Daniel Greenway (1705106)
Film & TV (Rob Jones)
Independent Inquiry (ADAD6001)
Word Count - 6,018 words

MY JOURNEY INTO FILM POETRY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT…… 3

INTRODUCTION……4

CHAPTER 1 - FILM POETRY……..5

WHAT IS FILM POETRY?……..5

THE KEY INFLUENCERS OF FILM POETRY……6

GERMAINE DULAC…..……..6

MAN RAY……7

HANS RICHTER……8

WHY MAKE FILM POETRY?……..9

CHAPTER 2 - SEMIOTICS OF IMPRONTA……11

ORIGINS OF IMPRONTA……11

SYMBOLISM IN VISUAL POETRY……12

POETIC VISUALS IN IMPRONTA……13

CHAPTER 3 - FUTURE WORK……..16

WAR & ART……16

THE DWINDLING FEW……17

THE POPPY……..18

IN CONCLUSION……20

BIBLIOGRAPHY……22

ABSTRACT

Modern, beginner film makers are often looking for the perfect medium for delivering a specific topic and efficiently reaching an audience. Since the 1920s, Avant-garde style cinema has urged the use of alternative film making focused on nonlinear narrative and more on film poetry. By evaluating the work of many practitioners of film as well as personal work, the structural usage of film poetry can be examined. Building on the style of the avant-garde movement in modern cinema urges the question of whether film poetry is an effective form of communicating critical topics in an elusive yet meaning full way. Dissecting what has made film poetry effective in the past draws a conclusion that for students wanting to make a film with an in depth meaning, on a low-budget, film poetry proves capable.



(The Color of Pomegranates, 1969)

For thousands of years, poetry has existed as a way for humans to express their emotions and feelings as an art form in a constructed way. Embracing literature and spoken word through an artistic manner has shaped the way that people have viewed critical topics and historical events. Poetry has the ability to open our minds to images, tone, provoking thoughts and feelings that may not be easily grasped through regular narrative. For man, poetry has been a vehicle of the mind, giving us the ability to fully engage with the world through attentiveness and imagination. Interpretation of poetry gives power to the reader and takes us away from a normal linear thought process. To combine the visual art that film offers to the fruitful impacts of poetry is to give light to the unseen. The Epic of Gilgamesh, a poem that was written in Mesopotamia over four thousand years ago, is considered one of the first surviving examples of literature. The term “Epic Poetry’ derives from the Greek term “epos”, meaning “story, word, poem.” Since Epic poetry was a form of literature that could be more easily shared with others, it played a large role in maintaining the history of a culture. In ancient times, illiteracy was common and often, epic poetry was a gateway to storytelling. Poems, and especially epic poems are more than a story and “…their ability to remain accessible, relevant and remembered over time owes a significant debt to their roots in an oral tradition and to their cyclical pattern of events.” (Foley, 2019). It can be argued that poetry has existed since the beginning of human verbal communication, being that it is a way for humans to express themselves. Film, on the other hand, has only been around for a very short period of time and, as an art form, is an infant compared to poetry. Mixing the two art

forms is very much still a new medium for filmmakers to use. The hybrid relationship between visuals and poetry encompasses a lyrical side of experimental film practices. The power of cinepoetry remains in the ability to captivate spoken words and visuals and intertwine the two, allowing a parallel dynamic with room for interpretation. In depth thought on the topic at hand is pushed by letting the viewer make interpretations about the purpose and meaning behind the film. By examining the background of film poetry, film makers, and personal usage within past work and future work, an emphasis on the significance of using poetry within film can be made.

CHAPTER 1 - FILM POETRY

WHAT IS FILM POETRY?

"Film Poetry is the combining of poetry/words, displayed as text or spoken, with accompanying images and viewed on a screen. They can be created by the poet but they are usually a collaboration between poet and filmmaker." (English, 2013)
Experimental cinema re-evaluates traditional styles of narrative film making. The emergence of experimental cinema became relevant when avant-garde movements in the visual arts flourished in the early 1920s. Avant-garde is a term that means fore-guard in military connotations. Before and after the first world war, many aesthetic groups arose that sought to break the traditions of mainstream thought. The horrors and societal alterations that the war caused seemed to shift the way that many artists, especially film makers chose to create. This shift brought about a theoretical approach to cinema in which issues arise such as "realist versus naturalist films, spectator-screen relationship, editing styles, subjectivity, and psychoanalytical potential of a film auteur cinema and the semiotics of the film" (Film theory, 2014). By focusing on form and semi-abstract visuals, film makers have taken a radical approach in critiquing Hollywood conventions and dominant classic cinema. With the normalisation of linear narrative within the film world, the use of poetic communication within film and the outburst of film poetry by film makers such as Germaine Dulac, Man Ray and Hans Ritcher opened doors for many poets and filmmakers alike to continue the fluid relationship of film poetry.

