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Chapter 2: Fear

The freshman students were given the option of either writing a composition or making a film. The instructor gave neither criticism nor supervision for the film. . . . Immediately the question was raised as to how an instructor gets approval and support for film-making [sic], especially when the film will be considered equivalent to a written composition. (Martha Heasley Cox, Recorder, *CCCC Workshop Reports*, 1969)

[S]ome brave souls will investigate film as a separate and distinct form of statement. (Robert Dye, 1964, “The Film: Sacred and Profane”)

Robert Dye’s 1964 casting of phantom film-compositionists as “brave souls” is both hopeful and inspired. It may have wanted to serve as a warning, but from the perspective of today’s film-compositionist, it’s a shiny rhetorical trophy. We like to think of ourselves as courageous, so the recognition of bravery for curious, compelling, rhetorical and intellectual work is honorific. However, bravery is rarely easy, and the stakes of non-conforming disciplinary behavior are high, so Dye’s terms make sense, particularly in the context of its chronological utterance. More philosophically, to invoke a “soul” in contemporary rhetorical terms is a questionable move, one worth considering as a preface to discussing the defining affect of this chapter, fear.

Today’s “soul” is perhaps more routinely configured in the context of an environmental rhetoricity, as the postmodern self performs through sociality—the unwitting response to existence within the rhetorical scenes of our lives. But in 1964, “souls” obtained primarily as the agentially crafted, surveilled, and worryingly maintained morality-testifying entities toward which pedagogies aimed their highest energies. Advancing a more critical disposition, we recall the social unrest then blooming into a widespread cultural anti-establishment shift, and we witness various creative and collective stagings toward the articulation of emergent and increasingly liberated “souls” and their role in intellectual work and pedagogical practice. For this and many other reasons, (including the oft-cited chronostamp of “1963” as the “birth of composition”³⁰) it’s clear that 1964 may seem a threshold moment for change, certainly for bravery in new forms of storytelling and public disputes over the

30 See kyburz, b., Sirc, G, & Wysocki, A. F. (2007). “The Origins of Modern Composition, Part I.” *Conference on College Composition and Communication*. New York.

nature of our souls/ourselves (I see you, New Hollywood! I see you, French New Wave!). I want to argue that via affect theory, particularly through its emphasis on the body, and through contemporary discourses on ambient rhetorics, we find room to theorize the affective sensations and ideational potential of “souls.” Initially, however, the more salient feature of Dye’s epigrammatic comment is his reference to bravery. To designate as “brave” a creative act that is initiated through a vital creative vision of difference implies that the creator might have most certainly labored to transcend bravery’s affective scene partner, fear. There’s something to this notion in the history of film-composition. In this chapter, I will read a variety of fears and offer contemporary views that help to resolve them through the identification of Berlantian zones of optimism. In this way, I hope to advance an understanding of film-composition and testify to its critical value— the emergence of new bloomspaces for critical and affective intensities that render as rhetorical potential.

My own fears as a DIY digital filmmaker have been many. For the most part, when I decided to begin making films as rhetorical artifacts that might trace my experiences of the present moment and hopefully say something about cultural dispositions to textuality, I decided that fear had to go. Yet, this decision is a version of delusion and obviously a form of cruel optimism in the sense that such scholarship had at the time yet to be ideally valued. I had received tenure, but my filmmaking work defined my post-tenure output and, in the end, did indeed influence the decision against my promotion to full professor. The letter said something to the effect of, “The committee didn’t get your scholarship.” This rejection was sorely met, especially in light of my evolving rhetorical skill and sense of purpose. My attachment to this vital form of inquiry, expression, and rhetorical attunement flickered ambiently, lovingly. Yet, my auteurist practices also glimmered obstructively, the twitching eye out of sync with the sight lines of normative academic success.

My fears were comforted not only in the doing, in the process of making films, but also through reading film history, and I have often been especially inspired by André Bazin (1967). Hugh Gray (2005) introduces Bazin’s impressive history in a narrative that resonates with composition’s sense of disciplinary exigence, as a counterhegemonic force that emerged in response to war’s disruptive impact. Gray recalls that Bazin

founded a ciné-club which developed out of meetings at which he defied the Nazi forces of occupation and the Vichy government by showing films they had banned for political reasons. (2005, p. 3)

Bazin was passionate about cinema as a tool for contemplating “culture and truth,” and he has been regarded as “something of a mystic” (Gray, 2005, p.

3). Due to the force of his convictions regarding the cultural value of cinema for intellectual and cultural life, Bazin possessed a “Socratic capacity to make those who talked to him seem intelligent to themselves” (Touchard, as quoted in Gray, 2005, p. 3). Gray goes on to note Bazin’s singular importance to the history of cinema: “Indeed one might call him the Aristotle of cinema and his writings it Poetics” (2005, p. 3). Sound inspiration.

I was drawn to read Bazin more precisely because of his role as founder of the infamously first and most widely valued cinema journal, *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*, “which under his direction became one of the world’s most distinguished film publications” (Gray, 2005, p. 3). As a DIY filmmaker working apparently against my own conventional academic success by making films rather than writing books, I admired Bazin’s powerful self-determination. I identified with what Bazin saw in film; I had seen in film and filmmaking the potential to discover critical ways of seeing and coming to voice regarding complex phenomenon (see *proposition 1984*). I saw Bazin resisting the kinds of turf wars—political demarcations far more powerful and materially consequential than those we draw upon academia—that might have discouraged him from writing. Instead, Bazin saw cinema as cross-disciplinary and culturally integrated in an infinite number of possible ideological arrangements. He proposed a sense of cinema’s objectivity that did not reject ideology but instead saw that cinema could objectively project reality in ways that rendered ideology transparent and available for intellectual work (chronicled in the pages of *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*). In this sense, Bazin rejects efforts to align obediently with prior principles:

The fact that the cinema appeared after the novel and the theater does not mean that it falls into line behind them and on the same plane. Cinema developed under sociological conditions very different from those in which the traditional arts exist. (Bazin, 1967, p. 57)

