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## **The Global Bildungsroman: A Film Study of Individual Identity and Integration into Society**

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### **Overview**

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As an accompaniment to the existing Pittsburgh Public Schools tenth-grade curriculum for English, this unit addresses the yearlong theme of "The Individual and Society." Tenth grade scholars will develop an understanding of how individuals in Western culture define individuality and belonging to a society in a four-week unit. This study is based on the reading of three short stories: Kurt Vonnegut's "Harrison Bergeron," Doris Lessing's "No Witchcraft for Sale," and Sylvia Plath's "Initiation," available in the core textbook, McDougal Littell's *The Language of Literature* (Blue), Houghton Mifflin 2002. The goal of this unit is to build an understanding of how children move through puberty and into adulthood in America through written literature and contrast that journey to that of their counterparts around the world. My goal is to represent the global community through using films from other cultures to parallel and contrast to the stories in the existing unit. By including a variable number of films or clips, other educators can choose to add three, six, or nine days to the study of these stories. All worksheets and guides can be found in the appendices.

In the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the PSP (Pittsburgh Scholars Program) is populated by students who are above mainstream level in achievement and work ethic but are not eligible for the gifted program because of IQ scores. PSP classes range from 14 to 26 students per class. At Alderdice High School there are approximately five sections each of mainstream, PSP and CAS (gifted) English per grade level. Classes are taught daily for 43 minutes per period and last throughout the entire school year. While this unit is intended for 10<sup>th</sup> grade, film suggestions for other grades are included in **Additional Titles**.

After each story is read and discussed, a film will be used to illustrate similarities and differences among the cultures, clearly showing American students how society differs in this country when compared to other parts of the world.

## Rationale

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Today's students must realize that the world is shrinking and becoming flatter. Jobs are outsourced and more people now remain in their own countries and still make a living. Those jobs could not be filled at the same living wage required elsewhere. As cultures collide, students must understand how to deal with and understand people from other parts of the world. Introducing students to the broad range of cultural and societal customs and traditions will help them to understand and tolerate differences. Since the literature in my curriculum is a constant, the variable option for me is to utilize film to maximize the scope of the study and enhance the methods through which students will achieve the goal of discovering their places in the world as they become adults.

## Objectives/Strategies

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The students will be able to:

- understand how people in other cultures mature and what their societies expect of them
- make judgments about the values exhibited in those cultures and compare them to our own here in the US
- improve in their ability to evaluate the importance of rules in a society to ensure the smooth running of everyday life so that they will be able to apply this knowledge and transfer what they have learned to other experiences
- explore how they can make a difference as productive members of society through becoming responsible adults
- view literature and art as a means of conveying the human experience, both individual and societal through the study of both print and non-print sources
- gain experience in group discussion and informal debating on topics of mutual interest with their cohort group
- learn to compare a book and film and to evaluate the differences between the two, not as literary adaptations, but as storytelling vehicles
- apply the strategies learned from reading and viewing to everyday life, reinforcing how the human experiences depicted in fiction emphasize how human nature doesn't change

The curriculum provides ample opportunity to explore the diversity in upbringings. To supplement this study students will view films from three countries: the United States, Ireland, and Switzerland, and be able to understand the similarities and differences across cultures, leading to a deeper comprehension of the effects of each of the societies on the characters depicted in the stories.

For each step in the study worksheets will be utilized (see **Appendices**) to guide the students and give them a "roadmap" to their study that they can use to link the different readings.

## Anticipatory Set

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To launch the theme of the sophomore year, students will be asked to define individuality and society and then evaluate the importance of each one singly and as they coexist. This can be done on the board, on an overhead transparency, or on chart paper. A visual record of the opening discussion will serve as a reminder of the direction the class is heading.

It is likely that students will extol the value of individuality; it may be more difficult to get them to own up to their own conformity to one another when it comes to clothing, hair, and music styles. From the recognition of these elements, the discussion should shift to the meanings of them; how important it is to attain a degree of individuality, how crucial it is to have a sense of community.

To begin, post "The Individual and Society" on the board. The first step is to get the students to define these terms. They may offer many suggestions for defining the terms and the teacher can add the following: the individual is the single person; one who has awareness of his/her unique separateness from others. This is the person's identity. Babies develop through processes that slowly allow them to realize that their arms and legs belong to them and that they can control them. They learn about object permanence and that things and people outside their field of vision or hearing still exist. Forging an identity is crucial to the growth of each human being.

But very few people live in a vacuum. Stop here to ask if people always live in a society with others. Then add any of the following information to what your students bring up. There are stories of hermits and the occasional "wild child" but nearly everyone on earth lives within a society with others and learning how to fit comfortably within that society is key. Refer back to the topic of The Individual and Society and list the three key elements: Identity, Fidelity, and Conformity under the heading. Tell the students that they will be reading three stories in this unit and that each one will address one of those elements. Then entice them with the promise of three films that will echo the themes of each of the stories.

A segue from the theme of the year to the study of the first three stories that make up Unit 1 in the Pittsburgh Public Schools tenth grade English curriculum can be accomplished through further questioning. Choices might include: "How is your life different from that of a teenager in Iceland or Switzerland?" or "How is your life different from teenagers who lived fifty years ago, or from those who might live in the future?" Many of my students have traveled but many have not. In the past year I have had students from China, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic in my classes. In contrast, many of my students have not traveled beyond Pittsburgh. Comparing their teen years to those of their grandparents will also provide a contrast to the customs, styles, and trends between then and now. Probing into the future, speculation about how teenagers' lives might differ in decades to come will be glimpsed in the first of the stories and will be echoed in a selection of the films.

## Introductory Material

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### Storytelling

Storytelling has evolved from what we usually imagine to be a group of primitive beings gathered around a campfire listening to one member of the group entrancing the rest with his tales. Today's frenetically paced television and YouTube snippets of life take the place of storytelling for us. The traditional study of stories and storytelling reveals many elements common to a good story. In addition to a concrete story structure, plot structures involving characters with specific purposes are necessary in certain types of stories. For instance, the sequence of events in hero stories follows a pattern, cautionary tales often have a series of three warnings, fairy tales which test the true nature of an individual offer three chances to show goodness of heart, and African tales feature a griot, or storytelling guide who leads the young with his tales of creation and how one is to function in the world. For further study of narrative conventions, consult any of the resources in the **Bibliography**.

