1.0 ABSTRACT

Since its invention a century ago, the motion picture has established itself as one of the most powerful and influential artistic mediums ever conceived. Film has the ability to reflect as well as shape society, and has been referred to by many scholars as modern mythology. Over a three decade career has marked with controversy and critical acclaim, Oliver Stone has emerged as one of film's most successful myth makers. The D.W. Griffith of his time, Stone's films reflect (and reflect upon) an entire generation of Americans. As a creator of “countermyth,” it follows that Stone includes various historical and mythological constructs in his films. This thesis attempts address one such construct by answering the question: is there a consistently identifiable motif of “lost innocence” present in Oliver Stone's filmography, and what is its significance in the context of cinema and contemporary American history? A thorough literature review will be conducted to show the origins of the lost innocence motif and critical assessments of Stone's filmography. The question will be answered by considering Oliver Stone's filmography via a theoretical framework based on formalistic analysis, auteur theory, and sociohistorical analysis. The framework is built on the assumption of tabula rasa which avoids any preconceptions about the filmmaker's intent and allows historical implications to be linked to stylistic elements without prejudice. The thesis will be completed by the submittal deadline for the University of Houston - Clear Lake Spring 2005 semester.

2.0 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

2.1 Introduction

Oliver Stone is one of the most admired and hated filmmakers in the history of American cinema. His competence as a filmmaker is acknowledged even by those highly critical of the polemic structure imbued in his films. Throughout his prolific career, Stone has challenged audiences and critics with chaotic imagery and narrative “countermyth.” Platoon premiered in 1986 to raving critical reviews and ushered in a new era of social consciousness acknowledging the gash in America's psyche left by Vietnam. JFK took on one of the greatest tragedies in modern history, and through Stone's eyes became what one historian called "the most controversial American film of the twentieth century." It is in this way that the power of Stone's films transcends cinema and enters the realm of popular culture. Historians such as Martin Medhurst have called Stone a modern-day D.W. Griffith, identifying him as the “principal chronicler of the spiritual angst of a people.” Therefore, a survey of Oliver Stone's filmography is clearly crucial to any comprehensive understanding of
A motif of lost innocence is present across Stone's entire filmography, but it is often overlooked in lieu of more obvious discussions of violence or artistic license. While many critics have identified the concept of “lost innocence” as exhibited in films like *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July*, it is often underemphasized in those discussions and completely ignored in others. However, this motif is perhaps the most important aspect of Stone's films. The concept of lost innocence is an important historical idea for Stone, and it has roots in his own personal life. The tumultuous era of Stone's generation began with the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy on November 22, 1963, and films such as *JFK* and *Nixon* are imbued with the sense that the assassination symbolized a fundamental change in American society.

This idea of lost innocence - for a person, or an entire generation - is certainly not a new one. It is evidenced in some of the earliest written literature from Ancient Mesopotamia, and can be seen in various forms through human history. In Joseph Campbell's famous work *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, the idea of lost innocence is identified as being part of the hero's journey found in many mythologies. Similarly, in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Carl Jung introduces the idea of “dreaming the myth outward,” where transcendence is achieved when the individual is willing to give up ego identity. This can begin through the acceptance of the loss of innocence that accompanies a rejection of normative ideals. It is therefore obvious that the motif of lost innocence has an importance in the narrative traditions of many cultures.

Clearly, then, any full understanding of American society of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s must include a detailed analysis of the lost innocence motif as exhibited in Oliver Stone's filmography. It is the goal of this thesis to perform such an analysis.

### 2.2 The Research Question

Is there a consistently identifiable motif of “lost innocence” present in Oliver Stone's filmography, and what is its significance in the context of cinema and contemporary American history?