Gray explains that critics prior to Bazin would “start with a definition of art and then try to see how film fitted into it. Bazin rejects all the commonly accepted notions and proposes a radical change of perspective” (1967, p. 3). To be clear, I am by no means claiming to possess the boldness or visionary status of André Bazin. I am instead attempting to articulate my experience of having had a historical ally with whom I could identify as I began to work in ways not ordinarily scripted. Reading Bazin in the context of my developing role as a DIY digital filmmaker, I found courage in the face of my fears regarding my films as scholarship toward any kind of ongoing success in academia. I had struggled, but I had “made it,” with tenure. Fearful as I struck out to develop a new scholarly ethos and method, Bazin lovingly shoulder-patted my fears, assuring them that they might, just for a while, rest quietly on set. In reading of Bazin and

through his writings, I had discovered a Berlantian zone of optimism, a filter for my emergent rhetorical attunements that made them appear Instagrammatically of-the-moment, and thus perhaps relevant to rhetorical studies on the cultural texts circulating ambiently as (as yet) a kind of noise and increasingly as a form of rhetoricity. Powerfully linked to identification, an immersive experience of rhetoricity is ongoing. It seems likely that we might attempt to invoke, create optimal conditions for, or stage a willful rejection of fear that might enable more powerful identifications that motivate critical and creative rhetorical practice. As Brett Ingram explains, Burkean versions of this notion exceed his more famous articulation of rhetorical “identification.” Instead, Burke:

intuited a connection between the brain, rhetorical practices, and agency, and understood that this was compatible with the sophistic/mystic tradition. For illustration, we can look to his speculations concerning the mystic trance, a neurological state that seems to suggest neither fully passive nor active decision-making faculties (Burke 1969a: 294). In the mystic trance, the subject “loses the self” to substantive external forces which blur the line between symbolic and material inputs (visual images, verbal incantation, music, drugs), and which subsequently call into question distinctions between autonomy and possession, agency and obedience. (Ingram, 2013, pp. 6-7)

Sign me up for a “mystic trance”! Along with David Lynch, famously auteurist in rhetorical disposition, I’m on board for rejecting fear and entering a dreamy maker’s state. Not so, for many early film-compositionists.

Discourses regarding film and its various roles in writing pedagogies range from quite hopeful, desiring, and pleasurable, to less thrilling, historically overdetermined, and affectively charged discourses of fear. Berlant’s (2011) concept of cruel optimism articulates this reality more broadly, as she is concerned with a range of desires and attachments. She worries how sustaining these affects may stand in the way of conventional success—that’s the cruel part. More hopefully, Berlant enables a “compromised endurance” option by illuminating what she calls “zones of optimism” (2011, p. 48). Here, we are able to retain our attachments, even nurture them, and at the same time flirt with forms of success and pleasure. From my experience as a film composer working in composition, I can say that this unconventional success does indeed feel like a compromise, and it’s one I’ve been unavoidably (entranced!), passionately willing to make. Yet, cruelty. Reading in the archives, I see that many have feared moving beyond convention, despite the articulate hopes shared by so many who dared desire fuller participation in film discourses

(to say nothing of film production). Today, film-composition enjoys a vital presence, and I intend to spend far more time on the optimism of auteurism. Nevertheless, cruelty obtains, for despite the hopes, desires, and pleasures of film-composition, remaining doubts, perceived threats, fear-of-missing-out (FOMO), and other obstacles keep the fear alive.

Optimistically emerging from the fear-filled discourses, film-composition has been lit with the vital force of contemporary techné, with its conscious disposition to explore structure, function, and ethics—digital media afford film-compositionists the tools to inquire of each. The affordances of contemporary digital image and video capture tools have been central to the Postmodern, Social, Visual, Virtual, and Digital turns. Mark Poster argues that central to understanding and critique of these turns is attentiveness to the subject—identity (1995, p. 23), (including individual ethics), and identification. Ethics and identification are bound up in our studies and practices of techné, and both hermeneutic and generative practices are central to film-composition. Against fears of frivolity, this is serious play.

Often, earlier scholars worried the forms of identification their students took on (the focus was rarely on the professoriate). Ostensibly, English writing classrooms were capable of moving students to see differently. This vision would offer a transformative sort of enlightenment, and film might detract from this laudable cause. From a 1973 *Conference on College Composition and Communication Workshop Report*, we learn of early hopes for film in Composition, however painfully constrained and pointing to a sense that the affective intensity of film might foster frivolousness and dumb down course content:

Chairman Thomas Erskine outlined the direction of the session by raising questions concerning the place of film in English departments: Should film be tied to composition courses by cinema-writing equations? [whatever those are] Should film be used as an attempt to stimulate writing by providing a vague “visceral goose”? (p. 311)

Let's just replay that for a moment, here. “*Visceral goose*.” Okay, so points for recognizing affect (“visceral”), but so. Here, we see a very English Professorish attempt to say that film provokes affect in ways that may seem silly, in ways that may detract from a more mechanical version of film and its constituent parts (“cinema-writing equations”). This fear may not seem like fear; it might more readily be read as contempt, yet it seems to emerge from a more generalized worry over the seriousness of engaging with film, possibly converging with a simultaneous desire to do just that, . . . if only we could tame those images!! Another fine fellow in the same workshop, “W. R. Robinson focused on an essential difference between moving images and words”—great! Here,

Robinson articulates a version of Erskine's fear even as he hints at a compellingly moving desire as he insists that, "film imposes different kinds of relationships with the world and with ourselves. Because images are 'MORE CANTANKEROUS than words and won't be still, a new form is necessary with which to write about film'" (*CCCC Workshop Report*, 1973, p. 311). Funny, the report indicates that *no one considered film as this new form*. Regrettably, the session ends with a consensus that had little to do with advancing uses of film over and above continued efforts at teaching—at a seemingly primitive level—print literacy: "Professor Robinson's statement that students have to learn to read before they can learn to see films met little resistance or reaction" (*CCCC Workshop Report*, 1973, p. 311). Even those who hoped to argue for increasing film's presence in composition classrooms wrote from a position of fear. Dale Adams and Robert Kline frame up their 1975 *CCC* article entitled "The Use of Film in English Composition" with a list of things that film can *not* do for students in composition classrooms. Their appeal to teachers hoping to include film is "humbly prefaced" by the following list:

1. It [film] will not guarantee that all students will write correctly or even interestingly.
2. It will not guarantee that all students will write with a new enthusiasm.
3. It will not guarantee that all students will write with insight and aplomb. ["aplomb"!]
4. It will not be the great elixir that will render easy the teaching or learning of writing skills. (1975, p. 258)

Damn. I want that elixir. Adams and Kline seem to describe it (though they do not offer this as a definition of "elixir") in the body of their article, which works with and against various fears that warrant their claims. Take number 7, "Lack of confidence in one's ability to use the film in a teaching situation," for example. Perhaps lacking confidence themselves, they explain that, "[T]his is a barrier that cannot be brushed aside lightly," (1975, p. 259) because audience (?). Why do they assume the gravity of this inability to move what is essentially an obstacle involving rethinking a pedagogical approach? Clearly, some "brave souls" (Dye, 1964) swiped left anyhow, apparently quite confident in rejecting this fear: "Too often the assumption has been made that all one has to do to use a film is to show it in class and let the film do the rest" (p. 259). Adams and Kline clearly intended this latter comment as a critique regarding an assumption ostensibly undertaken by earlier "brave souls," but from today's perspective, we easily see the validity of the option. Given today's affordances and the kinds of nearly spontaneous remix culture in which we live, write, compose, think, and play, we can see how showing up to "hit play" might be all one need do in order to initiate, shape, and sustain rhetorical sen-

sivities and to enact productive critical and rhetorical pedagogies. But again, like many early film-compositionists, hoping and fearing, working from a position of feeling overwhelmingly bound to the concerns for written discourse and “the primacy of the word over all other forms of communication,” Adams and Kline refused the call. What they do concede is that “film does offer something which can improve student writing, this something does not lie, as some would have it, in the simple equation of frame to word, shot to phrase, and sequence to sentence” (1975, p. 260). (Are these Erskine’s “cinema-writing equations”?) Another concession involves student’s ease with film: “Students are generally not cowed by films” (Adams & Kline, 1975, p. 260). Yet, the “do not” list obtains as the frame. Adams and Kline feared the call.

