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Abstract

Millions of movies have been made; too many for anyone to have watched, let alone evaluate (*Rotten Tomatoes* notwithstanding) even if there were a consensus of criteria for doing so. What we can do is refer to those movies which have won recognition in the form of the most prominent awards, while admitting that the titles chosen may be neither all-inclusive nor deserving. After using movies as English educational materials over five decades (from the days of reel-to-reel only, when to arrange showing a class meant asking a film company to loan cans to a college, until the 2020s, when nearly any movie is accessible online) one might expect the choice of ideal titles would expand vastly. Instead, however, the most valid choices still remain in single digits.

While the two chosen for this study, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1976) and *Rain Man* (1988) have been discussed in previous studies (see **References**) we review them from a newly focused perspective. The more movies seem to change (especially during this time of pandemic) the more the essential qualities of excellence in plot and cinematography stay the same. Some subsequent stories rival these titles, of course. Despite our age of great diversity, when more and more television series break barriers of excellence once monopolized by movies, many recent achievements would have been unlikely or impossible 40 or 50 years ago. Even if they had been, the timeless excellence of the two films chosen could be copied but maybe never overtaken.

Therefore, we take a deeper look at the mechanism that generated their excellence by comparing the key (or trigger) scenes and the outcomes in close up, to focus on exactly what and how *Cuckoo's Nest* (for short) and *Rain Man* grew out of their very verbal origins to become visual virtuosos. Examining the visual transformation of a story's verbal roots can reveal patterns of imagery which we would otherwise continue to be oblivious to. In *Cuckoo's Nest*, the chosen feature occurs just once, but with a fundamental impact on the entire film. In *Rain Man*, the phenomenon appears in almost every scene to become a symbolic leitmotif that powers the movie toward ever deeper insights.

Introduction

Movies start as words. They may pre-exist in the form of a novel, a play, a shooting script, a few notes, a tentative title on a scrap of paper, or just an idea inside someone's head waiting to be realized. Communication is at least two thirds visual, the rest not only verbal. It can include many other features like intonation and eye contact. Translating written ideas from a novel or script into moving images successfully requires a team of talented people and lots of luck.

The process of visualizing (not simply imagining, but letting others see one's vision) the verbal into the viewable is only one step among many. Shaping those words into a sequence of actions and scenes to capture and even transcend reality is like praying for rain in a desert with the whole world in the middle of a drought. Even if successful, viewers may not see it. (For more discussions of using movies in English education see Wood, 1990, 1992 and 1995, and for commentary on visual literacy and film narratives see Wood, 2006a and 2006b.)

Reflections in a Golden Globe

Movies exist somewhere in the continuum between dreams and reality, pushing these book-ends of human existence further apart towards previously uncharted domains. They challenge our visual and linguistic perception to leap beyond the very boundaries of what we knew, felt, saw or heard before the encounter. Each person has his or her own cumulative and ongoing relationship with this art form, which is barely a century old, though its precursors (like magic lanterns) predate it by many centuries. The magic of colored light, and unprecedented size and sound seeming to emanate from other worlds left an indelible imprint on my own internal world seven decades ago, indelible sensations still filling my soul with wonder and the unquenchable drive to know more. The impact is long-term or never-ending, compelling repeated re-viewing

There has been nearly a century of Oscars up to 2021 (the year of this study) with their 93 anniversaries, plus 77 years of Golden Globes. Winning a total of six Golden Globes and Academy Awards in 1989 put the movie *Rain Man* in a prestigious league of the few movies dominating the major awards of their day by dint of their sheer artistry. Following long after the feat was first achieved (*It Happened One Night*, 1934) came *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* in 1976.

Unlike *Cuckoo's Nest* (winner of 5 major category academy awards, plus all Golden Globe categories including Best Picture, Screenplay, Director, Male and Female Leads) based on Kesey's novel of the same name (its perennial popularity shown by the spin off *Ratched*, 2020, a Golden Globe nominee) *Rain Man* was a movie without literary or thematic precedent. This point exposed once again a categorical glitch in the respective award nomenclature. While nominated (but

not chosen for) the Best Screenplay and Best Director Golden Globes, it won both these equivalents among the Oscars. So why the misnomer?

