is where the conflict takes place. *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest* has a darker conflict and a type of conflict that causes harm to the characters emotionally and physically. The patients argue amongst each other and also with the nurses that are supposed to be there to help them. However, it seems like no one is looking out for the well being of these patients and the conflict here, like in *Philadelphia Story*, is the argument about what is best for the individual versus what is best for the others in the institution.

The Lord family is one of power and prestige and for that reason they are put in the spotlight during a time where there are not many families of that nature to focus on. Tracy and her mother both have relationship conflict with their significant others in the family. The mother is estranged from her husband and seeing him at Tracy's wedding is a traumatic experience for her and her daughters to have him walk in and out of their lives when he pleases. Tracy's conflict is more internal and discrete than that of her mothers'. Tracy is going to marry George Kittridge because he is a hardworking man who adores her. Try as he might, George does not seem to entirely fit in with the family and Tracy always has the upper hand in the relationship. The Lord's adored Tracy's old husband, C.K. Dexter Haven and still believe that they should be together. Since Dexter came from the same social background as Tracy, it simply makes sense that they should be together because it is a way to unite Philadelphia's elite. Tracy's internal struggle is if

George is the right fit for her after all or if he is with them simply to fight her families wishes to be with someone more their status. When Dexter returns though it is not to win Tracy over, but to exploit her and make money for the magazine that he finances by having his two reporters Mike and Liz run a story on the family. However they are doing this to protect the family so that secrets of Mr. Lord's affairs are not revealed to the public and the family all at once. Margaret Lord and Tracy's sister Dinah, take Dexter's return as him still pining for Tracy and have high hopes for their reunion. Trying to pretend to be the perfect family for these reporters is what creates more of the conflict to come out in the household because they are being put under the microscope. Tracy waivers in her affections for George as it is put under the microscope of the reporters and makes her question the relationship more as it is scrutinized by not only her family, but the public as well. The more Tracy tries to fight with her family and her own feelings that she belongs with Dexter and belongs in this social class, the harder it becomes for her to resist. She expresses affection for Mike as an even larger act of defiance and it sparks conflict amongst the three lovers of George, Dexter and Mike to figure out who the right man for Tracy is. This is Tracy's final fight, her final attempt to go her own way and not become a pawn in her family's game to stay on top. She sinks even lower than George class wise to cause uproar, but also to show who will fight for her more and who has that affection for her. The arguments for them are if "romantic love is better than gold digging" and is "marriage better than a career or divorce" (Sklar, 188). At the end of the film, Tracy finds a common ground among these to side with the feelings of most women during the time. Although C.K. Dexter Haven is rich, it is romantic love that brings them together and that trumps his social status. She also shows that marriage is better than a career or divorce with her wedding to the man she did divorce in the end. The conflict in this film is verbal arguments amongst family members, lovers and the reporters as they all work to keep up with their lies and cover ups that they are trying to hide. When examining the conflict, it seems petty to the audience. Petty that they are arguing about such small problems when they

just got out of an economic depression and have bigger problems to worry about. However, the trauma of the depression did not impact this family so they do not have bigger issues to worry about and to them, these petty seemingly problems are the most important in their lives. The little problems show the audience that they cannot heal all of their traumas at once, working on one problem at a time would help them to work through the trauma as they solve the smaller issues that are part of their larger trauma.

Conflict in *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest* exists within the mental institution as a representative of the conflict going on outside in America. They are secluded inside of this mental hospital with no real sense of what is going on out there, but they work through their issues much like the nation outside is. The inmates argue about daily events in the ward such as getting cigarettes, what basketball team to be on and what to do about their problems. Although they argue, they work through their issues together through constant communication and it works well for them. The conflicts amongst the patients is calmer than most and is always solvable by the comrades they share and the uniting factor that they are all in the same boat. The more physical and dangerous conflicts were between the patients and the nurses as the nurses looked for ways to heal the supposed problems through treatments and therapy. The struggle between the two was a constant battle of who would get the upper hand. The nurses believed that they knew what was best for the patients and how to heal them while the patients wanted to take their treatment into their own hands and make the institution friendlier for themselves. Most of these patients are in the ward voluntarily and do not have to answer to every order from the nurses because if they feel they are being treated unfairly they have the option to leave. The patients fight against the nurse's rule and try to gain small amounts of power back through their little protests. These include holding votes to change the ward's policies, breaking out of the hospital and having guests to the institution after hours. All of these instances push the nurses further in their treatments and lead them to cause serious harm to the patients. In the institution, the

uprisings of the patients are put down quickly because they are submissive to the nurses and under the control of their medicine and treatment plans. Conflict in this film is an internal struggle between the two groups where they are constantly fighting for the upper hand. The inability of the patients to get the upper hand no matter how hard they fight shows the trauma of the failure of the little guy to be able to win the war for themselves. No matter how hard the protests fight, they will never be able to make a true impact and heal the nation of the Vietnam War without the help of the government and they should stop fighting and work together.

