

Art should entertain and educate

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CANDIDATES' DECLARATION

This is to certify that the work presented in this thesis, titled, “Art should entertain and educate”, is the outcome of the investigation and research carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Janardan Ghosh.

It is also declared that neither this thesis nor any part thereof has been submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree, diploma or other qualifications.

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CERTIFICATION

This thesis titled, “**Art should entertain and educate**”, submitted by Jimut Bahan Pal as mentioned below has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree M.Sc. in Computer Science in December, 2020.

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ABSTRACT

Art influences society by changing opinions, instilling values and translating experiences across space and time. Painting, sculpture, music, cinema, literature and the other arts are often considered to be the repository of a society's collective memory. Art preserves what fact-based historical records cannot: how it felt to exist in a particular place at a particular time. Art in this sense is communication; it allows people from different cultures and different times to communicate with each other via images, sounds and stories. Art is often a vehicle for social change. Art also has utilitarian influences on society. Art not only fosters the human need for self-expression and fulfilment, it is also economically viable. The creation, management and distribution of art employs many. Most of us know the feeling of being moved by a work of art, whether it is a song, a play, a poem, a novel, a painting, or a cinema. When we are touched, we are moved; we are transported to a new place that is, nevertheless, strongly rooted in a physical experience, in our bodies. We become aware of a feeling that may be familiar to us but which we did not actively focus on before. This transformative experience is what art is constantly seeking. The work focuses on the importance of art being not just entertaining but educating as well. In this dissertation, we emphasize on different aspects of art and how it can affect the society for the good or may be bad, how pragmatic art can get. The discussion is based on purely the enlisted books and the recommended films. The discussion is about the plot points and analysis of the stories, the message that each of the stories are trying to convey.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Art is an irreplaceable way of understanding and expressing the world. Art education is often underestimated by many who believe that educational institutions were created to teach only analytical concepts such as mathematics and literature. Art may include not only visual arts but performing arts such as dance, theatre and choir. Filmmaker Barbara Streisand once said, “Art does not exist only to entertain, but also to challenge one to think, to provoke, even to disturb, in a constant search for the truth. Certainly the primary aim of art should be to entertain the masses but that should not be the soul reason. The primary aim of most artists would be financial success in their field of employment. Whereas the primary aim of a critic would be to judge the impact of a certain form of art on the society, on the people. The primary aim therefore changes based on the perspectives. Engaging and getting entertained with art is not simply a solitary event. The arts and culture represent one of the few areas in our society where people can come together to share an experience even if they see the world in radically different ways. The important thing is not that we agree about the experience that we share, but that we consider it worthwhile sharing an experience at all. In art and other forms of cultural expression, disagreement is accepted and embraced as an essential ingredient.

I think that every form of art does have a goal. If we consider films, although films attempt to top box office, the main aim of films is to be approved by a vast variety of people. The entertainment provided by films should stay in the minds of those watching it. For a film to be impact full in the masses for a long period of time it has to be successful at giving a deep message to the audience and boggles their mind with its story telling. If art just entertains and provides no constructive form of message then it might give some joy to people momentarily but it will fail to affect them in any shape or form. Then that piece of art becomes very much forgettable. Art has the power to influence people, inspire them, motivate one to do something that a person might not have had the courage to venture before.