### The Short Stories

Each of the three short stories was chosen to explore how the individual functions alone and within society. The American way is to praise individualism and the first and third of the stories shows how individualism can have dire or positive results, but the second story is set in Rhodesia, where the native culture's idea of the importance of the individual and the importance of community differ from that of the Western world. To direct the study I have decided on a three-pronged interpretation of the theme of the Individual and Society: Identity, Fidelity, and Conformity. Each of the stories takes up one of these themes and will be followed by the study of a film that correlates to that theme.

## Narrative

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### Identity in "Harrison Bergeron" and 12 and Holding

Kurt Vonnegut introduces the reader to Hazel, who is perfectly average, and George Bergeron, somewhat above average, who are the parents of fourteen-year-old Harrison. The boy proved to be so intelligent and talented that the government-mandated handicaps assigned to him were beyond anything anyone else had ever worn. His mother was free of handicaps, but his father was considerably smarter because of the heavy weights he carried and his headgear which emitted crashingly painful sounds every 20 seconds or so. In the year 2081, society has equalized everyone down to the lowest common denominator so that no one feels less wonderful than anyone else. The parents are at home and their son has been jailed. The reader first meets the boy following his escape when he appears on the television screen.

In a world gone overboard with laws and palliatives to mask the realization that one is not as smart or pretty or talented as others and thereby eliminate competitiveness, Kurt Vonnegut has provided another chilling alternative to the future. His characters are treated to Job-like scourges of weights of bird-shot, hideous masks, and brain-numbing audio torture. Identity in this culture is limited to the one who is in charge, namely, Diana Moon Glampers, the Handicapper General. The effort to relieve the anxiety of those less talented, less

beautiful, less anything has resulted in a plain vanilla world. These characters lead a monotonous, semi-conscious existence, but those whose talents are greater suffer the most. Vonnegut's people endure pain commensurate with their brilliance, beauty, and talent.

A single man's impetus to assert his identity and free himself from the shackles of society will end in some sort of destruction; either the rebel will be destroyed or the carefully crafted microcosm of society disrupted by the anarchist will crumble. When Hazel suggests to George that he remove a few of the weights from his 47-pound bag he responds by reminding her what would happen if everyone cheated: "If I tried to get away with it then other people'd get away with it-and pretty soon we'd be right back to the dark ages again, with everybody competing against everybody else. You wouldn't like that, would you?"<sup>1</sup> Vonnegut's story is a cautionary tale that tells today's youth that everybody is *not* equal, nor should they be made so. Teenagers often confuse equal rights with equal abilities. In the struggle to define themselves, young people assert their notions of individuality. Ever notice how teens write their names everywhere? Their notebooks, the chalkboards, desks, the backs of their hands, and even in tattoos their names are emblazoned in an effort to leave a mark, like dogs marking their territories.

Harrison Bergeron's personal outcome is unvictorious but he goes down fighting. For one glorious moment he is on top of the world, or as close as he can come to it, dancing with his queen in mid-air. Society exacted the price of death for such flagrant disregard for the rules in order to maintain the carefully designed mediocrity, and Diana Moon Glampers had her day with her shotgun. Quelled for the present, the fact of Harrison Bergeron's uprising offers hope for the future.

In choosing a film to parallel with the Vonnegut story, I found many possibilities (see **Additional Titles**) but I was drawn to *12 and Holding* because of the richness of the characters, the storytelling technique, and the brilliance of the young actors. Harrison Bergeron fought to the end to express his identity; these characters are struggling to forge their identities, and their attempts are strikingly realized in Michael Cuesta's film. My students are teenagers but they will remember being twelve years old and may still struggle with some of the insecurities and other problems of the characters in this film.

*12 and Holding* is the story of four misfits: twins Jacob and Rudy Carges, their overweight friend Leonard, and Malee, a Chinese American whose retreat is a tree house on the twins' property. Three of these 12-year-olds must deal with the onset of puberty with the scars of their childhood freshly ripped open by the death of the fourth of their quartet. Their identities must undergo the usual changes that occur with puberty while dealing with the tragedy of death as well as their own personal identity issues. Malee yearns for a relationship with her absent father to the point of creating a relationship in her mind with a man who has been kind to her. Leonard escaped death only to lose his sense of smell and taste, much to the chagrin of his overweight, food-loving parents, and he deals with his friend's death through a diet and fitness program. Rudy, who survived his twin, deals with the guilt of being alive and the fear that his parents would have wished him to die instead of his brother because of what he thinks of as a gross deformity, the port wine birthmark covering much of his face.

When two bullies, Kenny and Jeff, firebomb the tree house at night unaware that Jacob and Leonard are inside, the effects of the crime ripple outwards accordingly. Rudy is now the surviving twin. Always one to hang back, both because of Jacob's strong personality and of his birthmark, Rudy is now in the unenviable position of the surviving child. With the loss of Jacob, the quartet unravels with varying effects on the three friends as well as the two bullies.

Leonard Fisher survived the conflagration because Jeff went back and dragged him to safety. His lasting effect

is the loss of his sense of smell. As the most overweight and unfit kid his gym teacher has ever known, Leonard's olfactory loss affects his appetite, and with some encouragement from his teacher, he begins to work out and eat more healthy food. This is much to the chagrin of his parents and two younger sisters who all eat enough for several people. They don't understand what he's doing, and while this is a serious situation, most of the humor in the film comes from the puzzlement of Leonard's parents and sisters.

Malee Chuang, the only girl in the group, is a Chinese American with a divorced mother who is a psychiatrist. Malee develops a crush on Gus, one of her mother's patients. Malee's yearning for her absent father gives way to her imagined romance with Gus. He also unwittingly provides the means through which Rudy is able to carry out his plan later on.

Both Kenny and Jeff are sent to juvie where their only visitor is Rudy. At first, Rudy taunts them both and Jeff, wracked with guilt, hangs himself in his cell. His brother tolerates Rudy's visits because they break the monotony. One act disrupted the lives of six twelve-year-olds, killing one of them, and affecting the lives of their families and friends. Both bullies are eliminated because of their actions as well, one through suicide caused by his inability to deal with the guilt, and the other through an avenging act of execution.

When is killing morally acceptable? Is it ever? Vonnegut's tale is a cautionary one for the reader, suggesting that the effort to attain equality for all citizens has resulted in the oppression of the individual's intelligence, talent, and beauty. The question that remains is a moral one, and that is the question of civil rights. *12 and Holding* poses a more intricate weaving of character relationships and the resourcefulness of the three children to find meaning in their lives.

