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Reading Movies

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“Reading” Movies

Tamarah Cohen

Abstract

This paper begins with a brief sketch of traditional classroom movie practices, then offers an alternative: a framework for performing in-class collaborative critical analysis of movies. It concludes with three materials samples that illustrate the methodology outlined therein and a sampling of movie-related resources.

Keywords: Movies, TESOL, Critical Pedagogy

Movies, freestanding or as supplements to print text, feature prominently in second language instruction. They are a readily available “high context” multi-genre cultural form and one in which most people are fundamentally literate. As Cady (1995) puts it, we’ve all been “trained by experience [...] to respond to camera angles, editing pace and music” (p. 23). This generic film competency combined with common knowledge of narrative structure (i.e., generalized scripts, subscripts, stories, patterns and themes) aids in both scene-specific and overall comprehension (Knees, 2001). The combination, when accompanied by “well-structured tasks and activities designed to promote active viewing and stimulate involvement” (King, 2002, p. 6), makes movies a rich and adaptable resource of intrinsically motivating materials that provide visual support for text-based and language content activities.

Beyond promoting these traditional pedagogic goals, however, movies represent a means to introducing and exercising visual and aural (i.e., media) literacy skills — skills based on an expanded definition of ‘text’ (Summerfield and Lee, 2006; Farias, 2005; Knee, 2001; Giroux, 1999; Klinger, 1997; Williamson and Vincent, 1996; Hardy, 1995; Shea, 1995; Cady, 1995; Casanave and Freedman, 1995; Fairclough, 1992, etc.). These skills can empower students to identify media narratives for what, in effect, they are: value-laden forms of socialization that shape (some would argue, stifle) our imaginations and the lives we live. By learning to ‘read’, i.e., analyze and decode, visual and multi-media text in tandem with the development of print

literacy, students can locate their own voices amidst competing and oftentimes conflicting discourses.

This paper begins with a brief sketch of what I perceive to be a consequential problem with traditional classroom movie practices, then offers an alternative: a framework for performing in-class collaborative critical analysis of movies. It concludes with three materials samples¹⁾ that illustrate the methodology outlined herein (APPENDIX, TEXT-A, MATERIALS SAMPLES 1-3) and a sampling of movie-related resources (APPENDIX, TEXT-B and TEXT-C).

TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM MOVIE PRACTICES

The traditional movie-centered teaching unit typically begins with pre-screening theme-based discussion and modeling of so-called correct linguistic forms (including vocabulary, idioms, colloquialisms and dialogue deemed important by the teacher). These activities are followed by one (and usually just one) of the following: single-scene viewing in which only one scene is used; selective viewing in which only a few, usually disconnected, scenes are used; stop-and-go language-intensive in-class viewing; or whole movie viewing, not uncommonly actualized as the “push-the-button-and-watch teaching methodology” (Davis, 1998).

All of the above screening approaches evoke debate²⁾. Shea (as cited by King, 2002), for example, asserts that incremental viewing interferes with students’ ability to recognize “the emotional force and narrative dynamic of the video as a story about important things in the human experience, aesthetic and ethical things [...]; things that drive language and ultimately stimulate students to learn it in the first place” (p. 3). In contrast, even though Cady (1995) acknowledges that movies are not designed to be viewed in decontextualized segments and that the intensive language-based approach is a strain on the attention span of students (p. 26), he argues that “it is hard to justify the [position] that some greater understanding of the language, or more detailed examination of its component parts, and the ways in which these parts relate to their contexts in a general way, will not contribute quite a bit to [students’] study of the film” (p. 26). Davis (1998) takes issue with the whole movie viewing methodology, describing it as when “we teachers rely too heavily on the video to teach, stimulate interest, and enhance comprehension without focused and controlled teacher involvement in preparing

students to receive the message” (p. 1).

The next step in the traditional movie-centered teaching unit involves ‘narrative analysis’ or student-directed cognitive re-orientation in the form of teacher-generated convergent³⁾ or “lower order questions,”⁴⁾ the answers to which are, by definition, fixed, singularly correct and always known to the teacher. In other words, the teacher provides precise elaborations which clarify the relevance of facts. S/He does this by posing questions that build prerequisite knowledge when it cannot be safely presupposed, and developing external criteria of importance in students. The common rationale is that by requiring students to work within the teacher-interpreted movie makers’ framework, they will eventually come to appreciate the significance of content that would otherwise remain irrelevant. The final step in a teaching unit of this kind involves students performing individual written follow-up work that involves personal response based on approximations of surface meaning as configured previously in class.