Authority in both of these films is a role taken on by many of the characters, but in both cases there is one true authority that they all must answer to. In *The Philadelphia Story*, Tracy's mom is a figure of authority in this film, but Tracy is also vying for this power so that she can lead a life separate from her mother's desires. In *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Nurse Ratched has the authority not only over the patients, but also the other nurses. However the other patients, especially McMurphy try to take over her role and Mac is seen as the authority to most of the patients when he encourages them to act out against Ratched. However, in each film both the Lord household and the mental institution answer to societal norms and rules. The Lords must always do everything the way society expects them to and the mother is the one who carries this ideal the strongest so she enforces it the most. Sidd the kid is the one who uncovers others social problems so that he can expose them and in doing show demonstrates to his readers that you must act properly or do not act this way at all. The patients in the mental institution are put there by society because they have been defined as acting against the norm. For them to rejoin society they must be able to assimilate and act by the norms, Nurse Ratched is there to make sure that they will be able to pass the standards to get out of the institution. Mac still has the goal of getting out of the institution in mind when he teaches the other patients how to act, but his treatments of them is not about their healing their ailment, it is about teaching them to live life as if they do not have one. The higher authority that all the characters in the film answer to is being carried out by the

one character that believes in authority and structure the most, while the other characters find that there are other ways to achieve these social norms that authority is enforcing and rebut the authority figure in each film.

The power of authority in *The Philadelphia Story* does not mean the sole power to control others or be the leader of a group, but the power to enforce the norm and make sure that others are living to the same standard that they are. The Lords are part of high society, a small fraction of the population during the depression, and this part of society has certain expectations that come with being affluent. Tracy starts to defy these expectations when divorced Dexter earlier in her life even though it was a match that was meant to be perfect by social standards. Divorce was not common during the era of the depression and it put a stigma on the family

by having this on their record. The mother inadvertently enforces her authority on this matter by simply separating from her husband instead of divorcing. This is her way of showing Tracy what the social norm is and what she should have done instead of divorcing Dexter.

“Opposing forces in Hollywood worked toward exploding not only the grimness of the female role, but up to a point, accepted standards of social relations” (Bergman, 50). Tracy looks to break away from this grimness while Margaret carries out her life as if society is always watching and she believes Tracy should do the same. Even though the parents are separated, they both understand the social conventions well enough for both to be present while the reporters are in the house so that the family’s secrets do not get out. When Dexter reenters the story, it is an opportunity for Margaret to write the wrongs that Tracy made by divorcing him and picking George to marry. Margaret and Dinah fawn over Dexter and welcome him into the home more than they do George. The family pushes for Dexter by informing Tracy how much they love him and missed him while her wedding is days away. Marrying Dexter, in the mind of Margaret Lord, would right the wrong of the divorce from many years prior and put the family back in good graces with the rest of society. The authority in this film is subtle; there are enforcements that are

not taken to the extreme to get the point across. It is a message to obey, to follow order and that personal passions that are out of the ordinary should not be acted upon. This was a similar motto to the government of the depression where they enforced a social order so that no one acted to extremely. It was traumatic to have to live a certain way because acting outside the norm could mean detrimental effects to the shred of life that Americans were able to maintain. However, this was a time that everyone wanted to get back to a norm and they were all striving to act to the standards of social conventions. They were not the same conventions that Tracy and her family had, but they were the conventions that all members of society had to have to maintain a normal life and that and society needed to function. Without these conventions, life after the depression would not be structured and could easily all apart like it had earlier with the crash.

Authority in *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest* is more intense as the actions that are taken are more severe for acting out against this authority. The nurses and heads of the institution are not family members that are personally involved in the matters of the patients like in *The Philadelphia Story*, they are just their to do their job and will take any means necessary to treat the patients to their standards. The nurses say what treatments the patients receive, when they receive them and judge when they can be released. It is an unfair system similar to the draft during the Vietnam War. Soldiers were drafted because of their age and passed the enlistment based off physical merits; few chose to enlist much like the few patients that were there willingly. The government had control over whom they sent to Vietnam and when they sent them, but more importantly when they came home. "Over the course of the war, Americans came to understand that presidents and lawmakers were willing to manipulate the truth to advance their agendas. They learned that their vaunted military was, for a multitude of reasons, incapable of defeating an enemy with far less conventional firepower" (Pendergast, 118). Being sent to a mental institution was like being sent to war where one was different enough from the societal norm and got sent there then acted in battle against the nurses and could not leave until they were given the okay by

the heads of the institution. The nurses were in charge of the destinies of these patients and they determined if they were ready to reenter society based on their judgments' of them, but also what they determined to be normal. Mac feels that instead of being treated to be normal in society, they should be taught. Although he is not the authority in the hospital, he is the authority to the patients as they begin to follow him and defy the nurses. He acts like a general would in the war; he is in charge of all the misfits that were sent to the same hellish location and all have the same goal to get out. Mac can never be the true authority though as the nurses and institution heads deem him unstable so his leadership is seen as delusional and misguided. What is so traumatic about the authority in this film is that they patients cannot fight against it, when they fight all they get is more treatments and a longer sentence in the ward. Most of the time the patients do not even realize they are being mistreated because it has become normal to them to live in fear of their superiors and the damage they could cause. Mac's form of authority allows freedom and learning for the patients, but this is not how things are handled in the institution or in America during the war. It is far more important for authority to punish those that act out against authority than to listen to all of their ideas and let them run with their protests. Punishing the patients and punishing rebels of the war took a similar course of treatments for the patients and gunfire or tear gas for the protestors. Authority in both cases caused harm because societal rules and conventions were not being obeyed and at this time of trauma they believed that everyone need to act a certain way or be punished to learn to act this way.