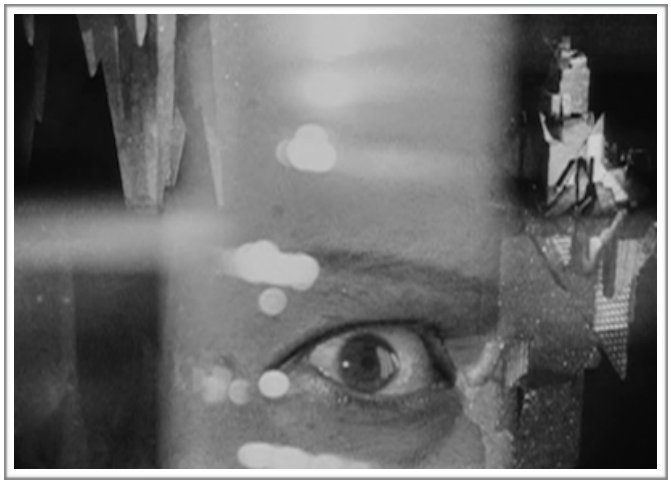
THE KEY INFLUENCERS OF FILM POETRY

GERMAINE DULAC -



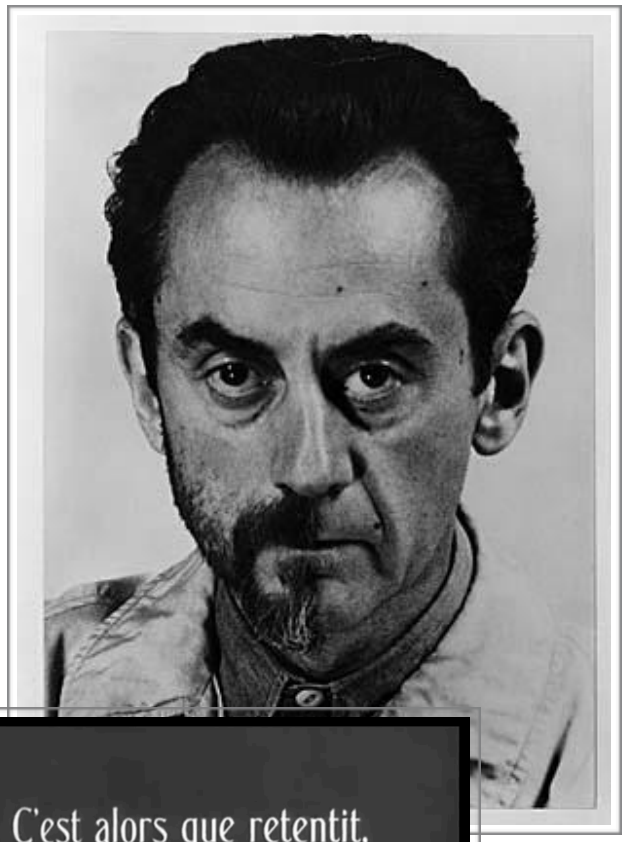
(Dulac, 2011)

In the early 1920s, Dulac, a filmmaker film theorist, journalist and critic, was part of the French Impressionist movement, a group of avant-garde filmmakers. “Poetry for the impressionists is the action of ‘isolating’ and ‘stylising’ a detail. In poetry, detail is more or as important as a whole and the way a detail is presented (stylised) affects the content itself.” (Ieropoulos, 2018). Dulac emphasised the importance of the filmmaker as an individual artistic and creative force. Her experimental studies were closely intertwined with music and lyricism which can be seen in her fiction films. Dulac made films that espoused pure cinema, which refers to relying heavily on imagery for storytelling rather than narrative. Dulac’s use of the cinema as a lyrical art and social practice had a major influence on twentieth century film and her film “The Seashell and the Clergyman” is widely known as the first surrealist film. “Dulac’s hands-on influence reached deep into both national and international film culture: she contributed significant pieces on moving image theory, including the early article "Mise-en-scène," and "La Musique du Silence;”” (Cinema.ucla.edu, 2018) Her outside the box approach to film making allowed film poetry as a genre to be born.

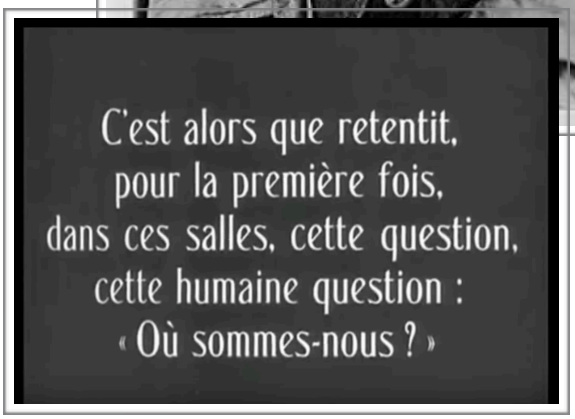


(Dulac, 1928)

MAN RAY -



(Ray, n.d.)



Ray, M. (1929). Les Mystères du Château de Dé. [image].