### 2.3 Subsidiary Questions

1. What is the history of the archetypal concept of lost innocence?
2. What is the historical and psychosocial significance of the motif?
3. What is Oliver Stone's impact as a filmmaker on American culture?
4. How is the lost innocence motif manifested in Oliver Stone's films?
5. Can the motif itself be identified through formalistic analysis?
6. How do Oliver Stone's biographical experiences bear on the appearance of this motif in his films?
7. How does the idea of the lost innocence motif bear on Oliver Stone's identification as a creator of “countermythology”?
8. Is the method of presenting the motif a signpost that points to a more significant picture?
9. Is it possible to subdivide the appearance of the motif into specific areas delineated by its intent, narrative purpose, or some other means?
10. How do we interpret Stone's films where the motif is not present?
11. What connections can be made between the appearance of the lost innocence motif in Stone's films and 1960s counterculture?
12. What other connections can be made between the appearance of the lost innocence motif in Stone's films and other literary, mythological, and historical sources?

### 2.4 Definition of Terms

**lost innocence** - The nuances embodied in the concept are too detailed to be defined here. The concept of lost innocence is an important one and will be operationally defined within the thesis itself.

**contemporary American history** - American history from 1960-present.

**Oliver Stone's filmography** - Those films written and directed by Stone, released from 1986 to the present.

Table 2-1 identifies the films from Oliver Stone's body of work that will be addressed in this thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2-1: Oliver Stone's Writer-Director Filmography</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Film</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comandante</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any Given Sunday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nixon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Born Killers</td>
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</table>
2.5 Review of Relevant Research

The research portion of the project can be divided into two distinct areas: the concept of lost innocence and the existing critical analyses of Oliver Stone's films. Major themes from both areas will be interwoven to create a picture of the literature regarding the thesis topic as it exists today. A working bibliography for the thesis is presented in Section 5.0.

2.5.1 The Lost Innocence Motif

The idea of lost innocence can be analyzed vis-à-vis the innocent child, the effects of war, the gaining of knowledge, entry into the "real world," and cultural loss of innocence, among others. A survey of the motif will be presented as it appears in mythology, literature, history, cinema, and contemporary history and counterculture.

Although there is a paucity of works dedicated solely to the exploration of the “lost innocence” motif in mythology, the concept itself is present in many cultures. One only has to read a handful of works on mythology to see that the concept of lost innocence transcends traditional social and cultural barriers. This work will provide a brief overview of some prominent world mythologies that convey the "loss of innocence" motif in some form. Contemporary works like Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* and Carl Jung's *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* will be used to illustrate the archetypal nature of this motif.

The loss of innocence motif also appears in various literary traditions. Otten's *After Innocence: Visions of the Fall in Modern Literature* raises some important ideas regarding the lost innocence motif as it appears in contemporary literature. Richard Lewis' *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* explores how writers such as Melville, Hawthorne, and Whitman were affected by the Transcendentalist movement and incorporated ideas including the lost innocence motif into their works. This idea appears again in Don Whaley's "Oliver Stone's Journey to Myth-Country: Platoon and the Cultural History of Adventure." In it, Whaley places Platoon in the larger pantheon of the mythological adventure. *Platoon*, Whaley argues, represents a natural extension of the "new adventure myth" embodied in the works of Melville and Conrad. Similar connections will be noted in the thesis where applicable.

The historical implications of the lost innocence motif will also be analyzed. The idea of a society longing for the past or maintaining a perception that its innocence is lost is merely an extension of the same mythological concept vis-à-vis the child or hero. Eliot Asinof's *1919: America's Loss of Innocence* claims that the seminal events of 1919 (the Red Scare, Prohibition, and even the Black Sox scandal) represented a fundamental shift in American society. 1919, Asinof argues, was the year the country lost its innocence. Other authors claim that the American ideal was shattered by a singular event. In *Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime that Changed America*, Emmit Till's mother Mamie Till Mobley states that her son's 1955 murder by a group of whites represented an awakening in America to the burgeoning civil rights movement. There are many other works that address the loss of innocence as an historical concept. This idea will be developed in greater detail in the analysis of Stone's historical films: *JFK* and *Nixon* show the assassination of John Kennedy as the event that emblemized the loss of innocence for his generation.