Chapter 2

V for Vendetta

V for Vendetta is a **2005 political thriller film** directed by **James McTeigue** and written by the **Wachowskis** [6], based on the **1988 DC Comics series of the same name by Alan Moore and David Lloyd**. It starred Natalie Portman, Hugo Weaving, Stephen Rea, and John Hurt. The film had its world premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival on February 12, 2006. The film had been nominated for many prestigious awards and accolades and it has won quite a few of them — Brothers Manaki International Film Festival, San Diego Film Critics Society Awards and Saturn Award. In the not too distant future, Britain is filled with torture cells, unfair punishments, prejudice against minorities. However, in the midst of all this chaos, one man known only by the name V (Hugo Weaving) dares to stand up to the government and is labeled as a terrorist. One night V rescues a mild young woman called Evey Hammond (Natalie Portman), and an unlikely bond between the two emerges which results with Evey becoming V's ally. But though V may be charismatic and have a passion for justice he also is bitter and has his own personal hatred of the government for something they did to him long ago. As November the 5th, the day V says he and those who will follow him will stand up to the government once and for all approaches, Detective Finch (Stephen Rea) becomes more and more determined to uncover the truth about V, however his search leads him to ask to question whether or not he is on the right side. Throughout the movie, the main character 'V' gathers the support of the citizens that is growing more and more dissatisfied with the amount of control the government has over them, and he takes advantage of a growing animosity towards power that he eventually funnels into a mass rebellion. He does so under the use of masks to cover the identity of him and his followers and allow people to protect their personal identities. this method of anonymous rebellion allows people to voice their true feelings and stand up to rebel against their justice.

Aspects of rebellion that we see in the movie are :

Rebellion against injustice: V for Vendetta demonstrates rebellion against injustice [2] through the main character "V." He was a victim of illegal genetic testing by the government in an effort to further their knowledge about the human body's ability to survive epidemics. V was

the only one to survive and escape from the torture. His hatreds then turns into vengeance. He vowed to bring justice to his country and overthrow the injustice of the government. He fights for the freedom of the people in his country. Part of V's plan is to kill those who played a role at Larkhill Detention Centre. V murdered these individuals as a payback for the suffering they have cause him and hundreds of others. While V for Vendetta does eventually succeed, many people are injured in the process, and he kills a lot of innocent and guilty people regardless of remorse. V's way of vengeance is not seen as justice, But, Rebellion, like many other social issues, is a double-edged problem, and not one that can be solved in a simple manner.

Rebellion against authority: Another theme that the film explores is the use of authority and power. The theme of authority and power is used to demonstrate the force that one person can have on a society. It's also trying to indicate the power of "Chancellor Sutler" by showing how he is dominating the people of the country.

Rebellion against stereotypes: The film explores the theme of unfair judgements and discriminatory stereotypes. Fascist government created so many strict rules and regulations-suppressing individuals. An example people weren't allowed to be exposed to other religions, works of art and homosexual was seen as a crime. In the scene where V is cooking a delightful breakfast for Eve with an apron that has flowers on it and greets her saying hello miss in French which indicates his class and sophistication. This shows that we shouldn't judge a book by it's cover.

The moral of this story is a bit complex. There are plenty of themes about how the government should be afraid of its people, not the other way round. And there are a few profound moments of "artists use lies to tell people the truth while politicians [7] use lies to cover the truth up". The horrible society that we find them in was created through fear. Their fear led them to elect a government that promised to make them safe and it led to their horrible circumstances. It would seem that the moral of the story would be to not live in fear because , "a life lived in fear is a life half lived" but I don't think that's the key point. When Evey was held prisoner she came to the revelation that when she was stripped down mentally and physically and the only thing she had left was her life, she still found herself not giving in to torture because she still had her integrity and the choice to not give her captors information. The experience of torture and accepting she'd rather die than give in freed her from her fear. Therefore, the moral of the story is: Value your integrity and do not live a life in fear.

Chapter 3

Inception

Inception is a **2010 science fiction** action film written and directed by **Christopher Nolan**, who also produced the film. The film stars **Leonardo DiCaprio** as a professional thief who steals information [5] by infiltrating the subconscious, and is offered a chance to have his criminal history erased as payment for the implantation of another person's idea into a target's subconscious. The ensemble cast additionally includes **Ken Watanabe, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Marion Cotillard, Ellen Page, Tom Hardy, Dileep Rao, Cillian Murphy, Tom Berenger, and Michael Caine**. Released to critical and commercial success, the film was named **one of the ten best films of the year** by **National Board of Review and American Film Institute**.