There is a false sense of home in both of these films when they start off and the audience works their way into each home through the presence of an outsider to discover the truth that is unseen by the public. In *The Philadelphia Story*, the audience is let inside of the secret and illustrious home of the Lords through the reporters of Liz and Mike. It is seen to the public as a beacon for what life during the depression could be like in because it is a perfect home. However, the audience is able to learn of its secrets and be able to connect to it as more than a façade. In

One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest it seems that all sense of home and belonging is lost for these patients so the institution has taken on the role of a home for them. They live their entire lives here and for those that do still not hold out for hope of getting home, they have no desire to leave. The outsiders in these films act out of the norm in each home and give the others around them a desire and longing for a home that they did not possess before.

The Lord's manor has every amenity that they could imagine and every amenity that almost all Americans during the depression are lacking. At first glance this is a home that audience desire to have and hope that they could earn after the depression. The façade on the outside is not a true representation of the turmoil on the inside. The life on the inside shows a family that also has fake relationships where they do not know what goes on in each others personal lives and do not care to find out. It is only when Mike and Liz come in to run a story on the family that they start to become a family and unite to keep the façade of their house to the public. It is when they are hiding secrets from the reporters when they all come out to each other because they need to know what secrets to protect and to look out for each other. This film emphasized the cliché that money cannot buy happiness since this family has every material possession that they could want, but they separate them from each other more than bringing them together. Homes during the depression may have been small or lacking in material goods but at least they were able to communicate with each other and unite as a family against the trauma of the depression. Relationships in the house are able to grow stronger throughout the film as the façade breaks down and it becomes a home. It was the opposite of the depression where the families put on the façade of being strong during the depression, but their home could not tell a lie. The home life in *The Philadelphia Story* shows Americans during the depression to be happy with what they have and that even though the life of the rich and influential is one they may desire, it is not always as great as what they have now.

A mental institution does not have the typical comforts of home and is the last place that most people want to be, but in *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest* it is the only substitute that the patients have for a real home. The patients have become accustomed to the life here and take care of the institution like they would their own home. They perform all of their daily activities there just like they would at home and they also get the comforts of home like a place to sleep, food and health care. They have chores to take care of their home and care for each other like they are a family. The nurses placate the patients to brainwash them into believing that they belong here by giving them medications and treatments and also making them stick to a schedule so time passes without them noticing because one day is just like the last. Until Mac enters the institution, the patients are perfectly happy living in the institution and have no desire to return home because they have no reason to. He is the one that comes in and shows them how wrong it is that they are comfortable with being here and that they should be living their lives outside of this home instead of rotting inside of it. While *The Philadelphia Story* has the outsider come into the film and make the home happier, the outsider in *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest* destroys the reality of home that they were living in and makes the patients question their happiness. Mac wants the patients to escape from this simulated home and return to their real ones by exposing the truth behind the institution. He questions their methods of treatment and the sense of home they created for the patients by making the institution more like the outside world than what the outside world is imagined to be by the patients. He shows it is about watching baseball and getting girls rather than focus groups and chores. He gives the patients a taste of what it would mean to go home and they all want it more than ever. When so many soldiers feared that they would never return home during this era, this film helps audiences at home understand how they felt while in Vietnam. It was a mad house and a false sense of home in Vietnam. They had to adopt it as their home to survive, but there was no denying that there was no comfort in their home abroad. The fear of home as a mental institution is that it will become a reality for so many

soldiers that just returned home from the war is those loved ones that they returned home to do not provide them with what they were deprived of aboard and make their home a loving and safe place.

Closure for both of these films is different than what was expected at the beginning because of the twists and turns taken throughout. In *The Philadelphia Story*, true closure is achieved as the standard wedding scene is played out for the audience. The symbolic wedding that took place during many depression films was a popular way to satisfy audience's need for hope and new beginnings.



Figure 11: *Philadelphia Story* (George Cuckor, United States, 1940)

The final scene plays out with Tracy deciding not to marry George because of his lack of trust in her. After this revelation, she has two men eager to marry her, Mike and Dexter. Since the wedding has already been planned and the guests are already in attendance, Tracy meets with her suitors outside and decides to marry Dexter while her guests wait anxiously inside. Her choice to marry Dexter shows her submission to societal conventions and authority, as he is the clear choice that her family would want her to make. However, by the end of the film the relationships Tracy has formed with her family have gotten stronger and now she realizes that she must ally her

thoughts with theirs and Tracy as well as her family now love Dexter. Tracy's individual desires may have seemed lost by this action, but they were not lost they were simply changed.

Throughout the film, her desires began to align with that of her families and as they grew closer her desire to rebel diminished and she discovered that she did still have feelings for Dexter regardless of social norms. This showed audiences that to align with authority meant happiness and a symbolic wedding for them where they would all find the happiness they desired. It shows that the post depression world could be a place where a union between government and the people was beneficial for both parties and the life of the Lords could be a reality. While the closure of *The Philadelphia Story* brought hope to the audience, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* left them with conflicting feelings of hope and sadness. The film ends with the Chief's escape from the institution and Mac's escape from life. The institution pushed too far as Mac returned from a lobotomy that left him unresponsive and in a state that would keep him in the institution for life. Chief realized that this would not be a life worth living and more than anything Mac wanted out of this place and Chief made sure that he obeyed Mac's wishes. Death was the only escape that Mac could have in order to get out of the institution or else he would be there for life living like the WWII who could not longer speak. The audience is conflicted because although Mac was unable to escape, at least Chief was able to and Mac found escape in death.



