

Overview about the Nature of War and Its Character as a Media Fact which Changes Minds

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INTRODUCTION

Communication is an inherent aspect of human beings. It is a process whereby we try to transmit ideas to modify the behavior of other individuals. But when communication fails, and people begin to try to impose their thoughts, there then arises the fear of another unknown point of view.

My proposal is an introduction to the nature of war. I propose a holistic and humanistic vision of war, democracy, and finally human beings, in order to develop meaning from an anthropological and sociological perspective more than from a historical one. With this essay, I'd like to show a sample of how I think a topic like this could be taught. Obviously, it is necessary to take into account the students we are working with and to look for an educationally appropriate strategy.

In my own opinion it is really important to try to explain to the students how war is an essential part of the history of every country and how war always involves a kind of upheaval in all societies. It seems that war is an inherent part of the human condition, and each time a war has taken place, people have changed their minds in some way.

An essential fact in the modern world is that communication is a process whereby one or more individuals transmit words or ideas to modify the behavior of other individuals. It seems that in a global situation like war, communication and the expression of ideas are critically important issues. How people are able to understand communications given out by the media depends on a lot of factors such as their personal structures of thinking, their cultural environment, their predisposition, their patterns of living experiences, and of course the uniformity that usually flows among the collective minds of members of a human group or society.

What I would like to show students is that to understand a different culture or a different country is not just a matter of what the political figures or official spokesmen are saying about their own culture or about others. I would like to work on the problem of changing the masses' minds on war issues with my students. Sometimes it is enough to develop some kind of understanding of how the educational process impacts people's minds in such a way as to get a responsible improvement in attitude within themselves, within their countries and among each other.

In my opinion, it is useful to explain the habitual causes of every war and to take into account the reasons for all the implicated aspects, the consequences or effects on all

countries, and how war has contributed to building the American way of thinking based on the information given by the media. I would like to connect a topic like this: the confrontation between democracy and war and the power of the mass media, with the TAKS objectives. I think that this theme represents a multi-lineal unit related to many different targets in the standards of social studies such as social studies skills, science, technology, citizenship, economics, history, geography and government.

The educational system asks all professionals for commitment to a respectable way of teaching, keeping involved all the different human groups we have to work with. Democratic values should be the best support for a peaceful education in a pluralistic society such as ours. These values could include the respect for all diversity, and for the study of the different perspectives of whole groups, as a way to build a safe scholastic environment, and then a safe and respectful society. In Spanish, we say that “*es necesario educar con valores.*” This means that we should not only teach curricular objectives but should also teach values such as a moral sense of living, democracy, and fairness.

UNIT BACKGROUND

I am going to use some of Marvin Harris’ theories to develop a little background about the nature of war. This part of the unit tries to help the teacher, who is going to develop the topic, explain some current theories about the meaning of war: it is not to be used as a lesson for students.

It is convenient to realize that the fact of war *per se* sometimes has followed a similar pattern throughout history. Harris, in *Cultural Materialism*, describes war and social cycles as the engines of history. The demographic pressure and the intensive use of natural resources have caused many reactions, including war. Harris also develops his interesting theory about the irrational character of certain actions committed by human beings, and he relates this behavior to ignorance, fear, and conflict.

Ignorance is sometimes caused because most of us are unaware of the diversity of alternatives that exist in comparison to our own lifestyle, or we fear them. There is fear of a break-out of hostile attitudes because of our incapacity of understanding other people’s ideas and behavior. Conflict generally arises because of the control exercised over most of the people by a few of them.

Many anthropologists are against some of Harris’ theories. They accuse him of being more an intuitive person than a rigorous scientist, but the fact is that he has a clear mind for explaining the nature of conflict and war. For instance, his theory about the identification of war as a pregnancy control method (this relates masculine supremacy to war) could be applied to the Islamic fundamentalism in which we find feminine repression and war acting together. Maybe it is also true that this population sometimes has the feeling that they are using up their natural resources and fear appears to be added to those other elements. Perhaps Harris is a visionary but it could be useful to consider

his approach as a way of teaching that promotes tolerance, liberty, equal rights and opportunity as a way to avoid war.