The category for original script as opposed to adaptation from a literary work was not being clearly recognized at the time. The difference between shooting scripts and screenplays is widely confused even now (the former pre-dating the latter, Wood, p.9, 1995) but a defining point in cinematic evolution, between the period when novels predominantly dictated the advent of movies, to one when original shooting scripts grew so much in status, they were recognized as an art form in their own right. Accordingly, Oscars can now be awarded for both.

We will look closely at the part shooting scripts played in *Rain Man*'s genesis (going through multiple versions) noting of course the director's carte blanche in changing either shooting scripts or even original novels to suit his or her vision, though often tempered by the demands of film studios which may lose a fortune on their investments if their products don't attract sufficient viewers.

The exact number of movies ever made may never be known. Not all the countries of origin have statistics when it comes to the number of movies made in theirs, anyway. We can only approximate. Estimates vary from a half a million to over 2 million (IMDb Database Statistics, between 1880 and 2020) and the number will likely increase at a rapid rate, despite the COVID crisis. This includes such genres as TV series, documentaries, video shorts, TV series, specials and miniseries, video documentaries, and so on as newer ones appear.

Award Details for Rain Man

Golden Globe Awards:

Best Drama Motion Picture; Best Actor in a Drama Motion Picture

Academy Awards:

Best Picture;

Best Original Screenplay;

Best Director;

Best Actor

Shooting Script to Silver Screen

What makes one movie better than another, if not any other, is ultimately subjective. It doesn't depend on awards or acclaim. But, when a movie leaves an indelible message or feeling on nearly everyone who watches it, then we may be able to see why if we take a more careful look than on the first viewing. Comparing two golden apples, as it were, of the screen closely, *Rain*

Man and *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, may show why they are so uniquely powerful. What they share is how their central characters come to see themselves with greater understanding than at the outset of their respective stories. This does not mean in the narcissistic way that actors see themselves on the red carpet before and after sweeping awards, but in the way that they achieve deeper perceptions of themselves and those around them by reflecting on their lives.

Attaining this partly visual, partly spiritual vision is their essential triumph, but the visual expression in both cases exceeds their verbal origins. Neither Kesey's novel nor *Rain Man's* shooting scripts hinted at the insights made possible by the cameras, directors, actors, editors and so on - only their artistic collaboration could have crafted and produced such profound revelations.

Charlie (*Rain Man*) and McMurphy (or Mac for short, *Cuckoo's Nest*) refuse to see themselves for what they really are at first, while the people they most affect (Ray and 'Chief Bromden) are unable to see themselves clearly for clinical reasons, until Charlie and Mac enter their lives and eventually lead them through new experiences to reviewing their identities. To begin with, Charlie and Mac are both mere hustlers, only on the hunt for self-gain. They perpetuate these states by trying to deceive others, but ultimately only deceive themselves. They stay locked in these deceptions until they start to feel sympathy and then empathy for those around them, instead of using others for their own gain.

The common denominator between the characters is how their transformation is expressed in visual imagery. (For more on metaphor in movies, see Wood, 2007.) Charlie is reflected in cars, windows, mirrors and photos, but he never seems to see himself for what he is until discovering that he's not an only child. Mac also fails to see the world beyond his own selfish viewpoint at first, showing no interest in his fellow inmates, until he realizes that only he and Chief Bromden are committed, and they will likely stay locked up until they die if the head nurse continues to have everything her own way, unchallenged.

These discoveries set off such a desire to understand and change things (starting with themselves) that it will not abate until they look beyond their opening mindsets. Yet it is the subtle visual nature of these revelations and reactions that raises their stories above the ordinary. All along, Charlie adamantly diverts his gaze from anything that might reveal to him his real self, until the moment of sudden awareness that his long lost brother, Ray, had been a part of his family and taken care of him as a baby late on in the film. This knowledge comes as they stand reflected in front of a mirror and Ray finally shows a photograph of them together from so long before Charlie had forgotten.