Anthony J. Cipriano's screenplay introduces the viewer to a foursome of preteens who seem to have little in common; twins Jacob and Rudy are the core with Leonard seeming to be the stereotypical fat kid and Malee the outcast "different" kid, being of Asian ethnicity. School figures into the film only incidentally, on three occasions: notably, Malee's concert where she performs a song specifically for Gus, Leonard's encounter with the gym teacher, and Jacob's empty seat in front of Rudy at the beginning of the new school year.

Through some very demanding processes, both Malee and Leonard mature; they shed parts of their younger selves, emerging from the cocoon of childhood. Leonard begins to lose some weight and Malee starts to use makeup. At the end of the film the viewer feels hopeful about their futures. With her mother's help, Malee is able to redirect her energies; Leonard's wake-up call to the fragility of life is aided by his nurse and his coach, but it is he who propels himself toward a healthier life for himself and his family.

Harrison Bergeron chose to go out with a bang; his triumph was short-lived but he showed that pushing forward one's identity is the only way to be true to oneself and one's destiny. In the case of these two examples, the story and the film, identity is shown to be the definition of human life.

Rudy is a much more difficult character to resolve. His family is affected the most deeply, understandably, and his stake in the whole affair is greater than the others. He is tortured by the loss of his twin, feeling a range of conflicting emotions from bereavement and loss to anger and hunger for revenge, to the burden of guilt as the survivor, and most terribly, the relief of no longer having to be second to his brother.

Rudy's decision to eradicate the bullies is not immediately evident to the viewer. His visits to the juvie center seem to be motivated merely to taunt the boys; indeed, it is Jeff, the unwilling accessory in his elder brother's plan to firebomb the tree house who suffers. It was he who managed to drag Leonard far enough away from the conflagration, assuring his survival, and it is he who is consumed with guilt from the deed.

Rudy's ultimate decision to shoot the bully is not clearly telegraphed to the viewer. As a tortured survivor, he is certain that his parents would have preferred that he, the disfigured twin, had died instead of Jacob. Rudy's desire to run away from home with the bully seems genuine. Kenny has already said that not even his mother has come to visit him in juvie. When they discuss running away, Kenny remarks that no one will even notice he's gone. This is prophetic in that his disappearance will not elicit any search for him. Rudy's suggestion to accompany Kenny seems genuine until he pulls the gun, so fortuitously supplied by Malee. The director reassures the viewer that Rudy's crime will remain undiscovered through the shot of the construction company pouring the foundation right on top of Kenny's body.

What can be learned from this and how does it fit into the overarching theme of The Individual and Society as well as the secondary theme of Identity assigned to this story? A discussion comparing the story to the film will follow along with the review of the video viewing forms (see **Appendix B**). Vonnegut shows the danger of society usurping the individual's right to Identity and the society's edict to eradicate anyone who will not accommodate the government mandated "equalizer." *12 and Holding* poses the question of how to deal with the hole left in the lives of survivors. This was unnecessary in Vonnegut's tale because neither George nor Hazel had the mental faculties to remember much. The lesson is that while it is a struggle, two of the three surviving children manage to arrive at the next stage of their development. Rudy, the third survivor, and closer to his dead twin than anyone else, has more complex problems and his conviction to punish the bullies is the only way that he will allow himself to feel free from his emotional torture. Ask the students what they think will happen next. Ask them if the adolescents in *12 and Holding* are related to Harrison Bergeron or if there is a possible sequel to "Harrison Bergeron?" What about the futures of the characters in *12 and Holding*? Ask the students if they can imagine Leonard, Malee, or Rudy in five years' time. These ideas might be incorporated into their Culminating Project.

It is unsettling, this ending. As an adult viewer, it is disturbing to think of a 12-year-old boy executing his twin's killer, in a cold-blooded, pre-meditated manner, and getting away with it. While Malee and Leonard are headed through puberty with direction and the support of their families, Rudy has withdrawn; he is "holding," stuck in time while his friends move on. Having lived in the shadow of Jacob his entire life, he is lost without him.

The R rating of the film is primarily because of the content and the violence. There is no gratuitous violence, though. There is also a scene in which one of the male characters is in the shower and he is shown from the back. Previewing these shots should allow teachers to determine how to deal with them in their classrooms.

Discussing the rights and wrongs of manipulating the lives of others is directly related to the theme of The Individual and Society and the whole concept of Identity. Does one's personal identity supersede the good of society? Probably not. What happens to individuals who impose their ideologies and agendas on others? If the result is the death of others, the perpetrator is apprehended and jailed or executed. If it is a matter of infringement of rights, other consequences may apply. For instance, in "Harrison Bergeron" the civil liberties of the citizens have been severely compromised; laws have been passed curtailing them. In Vonnegut's world of 2081 there are over 200 amendments to the Constitution. How far can we go? How far can the individual go or should s/he go to combat this kind of government? How much should society impose on its citizens?

### **Fidelity in "No Witchcraft for Sale" and Into the West**

Review the definition of fidelity that you introduced at the beginning of the unit. Expand on the theme with examples of different types of fidelity: personal relationship, family, team, club, community, nation. Post all of these ideas on chart paper or a bulletin board for referral while reading.

Before beginning the story, I always review the structure of Stasis/Instability/New Stasis<sup>2</sup> as a basis for this story's structure. Adam and Eve's story, a part of our common cultural literacy, is the prime example of the foreign element contaminating the paradise, introducing the instability, and causing a new stasis. Whether or not the new stasis is an improvement on the original is debatable in some instances. While the Adam and Eve story is generally accepted to have a satisfying conclusion with the establishment of the new stasis, not all stories are determined to be improved by the intrusion of the agent that necessitates the new stasis. This will be determined by the students after reading the story.

In Doris Lessing's short story of white farmers in Rhodesia, circa 1934, the importance of fidelity to one's culture is paramount. After the child of his employers is attacked and nearly blinded by snake spit, Gideon, the native cook of the white family, quickly and efficiently supplies the antidote that prevents blindness. Following this seemingly miraculous event, word gets around, and soon a scientist arrives to learn the secret of the antidote to bring the cure to the world-and turn a tidy profit. The Farquars, Gideon's employers, are happy to think of the cure being made available to the rest of the world but are less thrilled with the talk of profit, being Christian: "Their feelings over the miracle (that was how they thought of it) were so strong and deep and religious, that it was distasteful to them to think of money."<sup>3</sup> Sensing this, the scientist switches his tactic back to the good that will be done for mankind.