Figure 12: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (Milos Forman, United, States, 1975)

Vietnam veterans during the time sympathized the most with this ending, as this was a catch 22 that they felt when returning home. They could either leave the war behind them and return with a new outlook on life or they could let it eat them alive and end up like the cast of *Cuckoo's Nest*. "For Americans, the experience of Vietnam was one of loss. We lost the war in 1973 and the country in 1975" (Dittmar and Michaud, 41). This film ends echoing this loss with the death of Mac. The mental institution showed the nation that was lost with the patients representing those veterans and citizens struggling to come to terms with the end of the war. The loss of Mac shows the loss of this struggle because he was the only patient that seemed to have a sense of what reality was. Chief gives hope to the audience that he will go out into the world and take what Mac has taught him to heart and live a normal life in society and get the country back. Maybe he will even tell someone of the injustices at the institution and gain freedom for everyone inside. The unknown elements at the end of this film are insurmountable, but this is the state the world is at when they are questioning the post war life that America is living in. There are unanswered questions of the war and doubts about the future as they are moving forward and this film plays on that fact to the audience and does not do them any favors by answering any questions or providing closure. What the ending does do though is it gives them questions to

ponder than they can then take out of the film and worry about in real life. It is a way for the audience to work through real life issues inadvertently by working through those in the film. Finding their own answers to the film brings the closure they want to the film rather than a universal closure to everyone and is telling of how that individual wants the world after the war to be. Closure in these films shows how just how definitive the end of the depression was compared with that of the Vietnam War.

Chapter 8

***Pinocchio* and *A Clockwork Orange*: New Techniques Bring Hope for a New Future**

Philadelphia Story and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* end the typical ways films during their eras did, one providing hope for a better future and the other showing a bleak outlook for the way life would be lived. *Pinocchio* and *A Clockwork Orange* still have the expected endings that were seen during each film, but the progressive nature of the style in film shows a way for the audience to look towards the future not based on their endings, but based upon the advances in film and divergence from the norm. These films show a movement towards something new and different that audiences craved for. Animated films were gaining technological advances and were showing the direction that films could go in. *A Clockwork Orange* displayed an alternate style to filmmaking and one that showed where films could be taken in the future. Although the hope and the hopeless endings remain the same, there is something to be desired in the future for not only film, but society itself as it diverts from the norm and takes on new qualities.

Animation films during the depression era were the true catalysts of escape for the audience. A world was created where anything was possible and there were no limits to what could appear on screen. They were about one's imagination and where it could take them. *Pinocchio*, directed by Walt Disney, is an example of this where a puppet is able to turn into a real boy simply by wishing on a star. It gave audiences hope that what they wished for during this time could be achieved if they acted how their conscious guided them and truly believed their wishes could become realities. During the Vietnam War, animated films were not as popular and

A Clockwork Orange, directed by Stanley Kubrick, became an amped up version of an animated film with its crazy costumes, imaginary looking sets and over acted characters. These were not the animated films that dreams were made of, but more nightmares. The innocent animated characters from before had become monsters and were living in the real world where they pushed the limits that were set by society. While *Pinocchio* was about a puppet becoming a boy *A Clockwork Orange* was about how a man became a puppet because of the government. These films show a stark difference in what happens when hope is lost and submission takes over. Hope is what allowed citizens to dream during the depression and work towards their goals to make their lives better. When that hope was lost during the Vietnam War, citizens became like Alex, brainwashed to behave and to act a certain way according to the government's desires.

Pinocchio made its debut in cinemas in 1940, which coincided with the tail end of the Great Depression. This was a time where hopes were at the highest and morale of the United States was on the rise. Roosevelt said in his inauguration speech that, "happiness lies not in the mere possession of money, it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort" (Watkins, 141). This was the philosophy during the depression and a rebuilding of the nation was taking place with this motto to keep spirits high. *A Clockwork Orange* aligned along a similar timetable to that of *Pinocchio's* released because it also premiered toward the tail end of the Vietnam War. The difference was that the economy during the depression was beginning to take a turn for the better and there were tangible changes in the economy that pointed towards an end being in sight. Through programs such as the Workers Progress Administration, projects were being started that were providing paying jobs for employees (Watkins 249). These workers built "651,087 miles of highways, roads and streets" and were "paid an average salary of \$41.57 a month" although this was minimal, it was better than unemployment or salaries that were smaller than this (Watkins, 249). This was evidence that times were looking up, employees were needed to complete these projects and jobs could be found. During the Vietnam War, there was no telling

when it would end so no one was aware that an end was coming soon because the evidence for this end was not as tangible. Although troops were being removed from Vietnam, it was slow and did not happen all at once, which made Americans wonder when a true end would be reached. The removal of troops lasted for three years starting in 1970 when “Nixon announced the first of the massive troop withdrawals” and although aerial bombing continued, the following year 180,000 more troops were removed until there were no more in 1973 (Pendergast, 110). *A Clockwork Orange* came onto the silver screen in 1971 with the end of American Movement in the Vietnam War still two years off in 1973. While America beginning to take a turn for the better during the depression when *Pinocchio* was running, this period of the Vietnam War was one where the nation was spiraling out of control. It was the rise of protests and troops were still marching forward in Vietnam, but the beginning of the 70s was the final downswing of the Vietnam War before movements were made to end the war. Films during the Vietnam era deployed “varying technical and narrative means in an attempt to initiate al spectators into the emotive and evaluative modes of reception that each film constitutes as its norm” (Dittmar and Michaud, 9). *A Clockwork Orange* certainly created its own norm in an era where there was no normal standard to live by. Both of these films were essential for the audience to see during these eras and coincided with the mindsets of the times perfectly. To determine how they dealt with the trauma of the time and were part of the healing process for the audience they have to be taken apart by the conflict presented in each film, the way they each portray authority figures and how they view home. All of these elements were brought to the forefront of these films to either bring closure to the audience or to leave the films open ended with the purpose to call for a change in society.