Today, we know better—or, we operationalize a more capacious version of serious play as pedagogical approach, and we recognize that students can read films, and video games, and digital texts of many forms, “a multiplicity of discourses” (New London Group, 1996, p. 61). We also know that immersive study and play can be motivational, in the form of what many digital game scholars refer to as “serious play.” Because digital game theory and practice seems to participate via the affordances of digital media and toward the goal of critical pleasure, I turn to game theory as a zone of optimism that works along with film-composition to resist and reject many of the overdetermined fears that have evolved alongside turf wars, power struggles, and disputes over the nature of identity and identification.

Game theorist and player Jan Rune Holmevik (2012) explains that we use “serious play in order to invent a new image of ludic ethics” (p. 149), and he appears to reject discourses of fear in the context of an emergent ludic ethics. Like one of Dye’s “brave souls,” Holmevik is up for new intellectual terrain. He resists the normative compulsion to view affectively inspiring multimodal texts as unworthy. Reclaiming the teaching of ethics from fearful voices who have conventionally seen playful multimodal texts, such as films, as “another bit of ephemera like yesterday’s newspaper or the political cartoon” (Huss & Silverstein, 1966, p. 566), Holmevik insists,

[W]e are inventing a new ethics through the act of ethics, through playing, where experiencing outcomes and consequences is the key element. . . . As an experience engine, the game makes possible the move beyond epideictic rhetoric and the topoi of praise and blame toward a new understanding of ethics in an electrated time. Through play we can experience the consequences of the ethical choices we make. (2012, p. 150)

This “brave” rhetoric rejects worry-filled discourses over the identities students perform in response to film spectatorship and even college study. Embrac-

ing Holmevik's ludic ethics and serious play as pedagogical disposition, the fear that teaching film might corrupt is rendered quaint. From today's vantage, especially as contemporary pedagogy values invention, collaboration, improvisation, and play, we move beyond fear.

Seemingly presaging this critical zone of optimistic play, in 1966, Huss and Silverstein feared that a lecture-driven academic treatment of film might do more harm than good. To their credit, they feared a diminishing value for the integrity of the film, itself:

When classicists, historians, philosophers, professors of art and music, and the like, praise films, they also do not want them taught, fearing the destruction, through pedanticism, of naivety and spontaneity that will be likely if films are subjected to the discipline of college courses. Put a movie in a syllabus, make it an assignment, allow the professor to dissect it, and its spontaneity is gone. (1966, p. 566)

A playful, improvisational pedagogy of play—inclusive of the production of the course content (a world within a game, designed by students; a film, produced by students)—is today's response to the fears Huss and Silverstein articulated. This is not to say that such pedagogies will not occasionally be(come) tainted by professorial oversight that defers to a lecture-driven, analytical venue, where “Bad analytical criticism destroys the movie organism” (Huss & Silverstein, 1966, p. 566). But even in such scenarios, there is room to move beyond the fear of destroying a film's integrity, especially if such moments are balanced with immersive making. Here, critical rhetorical knowledge is gained in production, and what is of critical value—rhetorical and ethical insights beyond the overdetermined readings—is illuminated more profoundly as it is experienced individually and collectively in the body and in the mind. The roomy affordances I am describing here and associating with film-composition shine brightly as a zone of optimism and is best understood as a form of *techné*.

Techné is historically associated with Aristotelean ethics as not so much art (product) but craft (process and product). Immersive pedagogies seem poised to revitalize our attentiveness to *techné* as a portal for valuing craft as a form of ethics. This is perhaps the sort of teaching that earlier scholars who spent time and pages worrying film both desired and believed possible, but it appeared to seem an area of pedagogical possibility exclusively through the lens of literary hermeneutics. Today, we know *techné* through a variety of academic practices and daily life—through our practical indwelling within digitally mediated cultures.

Defining *techné* “as a way of knowing by which something is brought into

being not only with regard to how it functions, but also with regard to values such as beauty and goodness” (2016, p. 28), Belliger and Krieger explore the nature and ethics of body tracking and the information flows that emerge from digital self-monitoring practices that might have been seen as Orwellian doom in an earlier time:

The informational self is neither the product of technologies of power (Foucault), but of an “ethical” technology of the self. The self becomes a hub and an agent in the digital network society. Body tracking transforms the opaque and passive body of the pre-digital age into the informational self. Networking is the way in which order—personal, social, and ontological—is constructed in the digital age. (2016, p. 25)

Body tracking practices hack conventional approaches to self-care, and though dystopian fears abide, the value of seeing networking as a practice for knowing a self seems aligned with our notions of an always already openness, one to another, or rhetoricity. Thus, I see hacking the self through self-monitoring as a zone of optimism (though I prefer selfies or Pokémon Go to conventional fitness trackers). Similarly, pedagogies that demystify cinematic texts not by analysis alone but in the making of films seem vitally able to teach rhetorical knowledge and skill even as we are immersed within networks of symbolic action³¹ many associate with digital filmmaking.

Despite lingering fears, today’s maker-driven pedagogies amplify the optimistic strategy; we are making new “studio systems” (galleries, journals, e-publication houses, courses, programs) for producing rhetorically moving texts, installations, memes, trends, interventions, and critical and creative communities. Informed by more than two decades of emphatic “student-centeredness” and “active pedagogy,” today’s “engaged” student is expected to be able to work with digital tools toward the crafting of sophisticated multimodal texts. Pedagogies devoted to this more expansive version of “writing” define the field today to the extent that discussion of conventional academic essays are often whispered rather than gavel-banged. Whereas hope seems to upstage fear, the range of fears articulated in the context of film-composition’s emergence is powerfully tied to our historical constraints regarding the limits of our expertise and access to sophisticated tools. Some fears are rooted in a concern for rhetorical ethics in the form of a concern for piracy, remix work, and impoverished views on the capacious affordances of Fair Use policies (for works “protected”³² by copyright), and they are also bound up in fears regard-

31 See Halbritter, B. (2012).

32 The rhetoric of “protection” demonstrates how fear is inscribed within the very discourses designed to alleviate fear. And who, really, is afraid? And how far down must this fear

ing the crusty old figure of The Master. Many worry their own levels of teacherly proficiency, especially up against their students' skills.³³ Our fears began, however, in a broader, more clearly demarcated concern for morality, and its worried grandpa, turf.