Dominic Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio) is the foremost practitioner of the artistic science of extraction, inserting oneself into a subject's dreams to obtain hidden information without the subject knowing, a concept taught to him by his professor father-in-law, Dr. Stephen Miles. Dom's associates are Miles' former students, who Dom requires as he has given up being the dream architect for reasons he won't disclose. Dom's primary associate, Arthur, believes it has something to do with Dom's deceased wife, Mal, who often figures prominently and violently in those dreams, or Dom's want to go home and get back to his own reality, which includes two young children. Dom's work is generally in corporate espionage. As the subjects don't want the information to get into the wrong hands, the clients have zero tolerance for failure. Dom is also a wanted man, as many of his past subjects have learned what Dom has done to them. One of those subjects, Mr. Saito, offers Dom a job he can't refuse: to take the concept one step further into inception, namely planting thoughts into the subject's dreams without them knowing. Inception can fundamentally alter that person as a being. Saito's target is Robert Michael Fischer, the heir to an energy business empire, which has the potential to rule the world if continued on the current trajectory. Beyond the complex logistics of the dream architecture of the case [1] and some unknowns concerning Fischer, the biggest obstacles in success for the team become worrying about one aspect of inception which Cobb fails to disclose to the other team members prior to the job, and Cobb's newest associate Ariadne's belief that Cobb's own subconscious,

especially as it relates to Mal, may be taking over what happens in the dreams.

In *Inception*, the director wanted to explore the idea of people sharing a dream space that gives a person the ability to access somebody's unconscious mind and what would that be used for. The majority of the film's plot takes place in these interconnected dream worlds. This structure creates a framework where actions in the real or dream worlds ripple across others. The dream is always in a state of production, and shifts across the levels as the characters navigate it.

The mission of the *Inception* team : to implant an idea deep in the subconscious of a corporate executive (Robert Fischer Jr.) so subtly that he will believe its his own idea, and choose not to follow in his fathers footsteps, thereby leaving business to others and allowing a rival competitor to dominate [8]. Planting this idea requires such intricacy that it must be done on a very deep level, a third-level dream — a dream within a dream within a dream — where minutes in the higher-level dreams expand into months and years, and the danger of never waking up or falling into limbo escalate dramatically.

Some of the complex concepts shown in the movie are explained below :

The movie has two types of dreams:

1. **The basic dream-within-a-dream**, which Cobb uses to extract information from the subject's mind. An example of this is the opening dream sequence of the movie, where Cobb's team is trying to extract information from Saito's head (and they fail).

2. **The more elaborate multi-level dream** where Cobb's team is trying to perform inception on Fischer. For this multi-level dream you need to be under a powerful sedative. **Time Dilation** When one goes into inner levels of the dream, time will stretch. What is 10 hours in the real world would become 1 week in first level of dream and 6 months in the second level and so on. **Kick** A kick is a sudden jolt that can wake the dreamer up by one level. Usually the kick is a fall. In a basic dream a simple single kick is enough to wake the dreamer up by one level of dream. E.g.: Cobb is dunked into the bathtub which wakes him up by one level – this is a kick given to the sleeping body. A kick can also be given to the dreaming self, e.g. Arthur is shot in the head by Cobb and Arthur wakes up by one level.

Now, however, in a multi-level dream you are under a powerful sedative, so it's not that simple. A single kick is not enough to wake you up. This requires a synchronised kick. A pair of kicks, one kick to the sleeping body and one kick to the dreaming self.

To synchronise a kick, play music into the ears of the dreamer and then provide a kick to the sleeping body. Inside the dream, the dreamer hears music, which means its time to provide

kick to the self inside the dream. This will cause two kicks to synchronise.

Limbo Limbo is a shared subconscious state where the mind might fail to tell that it's a dream and can be lost there forever. If death happens in limbo then the dreamer wakes up all the way into reality bypassing all the levels of dreams. No kicks required.

There are two ways to get into Limbo.

1. If the architecture of the multi level dream consists of 3 levels and if one tries to go one level deeper than what was designed, one can reach limbo. In this case the person will still remember how one got to Limbo and what he or she were doing before that (**eg: when Cobb and Ariadne go from the hospital level further down to get Fischer**).

2. If one dies in a heavily sedated, multi-level dream, the person will be thrown into limbo but in this case he or she will not remember clearly how they got there and what they were doing before that (**eg: when Saito dies and reaches limbo, he ends up living there for many years**).