Conflict is a key point to any film of any genre. There are different types of conflict used to spice up the plot. The type of conflict may range from physical conflict, to internal conflict or relationship drama. The conflicts in these film pairings are at opposite ends of

the spectrum. *Pinocchio* presents the audience with internal conflict. Pinocchio is struggling with his conscious and trying to learn the difference between right and wrong. *A Clockwork Orange* is external conflict that is manifested through verbal arguments and also physical ones. The characters fight strangers on the street and in their homes as well as verbally argue with each other. The depictions of the conflict in each film are representative of the conflict being played out around America during each era.

The Depression was not a time of physical conflict, but one where people were struggling everyday to do the right thing for themselves and their family when there were temptations not to. People were tempted to steal food, money and other supplies to provide for their families. They were torn to do what was right and make an honest living or to take the easy way out by lesser means. *Pinocchio* was the filmic representation of this by showing the struggle Pinocchio had these temptations and the physical manifestation of a conscious with Jiminy Cricket. Pinocchio and the citizens of America each took a similar path during the depression and had similar temptations to steer them down the wrong path that would lead them to not achieving their goals, whether that was becoming a real boy or getting out of the depression and being able to provide for their family. The temptations Pinocchio meets are taking the easy way out through becoming a celebrity and going to work for the circus and also going to Pleasure Island where corruption ran wild with the vices of America on display. Citizens during the time faced similar temptations in their own lives. The easy way out for those in the depression were stealing food or money or riding off various initiatives started by the government at the time. Although this was a rarity during the time, when many were struggling with their daily lives these options started to look even better as the depression took an even greater toll on their lives. Pinocchio found an easy way to make money that was not part of his path to find the virtues he needed to become a real boy while those during the depression were aiming to suffer through the hard times so that they could come out on the other side virtuous. No matter how difficult the times were this hope that

thing would get better kept them from these temptations and giving into them would mean that they ran the risk of not getting their life back after the depression. The trip to Pleasure Island that Pinocchio took showed the vices during the time that citizens would partake in to escape from their troubles. The drinking, gambling and smoking became a way to make life during the depression seem more glamorous than it actually was. These temptations were distractions during the time though. When every dime earned was precious in the era, giving into these vices was a waste of money and also lowered the work ethic of the citizens that needed to work hard at their job to make money. This is where the internal conflict played a key role in the life of the film and the life of the audiences at the time. It was about getting through the times ahead and reaching the end goal no matter how hard it is to resist the temptation around, the conscious will be there steering everyone in the right direction it is just a matter of listening to it.

A Clockwork Orange represents the physical conflict and violence of the Vietnam War. It is not the internal struggle seen during *Pinocchio*; the conflict is physical fighting and bringing the violence in Vietnam to the big screen in this film. Alex and his gang of followers run amuck in the streets causing conflict first by abusing a man singing old folk songs and then going on to sexually assault a woman and beat her husband in their home. It is this senseless type of conflict that is seen in the movie and is representative of the senseless violence that most at the time viewed the Vietnam War was. Their violence is purposeless and they often have fights within the gang that have no sense of direction with no gain for anyone in the end. The attacking of strangers calls into question the reasons behind the Vietnam War at the time as it seemed that the United States involvement was unwelcome as we are fighting strangers for unknown reasons. They bring the conflict to them and create it on their own, while the opposite was the case during the Vietnam War where soldiers were drafted against their will and were dropped in the heart of conflict in the Vietnam jungles. The director of the film, Stanley Kubrick, made sure that the violence was as uncomfortable as possible for the audience to watch by

juxtaposing classical music and filming it from obscure angles. It is made to make the audience uncomfortable and to start having revulsions to violence that Alex experiences later in the film. While the first half of the film is dedicated to putting violent acts on a Pedi stool through Alex's eyes, the second part of the film is dedicated to making the audience and Alex opposed to violence experienced in their lives and his. This parallels the call for change in conflict in the nation at the time. The war escalated to an unexpected blood bath with obscene amounts of violence. When the war continued to rage on the more senseless it began to seem to those in America that were viewing these horrors on their television. Protests creating conflict on the home front to bring an end to the war were parallel with the random acts of violence exhibited by Alex and his crew. Both brought about more trouble that needed and did not serve a purpose. When America had enough violence overseas and at home they call for the end of the war was stronger. When Alex had reached his breaking point with being violent, he called for an end to his acts to erase it from his life. Conflict in *A Clockwork Orange* was robust and rowdy with no purpose, much like that of the Vietnam War, but the end of conflict was an important stance to take in the film because it became desirable for the audience.