Man Ray was the first filmmaker to talk about film poetry and coined the name “cinepoem”. Ray used motivations from the surrealist movement led by Andre Breton, and emphasised the fusion of art and life and of dream and wakeful consciousness. The oppressive status of society at the time led to many surrealistic artists and especially film makers to delve into the imaginations and desires of man. He directed Film Poems such as Emak Bakia (1926), which mimicked devices that were seen in surrealistic paintings such as distortions and mirrored imagery with dream like visual motifs, and Etoille de Mar (1928), a mix of poetry and dreamlike visuals which marked the invention of the cine-poem. Although there is a separation and often a disregard of narrative within cine-poems, Ray experimented with using poetry as narrative in Etoille de Mar, written by the poet Robert Desnos. Man Ray has had a huge influence on film poetry in the birth of the sub-genre. In his film, Les Mystères du Château de Dé (1929), he uses intertitles using the work of Mallarmé, a poet, in between the shots in his film. “Film poems are a series of fragments, a cinepoem with a certain optical sequence make up a whole that still remains a fragment” (Man Ray, 1927). Ray’s films resisted conventional narrative tendencies, logic and dramatic arc. His mission was to make a film that is viewed without apparent logic and that would disregard narrative. Many of his films combined his mastery of photography and his background in surrealism to create an artistic experience.



(Ray, 1926)

HANS RICHTER -



(Richter, 1928)

“Whereas the commercial film has to be laid out ironclad from the beginning to the end, has to follow the script to the point, but the film poem follows a different process. There is a general direction, there is an aim, a meaning, a mood in the process of production. But all that grows is not foreseen. It is a result of the creative process itself. It is not so much planning as it is feeling along the path which the theme takes. In other words, the material you accumulate during the shooting is more or less raw material: though it has been planned to contribute to a specific scene or aim, it might, in the end assume a different meaning altogether.” - (Leropoulos, 2018) Hans Ritcher played a pivotal role in the development of the avant-garde film. Cinematic avant-garde was originated in Germany although it’s centre was Paris. He focused heavily on politically charged figurative art early in his career and switched gears to abstract expression. With little experience in film initially, Ritcher faced many failed attempts of adapting his scrolls to strips of film. He later went on to focus on the emphasis of movement and the shifting elements of form within cinematic viewing experiences. Following suit with many avant-garde filmmakers of his time, Ritcher went against the norm of narrative and delved into expression. Passionately committed to ensuring the independent productions of poetic films, Ritcher founded Germany’s first avant-garde film forum which helped finance the creation of its first avant-garde film theatre. Political tension throughout Europe lead Ritcher to be responsive to the climate around him. In a manifesto he wrote that independent film makers should “deal with the social, political, and human ideas of their time.” (Richter, A History of the Avant-Garde”, p. 18.) Politically driven film poetry became to be a common form of expression due to the changing climate of relations throughout Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. Using poetry in film to emphasise rising issues is a way of reaching out to society and expressing emotion and

thought towards a critical topic. Ritcher used the combination of Dadaist poetry read on top of visuals in his film ‘Dadascope’. He explains that “When you use poems as a background instead of music, and you let your hand, or scissors in the case of editing, wander together with the poem, that could give you a new form of film.” (Richter, Hans) This new form of film gave the viewer an experience and countered the notion of merely understanding the film and instead feeling it for its deeper meaning. A film poem speaks directly to the audience yet leaves interpretation and intuition as a requirement for full comprehension. Symbolism and poetically visual experience gives the audience the ability to draw their own conclusions, a shift in film that remains critical today. The transition into an avant-garde style of expression within film poetry was an obvious reaction to the political and social status of Europe at the time and the want to articulate and provoke thought in a less narrative-manner, with more attention given to the personal expression of “independent” filmmakers.

WHY MAKE FILM POETRY?



(Thomas, 1944)

Not everyone thinks there is a reason to meld film and poetry including the famous Welsh poet Dylan Thomas who spoke at a symposium about film and poetry and said “I'm not at all sure that I want such a thing, myself, as a poetic film. I think films, fine as they are, if only they were better! And I'm not quite sure that I want a new kind of film at all; while I'm recharging an almost empty mind with an almost empty battery.” (Thomas, 1953) Now, while cinema has changed a lot since 1953, there is a clear attempt by Dylan Thomas to keep poems and films separate at the time and it sounds as though he wants poems to be kept for thought and film to be kept for entertainment. Dylan Thomas wasn’t alone in this line of thinking and Germaine Dulac and other impressionist filmmakers at the time also believed in the separation of art forms. “It

is important to understand that although the impressionists used the poetic analogy, they certainly did not believe in a literary inclusion of poetic text in the form of inter-titles, that they were generally against." (Ieropoulos, F. 2018). They believed that combining film with other art forms made film less original or 'pure'. The money side of film poetry also isn't as lucrative as the Hollywood route and there are less avenues to monetise the finished product as a feature length narrative film could. Film poetry will never have as big of a reach as a narrative piece could and people, generally, don't want to think too much about what they're watching if they are staring at a screen as a form of escapism. So, a thought-provoking film poem might not be at the top of that persons watch list.

