

**THE USE OF LITERARY APPROACHES IN TEACHING THE
ANALYSIS OF THE FILM NARRATIVE IN LIBERAL EDUCATION**

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by
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis entitled **The Use of Literary Approaches in Teaching the Analysis of the Film Narrative in Liberal Education**, prepared and submitted by **Juan M. Borra III**, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **M.A. in Education Major in Liberal Education** is hereby accepted.



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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to determine whether a literary framework can be used to teach the analysis of the film narrative in the context of liberal education. This study analyzed the available literature on liberal education, film studies, and a selection of the works of Northrop Frye and Roland Barthes. The main question was formulated as: How can a literary framework be used to teach Film Appreciation in the context of liberal education?

In order to answer the main question, this study sought to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What approaches are used to teach film appreciation in liberal education?
2. What aspects of Frye and Barthes' approach are compatible with liberal education?
3. How do these two literary approaches apply and enhance the teaching of film appreciation as a vehicle towards achieving the goals of liberal education?

This study employed a descriptive-critical analysis of the aims of liberal education. In answering the questions regarding liberal education, a comparative analysis was done regarding the liberal education theories espoused by Socrates, Aristotle, and John Henry Cardinal Newman. The following were the conclusions made regarding the four questions:

1. In answering the first sub-question, this study has determined that there are three characteristics which should inform film teaching in a liberal education curriculum: film form, developing film sensibility, and active criticism. As such, there are three general paradigms for film study which are compatible to the three aforementioned characteristics. These paradigms are represented by ontological theories, methodological theories and field theories.
2. Frye's literary framework centers on the concept of myth and the hero's power of action. Both Frye's conception of myth and his insights regarding the hero's power of action are consistent with the philosophical and curricular goals of liberal education. Barthes' literary framework, which also uses a particular conception of myth that is culturally bound, is not directly applicable given the philosophical and curricular goals of liberal education.
3. This study has determined that these two chosen literary approaches are not compatible with one another in analyzing literary texts, due to their radically different conceptions of myth. However, these two approaches may have shared areas of consensus with one another in the analysis of the film narrative. This oddity can be explained by the nature of the film form, which is both aesthetic and commercial. Despite this affinity in the analysis of the film narrative, only Frye's literary framework may be applied to liberal education. Frye's conception of myth

and the hero's power of action are consistent with the philosophical and curricular goals of liberal education.

4. To teach film in a liberal education curriculum, one may use Bordwell's understanding of the film form to complement Frye's literary approach. It must be noted that both Bordwell and Frye focus on the narrative development of the story. Bordwell focuses on the narrative development of the story to illustrate how an understanding of the integration between narrative and stylistic subsystems contributes to the film narrative. Frye focuses on the narrative development of the story to illustrate the hero's power of action and the connections between genres that allow one to develop an understanding of literature as the expression of timeless human concerns.

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