Authority lies with those that hold the power in the films, it lies in the characters that assert themselves over others and have the other characters answering to them. In some films it may be an actual character in the film, while in others it may be a universal authority, such as the government. In these films, both forms of authority are seen, they physical characters and also a universal authority. *Pinocchio* has Jiminy Cricket acting as the authority and the voice of reason and *A Clockwork Orange* has the universal authority of the government. The relationship formed with authority in the film is important to study to determine how relationships with authorities at the time were handled. *Pinocchio*'s relationship with Jiminy Cricket was a friendship where Jiminy helped *Pinocchio* achieve his goals and *Pinocchio* trusted Jiminy. On the other hand Alex butted heads with the different governmental characters and institutions that appeared through

various points in the film. The portrayal of authority in films and the relationships demonstrated with them are the ones that films at the time hoped to promote to the audiences by previewing the benefits or hindrances that the relationships with authority could bring in not only individual lives, but also the nation itself.

The relationship with authority in *Pinocchio* is symbiotic. Pinocchio needs Jiminy to reach his goals and Jiminy needs Pinocchio to do the same. Jiminy acts as the authority figure in Pinocchio's life and guides him through the obstacle course of events set before him in the film. They face other authority figures along the way together, such as Stromboli, but they are not the ones they answer to. The symbiotic relationship between the two of them leads Pinocchio to achieve his ultimate goal of becoming a real boy and Jiminy's of becoming a certified conscious. Although Jiminy's official title as an authority figure is not a governmental body or a corporate CEO, he is still authority in the film and representative of authority at the time of the Great Depression. The relationship that the people must have with the government at the time of the depression to thrive is one similar to what was seen on screen during this film. The government created a variety of initiatives during the time to help those struggling during the depression, such as the National Industrial Recovery Act which strove to control wages and prices of products under control (Watkins, 142). Without these programs, most people during the depression would have been far worse off than they ended up being. The government hoped to keep its citizens out of trouble and to prevent crime and other unsavory activities during the time through the promise of these initiatives and working with them to get out of the depression together. The relationship between Jiminy and Pinocchio in this film is an ideal one and having it promoted in the film increases the likelihood that it will take hold in the audience members and be the case for the real world. The idea was that the government was telling Americans "Don't be too imaginative, don't be too inquisitive, don't be too willful, or you'll get in trouble-though there's always time to learn your lesson and come out all right" (Sklar, 195). This is the way authority handles Pinocchio in

making sure he does not stray too far from what the right path is and coming out all right in the end. At the end of the day, the government needed the citizens to work and help turn around the economy by putting money back into it. A vicious cycle existed where there was not enough money being accumulated to spend so the economy was not growing. However, with a symbiotic environment with the government, the citizens could earn money and then spend it to provide for their families in turn improving the economy that the government was aiming to fix. At the end of the day, it was not one person or one company that was able to end the depression, it was the efforts of the nation, the government and the citizens working together like *Pinocchio* and Jiminy.

While *Pinocchio* presents a pleasant relationship with authority that they desire the audience having, *A Clockwork Orange* shows Alex acting out against authority figures and portrays them as the villain in this film and encourages the audience to think of them in the same way. Alex acts as the authority inside of his group of brothers, much like different protests had leaders that would give instructions on how to act and what to do to all of those involved. However, it was being the leader that caused him to get caught and answer to the higher power of the government. When he is sentenced to prison, he craves the life of a ruler in his group he once had and will do anything to get out of prison, including a government experiment. This experiment will make Alex and other criminals opposed to violence and put them back on the right path and live life the way the government wants them to. This is true control by the government; they are making subjects of the experiment act a certain way by brainwashing them with videos showing violence as a repulsive act. The experiment shows violence as a curable disease that can be wiped from the minds of all citizens after the experiment. However, the Vietnam War is not something that could be forgotten in the minds of the soldiers. In turn, Alex and soldiers alike both had posttraumatic stress disorder after experiencing these forms of violence that they were trying to forget. Authority may have thought violence could be forgotten through these experiments or by bringing the soldiers out of Vietnam and giving them certain

benefits, but the truth of the matter is that there will always be side effects when it comes to violence. The placated Alex under governmental experiments shows him as a true puppet and being completely controlled by the government. He became submissive under authority and lost his ability to act out against them and became completely brainwashed. The relationship with authority in this film is a damaging one because Alex lost his personality and eventually looked for an escape from his life by attempting suicide. The government also loses their creditability when the experiment is classified as a failure and Alex is seen as the victim. This vicious cycle is the one being had by most in the time of the Vietnam War. Soldiers would become drones of government agencies forced to go overseas with no option simply because they were of a certain age. Government was to blame for the state these soldiers returned in when they were having adverse effects to the violence they experienced when they were fighting. Since the soldiers abroad had no choice and often ended up like Alex, it was up to those still at home to make sure that this did not happen to anyone else and the only way to do that was to rise up and call for an end to the war. The relationship that the film wanted the audience to have with the government was one where they questioned their motives, did not become submissive to them and rose up against them to call for an end to the war.

