1.)

        Carl Laemmle's life and legacy are a good way to see how Hollywood emerged and changed in its earliest phases. He created an incredibly successful nickelodeon, was one of the first independents to break away from Edison's Trust, and promoted the star system when he hired Florence Lawrence to turn her into the face of his company. Each of these stages in his career highlight how the filmmaking industry in the United States slowly evolved into Hollywood.

        One of Laemmle's first major achievements in the industry was his successful nickelodeon. After 20 years of working odd jobs in the US, he entered the filmmaking industry by contributing to the thing that helped make it so big, movie exhibition (Frick, Module 2). He managed to turn an abandoned store into a nickelodeon and eventually turned it into his own distribution company, the Laemmle Film Service. Nickelodeons at the time were easy to set up and profitable both of which likely incentivized entrepreneurs such as Laemmle to buy and convert buildings. People flocked to nickelodeons because they prioritized showing movies at one-fifth of the price of the vaudeville theaters that catered mainly to middle class audiences (Douglas and Pafort-Overduin, pg 16). Laemmle's success was mirrored by other major Hollywood entrepreneurs in their early careers such as the Warner brothers and Adolph Zukor (Douglas and Pafort-Overduin, pg 18). As such, nickelodeons are an important part of Laemmle's career and Hollywood's history.

        Carl Laemmle became one of the first "independents' when he left Edison's Trust to create his own company, Independent Moving Pictures, in 1908. Thomas Edison helped turn the new technology of the moving picture into a proper industry after creating his own moviemaking company, the Black Maria, and engaging in the "Patent Wars" in an attempt to monopolize filmmaking. In order to take back the industry from foreign films and independent distributors, he created the Motion Picture Patents company that eliminated the direct sale of films and established a monopoly on all aspects of filmmaking, including raw film stock (Douglas and Pafort-Overduin, pg 24). The company eventually fell apart as contracts were modified, patent royalties expired, and, finally, the eager independent distributors, such as Paramount, started producing and distributing their own films. Carl Laemmle was one of these future movie giants and his departure from the trust is indicative of the end of the Patent Wars and the rise of the "independents", a monumental moment in Hollywood history. Edison's company and his war greatly throttled the production of western films and the independents immediately jumped at the opportunity to build large production companies, start exploring moviemaking itself, look for movie stars, and find new innovative ways to distribute the movies to audiences.

        In order to promote his new company, Independent Movie Pictures (IMP), Laemmle hired the "Biograph Girl", Florence Lawrence, to become "IMP Girl" (Douglas and Pafort-Overduin, pg. 39). He was one of the many independents that started chasing after and promoting new long-term "stars", something that Edison had avoided in fear of their salaries increasing in time. However, Laemmle likely realized that the audiences wanted to see familiar faces in movies and determined that the investment was worth it for the long-term success of films. He ensured this success by promoting his star in newspaper stories and featuring her in posters promising the audiences a chance to see her in the latest IMP production. This strategy reflects the development of the star system, which is instrumental to bringing Hollywood to life as movie stars and their fans are a vital part of Hollywood's culture even in the present day.

2.)

Silent films, especially comedic ones, relied on portraying a story or delivering jokes through the actors' actions themselves. However, they still needed to provide context or dialogue and relied on intertitles to accomplish this. *Sherlock Jr.* makes good use of them to introduce characters or show some dialogue. Title cards were still used sparingly and most of the film relied on special effects or Keaton's antics to push the story forward. One example is when Keaton's character is shown to have entered a dream when a transparent projection of him "leaves" his body to go on an adventure while he was asleep.

Orchestras were also a defining part of the silent movie experience. Movie theaters, big or small, ensured that music sent by studios accompanied their films. The most obvious way *Sherlock Jr.* showcases the orchestra is during the dream sequence where Buster's character is shown to "enter" the movie in his theater. In this sequence, he is whisked away to different sceneries such as a mountains cliff or a desert. The music appropriately changes each time such as when "Morning Mood" plays to accompany the view of the distant and peaceful mountains.

3.)

A title card is shown at the beginning of *The Birth of a Nation* that made "a plea for the art of the motion picture" (Griffith*, The Birth of a* Nation). This gives an idea of how controversial the film really was. "We do not fear censorship, for we have no wish to offend with improprieties or obscenities", the card declares. From this quote, we can infer that this film was under threat of censorship for its brutal and concerning scenes or imagery. Griffith must have known or, at the very least, realized at some point that what he had created was much more than a display of revolutionary filmmaking or a thrilling story. It was a political hot topic. However, all this title does is show that Griffith realized what the movie meant to some people. It fails to reveal his actual stance on racism in America nor does it directly acknowledge the fact that it relies on harmful racial stereotypes. It also does not indicate when Griffith realized what *The Birth of a Nation* really was. The viewer cannot determine whether he simply aspired to create a groundbreaking masterpiece or intended to send a political message.

In the 1930's, the Museum of Modern Art decided that films were invaluable pieces of art whose history needed to be preserved. D.W Griffith's collection of movies, including his early works, were donated by the Biograph Company and became an important part in film history exhibits (Frick, Module 6). In a video featuring MoMA's film collection, the collectors praised his collection as one of their most important acquisitions as they showed his genius evolving over the years. He was credited for perfecting game changing methods of compelling storytelling, such as parallel storytelling or fades between scenes. They briefly mention *The Birth of a Nation*, his most popular and controversial film, as simply one of his many great accomplishments. They remained fixated on his style of filmmaking rather than the movies themselves and how they were received. This likely reflects the focus of other collectors, film historians, and academics. While this clip shows what Griffith's legacy looked like at the

time, it fails to show us what who he really was. Without more context, it cannot be determined what historians know about him now as his films have likely come under closer scrutiny in the modern era.