Although there are reasons not to explore film poetry, it's a great creative route to take if a filmmaker wants to make a film about a specific topic whether that be about an emotion or a political message. Sometimes having to abide by a narrative structure in filmmaking can be obstructive and only make it more difficult for the filmmaker to express themselves. "A number of avant-garde film and video makers have created a synthesis of poetry and film that generates associations, connotations and metaphors neither verbal nor the visual text would produce on its own" (Wees, 1999). It's the melding of the two art forms that create something entirely different and the end product can be more powerful than if the two pieces of work were separated. A well written, thought-provoking poem can do very well on it's own and garner attention on social media but with visual people, like myself, a poem won't be as effective. Visualising the poem into film form and adding depth and symbolism to an already thoughtful poem can only add to the experience if it's realised well enough. It could also make sense financially to prove your skills as a director through film poetry if the film maker is working on a tight budget. Without the worry of continuity and other narrative structure, the filmmaker has freedom to express themselves in whichever they see fit. Usually the poem will dictate the overall tone of the film but using the strength of making a film poem by combining the strong words with equally strong visuals can lead to a powerful film. Film poetry is a financially attainable avenue for beginning filmmakers. The ability to create versatile, creative films on a low budget allows for the opportunity to produce a film on your own terms. Using poetry to visualise a thought or concept in film proves to be allusive and thought provoking especially with a topic that you are passionate about. My own experience with producing a film has helped me better understand the benefits of film poetry.

CHAPTER 2 - THE SEMIOTICS OF IMPRONTA

IMPRONTA'S ORIGIN



(La Guarimba International Film Festival, 2019)

In the summer of 2019, the international film festival "La Guarimba" kicked off its seventh edition in Amantea, Italy. I was given the opportunity of attending the two-week-long festival as well as helping to produce ten different films. With the goal of bringing the cinema back to the people and the people back to the cinema, "La Guarimba" was a socio-cultural project and an amazing opportunity for filmmakers from all over the world to come together and share their skills and visions. While there, I knew I wanted to take advantage of not only the talent around me, but the beautiful location. I went into the experience without the expectation that I had to make my own film, but I had an idea, visually, for a film about plastic pollution (a topic I'm very passionate about). Wanting to visualise my thoughts on the topic, I tried thinking about characters, locations and a plot to a story, but it didn't feel right; nothing was clicking. I could have asked a few actors from the festival to be involved and develop a script to express this idea in a narrative way but going for such a relevant and meaningful topic would require communicating in a different way. With any literature, there is a depth to spoken words; poems offer an alternative way of expressing thought. Looking for a poem online leads to complications with copyright and I didn't have the time to worry about that and I think there is an obvious want/need for authenticity when it comes to expressing thought, even when you are limited on time. I contacted my girlfriend who lives in New York about writing a poem for me and I knew that she is talented with words after reading some of her previous poems and felt confident about her

ability to come up with something I could use. She delivered with the poem “Impronta” and I had it translated by a native Italian speaker from English to Italian. With being limited on time, I was originally going to just film plastic on the beach and drone shots of beach/ ocean with the poem being spoken in the background. I didn't think that just a voiceover would be visually or mentally stimulating enough, so when I had time off of working on other people's films, I sat down and worked out exactly what I wanted the film to express. The idea of the apple being the leading symbolism in the film carried the rest of it. There was a task of blending the power that the meaning of the poem held in a visually grasping aspect. Although I was aware that the film could be viewed at the festival at the end of the two weeks by the participants and an audience, I had the deeper desire to make the film compatible to be shared by the masses while pulling pathos. My point was to ignite people’s awareness of the topic that is very much relevant to us all. The meaning of a poem is depicted by symbolism within the film. This is crucial in the development of the relationship between the poem and the visuals.

SYMBOLISM IN VISUAL POETRY

Being a very visual person, I believe that telling the story in thought-provoking images is essential to a good film. When making *Impronta*, it became very clear how important symbolism is; by adding subtle symbolic imagery, it gives the audience the ability to ask questions and try to figure the message out for themselves. The main symbol I added was the use of an apple in the film and throughout history and literature, the apple has had high polysemy, including it being the well-known forbidden fruit of biblical literature, representing love, knowledge, wisdom, joy, etc. Regardless of its previous symbolism, it is up to the audience to figure out what it is representing in my film. But without it, it is doubtful that the film would be as well received as it has been. The words are powerful and deep, the imagery is clean and dream-like, but take the apple away and the film loses a huge part of its charm and meaning. That detail, that is never mentioned



in the poem at all, can change the whole meaning of the film, making this a huge realisation for me as a filmmaker and a lesson I will take forward into my future films. The lesson isn't that an apple can make or break a film; but that meaning, and symbolism, can bring a depth to your films that otherwise, may have been lacking. Film Poetry is such a great medium for expressing those emotions and topics that can't be explored in normal narrative structure. It can be extremely powerful and make the viewer think about the message you're trying to explore. Just as poetry is an alternative, way to exploring literature and depicting meaning, fFilm Poetry is a way to challenge the audience to interpret meaning using the cinematic imagery and details provided. If I told the audience exactly what I was trying to say, then the meaning would be lost; the audience wouldn't have to take the time to figure it out for themselves what the film means. Symbolism in film is about drawing those connections yet leaving them for the viewers to make. At Eternity's Gate directed by Julian Schnabel is a film about Vincent Van Gogh's later years in life.


(At Eternity's Gate, 2018)

When discussing Shakespeare, he explains that "Some of the lines aren't very clear but I like that… because I like mystery and Shakespeare is more mysterious than any other writer." (Julian Schnabel's film At Eternity's Gate, 2019). That line emphasises that audiences enjoy working things out for themselves. If you tell them everything then there is nothing to figure out for themselves which is not rewarding as a viewer. You need to give as little information as possible but still enough to allow them to come to their own conclusion.