A sense of home is felt in both of these films, home does not always have to be where one is from or where they live, but where they are most comfortable and feel a sense of belonging. In the case of *Pinocchio*, his home is with Gepetto; it is where he was created and where he wants to return to after his adventures. Alex in *A Clockwork Orange* has not true home and we see throughout the film as he wrecks the sense of security that home brings for others. It is the returning to home that is the common thread between the Depression and the Vietnam War. During the Depression, families had to leave their homes behind to look for work elsewhere or they had to leave family members behind as they worked elsewhere. Return home for them was return to normalcy and a reunion of the family. During the Vietnam War, the return home was for

the soldiers overseas. This meant that the war was over for everyone or for the individual soldier. It was a relief for soldiers to come home, but at the same time there were so many that did not make it. Home in these two films gives a sense of what it means to have a home and return to it during these two eras, but with the specialization of each character and how conflict and relationships with authority have influenced the film thus far.

Since Pinocchio was created in Gepetto's shop, it is his home and his whole world since he has known nothing else in his life as a puppet and the first stages of his life as a real boy. His family is Gepetto, Cleo and Figaro and through his adventures, he desires nothing more than to be reunited with them and make them proud. The home that Gepetto creates is one of hope and happiness, but it is a home he creates from himself surrounded by toys and clocks. He shows that happiness can be created out of anything and encourages those during the depression to look for the happiness in the little things in their lives and make happiness for themselves regardless of the situation they are currently living in. Although Gepetto's home in Pinocchio is not one that many possess during the depression, the feelings around it are the ones that surround homes during the time and one that the audiences want to model their homes after. Gepetto shows that it is not about material possessions, but what makes you happy and surrounding oneself with the people and activities that do make you happy. This made audiences come to the realization that they should be doing what makes them happy and getting out of the depression could bring that to them. Pinocchio's return home after his journeys was a joyous one as he was finally reunited with his family and it was like nothing had changed except now he was a real boy because he had learned how to live the right way. The film is showing that by acting the right way during the depression and working hard people could return home and achieve this happiness shown in the film. The trauma could be healed by this return home that is surrounded by people and hobbies that make them happy and help repair the depression they faced during the depression.

Where home in *Pinocchio* is a defined location with a permanent set of people, *A Clockwork Orange* has a more ambiguous definition of what home is with a rotational location and transforming set of characters. Home is not the safe place where troubles are non-existent like Gepetto's home, but the area where problems are created and where being safe is a luxury. Alex lives with his parents, but his true home is at the Aurola where he and his "brothers" live the lives they want to live without the restrictions their real homes place on them. Aurola is a den of sin where they can live with their vices and where they feel most at home because they are untouchable there. This is where they meet to develop their schemes of where they will strike next and who their next victim will be. Alex and his band of brothers wreck the safety and sense of security provided by home when they break into one and sexually assault the wife and beat the husband. When these scheme starts, they pull up outside to a location that has a plaque just saying "home."



Figure 13: *A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick, United States, 1971)

It is the universal, undefined home and they perform a true home invasion. This shows that during the war, nowhere is safe and the home front can be just as violent as abroad. In a place defined strictly as home, something terrible like this can happen. There are two returns to home in this film, both done by Alex. There is his return to his actual home after he has gone through the traumatic experiment at jail. However, he cannot stay at his house because he has been replaced. He has lost his home; he has nowhere to return to after his traumatic experiences and lost his attachments to his home. When Alex loses his other home, he must go to the only other home he knows; Home. The place of his brutal acts that were so traumatic on others and he returns there for help, but ends up being treated just as brutally as he treated them. Home during the Vietnam War was a brutal place where the trauma experienced abroad still has an affect on soldiers when they return home and the home front is just as brutal as abroad.

The purposes of *Pinocchio* and *A Clockwork Orange* were to bring closure to the audiences at the time so that they could heal their wounds cause by the trauma they were experiencing. Closure can be seen through the sense of home, the conflict resolution and the relationships desired with authority in the films, but also the closure that the film itself has. *Pinocchio* is a film with true closure, where all conflict is resolves, the relationship with authority is strong and Pinocchio and his family have a happy home life. This “wish upon a star” mentality proved to earn the characters exactly what they desired and brought closure to the film and the audience when their wishes were achieved. Gepetto and Pinocchio are reunited in their home and are living life just as happily as they were before Pinocchio left for his adventures. Gepetto was rescued from the whale and Pinocchio has learned his lesson about taking the easy way out. He will now listen to Jiminy Cricket because he is a certified conscious.



Figure 14: Pinocchio (Walt Disney, United States, 1940)

The film ends with high hopes and is encouraging to those of the depression that it will end soon and they will have everything they hoped for. *A Clockwork Orange* takes the opposite route in having a wrecked sense of what home is, no true conflict resolution and a relationship with authority that is untrustworthy and volatile. There is no hope for the future at the end of this film as no closure is achieved. Alex discovers that he is cured when his dreams of violence and sex return. When the minister comes to hospital to ask him to give him good public relations he brings Beethoven's Ninth as a peace offering. When he can listen to this symphony and not have a revolting reaction to it, he knows he is entirely cured.



Figure 15: *A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick, 1971)

This ambiguous ending calls the audience to create their own ending and show that they have the power against the government that they took away from Alex. While the closure brought to the audience by *Pinocchio* called for a lack of action and for the audience to wait out the depression so they could live happily after it was over, *A Clockwork Orange* called for an uprising during the Vietnam War and for the audience to take matters into their own hands to end the war.