Marvin Harris proposed his Materialism Cultural Theory as an explanation for the differences among different human groups, and for that reason it is useful in these times when there seems to be such a lack of understanding among cultures. Sometimes we are unable to understand our own sense of life, why we live in one way or another and why we use some politics as structure (and some art as superstructure). Harris proposed that perhaps these are constructions that people use to avoid being conscious of their own way of living. Of course, I am not identifying cultural materialism with a determinism in which the individual human being is melted into his social group, but we cannot deny that certain patterns (nutrition, reproduction, religious experience, the need for feelings of transcendence, and perhaps war) seem to be inherent in us.

As a media fact, this current war has been fascinating to the world. A single picture of an image of confrontation has been able to change the feelings of people. But art history is filled with such examples, such as the Rock paintings in France and Spain; the *Alexander Mosaic*; the Roman columns telling battle stories; the Renaissance paintings of Paolo Ucello; the Baroque scenes of battles of Velazquez; the 19th Century “Orientalist” war paintings; the art of Goya in Spain telling the drama of the French occupation there; and of course, the greatest masterpiece in the whole world: *Guernica* from Pablo Ruiz Picasso about the Spanish Civil War. These are some striking examples of how powerful the image of war is to the human eye.

We cannot forget to note the great role that movies have played since the 1920s of the 20th Century. Films like *Battleship Potemkin*, *Paths of Glory*, *Full Metal Jacket*, and *Platoon* are art manifestations which have narrated the horror of war. In most cases, they try to turn our thinking in some way. In our 21st century world, it is journalists and writers of the mass media who are in charge of getting people to adhere to government rules and to support its sanctioned violence.

At this point I think that it could be useful for the teacher (and maybe for the grown students) to watch three movies that are especially interesting in relation to the nature of war and human beings’ thoughts about war in order to go further in the preparation phase of his/her background about the topic. Those movies would be *Birth of a Nation*, *Battleship Potemkin* and *Good Morning, Vietnam*. My students especially like seeing movies because it helps them visualize what they have read about in class and sometimes motivates them to do more reading about a particular subject. Since these students are children of the Information Age, and more dependent on learning through technology than people were in the past, I believe it important to teach them how to analyze and understand good films in the context of the time period when the film was made, and also, in terms of the historical period during which the storyline in the film is set. Both of these milieus are important, but most certainly will affect how we evaluate each film. Today, children watch many videos, but are often at a loss for how to interpret them.

The information that follows provides important background for teachers and includes a basic plot summary of the film that might be used with students. After each film, it is important to have students answer these basic questions after they understand the plot.

1. What is the theme of the film?
2. What purpose did the film makers have in mind when they created this film? In other words, if they were trying to send a message or persuade their audience to think a certain way, then what was the film's message?
3. What are some examples from the scenes in this film that you could use to support your ideas about the message of the film?
4. Given the time period when the film was made, who is the intended audience for this film? Imagine that you made this film. What people would you encourage to go and see it?
5. Analyze the music in this film. What are the songs? What do the words say?
6. Are these songs "war songs?" Are any of them traditional American war songs, for instance, in "*Birth of a Nation*"? How do these songs contrast with the music in the film, "*Good Morning, Vietnam*"?

Film One: *Birth of a Nation* (1915), directed by D.W. Griffith and written by Thomas F. Dixon, Jr.

Plot Summary

The movie is divided in two parts with different features for each one. The first happens during the pre-Civil American War period, and it is mostly about two families, their relationships, and their particular environments. The Stonemans are a northern family with abolitionist ideas. The father, Austin Stoneman, is a Congressman who has two sons and a daughter, Elsie Stoneman. The Camerons are a Southern family with two daughters and three sons, one of whom is the main character of the movie, Ben Cameron. Both families get along very well and their sons and daughters are friends. The Stonemans often visited the Camerons in South Carolina, where they are welcomed by their Southern hospitality. It is in one of these visits when Ben Cameron and Elsie Stoneman fall in love, and this is going to be a critical issue in the plot of the movie. The Civil War begins and the sons from both families join different sides. When Ben Cameron is seriously injured, he ends in the hospital where Elsie Stoneman is working as a nurse. Meanwhile Lincoln's assassination is dramatized, and after that some political leaders, including Austin Stoneman, try to punish the South because of the secession.