Rhetorics of fear largely defined the blossoming scholarship about film in composition classrooms. The momentum for such discourses gathered strength in the mid-to-late 1960s, interestingly aligning with the emergence of both the French New Wave, and the (then) New Hollywood (American New Wave). Both movements are associated with anti-establishment dispositions and desires for increased creative freedom from convention, often attended by radical DIY methods (Luzi, 2010). This generalized shift in film culture was marked by an obviously growing desire for films that boldly portrayed subversive forms of the good life, claiming new zones of optimism for desires that did not easily vibrate with normative culture and convention regarding identity, privilege, and power. Happening within the emergence of the postmodern turn, filmic portrayals of shifting identities and identifications offered audiences alternative visions of success. In many ways, film culture articulated postmodern zones of optimism in the form of "new configurations of individuality" (Poster, 1995, pp. 24). to which many critical pedagogies turned for non-normative thinking and promising new forms of narrative and rhetorical expression. The story goes that these new figures offered lenses through which to see more clearly the limitations of normative culture, and this tracked with pedagogical efforts to enhance our critical vision.

Our fears had, however, often rendered as fear of the new that manifest in rhetorics of crisis regarding the diminishing old. Vibing with rhetorics of crisis that have long marked composition scholarship (Green, 2009; Spellmeyer, 1996), William D. Baker wrote in 1964 of film's capacity to function as a "sharpeners of perception." Clearly emphasizing hermeneutics, Baker wrote of the nature and scope of film in composition classrooms, and this meant reading comprehension, an ability to see, a capacity for enjoying films not simply for affective pleasures but also as tools for the massive project—considered to be the appropriate moral range of writing classes—of "discovering what life and language have to offer" (1964, p. 44). Baker proposed that we halt our efforts to "nibble away at other rhetorical precepts," such

go in the pedagogical machine? This rhetoric is primarily and ultimately about ownership, which is to say that it is about earnings potential. How can we shift our pedagogical concerns so that they are more critically and creatively attentive to the critical production of moving texts rather than the constraining, fear-inducing, creativity-destroying legalese?

33 See Prensky, M. (2001), and his concept of "digital natives" (students), and "digital immigrants" (teachers).

as specificity and focus, and instead that we have a “primary need” to “look for something to help students learn to look at and record the details that make meaning” (1964, p. 44). In many ways, Baker saw rhetorical concerns as overly general, yet at the same time, he clearly wanted to use film as a tool to enhance perception of rhetoric, of strategic choices. This paradox appears often, as scholars attempt to argue for the use of film but appear constrained by their sense of allegiance to a disciplinary tradition. Perhaps it is a more straightforward matter of ethos. The upshot of this tentative framing—absent a direct rhetorical frame—is fearful discourse. Often, the fear doesn’t take the form of a direct articulation of a threat, but it occurs more subtly, as when Baker frames up a concept by which to articulate his sense of the rhetorical value of film analysis for writers. The first task appeared to have been a need to claim that film is art. Baker begins with this project, making quick work of it and then moving on to coin a phrase he used to highlight film’s rhetoricity:

Film enters the realm of art in its form and its use of symbols. We may start with the assumption that the poet and the film director are both deliberate artists. That is, they don’t let a word or scene just “happen-in” by itself. (1964, p. 44)

Baker wanted to assure teachers that their work might consist of helping students see how rhetorical choices have been made in a film, that, “We should assume that nothing ‘happens-in’” (1964, p. 44), summarizing film’s rhetorical nature by explaining that, “The point is to begin with the technique, not the message, of the film” (Baker, 1964, p. 44). Despite his emphasis on a valuable hermeneutic use of film in the composition classroom, Baker wanted to highlight how hermeneutics had been so prominently, albeit perhaps unsuccessfully taught; he proposed that students’ engagement with the text might aid the project of teaching critical faculties. He defaulted to discuss poetry analysis as an exemplar, but his rhetorical emphasis is clear:

No student, from kindergarten to college, enters the study of film with a clean, blank slate of non-experience. Would that he would. He has seen film, has been brought up on it, and resists an analysis of it because he has trained himself to concentrate on the message. Hence, he must learn to disregard the message temporarily, just as a good stenographer disregards the message when she transcribes her shorthand. Afterwards, she checks for sense and message. (1964, p. 44)

Baker describes several pedagogical moves he used to teach with film, including screenings followed by plot outlines and shooting directions, group

work involving critique of such, and challenges to certain claims regarding shot angles and meaning. More tellingly for my claim regarding Baker's sense of film's rhetoricity and the pedagogical affordances of filmmaking for rhetorical study (and toward practice) is his assertion that, "Experience shows that students do not immediately see the relationship between film analysis and rhetorical principles" (1964, p. 44). Despite Baker's seeming assertion that there exists a "relationship between film analysis and rhetorical principles," (1964, p. 44) his approach nonetheless suggests uncertainty regarding trust in student immersion in cinematic culture as sufficient for university-level rhetorical study and learning. That is, Baker seems to imagine that (surely) if "he has been brought up on it [film]," he/she does bring a great deal of knowledge, and so working from that point would be (is) how we would approach rhetorical pedagogies involving film today—working from students' inherent knowledge of rhetoric, narrative, and cinematic content on the basis of our awareness of their immersion in screen cultures. Baker, though, was working in a fearful new ecology, hopeful and on the cusp of claiming emergent qualities, but fearful, just the same. Baker worked with/in institutional constraints that were less forgiving of border crossings or interdisciplinary foraging. This status is perhaps responsible for what feels like an old-man-on-the-lawn level worry: "You must teach them the relationship, as carefully as some teachers (fie on them) teach sentence diagramming, slowly, thoroughly, item by item" (Baker, 1964, p. 45). *Sigh*. Inasmuch as "The words have been in rhetoric texts for centuries, and film analysis is but a new twist to the old tried-and-true principles" (1964, p. 45), Baker could not move too far from a sense of systematic, disciplinary propriety. Thus, his pedagogy reads as particularly constrained and conventional—hopeful, yet afraid. Even within Baker's fear-tinged rhetoric, however, zones of optimism suggest potential momentum.³⁴ Note his awareness of situatedness in cultural scenes featuring film love as near-but-not-quite qualifying students to take on serious film work as rhetorical study. While missing the fuller immersion argument (rhetoricity) that positions us all within screen cultures indebted to filmic rhetorics and the pedagogical affordances of this rich, multimodal ecology, earlier scholarship, exemplified by works like Baker's, begins to foretell today's more rigorous rhetorical work in film-composition.