Griffith was known for his shameless self-promotion and there is plenty of evidence of what he thought of *The Birth of a Nation* (Frick, Module 6). Such evidence can be used to find out Griffith's true intentions, something the previous sources failed to do. A poster advertising the movie brags about how much money and resources were required to create the movie. It took 18,000 people, 3,000 horses, 8 months, and 500 thousand dollars to create a masterpiece that is "rich in historic value" (BOAN poster, Module 6). The movie itself, given the time that it was made, makes these claims very believable with war sequences of soldiers on horses stampeding beside buildings and the climactic scene of the Ku Klux Klan heroically riding to the rescue. This poster gives a unique perspective of what the filmmakers believed the movie to be. They saw it as historical story that, while fictional, accurately depicted historical figures and groups such as the Confederates, carpetbaggers, and African Americans. This may provide the context that the free speech disclaimer lacked as to what Griffith's true intentions were. He may not have had a proper political message to put out. Instead, he recreated what he saw as a reality. To him, the Confederates were noble and honorable veterans such as "the little Colonel" who went on to create the Klan out of the necessity to take back their freedom from the vicious African Americans. It was simply a historical fact that the carpetbaggers of the North nearly destroyed themselves and the African Americans were drunk on their own power after the Civil War and terrorized white communities. Unlike the other two sources, however, this poster alone doesn't indicate the public response to the movie or how it defined Griffith's legacy.

5.)

One of the main theories behind the emergence of German Expressionism was that it was a result of the economic and psychological distress that the country and its people were suffering in the aftermath of the First World War (Frick, Module 5). Prior to the war, German cinema hardly stood out on the global stage. After the war ended, the German government banned film imports, allowing German companies to stand a chance. Hyperinflation and other economic troubles allowed production companies to grow quickly as they prioritized exports and were able to hire cheap labor (Frick, Module 5). Now that they were actually competitive, they needed a way to make the films they were exporting special.

Expressionism was a term that was originally used in the worlds of paintings and theater. With the inspirational success of Hollywood, new German film companies such as the government subsidized Universal Film AG (UFA) began to use this style for the new art form in order to stand out from foreign competition (Douglas and Pafort-Overduin, pg. 99). It can be defined by its surrealist settings, strange distribution of shadows, a somewhat exaggerated and cartoon-like set, animated acting, and an overall gothic tone in terms of story, setting, music, and even makeup.

An opening shot of the town setting of *The Cabinet of Dr Calegari* is a good example of German Expressionism. It is a drawing of the buildings crammed together with slanted and sharp roofs, seemingly pulled straight out of a children's Halloween cartoon in the modern era. Throughout the film, the characters wander through shadowy narrow streets and dark winding staircases. The eye shadows under Caesar the somnambulist and his wide unsettling eyes as he awakened from his slumber

showcased a new form of makeup and acting compared to most other silent films in that time. Everything from these shadows to the intertitle fonts to the acting itself is part of a unique art style that came from German Expressionism. This style was special when it first emerged as it set a new tone for a new type of storytelling. The movie was also accompanied by a chilling score that constantly kept the viewer on edge. This was a departure from the light and upbeat music that usually accompanied the silent films of Hollywood. In *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horrors*, another stellar example of German Expressionism in the horror genre, the music would slowly crawl to build up suspense and then "jump" at appropriate moments such as when the titular vampire suddenly rises from his coffin. The impact that German Expressionism made can be found in future generations of films and popular media as it inspired them to take filmmaking to the next level and beyond realism. One example is how Tim Burton's *Batman* from 1989 featured Gotham as, not a traditional city, but as a mash of tall and dark buildings with shadowy alleyways and random pipes going everywhere, not unlike the setting of *The Cabinet of Dr Calegari.*

Bonus.)

If I was in charge of this class, I would most definitely include *The Birth of a Nation* in the curriculum. In recent times, people have begun to take a closer and more critical look at forms of art from the past and historical figures themselves. It has become a heated debate to determine what legacies deserve to remain the way that they are and which ones need to be condemned. Therefore, it is important to encourage people to learn how to formulate these opinions for themselves. It is important for us to determine how we will personally judge art and its artists. As stated previously, many historians saw *The Birth of a Nation* as a cinematographic masterpiece. While that may be so, on a technical level, one must also consider whether it is worth keeping alive the harmful stereotypes that quite literally spurred the rebirth of a hate group. By determining how we will judge past works of art, we will be able to better judge modern issues as they come up. Even in the realm of science, moral boundaries are becoming blurry.

1.) Gomery, Douglas, and Clara Pafort-Overduin. *Movie History: A Survey: Second Edition*. 1st ed.,

Routledge, 2011.

2.) Frick, Caroline. "Origins and Inventions of Cinema" *Canvas*, https://clio.la.utexas.edu/module/3523#!/activity_toc

3.) Frick, Caroline. "The Movies Become Big Business" *Canvas*, https://clio.la.utexas.edu/module/3524#!/activity_toc

4.) Frick, Caroline. "The Birth of Hollywood" *Canvas*, https://clio.la.utexas.edu/module/3525#!/activity_toc

5.) Frick, Caroline. "Silent German Cinema" *Canvas*, https://clio.la.utexas.edu/module/3526#!/activity_toc

6.) Frick, Caroline. "Race and Racist Films: Griffith, Micheaux, and more" *Canvas*, https://clio.la.utexas.edu/module/35237#!/activity_toc