POETIC IMAGERY IN IMPRONTA

These two images taken from *Impronta* book-end the film and symbolise the impact human life is having on our planet. My hope was for the images to portray the over-consumption in modern society that has taken a massive toll on our planet. The first and last shots of a film are





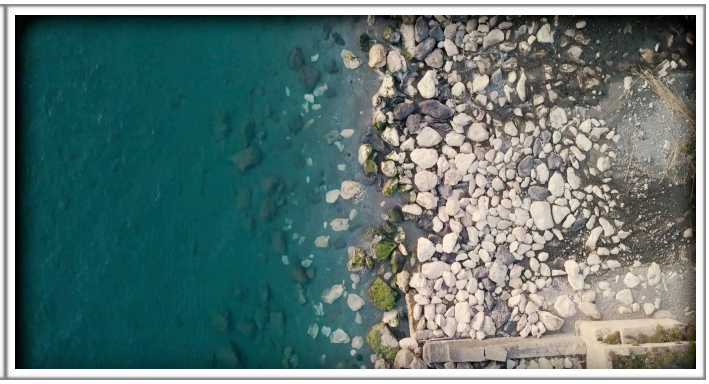
hugely important to any film; they show where the film has started and where the film has gone. “The first and last frames of a film can be incredibly impactful. No matter how the first and final frames are used, they're almost always incredibly meaningful and somehow representational of the story being told and its themes.” Hardy, R. (2015). The First and Final Frames of Famous Films Can Teach Us a Lot about Good Filmmaking.





The main character in the film is a ‘god-like’ character that is talking to the audience. He breaks the fourth wall and addresses the audience directly when he says “How can we apologise?” To emphasise the line and to ask the question directly to the audience. I told the actor to perform as though the apple is his co-star and that the apple is another character in the film. The apple itself is ‘the forbidden fruit’ in religious scripture and I wanted that to be in the back of people’s mind as he’s taking bites of the apple representing how much we keep taking as a species without giving back to nature.





The drone shots were added for several reasons. The artistic reason was to show the beauty in nature and what we are ruining through over-consumption and thoughtless waste. The 50/50 split between ocean and land was to show that land mammals aren’t the only living creatures on this Earth so why do we pollute that area of our planet with little to no thought? The non-artistic reason was to add production quality and some variation in shot type.

Lastly, we have the character leaving the frame. This comes after the line “How to walk while leaving nothing behind.” This refers to teaching the next generation how to live without leaving an imprint (*Impronta* means mark or stamp in Italian). The character leaves the frame and he literally leaves nothing behind. This isn’t very deep but I thought it was important to have on-screen.



Impronta was an overall successful experience for me being that it was my first film but I want to move on and keep learning as a filmmaker and applying what I learned during the filmmaking process to my upcoming work will enhance it greatly. Taking the research and knowledge passed down by the important and influential film makers of the past and melding my own experiences of making a film poem on *Impronta* has helped me understand Film Poetry as a sub-genre much more intimately. Learning that Film Poetry is an adequate way to express yourself moving forward is a powerful lesson in filmmaking; that there isn’t only one right way to make a film. If there is a topic you would like to convey your opinion on, there are several ways to express that opinion that doesn’t require a narrative film structure and a massive budget. Using a topic I was passionate about also had a huge impact on the films overall quality as I knew exactly what point I was trying to make with it and going forward into my future work, I want take the same passion forward and make another film poem I’m satisfied with.

CHAPTER 3 - FUTURE WORK

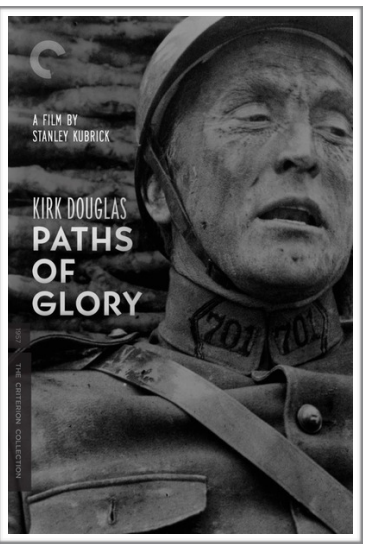
WAR & ART

"War is the most destructive activity known to humanity. Its purpose is to use violence to compel opponents to submit and surrender. In order to understand it, artists have, throughout history, blended colors, textures and patterns to depict wartime ideologies, practices, values and symbols. Their work investigates not only artistic responses to war, but the meaning of violence itself." (Bourke, 2018) Finding the art in human activity has been practiced for thousands of years and finding beauty in those activities doesn't end at human violence. Looking at our species worst aspects and finding beauty somewhere in the acts of violence is an inherently difficult task. Some artists used their skills as gifted painters, writers, or poets as a way to cope while their countries were at war. "Artists searched for an appropriate language to express the chaos and carnage that resulted from modern industrial warfare, reevaluating subject matter, techniques, materials, and styles, as well as their positions and responsibilities as cultural producers" (Farrell, 2017). Centuries ago, paintings portrayed the victors in the war as heroic and as if the soldiers deaths were for a great cause but in more recent history, war is painted in bleak images without trying to sugarcoat the horrific experience that is war. "Visual art has a longstanding relationship with war and continues to play a fundamental role in both condemning and promoting conflict. Wars have provoked numerous and diverse representations from which have arisen competing notions of the 'truth'; these conflicting ideas of truth have often bled into the political sphere, impacting on how conflicts are remembered." (Hutchison and Robertson, 2015)