Like many who write from affective intensity, an adversarial dialectic often shapes the work, as scholars seek new syntheses that actualize new, transcendent, and otherwise non-normative potential. I am not an expert in affect,

34 I can't help imagining an "underworld" of film-composition, where Composition teachers were doing radically progressive work but perhaps not publishing in conventional modes or routine academic venues. Researching this potential will be an ongoing venture that film-composition anticipates.

nor in Hegelian philosophy, but I have worked as a teacher-scholar in Composition long enough to appreciate the rhetorical registers of affective dialectic and to sense how these articulations vicariously radiate the wavering internal motivations of the rhetor. Reading Baker, I sense that he was working toward hope. Baker was not overt about fear. Perhaps he worked unaware of the extent to which disciplinary pride and tacit border policing constrained a clear view of the nascent desire to treat films rhetorically (even toward production). And so, perhaps Baker sensed the value of staging his argument as a potential zone of optimism for film work as rhetorical study (and practice). Others were more forthcoming with their fears. Announcing their fears at the outset, Roy Huss and Norman Silverstein introduced their 1966 *College English* article, “Film Study: Shot Orientation For the Literary Minded” by mansplaining that “[t]he serious filmgoer who would elevate cinema-study to the realm in which art, music, and literature are taught in American colleges is open to the charge of frivolity” (p. 566). In fact, the serious filmmaker who would do so is open to the charge of frivolity. I wish I could say otherwise. If I could see it as a valid descriptive move, this book might not be titled, *Cruel Auteurism*. Despite zones of optimism, one is right to fear. Or, less dramatically, one is wise to anticipate reactions that are less-than-ideal (this is just good process, if we can assume the filmmaker is primarily concerned with content rather than uptake in the form of rewards). I maintain that the challenge is worthwhile, for myself in terms of creative digital scholarship, and for my students, who so love multimodal composing and so clearly demonstrate rhetorical knowledge and skill in ways that are not nearly as movingly evident in their print work, alone. However, even when she is prepared with rhetorical training, narrative awareness, technical skill gained through auteurist practices, collaboration, and immersion in film communities, she is likely to receive responses to her work that register in only a few different configurations, 1.) Bemusement-erupting-into-anger, 2.) Pedagogy-grabbing inquiries about Fair Use, and 3.) Related, pedagogy-grabbing inquiries about technical skill (as in, “How can I do that?”).

Her greatest fear—the primary auteurist worry—is that no one will appreciate the work for its ambient hopes. The ambient is critical, here, for a sense of today’s auteur, for today’s film-compositionist, working within multiple ecologies toward participation in a particular network of like-minded agents. Jeong and Szaniawski (2016) explain the shifting meanings of “auteur,” and in doing so, they hint at the ambient rhetorics shaping our sense of (academic) filmmaking today, and an emergent film-composition. They explain the intention of their edited collection, *The Global Auteur: The Politics of Authorship in 21st Century Cinema*, beginning in an introduction cleverly entitled, “The auteur, then . . .”:

if auteurism has validity in this global age, it may express itself in the way film directors, old and new, capture the zeitgeist in a multi-layered and faceted world, overtly or covertly. We see here a twenty-first version of la politique des auteurs—not a certain policy or politics of auteurs anymore so much as “the political” immanent to cinematic authorship. (2016, p. 1)

Jeong and Szaniawski recall the origin story of auteur theory, recognizing that in the earliest (1950s) writings of the *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*, auteurs were positioned in terms of their artistic “authenticity” so that they were “equivalent to artists in other media” (2016, p. 2). In this formulation, the auteur produced works that captured an ambient moment, a cultural scene, and thereby implicated a range of political potentials:

When successful, this experiment established an original outcomes of theme-form chemistry [ambience] whose governing principle is nested in narrative structure as in mise-en-scene. (2016, p. 2)

So early auteurs were rhetorically attuned to ambience in ways that enabled them to render their works so as to capture the vibe rather than to mechanically stage an adaptation of reality. Jeong and Szaniawski complicate the “next phase of auteurism, ‘auteur-structuralism’” by turning to Bazin, who had foreseen the potential to overlay incongruities inherent in considering the body of work that distinguished an auteur, “but subsequently begged the question of its contextual parameters,” which would mean a rejection of “the quasi-mythical figure of the auteur” (2016, p. 2). They note that,

Bazin had already defended “impure cinema” as naturally hosting hybrids, which required technological, sociological, and historical approaches and captured “the genius of the system”. (2016, p. 3)

In other words, “Bazin’s *politique des auteurs* was also a *critique des auteurs*,” recognized by discerning film historians as “a wise man’s warning against the fetishistic ‘cult of personality’” (Jeong & Szaniawski, 2016, p. 3) that has marked the notion of the auteur throughout rhetorical renderings of cinematic history. Later, post-Barthes (1977), the spectator became implicated in a reading of a film’s ambient potential, so that the auteur was further diminished, so that

a film would work as an enunciative, performative *écriture* through which the auteur would then perform its “postmortem” agency by increasing spectatorship in a shifting discurs-

sive configuration, at the crossroads of historically accumulated films and the ways in which they are received. In short, the death of the auteur signaled the birth of the spectator, with the next phase of auteurism emerging on the side of the audience. (2016, p. 4)

For Jeong and Szaniawski, the “spectatorial turn” begins to move toward a sense of auteurism today. For while “auteurism has lost its semi-religious myth of independent creativity,” this fact “does not attest to its real death,” which they note as “rhetorical” in nature. Instead, “the auteur is now a critical concept indispensable for distribution and marketing purposes,” and it has been uptaken across a spectrum of writers and thinkers, making the concept available to “scholars who weave auteurs into a systematic web of critical ideas” (Jeong & Szaniawski, 2016, p. 4). Witness my own playful effort to use Berlant’s “optimism” for “auteurism,” its aural and ideational resonance hoping to bypass fears of failure, fears of disciplinary over-reach, and fears regarding critical and rhetorical validity. My brief turn back, to(ward) a justification for the term “auteur” is similarly about overcoming fear via affect. It feels right to play on “optimism,” to project optimism altered just so to accommodate my DIY filmmaker’s reality through the rich history of auteurism. However, simply feeling that I’ve found the right beat for my intention isn’t enough. The auteur works with a desired message, toward the production of agentially motivated rhetorical content. A sensational Orson Welles, a darling (albeit “decidedly masculine”) Francois Truffaut, a daring “female director” of the French New Wave, Agnès Varda, “has been called both the movement’s mother and its grandmother” (*Criterion*, 2016, para. 2). Oh yeah, being female somehow amplifies the signifying strategy; of Varda, the *Criterion Collection* site notices the compulsion to call it out:

The fact that some have felt the need to assign her a specifically feminine role, and the confusion over how to characterize that role, speak to just how unique her place in this hallowed cinematic movement—defined by such decidedly masculine artists as Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut—is. (*Criterion*, 2016, para 2)

I dare say that many female auteurists, and most filmmakers—because of or perhaps regardless of gender or sex—work to generate effective films without much consideration of their place in any particular “movement.” Speaking for myself, to worry how I am received over and above how my work is considered seems a waste of intellectual and affective energy. As an academic filmmaker striving to discover increasingly roomy working conditions so

as to support my work (think jobs, promotion, grants), I *must* be thinking about how I am considered. And, as a rhetorician working toward a particular vibe and meaning, of course I worry reception. Nevertheless, to enable fears regarding the articulated perception of one's auteurist status is—while in academia nearly an autonomic cultural practice—to diminish the rhetorical force and attendant affective intensities the filmmaker labors to experience and render in the process of filmmaking. These fears require strategic compartmentalization and sensitivity, and this dynamic balance requires a great deal of attention. This balancing act seems to activate new forms of rhetorical sensitivity that are increasingly multivalenced and complex, well-suited to the range of audience needs to which we attend as filmmakers working in the interstices. These heightened rhetorical sensitivities may help in the process of generating more effective filmic texts, and they certainly re-animate long-held rhetorical knowledge regarding audience, knowledge that is amplified and rendered perhaps more forcefully via the multi-sensory affordances of digital filmmaking.

Of course, I would love to claim that I work fearlessly, but what I am getting at is that working without fear in service to a film is hard work. This has been a driving motivation for me in my work, to more fearlessly and forcefully use the affordances of cinematic rhetorics to radiate my particular purposes through my films, absent consideration of a certain range of certain kinds of audience reception, rejection, or other less-than-ideal response. In hindsight, gender may have even amped up my fears (and perhaps Varda's, as well), but I like to think that I work, like Varda, with a confidence in the potential and thus the potentially powerful rhetorical effects of my filmic work. As well, considering that the audience participates in the production of meanings and receptions, I trust that I alone will not be diminished should a work fall short of its desired effects. To be sure, I have not worried that my gender discredits me more than might a history of fears associated with doing rhetorical work in the academy in ways that move more forcefully beyond words, beyond print. For me and for many film-compositionists, the multimodal making in which we have engaged has been about a deeply felt drive to engage digital technologies toward the goal of generating especially effective filmic texts. This passionate motivation drives many multimodal makers and filmmakers. I have heard many filmmakers at the Sundance Film Festival say, "I simply had to make this film," as if some force of nature, some deep internal accumulation of desire simply could not be denied. The intensely felt drive to create cinematically testifies to the power of affect as exigence and as sustaining force for film-composition. Fear, too, motivates as an oppositional affect that nearly always attends deep passion and conviction. Fear obtains in shaping film-composition, but we "brave souls" (Dye, 1964) carry on, revising our

fears into action, just as did many film-compositionists before us.

As a filmmaker, I identify productively with the rebellious auteurist filmmakers, many of whom worked with a conviction regarding their initial creative vision, undaunted by external efforts to alter their works. As noted, Jean-Luc Godard famously struggled against convention only to become a leading figure in a new cinematic movement, a new rhetorical genre in the French New Wave. Similarly, auteurist romantic Wim Wenders resisted studio control (an agent of convention) in his breathtaking cinematic works. He has argued that by working “through his conviction [affect, felt sense, purpose] . . . each film should reflect its own place within a certain tradition of filmmaking” (Cook, 1991, p. 34), intimating that good films find their place. In other words, focusing on the film and its rhetorical integrity may overtake concern for its reception, which is not to say that audience concerns are irrelevant (because, again, the contemporary, post-Barthesian auteur/spectator hybrid). Instead, according to Roger Cook, in “Angels, Fiction, and History of Berlin: Wim Wenders’ *Wings of Desire*,” Wenders

became less concerned with critical self-reflexivity and more intent on making films that through the strength of story [rhetorical purpose] and narrative form [delivery] work against the grain of contemporary cinema. (1991, p. 34)

Is Cook suggesting that Wenders’ films were so purposeful and narratively effective as to create a new form? If so, he hints at the iterative nature of textual production as it occurs on a timeline—drawing from what has worked, testing, and revising and working through hope to discover another/better way of achieving a desired purpose. So Wenders worked to move story along to/through new forms. Although Cook seems to say that Wenders wasn’t evaluative of his work (“less concerned with critical self-reflexivity”), this does not mean that Wenders was unavailable for critique. He was perhaps more concerned that his creative vision was at stake when considered through the machinations of convention. Cook explains that during the making of Wenders’ *Hammert*, the project received a great deal of what I will call “input” from Orion Studios and Frances Ford Coppola, who was hired to alter the original script “so that it better conformed to the conventional Hollywood detective genre” (1991, p. 34). As teachers, we worry that should we avoid teaching convention in favor of “creative vision,” we miss out on pedagogical opportunities (not to mention disciplinary shoring up). Perhaps our fears need not render as a primary frame. Cook reveals that while Wenders felt reined in by the forces of convention, he was nonetheless able to take on valuable rhetorical lessons. Cook frames up these lessons to reveal Wenders’ ability to maintain his creative and critical vision and to work within the given

constraints, noting that Wenders learned that

the conviction that the original concept for the film should remain open so that during the filmmaking the director can discover and incorporate into the film new images and ways of seeing. (1991, p. 34)

What I am highlighting here is how both creativity and fear inhabit the filmmaking process (and what we hope for in the convergence of teaching and learning). A director fears that he or she may not be able to enact his or her vision within the constraints of the particular process; this fear seems bound up in matters of trust. How can an auteur (or any composer, writer, rhetor, teacher, student) hope for her vision in light of institutional, generic, and other constraints? It seems to me that by thinking through the struggles of auteurist practices, we see a shared non-normative desire to work beyond constraints, perhaps as one path available for enacting the closest version of one's story or argument. By considering our own personal and professional histories, we may recognize a trend to iterate, moving with and against convention toward productive effect. Perhaps by trusting both fear and resistance in the context of teaching convention we may find room to improvise effectively. Perhaps as we learn to recognize the value of fear and resistance in our pedagogical and scholarly practices, we will discover their value rather than waiving them off as irrelevant in light of our proud explications and instead advance our disciplinary dispositions accordingly, iterating toward more holistic compositional practices. Attuning to affect, in other words, may mean recognizing the occasionally counterproductive nature of disciplinary constraints. We have not always been so feelingly available to think about affect.