A person cannot reach limbo in a basic dream.

Finally, the plot analysis of a movie like Inception cannot be ended without an analysis of the amazing ending.

The ending scene of Inception leaves us with a spinning top making us wonder if it was all a dream or reality. There are the popular Inception theories around the ending with wedding ring (the ring is on inside dreams and is off in reality and at the airport Cobb is not wearing a ring – hence that is reality). But besides that, the top wobbles. A wobble occurs when a spinning object changes speeds, especially when it is slowing down. We would not have a wobble on a spinning top if its speed remained constant, just like how the top looked in Mal's safe in their dream. The top wobbles which does mean it's eventually going to stop.

Inception, is a film that asks of its audience to participate in its unraveling. We don't just settle to 'watch' this film as an ordinary spectator; but carefully work it out, piece by tricky piece. If most films, by very definition, are made in order to entertain or engage viewers, Inception does more than that: it challenges them. It requires us to submit our full attention. The film is part sci-fi, part thriller, and part mind-bending psychological puzzle. And chances are one is going to need to watch it at least a second time to grasp exactly what is going on.

Chapter 4

The Purloined Letter

Edgar Allan Poe, born in January 19, 1809 – October 7, 1849 was an American writer, editor, and literary critic. Poe [4] is best known for his poetry and short stories, particularly his tales of mystery and the macabre. He is widely regarded as a central figure of romanticism in the United States and of American literature as a whole, and he was one of the country's earliest practitioners of the short story.

The unnamed narrator is discussing with the famous Parisian amateur detective **C. Auguste Dupin** some of his more celebrated cases when they are joined by the prefect of the police, a man known as G—. The prefect has a case he would like to discuss with Dupin. A few months ago the royal lady (probably the queen) gets a letter. She's in her sitting room reading it when another royal person walks in (probably the king). She wants to hide the letter from him, but she can't get it into the desk drawer [3] fast enough. Instead, she puts it on the desk, with the address showing. In strolls dangerous Minister D—. He notices who the letter is from (the readers aren't told), notices that the royal lady is acting funny, and realizes she wants to hide the letter from the royal man. Right in front of everyone, D— switches the royal lady's letter with one of his own and walks out. The lady can't stop him, because she's afraid D— will show her letter to the royal man. So, now he's using the letter to make the queen grant some vague but no doubt nefarious political wishes. Enter G—, whom she's called in to find the letter for her. Thinking that D— must have the letter either on his body or in his home, G— has searched and search—like, every night for the past three months—and still found nothing. Dupin takes an interest, asking G— to describe the letter, inside and out. Finally, G— leaves, resolved to search again. About a month later, he comes back. Still no luck. By this point, he's totally frustrated and offers to pay fifty thousand francs of his own money to whomever can find that letter. After hearing this Dupin then hands over the letter to G—. After G— leaves, Dupin tells our narrator how he found the letter:

He knows that D— is smart, definitely smart enough to have known how and where G— would

search for the letter. He concludes that D— probably hide the letter out in the open, where G— (who’s not so smart) would never think to look.

So he waltzes over to D—’s house for a friendly little visit, wearing green glasses to hide his eyes. He sees the letter, disguised as another letter, in an organiser box hanging from the fireplace. The next day he returns with a copy of the disguised letter. Dupin then creates a distraction in the street, so that D— wouldn’t notice as he swaps the copy for the original. The final touch is that inside the fake letter, Dupin wrote a snide little note to gloat about how he’s outsmarted D—.

The short story “The Purloined Letter” by Edgar Allan Poe establishes a new genre of short fiction in American literature: the detective story. The story is about how Dupin, an amateur detective solves a case of a stolen letter that apparently looks very difficult but with a bit of change in the perspective makes a lot of difference in the way of solving the case. The characters in this story are — Unnamed Narrator - A friend of Dupin. In awe of Dupin’s brilliance, the narrator faithfully recounts Dupin’s explanations without doubting or challenging him.

Monsieur G— - The Prefect of the Paris police. Limited by his conventional police training, Monsieur G— depends on Dupin’s assistance in peculiarly difficult crimes, and his own general competence highlights Dupin’s superior abilities.