Part two occurs during the Reconstruction period. Meanwhile, Stoneman is trying to promote a mulatto, Sylls Lynch, to the position of Lieutenant. Governor Ben Cameron intends to recover the Southern whites' power by forming the Ku Klux Klan. Of course, this situation is going to separate Ben Cameron and Elsie Stoneman. After a few unfortunate events in the relationship between the two families, the movie ends with the

double wedding of Ben Cameron with Elsie Stoneman and Phil Stoneman with Margaret Cameron. The final segment is highly allegoric and envisions a day with no war.

Commentary

This movie provides us with an interesting view into the nature of American cultural conflicts, but also speaks a universal language. The friendship developed between the sons and daughters of both families, and their following need of joining their respective sides, and even fighting until death, one next to the other, represents a real situation that appears almost in every war. Otherwise, in this masterpiece we sometimes have to separate form and content; for instance it is very difficult for people today to become involved and moved by the final scene in which a triumphant Ku Klux Klan is represented. In order to appreciate the cinematic conventions and great job of this movie, we have set aside some other moral conventions. As somebody said, “this movie belongs to a museum more than to a theater.”

It is a useful film when used in the classroom to study the moral climate of the early twentieth century, and how these perspectives differ from our own. This film always generates a reaction from students about race, class, war, and the distance we have come from then until now.

Film Two: *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), directed by Grigory Aleksandrov and Sergei M. Einsenstein and written by Nina Agadzhanova and Nikolai Aseyev

Plot Summary

This movie is based on the true events that took place in the battleship named Potemkin. When the sailors are given rotten meat for dinner, they start a riot which ends in a revolution in the port of Odessa.

Russia has lost the war against Japan and sailors on the battleship in Odessa are being mistreated by their superiors. Conditions on the ship are very unfair. A revolutionary fervor is rising among the sailors, especially the character of Vakulinchik. Rotten meat is served to the sailors, and the ship doctor declares it safe to be eaten. Thus, the sailors decide to buy their own food in the canteen as a protest. The Admiral of the ship, after tricking the sailors by asking for their loyalty, shoots them.

Vakulinchik encourages his shipmates to begin the uprising against the officers because of their oppression. The sailors kill the officers and the ship is liberated. Vakulinchik dies during the riot, and his body is placed on the dock of the Odessa Bay as a symbol of revolution in a very powerful scene.

The citizens of Odessa come to see the body, and join the revolution and the riot, when suddenly the Cossaks come and slaughter the citizens on the steps, in one of the

most visually stunning scenes ever made. They completely end the revolution and a fleet of battleships destroy the Potemkin.

Commentary

The communist propaganda in this movie is clearly undeniable, but it is also true that this is one of the most powerful movies ever created. This film, as Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* or Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*, is really remarkable as to the director's effective portrayal of his vision. *Battleship Potemkin* is both a product and a tool of the Soviet propaganda machine, and it shows how charismatic leaders and discontented masses rise up in revolution. As a movie, it really is a powerful visual tool that was capable of changing people's minds. There are no nice or pretty people in this movie and everything is about these powerful scenes with nasty visual shots which are very disturbing.

Even while it is true that this is a Soviet propaganda masterpiece, it is also true that Eisenstein created a real work of art that contributes to the understanding among human beings when they are suffering. The Odessa steps sequence is one of the finest ever shot about those suffering in war time.

Film Three: *Good Morning, Vietnam* (1987), directed by Barry Levinson and written by Mitch Markowitz

Plot Summary

An Army disc jockey is sent to Saigon in 1965 to bring humor and sense, and to encourage the Forces there. He uses his irreverent sense of humor and the Americans' most famous music to reach his proposal.

He becomes very popular among the troops, greeting them every morning with the line "Good morning, Vietnam," and playing their favorite music. He gets in trouble with his superior officers who think that he is not respectful enough of the Army and that his comments are sometimes crude and rude.

When he is not on the air, he is trying to meet Vietnamese girls, and to know about the real war that usually he cannot talk about in the news on the air.