2.5.2 Critical Analysis of Oliver Stone's Filmography

The importance of the motif, the motion picture, and Oliver Stone as a contemporary mythologizer make the appearance of the "lost innocence" motif in his films an important element. It is the goal of this thesis to use the research and theory mentioned above as a basis for telling this overall story.

That film is the modern equivalent of mythology has been theorized, such as in William K. Ferrell's *Literature and Film as Modern Mythology*. The importance of film, and its intrinsic value as a social barometer will be illustrated by citing such works as *Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals* by John Lyden. The role of film in the counterculture of the 1960s so often portrayed by Oliver Stone will be addressed. J. Hoberman's *The Dream Life: Movies, Media, and the Mythology of the Sixties* explores the idea of 1960s movies transcending the world of entertainment into a larger realm of political power. It is therefore important that the ages-old motif of
3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 Theoretical or Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework used in this thesis has been created to allow the most thorough and complete answer to the research question while avoiding the duplication of work of other authors like Susan Mackey-Kallis who have identified the motif in a particular Oliver Stone film. It is essentially an amalgam of several theories traditionally used in film analysis, but built on the foundation of tabula rasa. In this manner, the thesis will strive to avoid making the types of implicit assumptions that are inherent in most critical theories. The elements of the framework to be employed in the critical analysis for this thesis are

- tabula rasa, intended to eliminate any assumptions about the film based on the viewer's knowledge of its broader context or Oliver Stone's body of work. The film is to be analyzed based on the
- formalist approach, which considers the narrative elements, mise-en-scène, and filmmaking technique within the context of the film itself to yield information about symbols and thematic elements found in the work. This analysis will be rolled up into additional analysis relying on the
- auteur approach, which will be used to show the motif of lost innocence seen when the formalist approach is applied to a particular film is part of a pattern that exists in Stone's filmography. This approach will contextualize the motif as present in a particular film into Stone's overall body of work. The approach will culminate with a
- sociohistorical analysis, which further contextualizes the motif into the more broader world that exists outside of cinema.

The stylistic and auteur approaches will be applied to answer the first portion of the research question (i.e., is there a consistently identifiable motif of “lost innocence” present in Oliver Stone's filmography?), while the sociohistorical technique will be applied to answer the second portion of the research question (i.e., what is its significance in the context of cinema and contemporary American history?).

This approach falls under Boggs and Petrie's broadly defined eclectic approach, which is ideal for a thesis of this nature. It can be likened to a nesting doll, where each step of analysis relies on the one before it and the overall approach relies on the idea of tabula rasa. The first element in the theoretical framework is to objectively show that if the viewer did not know anything about the filmmaker or the project but viewed the film from a purely formalist perspective the lost innocence motif would emerge.

Auteur theory will then be used to weave a more cohesive structure, where individual elements of each film - identified in the formalist analysis - will be tied together to form a better understanding of the overall body of work. Although auteur theory has been rejected by some academics, the thesis will show through biographical works like Riordan's Stone and Hamburg's memoirs that if there is any validity to auteur theory, Stone's method in filmmaking assures that he is an auteur.

The third element in the framework takes the motif as identified through the formalist analysis and in the overall context of Stone's filmography and shows its overall importance in cinema and recent American history. This humanistic approach will focus on the statement the motif makes through the film and its social, historical, and psychological implications. Jungian criticism will be used throughout the analysis to explain the appearance of the motif in the film as well as its relation to the monomyth idea raised in Section 2.5.1.

The underlying assumption of tabula rasa is crucial to tying the motif in a particular film to the overall historical significance - it illustrates specifically the Jungian idea of the monomyth as being ingrained such that not knowing anything about Oliver Stone in general or the film in particular, the loss of innocence motif is still obvious. Furthermore, the importance of the motif as evidenced in a particular film is heightened by the top-level historical analysis because (if we assume tabula rasa) the film is both a reflection of and a manifestation of the idea of lost innocence - it is hoped that through an analysis based on this framework, the motif of lost innocence will be shown to exist for a purpose outside the purely aesthetic realm of film.