Minister D— - A government official and the thief of the letter. Minister D— ‘s ability to outwit the police in his crime proves he is a worthy adversary for Dupin.

C. Auguste Dupin - A savvy and learned Parisian who helps the city’s police solve crimes. Dupin uses psychology to foil the plans of a thief and uncover a stolen letter that the police of Paris could not uncover by conventional investigations.

Dupin is definitely the protagonist—for the narrator, at least. After all, he’s the smart guy who finds the letter. Yet he doesn’t seem to drive the action in the way a traditional protagonist does. Or, at least, he shares the action-driving with G—. Plus, his motivations are far from heroic. Money, politics, and bragging rights seem to drive him almost as much as the delight he takes in reasoning, thinking, and detecting. Still, the narrator sets up the story so we can’t help gloating a little over his success.

D— is blackmailing the royal lady, and using his power over her to get what he wants politically. He’s also the enemy of Dupin, our protagonist. That alone makes him the antagonist. When we consider the fact that Dupin, G—, and the royal lady want to get the letter back from him so they can continue to deceive the king and cover up the royal lady’s (presumed) affair, though, D— seems like just another corrupt player in a city of corrupt players.

In this story, the brilliance [9] with which Dupin solves the case of Purloined letter makes

the readers to feel astounded. The plot point of the story is so engrossing that it makes the readers to keep on thinking what happens next. As one delves deeper into the story, one begins to question one's own view of thievery and the moral codes of "teaching someone a lesson." Many believe the mystery remains unsolved at the end of this one... and while I would tend to agree, it's still a very artful approach to telling the story. It also helped push the mystery genre into more analytical thinking as opposed to true action-based, cut-and-dry physical tracking down of clues.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Art in any form provides a great form of relaxation to people, keeping them away from their busy and hectic lives. For a few hours they escape into a different world altogether and forget their woes and worries. Besides providing entertainment and amusement, art also provides a kind of education. The moral impact of art is also noteworthy. Amongst all forms of art, we find that cinema can have a very constructive impact in a multicultural country like India. Unfortunately, in India it is the box-office value of a picture which is more important than anything else. Film makers are seen to adhere to cheap entertainment making their movies full of vulgar dances and scenes in order to attract the common people. Such depictions poison and distracts the minds of the people especially the younger generation. Undue importance to sex and violence does irreparable damage to our youth and in-still in them wrong ideas of social living and family.

The movies and stories that have been discussed above, do not fail to teach us a lesson by giving some kind of social message, either to educate us or to challenge our thoughts. In the short story “the Purloined Letter”, whoever has the words has the power, whether it’s used for money, political gain, or just sheer control. By tracing the letter’s movements in the story, we can trace the shifting flow of power. In fact, maybe we can even read “The Purloined Letter” as a study in the abuse of power. Except for possibly the royal man, all the characters (including the narrator) use their power for their own personal, political, or financial agendas.

Secondly, the movie V for Vendetta certainly makes some very strong political points, and carries some powerful moral messages. The movie says that the people should not be afraid of their government, instead it should be the other way around. The movie shows how a fascist political group creates a fear and manipulates people into thinking that voting them as the government would keep the people safe. The largest question of the movie, is whether or not V is moral. He is killing people, but he is killing bad people for a good cause. This is why it can become unclear as to whether he is a hero or just a tyrant like the government. V is not afraid to kill anyone who stands in his path. So, it is on us to decide whether V is a protagonist or an

antagonist.

Lastly, in the movie Inception , the moral premise is, embracing dreams as reality leads to death of a vision but using dreams as inspiration leads to a vision fulfilled and embracing reality as a dream leads to a rejection of life.

The movie embraces conventions from a variety of genres, thus making it accessible to many different audiences (sci-fi, suspense, thriller, love, drama, and high risky adventure). The moral premise is true and consistently followed in the arcs of all the main characters. Concluding we can say, for a piece of art to be remembered, it needs to have some layered thoughtful message that gets the person watching it or reading it to thinking and doing some self analysis. Art should be engaging intellectually because we as an audience love to work out riddles.

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