Commentary

This is not, of course, a common war movie. In *Good morning, Vietnam* we find a story that moves along a consistent narrative through time, but there is not a real moment of suspense. This movie has a lot of underlying themes such as compromise, criticism, confusion in war time, and the officers' hard hearts. The whole thing is also garnished with a powerful sound track, sometimes filled of messages and *double meanings*. I think

the real achievement of this movie is that it shows us the effective attitude and mood of the country during the Vietnam War. Of course this is a funny movie, but its main purpose and contribution is that it makes us think.

HOW DO I IMAGINE TEACHING THIS TOPIC?

At this point, I would like to explain that this unit, as a multidisciplinary topic, is, sometimes inappropriate for teaching in a linear format. Many concepts are developed at the same time and sometimes you need to go beyond one objective. But in order to strengthen some targets, I would develop the topic in some lessons by trying to reach the objectives contained in the strands that could be taught by following the Project Clear objectives.

Objectives

Each of the following objectives will become a part of a comprehensive set of lessons. They are articulated here as they would be in the Houston ISD Project Clear curriculum.

Students learn about the **main causes and effects of every war** paying special attention to how communication works and **how information is given** to us in war time.

Students discuss the importance of **responsibility** and **fairness** in a **democratic society**. This will be a successful way to make them know that they need a **non-violent academic environment** in order to develop democratic values.

Students realize that they are **part of different kind of groups at the same time**, and so they develop **empathy** with the societies that surround them. Students are going to be able to notice how important **the fairness and the equality** of opportunities are to **avoid war**. It is important for children to understand that they can be a part of several different groups at once, and that getting along in a smaller context corresponds with how larger societies negotiate on the world stage, and how each contends with the possibility of war.

Students will develop **communication skills** and strategies by interacting with different group members, so that they **convey their identities** in a successful way.

Introduction

I always begin any historical topic suggesting that students role-play. Currently I'm teaching fourth grade but I would like to develop my topic to be applied to different grades. It is useful to notice the plurality and the many points of view in which one could be involved as a part of a human group or even a country. I will examine the causes and the different interests of every conflict. The lesson involves an activity called "Act it Out," based on the movies that I will show, in which the students will have to discuss the different sides, faces and interests of each part of the war. This way they would realize

that sometimes your own opinion is merely an aspect of your sociological identity, or even the opinion that mass media is expecting you to have. I will add model lessons explaining how to develop the role-playing and the movies shown.

Concept Developed

I will distribute the objectives, as they pertain to a particular multidisciplinary area, by assigning objectives (depending on how deep I would want to get with the theme and how much time I have available) grouped in lessons focused on the same instructional topic. For each objective, I have prepared a 120-minute lesson (divided into two 60-minute sessions, one each day) that includes the selected movies to be taught according to topic and the lead discussion questions. I have provided three samples, with the explanation of the objectives of each day's lesson, focusing on clues, but the teacher can select any other that he or she thinks is appropriate.

Homework

Homework will be individual and based on different kinds of graphs about concepts such as comparison and contrast, main ideas and details, and sequential order, targeting the topics developed in the movie that has been seen each day. They could also do activities such as investigations about news given by the mass media, or compare and contrast essays about the news, or activities such as writing their own news giving their points of view.

Assessment

The entire grade will be composed of three different parts: a black line master (an assignment to be reproduced) given with a true or false test about positive attitudes and about questions which show their knowledge of different causes and effects of the wars; and I will also take into account their homework and classwork; and finally, they will write a composition about the power of the mass media.

Sample Essay Questions that Might Be Adapted to Each Film

- Write a well written, carefully organized essay which explains the concept of irony as it is depicted in *Good Morning, Vietnam*. First define irony, and then pick a scene from the movie and describe how it is ironic.
- Choose a character from this film, and analyze this person's behavior. How did this character's actions affect the outcome of the film and its theme.
- Write an essay about the theme of this movie. Support your thesis with evidence from the movie, and explain how this evidence proves your statement of the theme.'