The problem with traditional (prescriptive versus critical) classroom practices is that they treat movies as unproblematic expressions of experience, as windows into culture. But *whose* windows? *Whose* culture? How movies come to take the form that they do is part of their meaning. Specific historical and material conditions influence — even determine — their textual character, as do prevailing circumstances of power. Like all text, movies are context-dependent. They are created by individuals (or corporations, comprised of individuals), each of whom is bound by her/his personal frame of reference. As such, they contain assumptions, presuppositions and buried propositions that become clear(er) when contextual information (including biographic, situational and structural factors) is either provided or the need for it made apparent. The shearing of contextual specificity in the name of accessibility (e.g., graded corpora) obscures this context-dependency.

In the traditional classroom, opportunities for critical dialogue (for developing a critical apparatus for reading media) are often lost. Where students could be asking questions that relate to rhetorical purpose — for example, who the intended audience of a movie is, what the intended purpose is, what knowledge/attitude the filmmaker presumes of the audience, if the students’ own experience supports the filmmaker’s conclusions, if they share the filmmaker’s point-of-view — they are instead busy catering to their teacher. This constrictive learning

position imposed by the teacher effectively defuses any impulse students might have to assert themselves against the power of conventionalized (media and/or English language) practices. The message conveyed is (that the teacher, not the students, is the subject of the learning process and) that there is but a single, cohesive set of appropriate schemata for any given reality, represented by the transcendent and unified ‘universal’ subject, embodied in the teacher. This approach presents problems, especially for those outside the range of audiences not commonly targeted — for those with different codes — including EFL students (for more on this point, see Cohen, 2009; Cohen, 2008). Of course, traditional classroom movie-viewing practices, like traditional classroom practices in general, are not without merit. My point is that teaching critical literacy as an add-on category is both wasteful and misleading in that it sends the signal to students that developing critical awareness is peripheral rather than fundamental to the learning process.

A CRITICAL ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Movie viewing, like all text consumption, is a dialectical process of reassemblage in which various preexisting, unrelated pockets of knowledge are activated and reassembled into an integrated schema. This schema then provides support for comprehending and remembering subsequent events. New and old cognitive events draw on each other, thereby promoting intellectual transformation and development, unique to the individual (Bransford et al., 1990). Within this process, students can position themselves variously. They can, for example, take a passive approach and rely on bottom-up processes, in which case they are likely to adhere to received knowledge and accumulate information without accommodating it into the structure of existing knowledge (Wallace, 1992). At the other end of the continuum are those who rely on top-down processes, in which case they are likely to indulge in biases, predispositions and personal experiences. The critically attuned, however, recognize that analyzing propositional knowledge and buried ideological presuppositions and assumptions — and the conditions in which they are cast — is an intrinsic part of reading (and learning in general). They know, in other words, that effective text consumption is a balancing act involving multiple, constantly shifting frames of reference.

Like print text, movies and their interpretation are invested with political and ideological processes, emerging as they do from individuals’ positions in time and culture. They are

placed, positioned and situated. An explicit critical methodology offers a collaborative student-centered way to explore the discursive processes by which knowledge is constructed. It does so by taking into account the cognitive significance and social ramifications of textual choices (Penelope, 1990), text selection and course content. Instead of aiming for deference to any one particular interpretive strategy (namely, mine), the overarching objective of this, the critical approach, is to provide students with sustained opportunities to acquire the cognitive tools required to unpack the unmarked intersecting cultural narratives of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class and national identity (Wallace, 1992). By capitalizing on the metalingual resources (*ibid.*) and contrapuntal vision (Said, 1984) of second language learners from within a multivocal framework, students come to recognize that all interpretative work (i.e., the construction of knowledge) is “a matter of overlapping and contested terrains” and not a “search for a sacred originating point” (Gunew, 1994, p. 38). It is, in other words, a context-dependent endeavor that can best be understood in the context of power relations, both within and beyond the classroom.