3.2 Sources of Evidence / Authority

The James Riordan biography Stone: The Controversies, Excesses, and Exploits of a Radical Filmmakerand Eric Hamburg memoir JFK, Nixon, Oliver Stone and Me: An Idealist's Journey from Capitol Hill to Hollywood Hellsare works that explore Stone's personal life and directing methods. They will be consulted to provide insight into Stone's personal life and history and how relevant events impact Stone's depiction of the lost innocence motif in his filmography.
Many sources have been identified in Section 2.5. The thesis will rely primarily on research gathered from the extensive periodical and film theory collections at the Perry-Castañeda Library at The University of Texas at Austin and the mythology and history resources available at the University of Houston - Clear Lake's Alfred R. Neumann Library. As the thesis relies heavily on analysis of Oliver Stone's filmography, source material from the films found in Section 2.1 will be consulted and cited in the work. If the appropriate copyright permissions are obtained, stills from the films will be placed directly into the thesis to illustrate stylistic elements where appropriate.

### 3.3 Timetable for Completion

Table 3-1 contains major milestones for thesis completion, which is scheduled for Spring 2005. A detailed completion schedule and Gantt chart can be found in Appendix B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Research</td>
<td>5/14/04 - 6/2/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Proposal</td>
<td>6/3/04 - 7/16/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Research</td>
<td>7/19/04 - 10/29/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Composition</td>
<td>11/1/04 - 3/28/05</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Draft Completion</td>
<td>1/21/05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Draft Completion</td>
<td>3/28/05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submittal to Dean's Office</td>
<td>4/4/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>5/16/05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.0 PRELIMINARY TABLE OF CONTENTS
1.0 Introduction – Introduce Research Question and Establish its Importance
2.0 The "Lost Innocence" Motif – Origins, Location, and Importance
   2.1 Classical Mythology
   2.2 Non-Western Mythology
   2.3 Contemporary (Joseph Campbell, et al) Mythology
   2.4 Psychological Manifestations (Jung, et al)
   2.5 Literature
   2.6 Post-Modernism, 1960s
   2.7 Historical Underpinnings (America, 1960s)
3.0 Film and the "Lost Innocence" Motif
   3.1 Filmic Techniques
   3.2 Overview of Film Theories
   3.3 Analytical Theory for Thesis
   3.4 Countermythology and 1960s Counterculture (Transitional Ideas)
4.0 Oliver Stone “Through the Looking Glass”
   4.1 Biographical Information
   4.2 Literature Review
   4.3 Filmography*
     4.3.1 Salvador
     4.3.2 Platoon
     4.3.3 Wall Street
     4.3.4 Talk Radio
     4.3.5 Born on the Fourth of July
     4.3.6 The Doors
     4.3.7 JFK
     4.3.8 Heaven and Earth
     4.3.9 Natural Born Killers
     4.3.10 Nixon
     4.3.11 Any Given Sunday
     4.3.12 Alexander
   4.4 Cinematic and Historical Implications
5.0 Conclusions and Future Work

* Sections 4.3 and 4.4 represent the majority of analytical work required to answer the thesis question. The films will be scrutinized according to the theoretical framework introduced earlier in this proposal.

5.0 WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY

The works listed below are a compilation of relevant material identified thus far. Although this bibliography will change as the thesis work progresses, it should be clear that the quality and quantity of resources available are adequate to support a project of this nature.


6.0 CONCLUSION

This proposal has introduced the research problem, solution approach, preliminary thesis structure, and working bibliography for a thesis that will attempt to answer the question; "is there a consistently identifiable motif of "lost innocence" present in Oliver Stone's filmography, and what is its significance in the context of cinema and contemporary American history?" The thesis will address the history of the lost innocence motif in mythology, literature and film. The question will be answered by employing a nested approach.
First, the motif in a particular film will be identified using a formalistic approach. When all films in Stone's body of work are analyzed in this manner, patterns between films will be considered using auteur theory. The lost innocence motif identified across the filmography will be then be considered from the sociohistorical perspective. Preliminary research has been conducted and strongly indicates that there is enough literature to support the research portion of this thesis. The thesis should be complete prior to the Spring 2005 submittal date.