LESSON PLANS

I'm planning to teach this subject in seven lessons of 60 minutes each. Some of my lesson plans are designed to be used in two-day sessions because they involve watching the following movies and in my opinion, it would be too much to see a movie and do the related activities the very same day. **Note: The following films are intended for a fourth grade class. Older students may study the films mentioned earlier.**

As I have already explained, the unit background information has been provided to show the teacher some of the current theories and the different ways of approaching the war issue, but it was not planned to be taught to young students in that format. However, this lesson plans below are to be used with the students to develop a few specific objectives.

Every teacher could implement this lesson plan by adding those movies, books, and relevant news articles which he or she thinks would be useful. The teacher can find other movies (it is mainly difficult to find G-rated movies related to war) or games that would be accurate to explain a certain objective.

Lesson 1: Using a Simple Game

Time

60 minutes

Objective

The students will develop a strong sense of plurality. He/she notices that he/she belongs to many different social groups and so he/she is committed to different interests depending on the social group in which she/he is acting in a particular moment. This way, students are going to become conscious of their own multiple facets.

Materials

Tape

Paper

Markers

Preparation

Every student in the classroom will draw the shape of his/her left hand on a piece of paper and after he/she will write his/her name inside the shape. The student will stick a piece of tape on the top of the page. At this point the teacher is going to allocate one of the walls of the classroom to develop the game (could be the white board). The teacher will prepare a set of sheets with different titles of sub-groups such as: girls, boys, children that are 10 years old, children who have more than two brothers or sisters, children smaller or taller than five feet, children with dark hair . . . and any other categories that the teacher thinks is appropriate, taking into account his or her group profile.

Development

The teacher will stick on the wall one of the titles previously chosen, and the students who identify themselves with the title should get up and go to that wall and add their piece of paper individualized by the outline of their hands. This way they are going to realize that they belong to that group. In that moment, the teacher is going to ask them to remove their sheet and to sit down again. Then, he/she will select another title and stick it on the wall. Children who identify with that title should stand up again, and put their sheet with their hand shape on the wall. The teacher will continue to choose titles, and the students will realize that they belong to many groups at the very same time. They also realize that their group-mates are not always the same people and that they are linked because of different reasons, and their interests could change.

Lessons 2 and 3: *Antz*

Time

Two 60-minute sessions.

Objective

Students will learn about the difficult relationship between individuality and community. They will learn that sometimes the human being is forced to follow society's rules and thoughts, and it doesn't necessarily mean that he or she agrees with all the decisions that sometimes we have to make in order to live in a certain social environment.

Materials

DVD player and *Antz* DVD

Plot

The movie develops the story of Z-4195, a worker ant that tries to break from his totalitarian society. He doesn't fit in a social order in which the individuals are divided into a superior race of soldiers and an inferior race of workers. War breaks out and Z becomes a hero after his struggle to find his own personality.

Preparation

The teacher will explain the lesson objectives to the students to guide the viewing of the movie and to focus their attention. The teacher is going to pass a simple list of the following questions:

- Who is the main character?
- Describe the society in which this character lives.
- Why is he not happy with this environment?
- Why do you think that society is not fair?
- What does he do to change his life?
- What results from this decision?

- Is he successful in his endeavors?
- Do you think it is worth fighting against unfair situations?
- Do you think that something similar is happening in some countries?
- What do you think people living in those countries should do to fix their situation?
- What do you think you could do to help in some way?

Development

Along with the viewing of the movie, the teacher is going to make several stops each time he/she considers that one of the questions on the check list could be answered by the students. Before making those stops the teacher will address which question (the following minutes of) the movie will focus on. Then the teacher will encourage her students to lead the discussion of each question, compelling them to reflect about how sometimes an individual is taken over by his/her own society.

Lessons 4 and 5: *Chicken Run*

Time

Two 60-minute sessions

Objective

Students will understand about the hopelessly repressed individuals who face tyranny. They will realize that many times an individual is being forced by extreme situations to rebel against their own society. They will understand that tyranny and war are the most negative environments in which the individuals could develop themselves as responsible citizens. They will also realize that people often show their worst side when faced with death. They will also understand, however, that leaders are not always right and perhaps not the very best people for their positions.