Fueled by Critical Applied Linguistics and the media literacy movement, I have designed a collection of critically-based pedagogical materials drawn from visual, print and aural media, including feature films, animation, documentaries, trailers, television news magazines, TV commercials, self-published Internet video clips, music videos, popular music and print advertisements. My objective is not to train students to receive, retain and return information in accordance with, as Krashen (1987) would say, the “learned system,” but to involve them in interdependent communicative activities that require the use of synthetic, analytic and abstracting skills for the purpose of reorganizing and interpreting information (Casanave and Freedman, 1995) while developing awareness of their own and others’ epistemological positioning, personal assumptions and preconceptions. I do this by, for example, going beyond simply demanding the identification of ‘significant’ textual propositions and asking questions that elicit fixed or singularly “correct” answers. Instead, I offer (and encourage the generation of) questions that invite a multiplicity of defensible interpretations, questions that focus on buried ideological investment and competing schemata, and how both affect meaning. My methodology has as its primary goal student awareness of and appreciation for ‘positionality’ — where one stands in relation to what one says — and ‘multivocality’ — the reality “formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 18). When exploited, these two interrelated concepts can emancipate

students, prompting them to think critically: to de- and re-construct the ground rules of education and the ideological premises on which they are based.

Included in the Appendix (TEXT-A, MATERIALS SAMPLES 1–3) are three movie-viewing worksheets designed to help students reconstruct contextual information by requiring them to look selectively for text-embedded clues as they watch movies in uninterrupted form. The idea is to combine the intensive (sequential) approach with the comprehensive (whole movie) approach, thus enabling students to “immerse themselves in the narrative, imagistic, and linguistic flow of cinema” (Knees, 2001, p. 145) while simultaneously engaging in detail-oriented critical analysis. In other words, instead of partitioning (from a moviemaker’s point-of-view, hacking) up movies into sequences, these exercises require that the viewing process be *thematically* partitioned up, one pre-selected theme per student or student-group.⁵⁾ In simplest form (procedural variations are common): students first choose a thematic focus,⁶⁾ then, during in-class viewing, keep track of theme-related observations.⁷⁾ Up to three students are invited to share the same focus, though the extra challenges that collaborative work poses are stressed. Finally, interdependent mini-presentations⁸⁾ before an audience comprised of classmates and peers from other classes (involved in the same/similar project) bring the unit together.

These scaffolded intensive whole movie exercises⁹⁾ encourage recognition of and appreciation for the structural and aesthetic integrity of text. They also make passive viewing impossible by positioning students (rather than their remote-wielding teacher) as the subject of the learning process. By learning from each other, students make interdisciplinary connections, build a wider range of schemata, and create knowledge that few if any — teacher included — had before.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Movies of every genre are “deeply embedded in cultural discourse” (Takahashi, 1995, p. 70). They reflect, affirm, maintain and perpetuate the culture to which they belong, and show, as Bazin (as cited by Maltby and Craven, 1995, p. 55) puts it “society as it wants to see itself” — or rather, as their makers see it. Because of this, and because they illustrate and embody the linguistic elements of style, movies can be used to great effect in the second language

classroom. Key to their effectiveness is an understanding by teachers and students alike of the notion of viewer/viewee positionality and an appreciation for the tension borne of cognitive dissonance that — when allowed to surface — facilitates learning, defined in this paper, not as the internalization of others’ perspectives, but as the development of an expansive epistemological perspective. For teachers to use movies in the classroom without introducing the notion of viewer/viewee positionality, without highlighting the role of history and the prevailing circumstances of power, without addressing the social and contestable nature of interpretation, is not to teach thinking, but “to reinforce a putative and dominant norm . . . [to oil] the machinery of legitimation rather than interrogating that whole enterprise of canonization” (Gunew, 1994, p. 95). Through structured in-class critical analysis of movies, conceptualized as text, teachers can, I argue, inspire students to travel recursively through cognitive loops of increasing complexity, confronting divergent sociopolitical agendas with intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm and self-confidence.

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APPENDIX

TEXT-A, MATERIALS SAMPLE-1¹⁰

Pocahontas, 10th Anniversary Edition (1995)

In pairs, gather and organize information about your chosen theme (below). Presentations, five minutes each, will begin next class, but first, individually, fill in the following box. Do not consult your dictionaries or friends. Just write what first comes to mind (free associate).

Native American Women:

1. _____
2. _____...