End Notes


APPENDIX A: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This is an annotated bibliography of Don Kunz's compilation, The Films of Oliver Stone. It illustrates the types of critical analysis regarding Oliver Stone's filmography that are available.

- **Salvador**

In "Manifestations of Foreign Culture through Paradox in Salvador," John Stone notes the radical differences between on-screen Salvadoran and American culture, but notes that the values and aspirations of the average American and El Salvadoran hint at a paradox. He argues that US involvement in El Salvador exacerbated civil strife there. The story of El Salvador is still influenced and filtered by traditional American hegemonical structures – "Latin history isn't denied per se as much as it is made subservient to and then assimilated by another." The end result is a paradox that "simultaneously tugs at the viewer to understand the on-screen world and its inhabitants as radically different form his/her own and, on the other hand, to understand the values and aspirations of the Salvadoran citizen as quite similar to those firmly ensconced in the American character." Salvador is ultimately filtered through Western hegemony; we see a homogenization to "Latin Americans".

In "Salvador: Oliver Stone and the Center of Indifference," Richard Keenan argues that Stone's intent was not so much answer the questions or tell the story as it was to arouse indignation and provoke questions. The article is largely an annotated plot summary with his own musings on the historical accuracy of certain parts or Stone's use of poetic license. For a post-JFK article on Oliver Stone it is neither insightful nor interesting.

- **Platoon**

Clyde Taylor's "The Colonialist Subtext in Platoon" is a departure from traditional criticisms of Stone that paint him as a misogynist or homophobe. Taylor claims that Stone's "good nigger/bad nigger schema of characterization" conveys black soldiers as throwbacks to the traditional stereotypes of Hollywood – they lack depth. Stone would probably agree, noting that Platoon is his story, "a white infantry boy's look at Vietnam," and would probably encourage Taylor to make a film about the black soldier's experiences in Vietnam.

Don Whaley's "Oliver Stone's Journey to Myth-Country: Platoon and the Cultural History of Adventure" places Platoon in the larger pantheon of the mythological adventure. Early Greek mythology was heavily centered on episodic tales of high adventure. The ancient adventurers would either travel to the myth-countries at their own peril, or make a spiritual journey into the spirit world. The Enlightenment marked a break with this tradition, as attention to rational thought and natural order rejected the "magical world." Science, not "the journey" gained knowledge. This prompted a reaction in the 19th century by writers like Melville and Conrad who returned to the idea of a "new adventure myth" where the protagonists were plagued by "dark emotions" (Nietzsche was the philosopher for this movement). Writers in the 20th century further changed the new adventure myth to focus predominantly on voyages of the mind induced by drugs.

Platoon came out of this new adventure myth. Stone read Conrad's Lord Jim, went to Vietnam, experimented with LSD, and saw himself as a modern-day Ulysses. He drew on the classic story of the adventurer's journey for Platoon. And Platoon, Whaley argues, contains many of the same elements Joseph Campbell noted are universal with regards to the adventurer's journey, the "monomyth." Elias was based on Jim Morrison, who is often associated with the new adventure myth.

Commentators on Platoon have dealt with that film either in the context of Vietnam War movies or in the context of Oliver Stone's other films. But Platoon should be dealt with in another context as well—the cultural history of adventure.
• **Wall Street**

"Wall Street: The Commodification of Perception" by Jack Boozer Jr. analyzes *Wall Street* as an allegory to the America of the 1980s. Boozer focuses on Gordon Gekko as a metaphor for the new American dream. Gekko is not concerned with the burdens of running or operating a company; rather, he focuses on liquidity and market timing to maximize his financial standing. He creates nothing, but owns everything. *Wall Street* stands in marked contrast to business-oriented films of the 1950s such as *Executive Suite* (1954) or *Sabrina* (1954), Boozer argues. The key differences are in the character's motivations and ethics. There are links to postmodernism here, but the essay is largely tied to the political and economic implications of the film. Boozer would likely argue that the "lost innocence" motif is subsumed by the character's economic motivations and overall tone of consumption.