Recognizing the “danger” (Barnes, 1976, p. 32) of struggling against disciplinary constraints are many earlier scholarly works articulating their desires and fears, both ignited to work with and against limitations that might afford film a broader audience in the academy. In 1976, Verle Barnes unveiled a “to do” list that might foreclose struggle in favor of a more direct series of strategies. In “Eight Basic Considerations for the Teaching of Film,” Barnes ultimately describes eight ways of preparing to teach film as an end in itself, which is fascinating and sensible, I dare say. Though he does not elucidate how his considerations will play out shinningly for teaching film in a writing class, per se, his fearful rhetoric appears in *College Composition and Communication*. Though this turn to film seems like a natural for a writing course in the mid-1970s, Barnes nevertheless begins with the somewhat hopeful, slightly cynical, and vaguely fearful assertion that

The study of film as an academic discipline has grown rapidly

in the last several years and has invaded, or should I say been snapped up by, various academic departments in the mad rush for students and for the attractive courses which can draw large numbers of students. (1976, p. 32).

That film was at the time becoming a discipline unto itself seems promising, though it might have been a more hopeful introduction had Barnes taken up that promise instead of quickly turning to fearfully viral rhetorics of “invasion” and the pragmatic buzzkill of drawing more students to courses. While Barnes tentatively celebrates the new discipline, he also thinks about the “danger” the new discipline faced, imagining that “they must also be a little worried about what might happen to the discipline itself” (1976, p. 32). Barnes worried too that

the characteristics of the cinema present special problems for an academic discipline. The nature of the medium, as both a medium and as an art, is so different from traditional disciplines that great care must be taken in the planning and offering of film-study courses to students. (1976, p. 32)

His eight considerations were similarly full of worry. However, reading them through the lens of my experience and thinking through affect, I see his fears as characters that Barnes uses to articulate his own qualifications for teaching film. For example, regarding “1. Preparation,” Barnes worries the forms of experience he sees as essential for someone to qualify to teach film, which in his list includes graduate course work, publications, film criticism, and (finally!) directorial work. *3 out of 4 scholars prefer production!* Barnes ultimately asserts that these matters “should be confronted in order to assure meaningful, quality instruction” (1976, p. 32).

Fear is not great at mobilizing effective rhetoric. To support his claims regarding the need for teacher preparation, Barnes shares anecdotally that his Chaplin course was, in retrospect, flawed not so much because of the teachers but because of the students:

I naively registered for the course, believing I would be involved in a small seminar of serious students, but what I got was an auditorium full of, largely, undergraduates looking for a snap course. (1976, p. 33)

It’s hard to take Barnes seriously when he argues out of a concern for bad pedagogy when what he does here is hold himself apart from other students he clearly sees as lacking. He carries on in this way, assuming a variety of things he can’t reasonably assume, most of it emerging less from fear for qual-

ity and more from desire to teach these courses (!). Framing it not as a critique of the class but “merely as an example of what might happen in a given situation,” Barnes goes on to further extol his intellectual skills while demeaning other students:

I believe I can safely say that the experience as an academic experience was not meaningful for the majority of the students in the class. I have the utmost respect for Mr. Chaplin, and I believe more students should see his films, but his films should not be studied by relatively unsophisticated students until they have been given some basic instruction in the art of films. (1976, p. 33)

Reading Barnes’ fear of underprepared teachers’ unsophisticated students through the lens of affect, I imagine that Barnes is driven by his passionate affection for good films in ways that occlude his vision. He is, after all, writing about film courses for a journal concerned with composition pedagogy. He writes little about film and writing, nothing at all about film as writing. Continuing his list, he worries, “2. Independence.” That is, Barnes makes clear that he is one of those possessed of the visual acuity to see film as “capable of carrying its own weight,” finally arguing that “care must be taken to insure that film gets scholarly and critical treatment as film, and not merely as an adjunct to literature” (1976, p. 33). Here, Barnes misses the chance to advance the seemingly obvious notion that when we treat film as rhetoric, the “critical treatment” is afforded both the study and production of film. Film-composition is about this more contemporary and less competitively fearful treatment. Film-Composition recognizes that the fears of its rhetorical structuration as “adjunct to literature” (a common refrain in Composition scholarship) are no longer essential to a productive conversation on the nature of its emergent status in the academy. In his third consideration, Barnes moves toward something that begins to feel less fearful and more like a hopeful map of film-composition, with film’s “3. Quality” discussed in terms of aspects of film that contribute to a whole—“critical-aesthetic aspects, . . . as artistic end product, . . . inherent ‘messages,’ [and] the structural and ‘craft’ aspects of the film which combined to communicate these messages to the audience” (1976, p. 34). Disappointingly, Barnes says nothing here of production, perhaps fearing that an initially strategic and administrative map must be established for film courses in composition. Even more regrettably because rhetoric, because complexity, in his next point, “4. Relevance,” Barnes misses an opportunity to write of film’s rhetorical affordances, but defaults to the logistical fear which forecasts that, “no film course might be relevant to a highly structured technical program in electronics which has given its students a timetable for completion”

(1976, p. 34). Wow. How does a writing and rhetoric scholar swipe left so hard on “relevance”? Turning more specifically to affect, Barnes lingers on “5. Enjoyment.” Oh, Barnes. Here, he vacillates between the more obviously hopeful proclamations about film courses and fearful “tssking” over, again, “3. Quality.” Barnes recognizes that pleasure attends learning and cites *Sesame Street* as a pedagogical opportunity. While he might have chosen any number of more age-appropriate examples, he seems to get that, “planned learning does not have to be drudgery, that it can, in fact, be fun and still be effective” (1976, p. 34). Perhaps revealing his own attachment and maybe also his desire to teach film and to be recognized as an authority on its teaching, Barnes asserts,

Film is one area that, by its very nature, is entertaining. Entertainment and enjoyment combine to form one of the major attributes of film study, as an academic discipline, one of the “attractions” [attachments] of the discipline itself and probably one of the major reasons why so many students enroll in film courses. (1976, p. 34)

Great! So . . . where’s the fear? Barnes has got you covered:

While it is possible to remove the “entertainment” from many film courses, there is no reason to do so. Since entertainment and enjoyment are positive attributes of film study, they should be maintained as much as possible in any film course. (1976, p. 34)

Right. Who said we need to take the fun out of film? Where is this coming from? Could it be from an entrenched set of conventions? Could it be from a more established field? Barnes offers

The primary caution which should be taken in studying films that entertain and that bring enjoyment is one which has existed in the study of literature since the birth of literary study itself. That caution is simple: maintain the quality of study by differentiating between quality films and non-quality films. (p. 34)

Is Barnes confused? What is “non-quality”? He might have classified a group of films as “poor” but instead suggests zero quality, which is odd. Perhaps hoping to clarify, he argues that we must watch out for “non-quality films”:

When the purpose of the course is historical and the content is, for instance, “B Pictures of the 1950s,” students should be

made aware that some of the films they will be viewing may be second- or third-rate. (1976, p. 34)