Group 1 **Music and sound effects** How are music and sound effects used to glorify some and vilify others? How are they used to enhance/convey the directors’ messages? What genres of music/instruments are associated with whom? Which/Whose emotions are emphasized through music and sound effects? Finally, who sings and how, and who does not? *Do you see any patterns?*

- Group 2 **Emotion (e.g., love, happiness, lust, fear, guilt, grief, remorse, sorrow, anger, jealousy, greed)** Who emotes and how (be specific)? In other words, who is featured smiling, frowning, scowling, laughing, etc. *See any patterns?*
- Group 3 **Work (including parenting)/Play (including sports, games)** Who is featured working/playing? Who is featured as physically agile, powerful, self-confident, athletic etc.? Who is not? Who crawls, walks, runs, dives, flies, swims, climbs, falls, sits, reclines? *Do you see any patterns?*
- Group 4 **Physical contact (touching, rubbing, kissing, embracing, breathing on, hovering over/under)** Who is doing what to whom? (Include non-human animal characters in your analysis). Count frequency. Assess motivation. *See any patterns?*
- Group 5 **Flags, Maps (and other paraphernalia of nationhood)** How are flags, etc., featured, with what frequency and in association with whom? *See any patterns?*
- Group 6 **Alcohol, animal flesh (meat), vegetables** Who is featured consuming what? *Do you see any patterns?*
- Group 7 **Camera (close-ups, far shots, small group shots, large group shots, high/low angles, subjective point of view, bird's eye point of view, moving camera)** Who is bestowed with individuality through framing and who is denied it? Who is/are featured like fashion models? *See any patterns?*
- Group 8 **Movie structure (opener, intro, body, conclusion)** Pay attention to the film's structure and what holds it together (i.e., transitions). What/Who is featured in the introduction (before the title appears), and how? What/Who is featured after the introduction, and how? What/Who is featured after the conclusion, and how? Which culture is given more screen time? *See any patterns?*
- Group 9 **Hair (facial-, head-, body-hair, color, texture, length)** Whose hair is: focused on incessantly, moving autonomously, forever blowing in the wind, conveying emoto-sexual information? Whose hair functions like a picture frame/halo/black cloud/_____? *See any patterns?*
- Group 10 **Body types (height, weight, breast/chest-size, foot/hand-size, arm/leg-size, finger length, musculature or a lack thereof, belly button/arm pit/nipple/crotch bulge/thigh/body exposure)** Who is represented as 'average'/normal? Who is emaciated/fit/obese/imposing/towering/wispy/dance-like in every movement/matter-of-fact in every movement, etc.? Whose bodies are featured/displayed in exacting detail? *See any patterns?*
- Group 11 **Voice/Speech (pitch, projection, volubility, muteness)** Who speaks at (what most of us consider to be) a "normal" rate and volume? Who is soft-spoken/bombastic? Who is voluble? Who speaks minimally? Who never speaks? *See any patterns?*
- Group 12 **Language** Who speaks which languages? During interracial interactions, who initiates

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dialogue, who asks questions/who holds the floor/who interrupts whom/who offers minimal support? During mixed-sex interactions, who initiates dialogue, who asks questions/who holds the floor/who interrupts whom/who offers minimal support? Why do you think John Smith likes “hello” better? Which language are we left to conclude Pocahontas prefers? Who can communicate with animals? *See any patterns?*

Group 13 **Facial types (eye-color, hair-color, skin-color, nose-type, chin-size, eye-size, eyebrow size, lip size, make-up and body paint, lipstick, hair style, facial hair, teeth, etc.)** What do the faces in this movie mean to tell us about the characters attached to them? Who looks clean and coiffed? Who does not? Who engages in self-decoration and/or self-gazing? *See any patterns?*

Group 14 **Fashion** Who is in uniform? Who is armed (carrying weapons/swords/bow and arrows/guns/daggers/clubs and other symbols of authority/power/aggression)? Who is dressed for comfort/mobility/easy access; who is not? Who is wearing jewelry (and why?), bows, hats (crowns, caps, head coverings), shoes/moccasins, sandals? Who is barefoot? Whose is dressed in earth tones? Who is dressed in bright colors? Who is fully clothed and who is dressed minimally (effectively naked)? *See any patterns?*

Group 15 **Sex/Age ratio** Are females and males shown in equal numbers? What is the human (and animal) sex ratio (infant girls-to-old women/infant boys-to-old men)? Which age groups are/are not represented? Which animals (small, big, etc.), if any, are featured with whom? *See any patterns?*

Group 16 **Characters** What do we know about _____’s character? What don’t we know but would like to know about:

Princess Pocahontas (real name Matoaka); Pocahontas’s father (King/Chief Powhattan); Pocahontas’s mother (Queen Amopotoiske/Nonoma Matatiske); Grandmother Willow; Soldier-adventurer colonist John Smith; Governor Ratcliffe/Wiggins; Meeko; Thomas; Percy; Ben; Lon; Flit; Nakoma; Kocoum, Kekata. Do you see any patterns?