Gideon faces the dilemma of how to keep his native cure a secret without openly defying his employers. Rather than disclose the source of the antidote, Gideon first feigns ignorance and then leads the family and scientist on a grueling five-mile walk pretending to look for the plant, culminating in his grabbing a handful of common flowers and handing them off to the scientist. There is a way things are done in this culture and the Farquars (white people) just don't get it. It takes another of their servants to explain to them Gideon's standing in their local community: "Now there's a doctor for you. He's the son of a famous medicine man who used to be in these parts, and there's nothing he cannot cure." This is followed up by the disclaimer: "Of course, he's not as good as the white man's doctor, we know that, but he's good for us."<sup>4</sup>

Fidelity to his culture superseded Gideon's loyalty to his employers, people for whom he'd worked for quite a while. His reputation in his community was well-known, yet to the Farquars he was just a cook who doted on their son and behaved like a good Christian. While it is true that the marketing of the antidote could help others, it would have destroyed the village; industry, with white scientists swarming everywhere and upheaval of the vegetation would have overwhelmed and upset the balance. The indigenous population could assimilate one family, the Farquars, and coexist with very little disruption to their own lives, but inviting in the rest of the world was unthinkable. Besides, where else would this antidote be needed? Maybe it was only effective right where it grew, where the snakes lived, and nowhere else. Ultimately, each person must do as he or she sees fit and proper. Allegiances are strong and difficult to break, and honor is a must in any culture that hopes to retain its integrity.

To continue with the second theme under the heading of The Individual and Society, that of Fidelity, I plan to screen Mike Newell's interpretation of writer Jim Sheridan's *Into the West*, which poses the question of how the intrusion of a foreign element disturbs the stasis of any given society. What effect does the instability have on societal structure? Stories from all places and ages thrive on regaining or restructuring a new stasis, demonstrating this urge as a crucial element of human nature. How does this figure into the Fidelity theme? Remaining faithful to what has always been suggests that no new elements be introduced, or if they are, they must be rejected. This is mostly true in the Lessing story. The Farquars were tolerated but the scientist and everything he represented was not because acceptance of that eventuality would be destructive to the environment. The tale Mike Newell brings to the screen utilizes a legend that *seems* to be an intrusion into the



world of the characters but which is really a vehicle that allows the characters to patch up their broken lives and restore the balance they all require.

*Into the West* is a fable that introduces a foreign element that is a desirable one rather than an unwelcome intrusion. Whereas the Farquars in Lessing's story are assimilated into the indigenous culture as much as necessary, Sheridan's story offers the viewer an intruder with a mission. The horse, Tir nan Og (*tear nuh nogue*), has a goal which the grandfather calls forth in the story of Oisín (*O sheen*). Tir nan Og's purpose is to shepherd the lost travelers back to the sea, where the spirit of Mary, the boys' mother reigns. Perhaps Tir nan Og is Mary's spirit.

The opening is a prologue in which Tir nan Og gallops freely along a sandy moonlit shore. At daybreak he presents himself to the grandfather and accompanies the old man back to the settlement near the towers where his son Papa and two grandsons, Tito and Ossie greet him. Posing as part of the Murphy family, Papa and his boys have secured housing and a stipend to get them through the winter. According to the grandfather this is a betrayal of the old ways, the ways of the travelers. Papa had withdrawn from his former life as a traveler after the death of his wife Mary. When the grandfather shows up, Papa tries to calm the wild horse and fails, allowing the viewer to see that he has lost his "gift," as his father astutely points out. Then little Ossie comes along and shows an immediate affinity for the beast that his grandfather calls Tir nan Og. He is then pronounced to have the "gift." Papa's loss of the gift shows that he has lost his connection to the organic world; in fact, he now makes a living doing body work on cars. Following the naming of Tir nan Og, the grandfather tells the story of Tir nan Og and the handsome Oisín who was given the horse by a princess who promised him that if he ever dismounted he would grow old. After a thousand years, Oisín yearned to visit the travelers and upon arriving suffered the misfortune of his saddle breaking, causing him to fall to the ground, age dramatically, and turn to dust. The magic of storytelling is evident in the close attention everyone pays to the grandfather's tale around the campfire, young and old alike. Ossie is particularly moved by the story and is reluctant to dismount to go to bed for fear of growing old.

In Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*, the author outlines thirty-one steps the hero must complete in his quest (see **Bibliography**). Ossie is the hero called to action in this story. Tir nan Og represents the driving spirit that serves as the vehicle for Ossie to satisfy his yearning for his mother. When he and Tito rescue Tir nan Og from the Englishman who has appropriated him to be a racehorse and start on their adventure, our hero, Ossie, is accompanied by his brother; he is too young to go alone, and the provision of Tito allows for dialogue, eliminating the need for the boy to talk to himself or to have complicated voice over thoughts.

In their flight from Tir nan Og's "owner" the boys ramble through the beautiful countryside, ever west, with Tir nan Og taking them exactly where he wants them to go. Several of Propp's heroic steps are completed on this physical journey. An interesting element here is the layering of an additional theme, that of Papa's emotional as well as geographical journey through his grief so that he can finally let go his obsession with Mary. It's as though Tir nan Og knows that Papa's reversal and change will naturally follow since the man will pursue his sons. This secondary journey also provides a satisfying ending, as seen by Papa's burning of Mary's caravan. His private gesture of throwing the photo of her into the flames symbolizes the release of her spirit and frees him from the torment he's carried for so long. Tir nan Og's job is done and he disappears back to the land under the sea where legend says he lives. Ossie nearly accompanies him but is rescued by a female helping hand and is allowed to return to his family. Her flowing hair, fine bracelet, and manicured hand suggest she is the princess of grandfather's tale. When Ossie comes to the first thing he says is, "I saw her."

So are these events real or imagined? And does it matter? How does this restoration compare and contrast to

one's roots and the integrity of the society?

In reviewing the film along with the video viewing sheets, discussion can be generated that will further explore the theme of *Fidelity*. Students can offer their own ideas of fidelity and to whom they pledge their allegiance. Discussion about when fidelity is good or bad may emerge, as well as ideas for their culminating project stories.

In the **Additional Titles** section, two other films are offered that could be of benefit in this study and teachers may wish to screen clips of them. If there is extra time available or if only "No Witchcraft for Sale" is to be taught, consider these examples. Claire Denis' 1988 *Chocolat* shows the bond between a young French girl and the Cameroon cook employed by her family. In this piece, the child's trust is betrayed in contrast to the child/adult relationship in Lessing's story. In Germany's *Nowhere in Africa*, director Caroline Link shows how a Jewish family escapes Nazi Germany to spend the war in Kenya. The ability of their daughter to assimilate African ways is interesting. Rather than depicting a struggle between cultures in which one character is wronged or betrayed, this film shows each family member working through his/her feelings about being in Kenya and missing Germany. This film is too adult to screen in the classroom but clips from it may be helpful, particularly showing the young daughter interacting with the Kenyan children.