Materials

DVD player and *Chicken Run* DVD

Plot

This movie plot is based on George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. It metaphorically symbolizes the Russian revolution. The idea is that under certain kinds of pressure, such as a totalitarian government, individuals are forced to rebel, but sometimes the solution that at the very beginning seemed to be the fairest one doesn't happen to be that fair (many times because of the individuals that lead the issue). A crew of animals is waiting for certain death and being unfairly treated in the farm where they are held. Rocky the rooster and Ginger the chicken decide to rebel against the farmers and to lead a fabulous escape adventure, but finally things are not as fair as they expected them to be.

Preparation

The teacher will make a list of questions in order to focus the viewing. Those questions will include:

- Who are the main characters?
- Where do they live?
- Why is their situation unfair?
- What decision do they make in order to fix their situation?
- Do you think that decision was the best one or was there a better option? Which one?
- Do you think that at the beginning their situation was acceptable?
- Do you think that finally they fixed their lives?
- Why?
- Do you think that perhaps a similar situation is happening somewhere now?

Development

We are going to follow the same procedure as in the previous film. Along the viewing of the movie the teacher is going to make several stops each time he/she considers that one of the questions on the list could be answered by the students. Before making those stops, the teacher will have announced which questions the next minutes of the movie will address. Then the teacher will encourage the student-led discussion of each question. The student will realize that sometimes an individual needs to rebel against his or her society because of an unfair situation, and the student will also notice that leaders are not always right in their decisions.

ESSAY TOPIC ASSESSMENT

Teachers can use the following questions for students as an assessment after watching the movies. Questions will provide students with a summary of the objectives taught and would be useful for the teacher for his/her own self-assessment and feedback. Students should be allowed to give free answers.

- Do I understand how war, sometimes, breaks out?
- What do you think about the role of the mass media in giving or keeping us from information?
- Do you think that a society or system is more prone to revolution or war if it is comparatively an unfair society? Why?
- Do you think that if we were more empathetic with other societies and their habits we could avoid war? Why?
- Do you think that if we are overexposed to violent images we develop a more violent way of living, or not necessarily?
- Do you think a democratic society has more chances of being fair and of avoiding war?
- What do you think you can do from school to promote fair and non-violent attitudes?
- What do you think you can do from school to promote understanding amongst cultures?
- Do you realize that everybody, even you, is part of many social groups at the same time?

- Do you think that both money and land are real issues related to war?
- How could you promote communication skills amongst the groups you are involved in?
- Do you think it has been very useful for you to see those movies in order to develop a critical conscience of war?
- What else do you think we could have done to master this topic?
- Once we have finished the unit, what do you consider to be the most important thing you have learned?

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Genghis Khan. Dir. Henry Levin. Perf. Stephen Boyd and Omar Sharif. Columbia Pictures, 1965.
Fictional biography based on the conqueror Genghis Khan's life.

Joan of Arc. Dir. Victor Fleming. Perf. Ingrid Bergman and Francis L. Sullivan. RKO, 1948.
Biographical movie based on the life of Joan of Arc and the religious European wars.

The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc. Dir. Luc Besson. Perf. Milla Jovovich, Dustin Hoffman, Faye Dunaway and John Malkovich. Columbia Pictures, 1999.
Another vision of Joan of Arc's life and the religious European Wars.

Eastern Wars

The Last Samurai. Dir. Edward Zwick. Warner Brothers, 2003.
Dialogue between the ancient Samurai's war codes and the modern warfare campaigns in 1870 in Japan.

Ran. Dir. Akira Kurosawa. Orion Pictures, 1985.
Set in 16th century Japan, this is a version of King Lear.

Modern Wars

Alexander Nevsky. Dir. Sergei Eisenstein, Dimitri Vasilyev. Reel Media International, 1939.
Eisenstein's landmark tale of Russia thwarting the German invasion of the 13th century.