Follow-Up Discussion Questions

1. When Pocahontas first met John Smith, she was a 10 or 11-year-old child and he, a 28-year-old man. In reality, there was never a romance between them. Pocahontas did eventually marry an Englishman years later, but it wasn’t John Smith. Why do you think Disney modified the facts?
2. What was John Smith doing before he met Pocahontas?
3. What was John Smith and his colonist peers’ purpose in coming to the “New World”?
4. How does the movie explain Pocahontas and Smith’s ability to communicate with each other so effortlessly? More generally, how is it that the Native Americans can (and would want to) speak English?

5. What does the combination of leaves, dust, and little Native American symbols that (whisper “listen with your heart” and) swirl around Pocahontas and Smith mean to signify?
6. How is object (vs. oral) communication (via clothing, hairstyles or architecture; symbols and infographics) featured in the movie?
7. How is British-Native contact depicted? What does the closing scene convey about Pocahontas’ future and the future of Native America as a whole? What, actually, was Pocahontas’s future and at what age/under what circumstances did she die? (First guess, then find out.)
8. What do John Smith and Pocahontas have in common, and does it matter if your answer is “nothing”?
9. Heredity among the Algonquin tribes (of which Pocahontas was a member) was through the mother and her clan. Princess Pocohantas’ mother, Amopotoiske/Nonoma Matatiske, was a queen who ruled her own nation. (She lived with her husband, King Powhattan, only roughly half the year.) Thus, while Princess Pocohantas’ father was a king, her real status came from that of her mother. Why, then, do you think the Queen (Pocahontas’s mother) is never shown in the movie and, more generally, why do you think Disney rarely features mothers in its movies (think *Mulan*, *Cinderella*, *Lion King*, *Beauty and the Beast*, etc.)?
10. Disney’s Pocahontas and John Smith are flawlessly beautiful (by mainstream American standards). Some argue that such depictions reinforce the belief that beautiful people are naturally good. How would the story have been different had the two characters been featured as they actually looked, Pocahontas as a 17th century Powhattan Algonquian child (probably with facial and body tattoos) and John Smith as a short, full bearded man?
11. The willow tree is a sacred Native American symbol associated with certain goddesses and gods, and fertility. It is also traditionally a powerful medicine tree, its leaves, bark and seeds used to treat a variety of disease. How is the tree represented in Pocahontas?

MATERIALS SAMPLE-2

Lion King (1994)

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Group 1 | Body Types Overall size; musculature (or lack thereof); posture; buttocks and tail exposure. Compare the females and males within each species. <i>Do you see any patterns?</i> |
| Group 2 | Face/Coat Coat color: who is fair — beige and light brown, pink and reddish? Who is dark — brown, grey, blue, black? What about eye color? Whose teeth, fangs, tongue and back-of-the throat are shown and whose are not? <i>See any patterns?</i> |
| Group 3 | Sex What does <i>Simba</i> have that Nala does not have that qualifies him for leadership? What does <i>Simba</i> get that Nala does not get that could qualify him for leadership? <i>See any patterns?</i> |
| Group 4 | Age How is sexual maturity indicated? How is male agedness represented? How is female |

agedness represented? *See any patterns?*

Group 5 **Voice and Dialect** Can you identify any of the English dialects spoken by the characters?

There are several, including:

Southern American (e.g., *Mufasa*, played by a Black man from Mississippi, USA)

“Black English” (e.g., *Shenzi*, played by a Black woman from New York; *Nala* [as a cub] played by a Black woman from California, USA)

Mexican American English (*Banzai* is played by a Mexican American man from California, USA)

Jamaican English (e.g., *Sarabi* is played by a woman from Kingston, Jamaica)

Standard American English (e.g., *Simba* played [as a cub lion] by a white man from Pennsylvania, USA, and [as an adult lion] by another white man from New York, USA; and *Nala*, as an adult lion, by a white woman from New York, USA)

Working-class White American English (e.g., *Timon*, played by a white man from New Jersey, USA; *Pumbaa*, played by a white man from New York, USA)

Queen’s English (e.g., *Zazu*, played by a white man from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England; *Scar* played by another white man from Cowes, Isle of Wight, England)

What about cadence (rhythm and flow of speech)? *See any patterns?*

Group 6 **Individuals/Groups** Who is featured as individuals (in other words, who gets to do solo songs/dances/speeches) and who is featured in groups? Who gets to save the day (be heroes)? Who does heroic things but gets no heroic credit?