• **Talk Radio**

Don Kunz' "Oliver Stone's *Talk Radio*" discusses the oft-overlooked film. Wedged between *Wall Street* and *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Talk Radio* is an excellent adaptation of Peter Bogosian's play of the same title. Stone adapted the play and fleshed out the protagonist, turning him into a complex character. The familiar tragedy involves Barry's sacrifice of friendship and love for power. "A man sacrifices his marriage for business success; commercial radio finds so much profit in the entertainment value of verbal abuse that it incites civil disorder and criminal action; fundamentalist Christianity becomes perverted into paranoid ethnocentrism." The irony is that these sacrifices ultimately result in Champlain's death. The technology that allows Barry to reach out to a mass audience is ironically used not for "community-enhancing ideal" but for hate. Kunz focuses on the visual manifestations of Stone's traditional characterizations of violence, chaos, and sexual overtones are addressed, but does not address the "loss of innocence" motif.

• **Born on the Fourth of July**

In "Oliver Stone's Film Adaptation of *Born on the Fourth of July*: Redefining Masculine Heroism" Don Kunz addresses how the American mythology of the "frontier hero" compelled Ron Kovic to go to Vietnam and how it was shattered by his real-life experiences there. It "becomes the story of all America's boys who were seduced into the Vietnam War trying to fulfill their culture's myth of heroic manhood." It analyzes the difference between Kovic's book and Stone's film – primarily in the sexual trope; the emasculation theme that underlies the destruction of the concept of the masculine American warrior. The film is essentially a reevaluation of the American frontier myth. The article addresses the idea of a cultural myth that tells the loss of innocence story; i.e. American culture. It further categorizes the idea by segmenting it into the loss of innocence for the American male. But what this thesis is concerned with is the more universal loss of innocence that occurs in any culture, more related to adolescence than the concept of emasculation. The distinction is slight but important.

• **The Doors**

"Enough to Base a Movie On?" by Suzanne E. O'Hop sees *The Doors* as Oliver Stone on Jim Morrison on film...O'Hop discusses Morrison's view of film as part of a "powerful, infinite mythology," the next logical step of the "shadow play" idea – film, like Morrison himself, is underlain with an obsession with death. The very nature of film, O'Hop argues, makes it an ideal medium for conveying the essence of Morrison. In a sense, Stone's film can be viewed as an attempt to visually convey the essence of Morrison through his own poetry. This explains Stone's use of the non-linear narrative, heavy use of opticals and colors, and the reliance on Morrison's own words and poetry. Stone mythologizes Morrison and in creating this homage has allowed Morrison to speak for himself years after his own death. O'Hop also spends a deal of time identifying the various important elements of Morrison's poetry and how they are manifested in *The Doors*; specifically themes like the sky, life, death, the cave, etc...

• **JFK**

In "JFK: Historical Fact/Historical Film," Robert Rosenstone begins his article by questioning the assumptions behind the traditional attack made against *JFK* by historians; specifically "first, that a historical film is no more than a piece of written history transferred to the screen and thus subject to the same rules of historical practice; and, second, that a fact is a fact and history is little more than an organized compilation of such facts." He asserts that such contentions are incorrect as the "facts" are always internal to the work in which they are conveyed and thus must be interpreted in the context of that work. *JFK*, as it turns out, contains many of the elements of traditional Hollywood historical films (like conventional story structure with beginning, middle, and end, and dramatizations for appealing to viewers' feelings). Rosenstone's argument is that it is not the use of poetic license that angers historians about Stone's film; rather, it is the touchy nature of the topic and Stone's implication of the American government in John Kennedy's death that invites the fury. Stone uses techniques that would be required of any filmmaker in creating any historical film, but the importance of *JFK* as a debate-encouraging polemic makes that film "among the most important works of American history ever to appear on the screen."