- Apocalypse Now*. Dir. Francis Ford Coppola. Zoetrope Studios, 1979.
The personal trip to devastation of a soldier during Vietnam War.
- The Battle of Britain*. Dir. Guy Hamilton. United Artists, 1969.
The effects of the war over the civil population are shown using the bombing of London.
- Battleship Potemkin*. Dir. Grigori Aleksandrov and Sergei M. Eisenstein. Image Entertainment, 1925.
Based on the unsuccessful 1905 Russian Revolution
- The Birth of a Nation*. Dir. D.W. Griffith. Allied Artists, 1915.
The very first movie about the American Civil War.
- The Bridge Over River Kwai*. Dir. David Lean. RCA/Columbia Pictures, 1957.
Vision about the hard way of life of the prisoners that contrasts with the military honor sense.
- Cortina de Humo*. Dir. Barry Levinson. 1997.
This movie's plot about how to build a war in order to hide other issues from the public opinion is directly related to some events happened during the 90's.
- Cross of Iron*. Dir. Sam Peckinpah. Warner Home Video, 1976.
War, honor and ambition from the German point of view during the Word War II.
- The Deer Hunter*. Dir. Michael Cimino. Universal Pictures, 1978.
Vision about the effects that war causes in people.
- Fat Man and Little Boy*. Dir. Roland Joffé. Paramount pictures, 1989.
Film about Manhattan Project which caused the use of the atomic bombs.
- Full Metal Jacket*. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Warner Brothers, 1987.
Masterpiece about the horror and the harder aspects of the Vietnam War.
- Gettysburg*. Dir. Roland F. Maxwell. New Line Cinema, 1993.
Vision of the famous and critical battle of the American Civil War.
- Good Morning Vietnam*. Dir. Barry Levinson. Buena Vista Pictures, 1987.
Film that shows the ironic-kind face of the war.
- Judgment at Nuremberg*. Dir. Stanley Kramer. United Artists, 1961.
Vision of the first trails against the war crimes of the World War II.
- The Longest Day*. Dir. Ken Annakin, et al. Twentieth Century Fox, 1962.
The famous battle of Normandy.

October. Dir. Grigori Aleksandrov, Sergei M. Eisenstein. Sovkino, 1927.
Powerful retelling of the 1917 Russian Revolution,

Paths of Glory. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. United Artists, 1957.
A hard view of the WW1 that shows how the new warfare campaigns and the traditional military codes are not always compatible.

The Patriot. Dir. Roland Emmerich. Columbia TriStar Pictures, 2000.
An ex-soldier has to fight against his own ideas in the American Independence War.

Saving Private Ryan. Dir. Steven Spielberg. Paramount Pictures, 1998.
An accurate film that explains how important public perceptions are in the government military actions.

Schlinder's List. Dir. Steven Spielberg. Universal Pictures, 1993.
This movie shows a sensible view about the terrible facts during the Holocaust and so is useful in demonstrating the high impact that visual media are able to give us.

Stalingrad. Germany / Sweden. Dir. Joseph Vilsmaier. Dist. Belle and Blade Studios, 1993.
The German soldiers' situation during the battle of Stalingrad in World War II

Thirteen Days. Dir. Roger Donalson. New Line Home Video, 2000.
The tension during the Cold War.

Tora! Tora! Tora! Dir. Fleischer and Kinji Fukasaku. Twentieth Century Fox, 1970.
Japan and American co-production about the preparation of the Pearl Harbor attack.

Other Interesting Movies

Intolerance. Dir. D. W. Griffiths. Image Entertainment, 1916.
Griffiths wrote "The purpose of the production is to trace a universal theme through various periods of the race's history. Ancient, sacred, medieval, and modern times are considered. Events are not set forth in their historical sequence, or according to the accepted forms of dramatic construction, but as they might flash across a mind seeking to parallel the life of the different ages."

Films for Students

AntZ. Dir. Eric Darnell and Tim Johnson. Dreamworks, 1998.

Metaphor about the relationship between the individual and the society he belongs to.

Chicken Run. Dir. Peter Lord and Nick Park. Universal Studios, 2000.

Metaphor about the need of runaway for the societies that are oppressed.

Pocahontas. Dir. Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg. Disney Studios, 1995.

View about the relationship between the English settlers and the native Americans.

The Road to El Dorado. Dir. Bebo Bergeron, et al. Umvd/Dreamworks, 2000.

View about the relationship between the Spanish conquerors and the native Americans they found in Mexico.