Who has/lacks dignity, integrity, basic goodness? *See any patterns?*

Group 7 **Music and sound effects** How is music used to glorify some (angels singing from heaven) and vilify others? How about sound effects (e.g., hissing steam, echoes)?

Group 8 **What We Know and Don’t Know** What do we know about _____’s character? What don’t we know, but would like to know about:

Sarabi (Queen of Pride Rock); all the other female lions; all the other male lions; Nala, Simba’s best friend and wrestling superior; Nala’s family; Scar, Mufasa’s brother; Scar and Mufasa’s mother (sisters?); Rafiki, the old baboon; Rafiki’s family/clan/community; Zazu, Mufasa’s (bird) advisor; Timon (rodent friend to Pumbaa); Pumbaa (the pig); The Hyenas: Shenzi, Banzai, Ed [Note: Shenzi, the leader of the pack, and Banzai, her male buddy, talk and joke, but Ed, the third, only laughs.]; the rest of the Hyena community (mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, babies); the entire other half of the “animal kingdom” (i.e., the females)!

MATERIALS SAMPLE-3

In the Name of the Emperor (1998)

In pairs, gather and organize information about your chosen topic (below). Presentations, four-minutes each, will begin next class.

A. Below is a list of the film's narrators. Who are these people and what does the array tell you about the filmmakers themselves?

Robin Brentano; Ted Hannon; Matthew Myers; Lamar Sanders; Sam Schacht

B. Below is a list of the (rest of the) credited cast. Who are these people and what does the array tell you about the filmmakers, themselves?

Shiro Azuma: Himself (Imperial Army, Nanking, 1937); **Richard Chu:** Himself (Rochester Institute of Technology); **Tillman Durdin:** Himself (US reporter, New York Times); **Akira Fujiwara:** Himself (Kagawa Nutrition College); **Katsuichi Honda:** Himself (Japanese journalist); **Saburo Ienaga:** Himself (Prof. emeritus, Tokyo Univ.); **Toshio Morimatsu:** Himself (director, Veterans Library); **Shigeto Nagano:** Himself (Minister of Justice apologizes for denying Nanking Massacre); **Hakudo Nagatomi:** Himself (intelligence agent, Nanking, 1937); **Rumiko Nishino:** Herself (author); **Yasuaki Onuma:** Himself (Tokyo Univ.); **Shindo Song:** Herself ("comfort woman", 1937); **Fuichiro Ueha:** Himself (Imperial Army, Nanking, 1937); **Shoichi Watanabe:** Himself (Sofia Univ.); **Ying Wong:** Herself (resident, Nanking, 1937); **Yutaka Yoshida:** Himself (Hitotsubashi Univ.); **Yoshiaki Yoshimi:** Himself (Chuo Univ.).

- C. **Japanese/Korean girls and women** All references to, images of, statements by ~
- D. **Children, babies, pregnancy** All references to and images of ~
- E. **Fathers, husbands** All references to, images of, statements by ~
- F. **Soldiers** All references to, images of, statements by ~
- G. **Hiroshima, Nagasaki** All references to and images of ~
- H. **Poor, ordinary (civilian) people** All references to, images of, statements by ~
- I. **Music** How is music used to convey the filmmakers' messages?
- J. **Emotions** All references to and expressions of ~
- K. **Sexual violence and servitude** All references to and images of ~
- L. **Film structure and language** Pay special attention to the film's beginning, transitions and conclusion. Also note when subtitles are used versus voiceover.
- M. **Censorship** All references to and examples of ~

TEXT-B TEACHING RESOURCES: SAMPLES of TRADITIONAL MOVIE-ORIENTED

TESL PIECES (Organized alphabetically according to pedagogical focus)

Ambiguity training King, Jane (2002). “Using DVD Feature Films in the EFL Classroom.” In *ELT Newsletter*, The Weekly Column, Article 88, February.

<<http://www.eltnewsletter.com/back/February2002/art882002.htm>>.

Content-based instruction Crawford, Michael J. (2004). “Trivia as a Bridge to Content in CBI Classes.” In *The Language Teacher*, April.

<<http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/articles/2004/04/crawford>>.

Comprehensible input Luque Agullo, Gloria (2003). “Reading’ Films and ‘Watching’ Literary Texts: 5 Lesson Plans for Advanced TEFL Students.” In *Bells: Barcelona English Language and Literature Studies*, Any, Vol. 12.