Chapter 9

Conclusions and Trauma Today

Bonnie and Clyde and *Gone With the Wind*, *The Wizard of Oz* and *Night of the Living Dead*, *Maltese Falcon* and *Chinatown*, *It Happened One Night* and *The Graduate*, *Philadelphia Story* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Pinocchio* and *A Clockwork Orange* when paired together, show how similar the eras are and what it means to the masses to live in a time of trauma. Making films that drew in audiences were the goals of directors to make money, but they also wanted to make films that would make an impact. There was a need during both of these eras for some way to deal with the current situations and films were able to provide that for their

audiences. They would watch characters they connected to solve their issues on screen so they believed that could as well. Although film was a mass art that was viewed by mass amounts of people, it is important to focus on the individual's role in film viewing and how seeing these films that were previously discussed affected the individual.

Every viewer in the audience interprets every film and its messages differently. Although the same film is being viewed by the masses, every individual is watching a different film in their eyes. The traumas that those in the audience went through affect the ways they viewed the films during these times. For those that lost homes, jobs and their livelihood during the depression, they viewed these films differently than someone who still had their jobs and did not have to ration their food. For a viewer during the Vietnam War that had a loved one fighting in Vietnam or were protesting back home had a different view than those that had no connection to the war and stayed oblivious to it at home. Individuals' interpretation of the films prompted them to respond differently. This reaction to the films either prompted the individuals to join up in arms with others to defend a lifestyle or change the way they are living. Other reactions were to keep living they way they were so that they did not get hurt or to go on by themselves acting purely to find a better life. Regardless of what the response was, each viewer of these films walked out with a different view of the era they are living in and the trauma surrounding them.

The closure of this analysis and the closure of these films leaves the readers and viewers with the same questions; is there hope to heal the trauma? Looking at the pairs of films, it was seen how each of them are able to leave the audience with hope and a way to heal their trauma if they listen to the messages of the film. However, what is the hope for films in general to continue to have this ability. Although times are not as traumatic as they were during these designated eras, there have been moments of extreme trauma that the nation needed somewhere to turn to for comfort. In both the depression and the Vietnam War, it was reasonable to go to the cinema to escape and find comfort. Now, cinema is not at the zenith that it was during these eras, especially

during the depression. Although films were beginning to lose their popularity during the Vietnam War because of the growing popularity of television, films were able to become a spectacle and become important enough that they had to be viewed. They were able to capture what television could not and still drew in audience to see them with their politically ambiguous content. However, the world today has turned even further away from film with the growing rise of a variety of mediums. In a world where there are technological advances constantly on the rise and other mediums outweigh going to the theater and even watching television, films are losing their ability to have an impact. After this analysis, the importance of films can be seen and pushing them aside is a mistake to be made in the current generation.

Although hard times have not lasted as long as they did during the depression and the war, they still have hit and without having an outlet like the cinema to turn to, will the nation be lost. This analysis shows how to use cinema as a tool for dealing with trauma today. When times come like September 11th and like the war in Afghanistan, the audience must watch films with the same eye as they did during the depression and the Vietnam War. When more traumas hit, it is important for Americans to turn to cinema like they did during the Depression and Vietnam War to learn how to cope with what they are going through. In today's society stars have also taken on a role of getting through trauma as audiences connect with them on screen and follow them in real life, "in this way, they serve as icons of a particular era, speaking more to the times in which they resided" (Walton and Tucker, xi). Since viewing cinema during these past eras to heal trauma was a success, it would seem logical to turn to cinema now for the traumas we have had and the future traumas that will occur. Although most people today do not remember the depression and an increasing amount are beginning to not remember the war, we can learn from their triumphs of these eras how to triumph in ours. The goal of this analysis and future looks at film and trauma is to "raise questions as to how and what historical events altered the shape of everyday life" and will continue to alter everyday life (Walton and Tucker, xi). Since popular

culture can reach entirely new heights in today's society it is important to learn how to use it as a tool. By putting ourselves in the shoes of those back then, we are able to have a parallel experience to theirs when we watch films today. No matter how insignificant the audience believes a film is, all films have elements derivative of the era they are made in and interpreting them today is just as important as it was during these previous eras to look for ways to heal or current trauma and look for hope in the future.

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Work with several intercollegiate athletic teams at Penn State University to improve students' awareness and attendance sporting events. Concentrated experience in leveraging social media to promote "minor" sports. Developed and deployed the "Code Blue" initiative, which rewarded students for attendance at sporting events throughout the year.

- **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame & Museum** • Cleveland, OH • May - August, 2011

Worked with the Membership and Development Department to improve the portfolio of communications and marketing materials distributed to members and trustees. Assisted in curation of archives and development/deployment of new and existing Museum assets.

- **PGA Tour's Greenbrier Classic** • White Sulphur Springs, WV • May - August, 2010

Acted as integral member of PGA Tour's Inaugural Greenbrier Classic professional staff, concentrating on tournament operations, event production (associated concerts), sponsorship procurement, ticket sales, logistics, setting up vendor contracts, management of time and people, all part of preparing the facility to host the tournament.

- **Gaelic Girls** • Dublin, Ireland • May - August, 2012

Strategic and operational development focused on identifying and activating opportunities for American students to populate marketing, advertising and service sector internships in Ireland.

- **CBS Sports (Golf)** • May - August, 2013

Hired to work directly with Executive Producer, Lance Barrow's, production team. Covered eight 2013 PGA Tour events televised by CBS Sports. Experienced multiple facets of on-site preparation and production of televised and taped golf tournament content.