War and cinema have been closely linked ever since the inception of the artistic medium. "They Were Expendable" (1945) directed by John Ford and Robert Montgomery is a film set after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. It explores the pointless sacrifice that's taken during war and the notion that men are just pawns in war to their world leaders. "Paths of Glory" (1957)



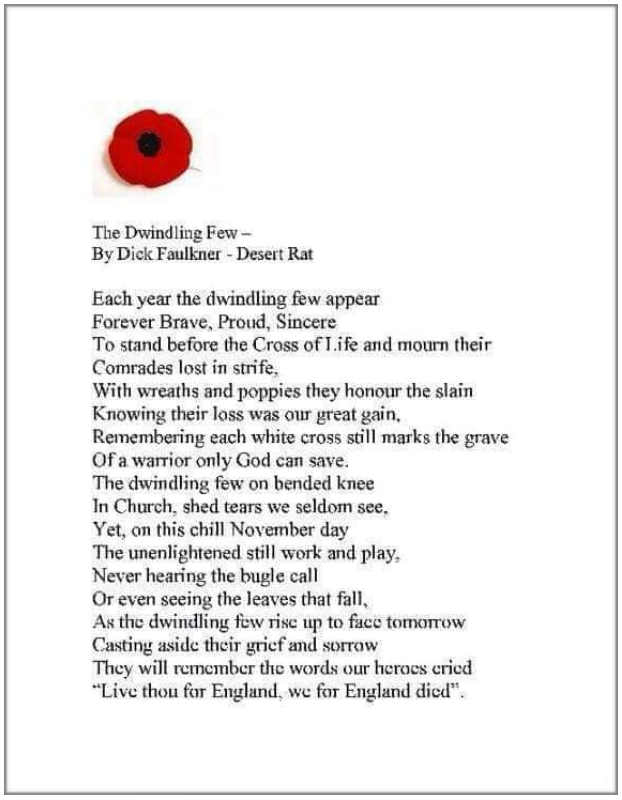
(They Were Expendable, 1945)



(Paths of Glory, 1957)

directed by Stanley Kubrick takes an anti-war approach and has been called a transcendentally humane war movie. There are many different ways to approach films based on war and that usually depends on the directors viewpoint on war. There aren't too many examples of filmmakers making light of war, especially the more recent wars such as World War I and II as they would most likely be lambasted by viewers and critics alike. Taking the topic of war seriously and being respectful to those that we have lost in quite recent history is imperative to most filmmakers. The soldiers during WW2 specifically were drafted into the war at 18 years of age and many died during battle instead of getting to live out their lives and pursue their passions like someone could in todays world. My next project will be taking my Grandfather's poem he wrote after WW2, 'The Dwindling Few' and turning it into a film poem. As a filmmaker, I have the opportunity to represent his legacy in an artistic and creative way.

THE DWINDLING FEW



The Dwindling Few –
By Dick Faulkner - Desert Rat

Each year the dwindling few appear
Forever Brave, Proud, Sincere
To stand before the Cross of Life and mourn their
Comrades lost in strife,
With wreaths and poppies they honour the slain
Knowing their loss was our great gain,
Remembering each white cross still marks the grave
Of a warrior only God can save.
The dwindling few on bended knee
In Church, shed tears we seldom see,
Yet, on this chill November day
The unenlightened still work and play,
Never hearing the bugle call
Or even seeing the leaves that fall,
As the dwindling few rise up to face tomorrow
Casting aside their grief and sorrow
They will remember the words our heroes cried
"Live thou for England, we for England died".

My Grandfather, Dick Faulkner, was a Desert Rat during WW2. The Desert Rats were a group of soldiers who helped defeat the Germans in North Africa. After returning home, he decided to write about his time in the war in the form of a poem. The poem he wrote he named 'The Dwindling Few'. I have read it every year since I can remember on Remembrance Day. I, unfortunately, never got to meet my Grandfather as he passed away before I was born, but I have always felt a connection with him by the way my Mother and Grandmother talk about him and compare him to myself. My Grandmother described the experience of the poem being written to me and said that, as they came home from church one day, he asked for a piece of paper and then wrote the whole poem in one draft. My Grandmother said that "he must have had the whole thing written down in his head." She has expressed to me on several occasions about my Grandfather's suffering which hadn't been diagnosed at

the time but many years later realised he was suffering from PTSD, which is an illness that wasn't recognised until quite recently. The war had a huge affect on my Grandfather, understandably, and the time period after the war did not provide veterans with the proper validation for the trauma that was inflicted on them. "Clinicians have increasingly recognised post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among Vietnam veterans, but the disorder may be easily overlooked among World War II combat veterans. Patients avoided reminders of war, showed an exaggerated startle response, and experienced restless sleep and chronic anxiety" (Hierholzer R, e. 1992). War doesn't just wound the body but also can have long-term effects on the mind. As the years go on and a new generation is being raised, the war and what the soldiers went through is being forgotten. The Dwindling Few refers to those few soldiers that are left to share those awful experiences of the war but also refers to those few that are still alive that lived during the war to pass down their memories. In order to turn my Grandfather's poem into a film, research is vitally important in order to be respectful not only to my Grandfather but to all veterans of war. When looking back at wars, it's sometimes hard to imagine what the soldiers were going through and thinking at the time but poems written by veterans give a perspective into how they were feeling and what they were thinking during those unimaginably dark times. Just because they were born in a time where their countries were at war with another meant they had to sacrifice their dreams and for some, their lives. In preparation for filming 'The Dwindling Few', I have interviewed my Grandmother on the events that took place before and after the poem, about his life, and his general experience and opinion on the war to give myself better context about the man behind the poem.