Consciousness-raising Fujioka, Mayumi (2003). “Raising Pragmatic Consciousness in the Japanese EFL Classroom?” In *The Language Teacher*, May.

<<http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/articles/2003/05/fujioka>>.

Contextualization (of language learned in previous lessons) Colwell, Heather and Monica IPINCE BRASCHI (2006). “Using Films with Mixed Level ESL Classes.” 19th Annual EA Education Conference. <http://www.englishaustralia.com.au/ea_conference2006/proceedings/pdf/Colwell.pdf>.

Conversational proficiency development Jeon, Hyong-Ju (2003). “Use of Film Dialogues as a Model of Natural Conversation for Developing Conversational Proficiency.” University of Edinburgh, The College of Humanities & Social Science, The Moray House School of Education.

<<http://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/bitstream/1842/486/1/Jude.pdf>>.

Film appreciation Voller, Peter and Steven Widdows (1993). “Feature Films as Text: a Framework for Classroom Use.” In *ELT Journal*, 47(4).

Form focus Doughty, Catherine J. (2001). “Cognitive Underpinnings of Focus on Form.” In Robinson, Peter (Ed.), *Cognition and L2 instruction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Formulaic language Weinert, Regina (1995). “The Role of Formulaic Language in Second Language Acquisition; A Review.” *Applied Linguistics*, 16.

Interlanguage development Pellowe, William R. (1996). “A Dialog-Based Approach Toward Interlanguage Development.” In *The Language Teacher*, December.

<<http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/files/96/dec/interlang.html>>.

Global awareness (raising) Fujioka, Ken (1999). “Using Rainbow War to Raise Global Awareness. In *The Language Teacher*, February.

<<http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/articles/1999/02/fujioka>>.

Hot spot analysis Tatsuki, Donna H. (1998b). “Comprehension Hot Spots in Movies: Scenes and Dialogs That Are Difficult for ESL/EFL Students to Understand.” *The Internet TESL Journal*, Vol. IV, No. 11, November. <<http://iteslj.org/Articles/Tatsuki-HotSpots.html>>.

- Learner motivation** Ryan, Stephen (1998). "Using Films to Develop Learner Motivation." In *The Internet TESL Journal*, Vol. IV, NO.11, November. <<http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/>>.
- Narrative structure analysis** Liversidge, Gordon (2000). "What Do EFL Students See in Introductory Sequences of Movies." *The Internet TESL Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 3, March. <<http://iteslj.org/Articles/Liversidge-Video.html>>.
- Note-taking** Morrell, Ernest (2006). "Critical Approaches to Teaching Film in English Classrooms." UCLANCTE <<http://www.ernestmorrell.com/images/NCTE.Film.2006.pdf>>.
- Oral fluency** Donley, Kate M. (2000). "Film for Fluency." In *English Teaching Forum*, April, 38 (2).
- Paralinguistics** Seferoglu, Golge (2008). "Using Feature Films in Language Classes." In *Educational Studies*, 34: 1, February.
- Phonetics (the fundamentals)** Kumai, William Naoki (1996). "Movies: Dubbing Movies for Pronunciation." In *The Language Teacher*, September. <<http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/files/96/sept/dub.html>>.
- Reading [via closed captions] comprehension** Stempleski, Susan (2000). "Video in the ESL Classroom: Making the Most of the Movies." In *ESL Magazine*, March/April.
- Self-study** Doye, Chris (1998). "Films for Self-study." In *Modern English Teacher*, Vol.7.No.4.
- Strategy training** (intensive) Ishihara, Noriko and Julie C. Chi (2004). "Authentic Video in the Beginning ESOL Classroom: Using a Full-Length Feature Film for Listening and Speaking Strategy Practice." In *English Teaching Forum*, January. <<http://eca.state.gov/forum/vols/vol42/no1/p30.pdf>>.
- Summary writing and sentence structure** Greaney, George L. (1997). "Less Is More: Summary Writing and Sentence Structure in the Advanced ESL Classroom." In *The Internet TESL Journal*, Vol. III, No. 9, September. <<http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Greaney-Writing.html>>.
- Theme-based active dialoguing** Fox, Timothy R. (2004). "Simple Cinema, Complex Conversations. How Passive Viewing Encourages Active Dialogue." In *Hwa Kang Journal of TEFL* 10.
- Verb tense practice** Tatsuki, Donna H. (1998a). "Narrating in Simple Past with Video." In *The Internet TESL Journal*, Vol. IV, No. 3, March. <<http://iteslj.org/Lessons/Tatsuki-Movie/SimplePast.html>>.
- Vocabulary ("real-world")** Weschler, Raymond (2003) *Raynotes Home Page*. <<http://www.eslnotes.com/print/mainessays.pdf>>.
- Writing fluency** Wolf, Grant S. (2006). "Using Video to Develop Writing Fluency in Low-Proficiency ESL Students." In *The Internet TESL Journal*, Vol. XII, No. 8, August. <<http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Wolf-UsingVideo.html>>.