As for Mac, after a first failed attempt to release the other patients from the conceptual cells which their minds have been locked in fails (he can't do the impossible by lifting up the 400 pound control panel, symbolizing the weight of authority that he and the others are being crushed under)

he ignites a spark of freedom in them. This was needed to get them to vote against the head nurse's ruling that keeps them from watching the World Series. While she naturally quashes their democratic revolt of voting for change, when Mac sits in front of a blank television screen acting as if he can see the game, his will triumphs as the sense of belief he imbues triggers the defiant strength needed to join him.

In both cases, however, it is only the movie renditions of these events that bring them to life by means of their visual symbolism 'panaching' the moment, as it were, to heights seldom achieved in writing or other movies. This ensured *Rain Man* and *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* their distinction in film history. In other words, when we actually see Charlie and Mac reflected with our own eyes in these scenes (sights maybe suggested but not perceptibly so in their written originals) the windows from the physical world to the spiritual open for us to see, not only inside the actor's heads, but also into our own. In neither the novel nor the shooting script are Mac and the others described as seeing themselves in the blank screen. This unique vision only occurs in the film.

Reflection as Symbolic Leitmotif

The movie *Rain Man's* artistic integrity derives from its symbolic leitmotif of reflection, reminiscent of the television scene in *Cuckoo's Nest* explained below. It went through story changes (countless shooting scripts) story writers (first Morrow only, then Morrow and Bass) and directors (Pollock, Spielberg and Levinson) like whirling dervishes go through twirls, yet somehow retained enough integrity to justify its lengthiness, captivating critics and viewers for over five decades. While it isn't easy to locate the years of wildly changing script versions preceding its final production, a glance at them shows the story was changing shape like quicksilver. The final version (1988, as distinct from the post-film screenplay in the same year) has many of the exquisite details that appear in the movie, but also reveals a major difference to the movie's meaning and essence that made *Rain Man's* journey one from great story to enormous significance in cinematic history, the role of reflection permeating multiple levels to underpin the story's universality. Reflection in the final shooting script may seem a background afterthought. In the movie, it is the very soul of the story, foregrounded again and again, though in such subtle and fleeting ways, audiences may watch many times without even realizing what they are seeing. Take as a starter the movie's opening image of Charlie staring at one sports car descending on its palette reflected in his polished bonnet.

Blink and you may miss its vital importance to the deeper meaning of the movie. The shooting script expends a relatively extravagant 22 lines of narrative description, similar to the screen



play, neither suggesting any reflections. The visual statement of the film's opening seconds in contrast creates a mastery of meaning encased in its angles and perspectives – such elements are not accidental. They are the movie. Brashly colored Italian sports cars descend on a crane from out of a smog-ridden sky, gods of the materialism Charlie (one of two main protagonists) worships, having turned his back on humanity over a relationship-busting argument with his widowed father about – yes, a car. (That point is aggressively confirmed in a scene soon after when he inherits not his father's fat estate, but the very car he once coveted, now seemingly of no use to him.) Keep looking and you'll see in one car Charlie's staring reflection imaged in a car hood's symbol marque, his sunglasses blocking a deeper view. Only his 2-dimensional image appears in this shot, evoking how flat and sad his life's meaning is. You may doubt it's a deliberate plot element (Wood, 2011). Yet the cars' central role dispenses with any notion of randomness in reflections, which recur so frequently at key points, they are crucial to the core.

Charlie's sunglasses (after leaving his old warehouse office in his own car) reflect and reject communication with his girlfriend Suzanna as he adamantly locks himself in his own inner world by refusing to share his thoughts, much to her only to be accepted frustration. A sense of shattered and disconnected communication (which by definition cannot be fake) had started the movie as Charlie, Suzanna and Lenny all deceived or threatened clients, loan companies and so on over their landline extensions in the same cramped office, while visually the three of them seemed quite cut off from each other, with only Charlie's belligerent commands connecting them. They are mere mouthpiece extensions of his twisted ego's will to put self-benefit over honest interaction.