THE POPPY

Warfare and poppies have become synonymous with each other, because of this, the poppy itself has become a political and ideological symbol. In the United Kingdom, it would be almost impossible to go the whole of the 11th of November without seeing a single poppy clipped to someones shirt. The poppy is widely



(The Poppy Controversy: A Sign of Respect Or An Endorsement Of War?, 2018)

used on Remembrance Day after a soldier named John McCrae penned the poem *'In Flanders Fields'* after the Second Battle of Ypres on 2 May, 1915. "The Great War, as it was then known, also ravaged the landscape of Western Europe, where most of the fiercest fighting took place. From the devastated landscape of the battlefields, the red poppy would grow and, thanks to a famous poem, become a powerful symbol of remembrance." (Pruitt, 2019) Poppies signify the everlasting memories of the soldiers that died during the war; the poppy is a symbol of the memories of the soldiers that gave their lives for us to live ours with the freedoms that they thought we would have lost if were to lose to war. Keeping that memory alive with a flower bursting with life and colour is a beautiful way to remember and pay respect to our fallen veterans.

Using the poppy as a symbol in my upcoming film poem '*The Dwindling Few*' as I did in my previous film, '*Impronta',* with the apple will add depth to the film and be recognisable with the audience instantly. They have grown up with seeing the symbolic poppy every year but very few really understand it's true meaning or importance; the dwindling few that remember and appreciate the great sacrifice and heartbreaking casualties of generations past. I want to highlight the significance of the poppy in my film in a poetic and visual pleasing way that also pays tribute to our veterans. "Movies themselves are metaphors for how humans experience life on a deeper level. Creating a unique language of metaphors and symbols for your film is a big part of being a visual storyteller. Symbolic images help us to understand abstract concepts that cannot always be translated into words." (Sheridan, 2004) I want to create an emotional piece that will help to be a reminder to my generation and especially younger generations that have never had to fight tyranny in order for us to grow up in a world they believe in. By using the powerful words of my Grandfathers poem and combining the visual metaphors and symbols I can create in a film, I'm hoping for a great outcome for my upcoming Film Poem '*The Dwindling Few'.*

IN CONCLUSION

Learning from the trailblazers of film poetry has been essential to my own craft in a sub-genre that's completely new to me. Researching poetry as an art form entirely separate from film has brought a new found appreciation of an expression I once overlooked. Dissecting a poem to grasp an in depth meaning almost always leads to a mental visualisation of what the poet is trying to convey. Looking at poetry separately has meant that I can realise what visuals can pair well with certain lines in the poem and what kind of metaphors work well with the overall tone of the piece. Expressing myself through avant-garde style filmmaking allows me to express feelings on topics I want to cover in future films such as overpopulation, corruption, war, etc. This creative approach doesn't require literal coverage of the topic in a narrative format which would require a huge budget. The only money spent on my film, '*Impronta'* was the price of the apples I bought for less than £1, so being smart with your budget as a filmmaker is essential; especially as a student and an up-and-coming filmmaker. Proving you can produce a quality film with little or no money is a great skill to adopt and film poetry is such a useful sub-genre to explore for novice filmmakers. Film Poetry allows us to cover topics in poetic form that already would be poignant on their own but adding a visual touch turns them into something entirely different. '*Impronta'* has been well received in film festivals and I want to continue to make films that can be shared but also that will have a chance at winning film festivals to help my career as a filmmaker. In order to do this, it requires the topic of the film to reach the viewers of that generation on a deeper level that establishes a connection between the filmmaker and the audience. Limiting yourself to one character on screen and possibly a few locations and props puts yourself in a low-risk scenario with possibly high rewards depending on how solid foundations of the poem are and visuals of the film.

Looking forward to my future work, I would like to learn from '*Impronta'* and use the lessons from the experience. By applying the homogeneity of poetry and film into my future work, I hope to highlight how creative advancement in influential filmmaking can be achieved, even by beginner filmmakers. Film poetry is a unique form of expression and has stood the test of time since it flourished in the 1920s and modern day film makers have the leisure of platforms that make it easy to produce film poetry and spread

messages that they are trying to convey. Poetry has said to be a way of making the private world public, and film can bring to light the emotions that have been put into measure. The phantom script that poetry provides proves to engage the audience in a way that a linear narrative often fails to do. To be able to give sight to poetry in the form of film “lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar” (Shelley, 2002). I hope to use what I’ve learned through my research and develop my own style of film poetry while also taking inspiration from the established practitioners.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

At Eternity's Gate. (2018). [film] Directed by J. Schnabel. France: Curzon.