### **Conformity- "Initiation" and Vitus**

Sylvia Plath's story is of the yearning to belong. In Millicent's American high school in the 1950s, the pinnacle of social stardom is to be invited to join the exclusive sorority. Her reflections shortly before the final initiation ceremony provide the flashbacks that set up the climax of the story. Sylvia Plath sets up the reader at the onset of the narrative with Millicent awaiting her final confirmation as a "sister." Sitting blindfolded in a basement, bits of dried raw eggs clinging to her hair, Millicent reflects on the events of the pledge period; this reconstruction of what has happened guides the reader through the positive and negative consequences of pledging.

The excitement is evident in the descriptions of the little embarrassing things the pledges must do, from not wearing any lipstick and not styling their hair, to walking up and down the aisle on a bus asking people what they eat for breakfast. Millicent feels proud of the way others at school notice her during pledge week, thinking that she's made it, finally. The only thing nagging at her is the fact that her best friend Tracy wasn't asked to pledge, but she manages to put that aside during the exciting pledge period.

The epiphany occurs when Millicent is on the bus. After receiving many boring,

everyday answers to her breakfast question from good-natured passengers she is pleasantly surprised by one man's quick response: "Heather birds' eyebrows on toast." Taken aback, Millicent can't help but exclaim, "What?" to which the man replies that these birds live on mythological moors and spend all day singing besides which, they're bright purple and have very tasty eyebrows. Following that encounter, Millicent begins to look at life differently. She realizes that people aren't all supposed to be alike and that the ones who aren't trying to conform are often a lot more interesting. Her realization is complete with this, "So many people were shut up tight inside themselves like boxes, yet they would open up, unfolding quite wonderfully, if only you were interested in them. And really, you didn't have to belong to a club to feel related to other human beings."<sup>5</sup>

While belonging is as much a part of growing up as being an individual is, there is a point at which too much of either one can be unhealthy. Millicent realizes this and finds a new happiness within herself. This story shows

how people in Western culture often get their priorities skewed when choosing how much to conform. It is vital to be able to conform to some of societies demands; conformity is a necessity in society; laws protect society's citizens and some agreement on how to behave is crucial. Too much conformity, however, chokes creativity and individuality.

Viewing *Vitus*, a delightful film from Swiss filmmaker Fredi M. Murer, will extend this idea. This tale of nonconformity and decisions is concocted of a mix of languages, characters, and talents that add to the complexity and makes up strands of meaning that include the language of music as well as the language of interpersonal relationships. This is illustrated specifically in the bond between Vitus and his grandfather. This film is the only one that requires students to read subtitles, but as it is the final one in the unit, students should be ready.

Four-year-old Vitus is asked to play for his parents' friends at an party in their home. Sensing the attitudes of the adults, he begins by playing "Lightly Row," a beginner's piece, eliciting patronizing smiles from adults who don't expect much from him. After suckering them in, he quickly switches to Schumann's "Wild Rider" and enjoys the jaw-dropping reaction of the hitherto smug adults.

The relationship with his grandfather, played by the great Bruno Ganz, is not predicated on his musical abilities; his grandfather simply loves him. This unconditional love is what children need most. Parents want what is best for their children, and in pursuing this goal, some parents focus their energies on the child's future instead of enjoying him in the present and merely loving him. Vitus' parents, excited about his future, treat him as a commodity. They love him, but to the child it appears that they love his gift, not him.

Soon, pressure to excel in school is applied to the boy "genius." What recourse does a child have when this kind of pressure is put on him? Does he step up to the plate? Dig in and refuse? Run away? What is the best solution? Vitus decides *not* to conform but he doesn't do it through refusal like Millicent plans to do when "Initiation" comes to a close. Instead, he stages an accident, leading his parents and doctors to believe that he suffered some brain trauma. He exhibits memory problems. He can't zip through algebra anymore. He doesn't play the piano anymore. He has become a normal boy.

Vitus' parents are at a loss. Not knowing how to deal with an average child causes a lot of tension in the house. Vitus' time with his grandfather, however, is unchanged because his gift had nothing to do with the relationship. One day, the grandfather discovers Vitus playing the piano brilliantly and Vitus' secret is out.

While Millicent's story stops at the moment of deciding she will not conform, the longer tale of Vitus allows the viewer to see just how it will all play out. After staging his accident and achieving his goal of being a normal boy, Vitus begins to enjoy life without the pressure to perform. He runs across his former babysitter and reconnects with her. She still thinks of him as a child but he has outdistanced her intellectually in the intervening years. He keeps up the charade of having been injured in the "fall" while coming up with a business plan to make himself and his grandfather rich-the stock market. Vitus' decision to drop out of society to avoid the demands of his talent is one of self-preservation; he cannot and is not willing to compromise his childhood, his time, his goals and desires to fulfill some imagined kind of prophecy for his future success as a world-famous concert pianist.

How much conformity is indicated in any given situation? Of course, the answer will be "it depends." More important is whether or not conformity is good or bad; one should consider the comfort zone of the individual and when the conformity is helpful or necessary and when it is an infringement.

The triumphant close to the film celebrates the reemergence of Vitus into the music world. He has *chosen* to become a world class musician rather than being nudged into it. He has reconnected with his early crush, and although grandfather has passed away, Vitus' affinity for the man endures beyond his death.

## Reflection

All of the stories and films have overlapping themes and students can identify these as they mingle and move to the forefront throughout each story, demonstrating how the elements of Identity, Fidelity and Conformity (under the umbrella of the Individual and Society) occur and intersect within the stories and films. At this point, students will have a wealth of examples from which to work. They will be able to write their own stories with the overall theme of the Individual and Society and can also incorporate or iris in on one of the three more particular facets of this broad theme. In addition to the intensive viewing guides provided in the appendices, information about several additional films follows for those whose studies may lie elsewhere geographically. All the films and their directors and countries will be offered below.

## Classroom Activities

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This full plan will use 20 class periods (43 minutes) or a month of classes as follows:

For each of the three stories plan 3 days for reading and writing activities and 3 days for film viewing, completions of video viewing forms, and discussion.

Allow two days (or more if necessary) for presentation of the Culminating Project.

Modifications can be made to adapt to fewer days if you simply eliminate one of the stories or the Culminating Project. You can add days by scheduling some of the writing on the final project to take place during class time rather than as homework as I am planning.