Martin Medhurst's "The Rhetorical Structure of Oliver Stone's *JFK*" is summarized by the following excerpt:

Oliver Stone's *JFK* is a mythopoetic discourse that functions as cinematic rhetoric. Through the lens of the Adamic myth, the author examines the film as a metaphorical interpretation or parable of the human condition. Members of the viewing audience are invited to participate in this mythic structure by emulating the actions of the protagonist, thus becoming instruments of sociopolitical change.

Medhurst makes the connection between JFK and Adam (who lost Paradise) and Garrison and Christ (who restored the relationship between humans and God). The loss of innocence motif here appears in Medhurst's contention that one of the key themes in *JFK* is the
simultaneous loss of innocence and humanity's own capability to restore it. Medhurst stretches Rosenstone's ideas by claiming that Stone's depiction of Garrison is not just an element to reinforce the structure of the film, but a model for action that the viewers are encouraged to emulate. This interaction between audience and film is JFK's strongest point, Medhurst argues. The assassination of JFK is a mythical moment that marked an absolute change in the American consciousness, and Stone's film calls on the American people to question the events of that day.

"JFK: The Lesson and Legacy of Vietnam," by Jim Welsh, is centered less on JFK than on Stone's credentials as a filmmaker and activist. JFK, Welsh argues, is an important film because it attempts to answer the question, "why were we in Vietnam?" He concedes that at times the film is as "wacky as the conspiracy theories it seems to embrace," but that it had an effect on the national debate over the assassination as well as played a role in declassifying many assassination-related documents.

- **Heaven and Earth**

In "When Man and Woman Changed Places," Bryan Marinelli contends that Heaven and Earth's basic premise, that it is a film about a woman's point of view, is subsumed by the masculine subtext. As such, it is a distinctly masculine film that reinforces traditional patriarchal structures. Marinelli argues that although Heaven and Earth appears a priori to be a film that challenges the traditional depiction of Vietnam and masculine roles, it in fact reinforces those traditional constructs. Born, it turns out, is the true exception. Heaven and Earth is an attempt by Oliver Stone to deflect criticisms that he is a misogynist, but in the end it becomes only an attempt to get the audience to empathize with Butler who represents Stone's own "disenchantment with the Vietnam War's effects on American male soldiers."

- **Natural Born Killers**

In "Natural Born Killers and American Decline," Daniel Green begins his article by addressing JFK, which he claims is Stone's first critique of "the media's abandonment of principle and the effect of that abandonment on society's perceptions of its own reality." NBK is the next logical step in the discussion, as Stone attempts to show how the political corruption depicted in JFK has given way to a more general corruption of American culture. NBK, Green argues, makes "powerfully manifest the degree to which violence in American culture has become largely undifferentiated in its source and mostly undiscriminating in its effect."

- **Nixon**

"Citizen Nixon – Oliver Stone's Wellesian View of a Failed Public Figure" by Frank E. Beaver draws several parallels on a narrative and visual level between Welles' masterpiece Citizen Kane and Stone's Nixon. There are several overt homages to Kane in Nixon, but the real parallel lies in the psychological approach to the main character: Stone, like Welles, depicts Nixon as an unknowable enigma, and that any character study is by definition inherently subjective. The stylistic and structural similarities are differentiated by each man's approach to history: Stone is committed to the drama inherent in an historical story, while Welles departed from a historical story to create drama of his own.

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**APPENDIX B: THESIS WORK SCHEDULE**

Work schedule was created and will be updated using Microsoft Project. The following PDF files are the latest version of the schedule.

[Page 1](#)
[Page 2](#)

(You'll need Adobe Reader to view these files. It's free.)

"Through the Looking Glass" is the third-season finale of the ABC television series Lost, consisting of the 22nd and 23rd episodes of the third season. It is also the 71st and 72nd episodes overall. It was written by co-creator/executive producer Damon Lindelof and executive producer Carlton Cuse, and directed by executive producer Jack Bender. When first aired on May 23, 2007, in the United States and Canada, it was watched by an average of 14 million American viewers. Like the previous two season