Bordwell, D., 1989. Historical poetics of cinema. The cinematic text: Methods and approaches, 3, pp.369-398

Bourke, J. (2018). A visual history of warfare. [online] CNN Style. [Accessed 5 Dec. 2019].

Blogs.iac.gatech.edu. (2019). [online] Available at: http://blogs.iac.gatech.edu/exfm2014/files/2014/08/Dulac_reading.pd [Accessed 9 Dec. 2019].

Cinema.ucla.edu. (2019). The Cinematic Impressions of Germaine Dulac | UCLA Film Television Archive. [online] Available at: https://www.cinema.ucla.edu/events/2018/cinematic-impressions-germaine-dulac [Accessed 7 Dec. 2019].

Dulac, G. (2011). [image] Available at: http://sensesofcinema.com/2011/feature-articles/cinema-and-abstraction-from-bruno-corra-to-hugo-verlinde/attachment/4-germaine-dulac/ [Accessed 9 Dec. 2019].

Dulac, G. (1928). *The Seashell and the Clergyman*. [image] Available at: http://sensesofcinema.com/2013/feature-articles/another-look-at-germaine-dulacs-the-seashell-and-the-clergyman/ [Accessed 9 Dec. 2019].

English, L. (2013). A Brief Introduction to Film Poetry - The Writing Platform. [online] The Writing Platform. [Accessed 2 Dec. 2019].

Farrell, J. (2019). [online] Metmuseum.org. Available at: https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/now-at-the-met/2017/world-war-i-and-the-visual-arts-introduction [Accessed 7 Dec. 2019].

(2019). A Story of Epic Proportions: What makes a Poem an Epic?. [online] [Accessed 7 Dec. 2019].

Hardy, R. (2015). The First and Final Frames of Famous Films Can Teach Us a Lot about Good Filmmaking. [online] [Accessed 27 Nov. 2019].

Hierholzer R, e. (1992). Clinical presentation of PTSD in World War II combat veterans. - PubMed - NCBI. [online] [Accessed 28 Nov. 2019].

Husseini, H. (2015). 20 Great Poetic Films That Are Worth Your Time. [online] Taste of Cinema - Movie Reviews and Classic Movie Lists. [Accessed 30 Nov. 2019].

Hutchison, M. and Robertson, E. (2015). Introduction: Art, War, and Truth – Images of Conflict. [online] Taylor & Francis. [Accessed 6 Dec. 2019].

Huth, G. (2008). Visual Poetry Today. [online] Poetry Foundation. [Accessed 30 Nov. 2019].

Mass, W. (2019). U B U W E B :: Poetry and the Film: A Symposium. [online] Available at: http://www.ubu.com/papers/poetry_film_symposium.html [Accessed 9 Dec. 2019].

Ieropoulos, F. (2018). Film Poetry: A Historical Analysis by Fil Ieropoulos. [online] Poetry Film Live. [Accessed 2 Dec. 2019].

La Guarimba International Film Festival. (2019). [image] Available at: https://www.laguarimba.com/schedule/ [Accessed 9 Dec. 2019].

They Were Expendable. (1945). [film] Directed by J. Ford.

The Color of Pomegranates. (1969). [film] Directed by S. Parajanov.

The Poppy Controversy: A Sign of Respect Or An Endorsement Of War?. (2018). [image] Available at: https://www.thegryphon.co.uk/2018/11/13/the-poppy-controversy-a-sign-of-respect-or-an-endorsement-of-war/ [Accessed 9 Dec. 2019].

Pruitt, S. (2019). The WWI Origins of the Poppy as a Remembrance Symbol. [online] HISTORY. [Accessed 6 Dec. 2019].

Ray, M. (n.d.). [image] Available at: https://americanart.si.edu/artist/man-ray-3094 [Accessed 9 Dec. 2019].

Ray, M. (1929). Les Mystères du Château de Dé. [image].

Richter, H. (1928). [image] Available at: https://www.wikiart.org/en/hans-richter [Accessed 9 Dec. 2019].

Shelley, P. and Beach, J. (2012). A defense of poetry, and other essays. Austin, TX: West by Southwest Press.

They Were Expendable. (1945). [film] Directed by J. Ford.

Thomas, D. (1944). [image] Available at: https://www.wesa.fm/post/book-news-happy-100th-birthday-dylan-thomas#stream/0 [Accessed 9 Dec. 2019].

Ray, M. (1926). *Emak Bakia*. [image].

Sheridan, S. (2004). Using Metaphors and Symbols to Tell Stories | Creating Original. Characters, Themes, and Visual Metaphors for Your Digital Short Film | Peachpit. [online] Peachpit.com. [Accessed 6 Dec. 2019].

“The Essence of the Cinema: The Visual Idea” in Sitney, Adams, P. (ed), The Avant-Garde Film, New York: Anthology Film Archives, 1987, pg. 38.

William C., “Poetry-Films and Film Poems” in The Lux website, retrieved in 5th March 2005 also originally published in ‘Film Poems’ programme notes, April 1999

(2019). Avant-Garde - Film Theory. [online] Available at: https://www.filmtheory.org/avant-garde/ [Accessed 7 Dec. 2019]