Days One through Five-"Harrison Bergeron"

Day One-See **Anticipatory Set** for background information. Read and discuss story and hand out culminating project assignment (see **Appendix A**).

Days Two and Three-Complete any written activities you wish. Any textbook from which you take your stories will have vocabulary and written assignments. McDougal Littell's *The Language of Literature* series does a fine job of this. I would recommend tailoring the vocabulary to suit your students and methods.

Days Four, Five, and Six - View *12 and Holding* using guides in **Appendix B**.

Days Seven through Twelve-"No Witchcraft for Sale" and *Into the West*-as above

Days Thirteen through Eighteen-"Initiation" and *Vitus*-as above

Days Nineteen and Twenty-presentation of projects from **Appendix A**

## Annotated Filmography

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The three films that are the basis of the **Narrative** section are not further annotated here:

*12 and Holding*, USA, Michael Cuesta, 2005, 94 minutes

*Into the West*, Ireland, Mike Newell, 1993, 97 minutes

*Vitus*, Switzerland, Fredi M. Murer, 2005, 123 minutes

## Additional Titles

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To substitute or augment the above films, suggestions are grouped below under *Identity*, *Fidelity*, or *Conformity*. I plan to use these for an after-school international film club.

I have included the age appropriateness following each title, country, director, date, subtitled or English, and running time.

### Identity

*Snow White: The Fairest of Them All*, Canada, Caroline Thompson, 2001, 93 minutes, English, Any grade

Starring Miranda Richardson, this Canadian production is truer to darker versions of the story. The seven dwarfs are colors of the rainbow and days of the week and the prince is turned into a bear. The theme remains the same; don't try to change who you are or eliminate those you believe are in your way. This could be fit into the Conformity section as well.

*Central Station*, Brazil, Walter Salles, 1998, 106 minutes, subtitled, Middle or High School

An older woman who writes letters at the train station for the illiterate suddenly finds herself accompanying a young boy on a quest to find his father after the sudden death of his mother. An interesting twist in this story of our young hero searching for his identity is that his chaperone learns something about herself as well.

*Ponette*, France, Jaques Doillon, 1996, 95 minutes, subtitled, Middle or High School

Amazing four-year-old Victoire Thivisol won a best actress award for her portrayal of a grieving child whose mother died in a car crash. Her journey through grief is poignantly told through her attempts to come to terms with her loss in the following months. Identity can be forged at a very young age and adaptation to loss does not differ much regardless of how old one is or where one lives.

*The Color of Paradise*, Iran, Majid Majidi, 2000, 90 minutes, subtitled, Any grade

A young blind boy is barely tolerated by his widowed father yet he finds beauty in life, ultimately teaching his father that beauty is everywhere and that one's corporeal limitations do not have to prevent him from reveling in life. This could also fit into the Fidelity section as the father learns that his son is an integral part of his world.

Yeelen (Brightness), Mali, Souleymane Cisse, 1987, 105 minutes, subtitled, Advanced High School (some nudity)

Young adult Nianankoro and his mother are pursued by his evil father Soma, who searches for them using a magic rod which leads them on their way. Nianankoro's mother cautions her son that Soma is a terror and must be avoided. She gives him a fetish and a magic eye and commands him find his father's twin and deliver the magic eye that will reveal the truth in a showdown. Cisse found real people rather than actors to tell the tale of the young man's self-discovery and realization of his destiny. The film ends with the viewer wondering whether Nianankoro's progeny will choose to be good like his father and great uncle or evil like his grandfather.

*The Girl Who Sold the Sun*, Senegal, Djibril Diop Mambety, 1999, 45 minutes, subtitled, Any grade

Young Sili, ever-cheerful, makes her way on crutches through the day selling the daily newspaper, *Le Soleil*, and both sharing and enjoying the earnings. Her spirit carries her through all situations and the viewer is certain that she will endure. Individuality carries its own responsibilities to society.

*Times and Winds*, Turkey, Reha Erdem, 2006, 111 minutes, subtitled, High School

On the hillsides of rural Turkey, three teenagers seem to drift laconically through days punctuated by the call of the imam at measured intervals. Each deals with a different difficulty, one being that the son of the imam hates his father and prays for his death. When unencumbered by other duties, the children seem to spend a lot of time dozing on the hillsides. This one is interesting for its look at puberty from a country not often viewed by Westerners.

*Motel*, USA, Michael Kang, 2005, 75 minutes, English, High School

Michael Kang delivers the angst of a chubby, thirteen-year-old Chinese American boy with thick glasses as he trudges through his days, bullied by schoolmates, made to work as a "maid" in his mother's cut-rate motel, and yearning for love. Our hero suffers all the longings and indignities of puberty until a fatherly drifter comes along who takes helps him deal with the anger and frustration of his situation. Young Ernest inspires both pity and humor as he is buffeted through this turbulent period of development. Preview the scene where the boy finds a girlie magazine before deciding to screen it in the classroom.

*Gattaca*, USA, Andrew Niccol, 1997, 106 minutes, English, Middle or High School

Can one change his or her identity? In the future, iris scans, fingerprinting accompanied by blood samples, and urine samples have all become standard identifiers. A genetically disadvantaged man hires a DNA broker to enable him to pursue his dream of becoming an astronaut. This coming-of-age story shows the ingenuity of the human spirit along with the compassion inherent in the human race. This film could also fit into the Fidelity section.

## **Fidelity**

*Keita: Heritage of the Griot*, Burkina Faso, Dani Kouyate, 1994, 94 minutes, subtitled, Middle or High School

The paradigmatic griot film, *Keita* gives the viewer a look at modern-day life in Burkina Faso and embeds the story of the griot within this context. The young boy must learn his heritage and place in society from the griot who comes to instruct him. The film reminds Western viewers that individuality and society have different meanings in other parts of the world and that everyone has a valued role in this society.

*Abouna*, Chad, Mahamat-Saleh Haroun, 2004, 84 minutes, subtitled, Middle or High School

The breakdown of the family unit interrupts the flow of life for two brothers and their mother when their father leaves them. Haroun shows how family structure is crucial to the development and maturation of children. Identity is also an important theme in this film.

*Not One Less*, China, Zhang Yimou, 2000, 106 minutes, subtitled, Any grade

In rural China, a thirteen-year-old farm girl is recruited to teach first through fourth grades for one month to 28 children while their teacher is away. Before he leaves, the teacher promises the girl a bonus if when he returns there is "not one less" student. When a particularly troublesome boy leaves for the city hoping to find work, our heroine determines to take off after him to bring him back with no idea what she'll find.