Another rhetorical opportunity missed! Can you just see the remix project potential, here? *Of course you can. You are immersed in screen cultures that have emerged from cinematic histories that have intertextually prepared you to consume and produce in clever and rhetorically strategic ways! You are attuned to what works, what has worked, what worked in a given situation and how that working might be repurposed in the present moment for a variety of different and new purposes.* If only Barnes could have liberated himself from the fears of appearing to conform to academic convention and instead embraced film's pleasurable qualities, he might have articulated a more productive and rewarding vision for film study *and* production as rhetorical work; he might have begun to testify to the emergence of film-composition. Barnes concludes, "6. Time," by insinuating that this is the "easiest" consideration, which seems odd given that he goes on to list scheduling limitations and the need for extra time for screenings, discussion, and speakers as the main concerns regarding time and the teaching of film. From the perspective of film production, time becomes intensely important and perhaps higher up on the list of worries. From the perspective of film-composition, *time is the elemental space for writing a film.* The timeline is the essential conceptual tool, and so "easy" seems far too flip-pant. Barnes moves between attempting to argue for his serious consideration as a qualified film teacher (scholar?) and working to list the administrative concerns of offering film courses. He concludes with, "7. Assignments and Outside Activities," and "8. Budget" in ways that further reduce his fears and tend instead to amplify his sense of confidence as a verifiable judge of quality, meaning, and scope. He argues that another "danger" of teaching film is the potential to overlay extra activities, to "kill the films" with too much critical work such as "too much 'forced' discussion, too much 'significance searching,' [and] too much 'meaning'" (1976, p. 35). Perhaps Barnes is lingering with that notion of pleasure, here, hoping that there will be less need to explore a film's rhetorical structure and meaning, to say nothing of production, but it is one of the delights of reading early Composition scholarship, to find this sort of quiet dismissal of the mainstays of conventional classrooms in favor of keeping a film alive, so to speak. It is almost as though Barnes dismisses fear in favor of trust in attunement, trust in a shared knowing that might simply vibrate out instead of suffering (dying!) at our pedagogical hands. Financially speaking, ("8. Budget"), Barnes writes of "cutting corners" by showing films on televisions, noting that, "the advantages far outweighs the drawbacks" (1976, p. 35). He also suggests showing "Good foreign films" as they "might cost much less than well-known American movies," (1976, p. 35) and, again, writes

nothing at all about production. Of course, to fault these tentative gestures toward film-composition for not thinking about making films as a rhetorical and pedagogical approach toward learning how to write, how to compose, . . . well, it's too easy, and it may seem mean-spirited, but I do marvel at how ancient practices in imitation seem to have evaded these teacher-scholars. It seems that only imitation of print modes would do.

Hinting at potential approaches to take in and utilize the affordances of film for English courses, Stanley J. Solomon (1974) played it safe while arguing for "Film Study and Genre Courses." As you might guess, Solomon advocated using film without fear of disciplinary punishment by developing genre courses, with films as the central texts. While Solomon seems quite confident within the contours of his schema, he nevertheless betrays a fear that underlies his desire to work with film as an English professional. In part, the fear was about intra-and interdisciplinary disputes regarding course content, and how to proceed. Interestingly, Solomon seems to easily evade fears regarding the propriety of teaching film in English, and this is because he recasts film within the familiar context of genre, and sees film as simply given that "what an English teacher often considered his [sic] primary pedagogical responsibility" was "to guide a class through a close textual examination of a work of art" (1974, p. 283). By suggesting quite boldly that the way to use film in English would be to design genre courses that mimicked existing genre approaches routinely used by Literature, Solomon seems less than confident in the rhetorical skills of those English professors who would be teaching film. It seems such an obvious line of reasoning to follow in support of his desired ends, yet he does not address the kinds of rhetorical knowledge these genre courses might yield but instead uses the genre approach, well, generically as a way of bypassing worries over turf and to ensure that English departments would gain access to the growing student demand for film courses. I want to retroactively say to (belt out at) Solomon, "Don't fear the rhetor!" Interestingly, Solomon begins to unravel one of the more vexing concerns facing teachers and scholars working in visual rhetoric, multimodality, and film-composition today when he asserts that, "What is really essential for pedagogical dialogue in film studies . . . is constant practice in verbalizing the visual experience" (1974, p. 282). Solomon teases us with a hint of "ekphrastic hope," 1 of 3 modes of ekphrasis articulated by visual rhetorician, W. J. T. Mitchell. For Mitchell (2004), the hope that we might articulate verbally (via print) the nature of our reception of an imagistic entity is complexly related to our fears that should we do so we destroy the distinction between the objects' affective allure and our necessarily reductive articulation of its value and meaning. Solomon argued that we must take up exercises in ekphrasis, guided by a sense of disciplinary value and the conventional forms of evaluation that make a

discipline's discursive practices valid as intellectual work. Solomon's view of the struggle inherent in this work of "verbalizing the visual experience," what I see as a type of ekphrastic practice, involves his overdetermined sense of the nature of academic work in English Studies. Considering the nature of ekphrastic rhetorical practices, Solomon says that

[t]eachers will often have more trouble doing this than their students, for there is no textual passage to point to, once the film is completed, to support a generalization, no palpable line reference in hand for all to gaze at during a tour de force of explication. (1974, p. 282)

So, it seems that for Solomon, teachers are routinized toward explicating via guides and in a manner that calls for laudatory consideration of their performances. This seems about right for the time. Not "right" as in the better choice, but "right" in terms of how the professoriate functioned and conceptualized its own values in the mid-1970s. Moving to consider students' roles in processes of ekphrasis, Solomon defaults to a narrow view of student capacities even as he hints at their rhetorical attunement, which may be viewed from today's vantage (see Rickert) as a form of functional rhetorical knowledge. He argues that,

[s]tudents may lack the words to spell out exactly what they have observed, but they sometimes can remember it better, being more attuned to the "literal level," more passive, and thereby less analytical than their professors. (1974, p. 282).

Exactly. But whereas Solomon feared that student reception of filmic texts may be too literal, that they were too ready to accept a film's narrative, its vibe, and its affects, it may be safe to say that at this point in (postmodern) time, Davis' "rhetoricity" and Rickert's "attunement" sufficiently theorize what Solomon saw as damaging. Instead of seeing the eager acceptance of a film's various affective and rhetorical shimmers as productive, Solomon (bless him) saw students' "literal" reception of cinematic experience as weak, inadequate, and in need of teacherly guidance. Solomon feared the reader where he might instead have begun to see the critical, pedagogical, and rhetorical affordances of film. This is not new. Regrettably, these fears of this kind continue to darken hopes, but film-compositionists, now as ever, persist in light of their fears.