TEXT-C TEACHING RESOURCES: MOVIE-RELATED WEBSITES

Media Resources Center <<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/>> (MRC is the UC Berkeley Library’s primary collection of materials in audio and visual formats. These formats include: videocassettes, DVDs, compact audio discs, audiocassettes, and online (streamed) audio and video)

All-Movie Guide <<http://www.allmovie.com/>> (Allows users to search for films using flexible criteria. Film listings include general information, cast and crew, synopses, reviews—and trailers!)

Apple Movie Trailers <<http://www.apple.com/trailers/>> (array of movie previews aka trailers)

Drew’s Script-o-Rama <<http://www.script-o-rama.com/table.shtml>> (free scripts, transcripts, quizzes, “movie haiku” etc.)

The Script Shop <<http://thescriptshop.org/>> (The Internet’s top resource for premium downloadable php scripts and cgi scripts sorted in more than 19 categories)

The Daily Script <<http://www.dailyscript.com/links.html>> (downloadable movie scripts and movie screenplay)

Teach with Movies <<http://www.teachwithmovies.org/>> (lesson plans in history, English, literature, the arts, science; high school — elementary)

ESLnotes.com <<http://www.eslnotes.com/>> (detailed synopses of popular movies)

The Internet Movie Database <<http://www.imdb.com/>>

MRQE <<http://www.mrqe.com/>> (“Web’s largest online directory of movie reviews”)

NOTES

- 1 The samples included in this report are appropriate for the full range of proficiency levels that I myself teach at Kansai Gaidai, which includes: first- and second-year junior college IES students, first- and second-year regular university students (English I–II) and second-year IES university students. Colleagues using my materials and working with lower level (in particular first-year) students have, however, reported a need to simplify and abbreviate. Rather than modifying materials, my advice is to discuss them, item by item, with each class before assigning groups.
- 2 Mention of the various approaches should assure readers that the author of this piece recognizes the diversity of “traditional classroom movie practices.”
- 3 Convergent (also known as closed) questions typically involve the recall of facts or application of knowledge to a specific situation. Divergent questions, in contrast, have multiple correct or even unknown answers.
- 4 Lower order questions call for responses from students that demonstrate basic comprehension. Higher order questions require synthesis, analysis and evaluation.
- 5 When it is unfeasible to screen movies uninterrupted, I assign viewing as outside (in fairness to all,

- library) work.
- 6 For example, APPENDIX, TEXT-A, MATERIALS SAMPLES-1 “Pocahontas,” Group 4: Physical contact (touching, rubbing, kissing, embracing, breathing on, hovering over/under).
 - 7 For example, “Who is doing what to whom?” etc.
 - 8 Presentations that include a summary, critical analysis, visual support and handouts (on recycled paper).
 - 9 These movie exercises are supplemented with an array of extensive print-based readings that include: Jean Kilbourne’s (2002) *Can’t Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*; Gail Dines and Jean M. Humes’s (2002) *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Text-Reader Second Edition*; Sharon Lamb and Lyn Mikel Brown’s (2007) *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters from Marketers’ Schemes*; and Millie Creighton’s (1997) “Soto Others and Uchi Others: Imaging Racial Diversity, Imagining Homogeneous Japan” in Michael Weiner (ed.), *Japan’s Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*.
 - 10 More such exercises (e.g., *Finding Nemo*, *Cinderella*, *Lion King*, *Little Mermaid*, *Aladdin*, *Mulan*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Rabbit Proof Fence*, *Whale Rider*, *Sacrifice*, *Anonymously Yours*, *Born into Brothels*, *White Light Black Rain*, *The Triplets of Bellville*, *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Princess Mononoke*, *Spirited Away*, *Miss Potter*) are available upon request at <tamarahc@hotmail.com>.

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