*Chocolat*, France (Cameroon), Claire Denis, 1988, 106 minutes, subtitled, High School

One graphic comparison to the lifestyle described by Doris Lessing is Claire Denis' 1988 *Chocolat* (not to be confused with the Juliette Binoche/Johnny Depp film). The title is a slang term for "to be had,"<sup>6</sup> and that's what happens to several of the characters. Ten-year-old France is living in Cameroon in an outpost where her father serves as a government official. Her close relationship with their cook Protee is disrupted by her mother and Protee takes it out on France, betraying her trust and causing a burn that results in a permanent scar. The integrity of the community is torn and cannot be mended.

*Kirikou and the Sorceress*, France, Michel Ocelot, 2000, 74 minutes, subtitled, also in English, High School (animated nudity)

This animated tale shows that little can beat big much in the same way that David beat Goliath. Kirikou sets out to defeat the Sorceress, following the same type of storyline outlined by Vladimir Propp (see **Bibliography**). The village has suffered in its wait for a savior, and when Kirikou is born he declares himself to be that savior.

*Nowhere in Africa*, Germany, Caroline Link, 2001, 141 minutes, subtitled, Advanced High School -nudity and sexual situations

A Jewish family of three flees Germany and Hitler to escape the persecution of the Jews. Settling in Kenya, the daughter grows up beginning to adopt many native ways until her parents send her to boarding school where she excels in all her studies. The lesson is that one can assimilate the lifestyle of another culture and still remain faithful to one's roots.

*The Secret of Roan Inish*, Ireland, John Sayles, 102 minutes, English, Any grade

Sayles transplanted a little-known Scottish tale to Ireland to weave a legend about selkies, seals who can take human shape. Told from a young girl's perspective, the story takes the viewer on a journey of self-awareness, family mystery, legend, and rediscovery. What Fiona's youth enables her to accomplish is her belief that there are no hopeless causes, allowing for the reunification of the Coneely family with the island Roan Inish and the seals, and restoring the unity of man and nature.

*Whale Rider*, New Zealand, Niki Caro, 2003, 101 minutes, English, Any grade

When young Pai is denied the opportunity to become leader of her Maori people because she is female, she sets out to demonstrate her worthiness, showing how the integrity of the society can be kept intact with her as their leader.

*Hyenas*, Senegal, Djibril Diop Mambety, 1992, 113 minutes, subtitled, Advanced students in High School

This story of calculated revenge is a retelling of Frederic Durrenmatt's *The Visit*, a German play in which a rich woman returns to her impoverished village promising riches to all if they will just complete one small task: kill the man who wronged her and was responsible for her exile. Senegal provides the mystique of hyenas and other animals and the local beliefs that humans can assume the shape of an animal. Like the citizens in Harrison Bergeron's world, these people are willing to sacrifice the outcast, the one most unlike the majority, in order to preserve the way of life to which they have become accustomed.

## **Conformity**

Noi, the Albino, Iceland, Dagur Kari, 2004, 93 minutes, subtitled, Middle or High School

In Dagur Kari's character study, our eponymous hero is an outcast at home, school, and in his bleak and tiny Icelandic community. If he had been eradicated like Harrison Bergeron, the rest of the citizens would have just gone on, plodding through their ho-hum existences, probably not missing him, but Fate freed him. In true situational irony, an earthquake kills everyone close to him, leveling his house but leaving him alive and unscathed to be unearthed by crews searching the devastation. Liberated from those bonds, Noi is free to explore life undefined by the expectations of those who knew him, making this one also a possibility for inclusion under Identity.

Mother India, India, Mehboob Khan, 1957 172 minutes, subtitled, Elementary or Middle School for clips, or High School

In India's classic 1957 drama, filmmaker Mehboob Khan chronicles the life of an ordinary woman. Her rebellious son Burji is depicted as a high-spirited and demanding child. These qualities spell his doom in adulthood when he defies society's mores and attempts to kidnap a bride. His threat to the integrity of the social structure forces his mother must do the unthinkable; she must kill her own son to maintain honor and balance within the community. This act demonstrates her commitment to her world, showing a stark contrast to the prized notion of individuality in the Western world.

*Children of Heaven*, Iran, Majid Majidi, 1999, 88 minutes, subtitled, Any grade

Life is beautiful at its simplest. A young boy accidentally loses his sister's shoes and makes a pact with her to share his shoes so they don't overburden their parents with the problem. The family lives in a small room in which they cook, eat, and sleep, with a community tap in the courtyard. The sister attends school in the mornings and her brother in the afternoons. He meets her at a point between their schools and home. When the boy learns of a foot race with third prize being a new pair of shoes, he can hardly wait.

*Offside*, Iran, Jafar Panahi, 2006, 92 minutes, subtitled, Middle or High School

At a crucial qualifying soccer match, several individual girls try to get into the stadium illegally, only to be spied out by guards and taken "offside" to a cordoned-off area to await transport to the police station. This humorous look at a society shows that while laws differ around the world, human nature is the same. The filming during the actual playoff game is a good joke on the viewer, showing real fans reveling in the real victory. It teaches and entertains while commemorating a national event and stressing the importance of the spiritual mores of the society. Dramatically, even Aristotle couldn't ask for anything more.

***Turtles Can Fly***, Iraq, Bahman Ghobadi, 2005, 98 minutes, subtitled, Advanced students in High School

An individual can be a strong leader and still hold the good of the whole above all. Fifteen-year-old "Satellite" is an electronics whiz who leads a group of orphans in a tent settlement on the border of Iraq and Turkey during Saddam Hussein's reign. His organizational and technical skills help them to survive amidst fear and uncertainty. This stunning film shows real children who bear the physical scars of a war-torn society. This can easily fit into either of the other categories as well.

***No Regrets for Our Youth***, Japan, Akira Kurosawa, 1946, 110 minutes, subtitled, High School

Four friends graduate from college in the 1930s and enter adulthood amidst the turbulence preceding the Second World War. Identity meets change and conflict with society in this thoughtful drama. One's identity is sacrificed to the good of the society and this conformity determines their destiny, making this film a candidate for all three categories.

Nobody Knows, Japan, Hirokazu Koreeda, 2005, 141 minutes, subtitled, Advanced High School

Society demands that certain rules and laws be upheld, but what nobody knows, nobody can act upon. Based on true events, this story shows the lives of four siblings who live in a Tokyo apartment without adult supervision. Their attempt to protect their mother



by covering up her absence in order to maintain the family unit works for awhile-until one of them suffers an accident, upsetting the balance they had tried so hard to maintain.

*The King of Masks*, China, Tian-Ming Wu, 1996, 91 minutes, subtitled, Any grade

An aging street performer must pass on his craft to a male heir, and lacking one, buys and orphan. When he discovers that his new "grandson" is female he rejects her and she works to regain his affection and her place as the next generation's mask performer. Identity is a determining factor here as well as the old man's dedication to his craft and fidelity, so this one can also fit all three categories.

*Viva Cuba*, Cuba, Juan Carlos Cremata Malberti, 2005, 80 minutes, subtitled, Elementary or Middle

This is a real "kid" film in which the director has fun with his young actors. Cultural disparity is the problem and the two kids take matters into their own hands in an effort to teach the adults that socio-economic class shouldn't matter.

## Annotated Bibliography

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*Asian Cinema: A Field Guide*. Tom Vick. New York: Collins. 2007.

This is a good place to start to examine Asian cinema. The title really says it all.

*A Chacun son Griot*. Valerie Thiers-Thiam. Paris: L'Harmattan. 2004

Taken from the saying "chacun a son gout" (each to his own taste), Thiers-Thiam's exploration of the griot and his universality examines the how and why of the griots and how they differ from historians. Utilizing both *Keita* and *Soundiatta*, to illustrate her theory, the author suggests that both are necessary figures to be utilized as each culture's needs demand.

*The Cinema of Globalization: A Guide to Films About the New Economic Order*. Tom Zaniello. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press. 2007.

Zaniello examines the industry on a global level, helping the modern reader to understand the place of film in the economy of recent years.

*Film: A World History*. Daniel Borden, Florian Duijens, Thomas Gilbert, Adele Smith. New York: Abrams. 2008.

A primer for those new to the study of film, this book offers an overview of global cinema.

*Foreign Affairs: The National Society of Film Critics' Video Guide to Foreign Films*. ed. by Kathy Schulz Huffhines. San Francisco: Mercury House. 1991.

A great resource for delving into foreign films, concentrating on specific landmark titles.

*The Language of Literature (Blue Level)*. McDougal Littell. USA: Houghton Mifflin. 2002.

This is the textbook for tenth grade and includes all three stories with vocabulary, study and discussion questions, and projects.

*Morphology of the Folktale*. Propp, Vladimir. Rev. and ed. By Louis A.

Wagner. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968.

An examination of the chain of events common to all folktales.

The Penguin Book of Scottish Folktales. Neil Philip, ed. London: Penguin. 1995

Among the many tales is the traditional story of the selkie who lived with a human and bore him children, only to return to the sea upon finding her hidden seal skin.

*Sundiata: Epic of Old Mali*. Niane, D. T. Longmans. 1965

The story of the griot is the basis for all the oral traditions in this culture.

*The Uses of Enchantment*. Bettelheim, Bruno. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976.

The ultimate text in examining the psychology of the fairy tale and its effect on child development.

## Appendices

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Teachers, I am not including basic worksheets on vocabulary and figurative language, etc. as I expect you already have them, but if you need help with any of these they can be readily found online.

### Appendix A

#### Culminating Project Assignment

For your culminating project you will write an original short story that uses one of themes in our study of *The Individual and Society*. You may choose to write in the style of one of the authors we've read or in another style. You may also choose to continue one of the stories and tell about what happens to one or more of the characters in his or her future. Keep in mind that your story must show how one or more of your characters solves a problem concerning his or her **identity, fidelity** to his or her group, or decision to commit to **conformity** to society or not. This will be treated as a Full-Process Writing Assignment with grades based on each step of the process. Your Prewriting (15 points) may be in the form of any of the graphic organizers we've explored or of your own device. The First Draft (25 points) will be written neatly in ink or typed and given to your Peer Responder with the appropriate Peer Response Sheet (10 points). Following your revision, you will turn in all four documents for me to read. When you receive your work back from me you will have one week to finish a Final Draft (50 points) and turn in the entire packet.

### Appendix B

Video viewing-the forms provided can be copied and used for all three films or adapted for other films.

#### *Video Viewing Sheet for Day One*

1. How does the film demonstrate the theme in the short story? Does it work? Choose an example and explain whether or not you support the filmmaker's choices.

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2. How would you describe the music and the way it is used to someone who had not seen the film? What does the composer do that is effective? How does this help the story and your understanding of what is happening?

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3. Which character (s) do you like and why? Which character (s) do you dislike and why?

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*Video Viewing Sheet for Day Two*

(Add lines for this sheet as above.)

1. How does the music reflect the action? Can you tell what is about to happen through the music? Can you identify any of the instruments?
2. Does color have any importance in the film? Does the filmmaker use any specific colors or color combinations to tell the story? What do you think the colors represent?
3. What can you say about the actors' depictions of the characters? Do they compare favorably with your impressions from reading the story? Which do you like better, and why?
4. Have your feelings or opinions about any of the characters changed since yesterday's viewing? Explain why and how.

*Video Viewing Sheet for Day Three*

(Add lines for this sheet as above.)

1. How is the music helping to define the tone of the action? Identify a particular scene in which the music is effective.
2. Have you changed your opinion about the characters (actor portrayals) you liked and disliked since watching first two days? Offer examples and explain.
3. Does the action seem more real and moving when you see it compared to when you read it? Why do you think this is so?

4. Now that you've seen the end of the film what is your overall impression? Would you recommend the film to anyone? Who and why?

## Standards

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Pennsylvania Content Standards for Communications: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking-All students: 1. use effective research information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies. 2. read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts. 3. respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems. 4. write for a variety of purposes, including narrate, inform, and persuade, in all subject areas. 5. analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence. 6. exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications. 7. listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify the purpose, structure and use. 8. compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform or describe. 9. communicate appropriately in business, work and other applied situations.

## Notes

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1. Vonnegut, Kurt, "Harrison Bergeron" in *The Language of Literature*, 23
2. This way of looking at the novel is credited to the great teacher and Faulkner scholar Olga Vickery who imparted the method to my own graduate school professor Dr. Ronald Schumacher. This citation is personal recollection.
3. Lessing, Doris, "No Witchcraft for Sale" in *The Language of Literature*, 153
4. Lessing, Doris, "No Witchcraft for Sale" in *The Language of Literature*, 155
5. Plath, Sylvia, "Initiation" in *The Language of Literature*, 405
6. Sandars, Diana, <http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/cteq/01/17/chocolat.html>

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<https://teachers.yale.edu>

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