This feeling hardens as he shows no reaction to the car phone's news of his father's death. At the funeral, his absence of emotion is sustained behind his sunglasses as he rushes to get away in

expectation of his father's millions at the will reading. Before that, he takes Suzanna to his family home where two telling events cement the role of reflection – first, he is again mirrored in a car, this time his father's, and then in the house, he reacts angrily after she finds and comments on a photo of Charlie as a child, taken with his father, which, Suzanna argues, seems to show that he must his father was a loving parent.

Photos form a key physical reflection throughout the movie, revealing not only key relationships but also an ongoing reminder of the symbolic leitmotif's importance. Their intensity is powerfully established in this opening volley between the couple. Even more telling is the story Charlie recounts of how he split with his father as a teen when he took the latter's car (the one just reflecting him). Hysterically he denounces it as a rival sibling, as he believes his father loved it literally as "his (only) baby" Charlie having always believed he was an only child. His father tries to discipline him, calling the police to report it as a theft (not even by a family member) he endured two nights' incarceration. He left home for good, never again communicating with his one living parent.

Charlie's secret plan after hearing in the will that he wouldn't be getting a single cent from his father's millions is to search out the unnamed recipient by asking at his father's bank where that person might be. This leads him to a special home (Wallbrook) for those with conditions that make it too hard for them to function in normal society. He grills the head doctor (Bruner) but draws a blank – yet during their conversation in the latter's office, there is a moment when we see Charlie's face reflected in the window against the outside view of his as yet undiscovered brother, Ray, flitting around their father's car.

Ray is carrying a camera, methodically taking pictures of the vehicle, to underscore the reflection leitmotif emphatically. He repeats this activity frequently throughout the movie. In the subsequent scenes, we see again and again examples of his super-human photographic memory, and the final credits are a gallery of his odd film-long snaps. The movie is intricately layered.

When Charlie finds what he believes is just a stranger in his car, he aggressively shouts him out of it, but in that instant, a different level of reflection hits the viewer – Ray recites exactly the same car specs that Charlie gave Suzanna when she first saw the car with him. This marks another gear, as it were, in the rate of reflection in the form of verbal reflection and echoes, coursing all the way through the film, up to and including the very last scene. On this point, what Bruner then tells Charlie about Ray is fundamental to our understanding of the film's trope – how communication (or being unable or failing to achieve it) is the key to everything we see: "He (signifying Ray but even more applicable to Charlie) has a problem communicating and learning. He can't even express himself or probably even understand his own emotions in a traditional way." The doctor is simultaneously describing both brothers' states.

The brothers resemble mirror images in this sense, unable or (at least in Charlie's case) unwilling to communicate their true feelings with the rest of the world. As we learnt at his father's home, this condition is based on his sense of absence of family. The brothers' first meeting, though ill-tempered and unpromising, is a giant first step for both of them. Despite this, Charlie is cold.

Ray's panic repartee of an Abbot and Costello comedy routine ("What's on first, who's on second" which are not questions, but statements about baseball runners so named) signify their movie-long mutual (if not conscious) quest to achieve self-understanding. The apparently random and often repeated recitation in fact thus forms a central part of the story's reflection theme. It reflects how neither of them really know who they or each other are.

Reflection imagery continues its emergence in the background, gradually growing into greater foregrounded prominence. Charlie takes Ray from his institution without permission, deceiving his girlfriend by saying the doctor had advised him to do so. He treats his brother more as a commodity than a human being, essentially confining him to his room in a hotel. After the truth comes out and Suzanna realizes that Charlie had all along just taken Ray for a ride as leverage in an attempt to secure the inheritance money, she can endure Charlie's lies and insensitivity no longer. As she storms out in the middle of the night, we see Charlie's aggressive face reflected in the hotel bathroom mirror.

Though the two brothers are suddenly alone, it is not taken as a chance to get to know Ray better by Charlie, but merely to continue his 'ransom' plans. Yet something is changing in him as he finally seeks help in understanding Ray. Initially, this is only so he can cope with him better until pay-off day, but without knowing it, Charlie's albeit self-serving interest in Ray's condition gradually approaches and matures into genuine concern for his brother, if not himself.

The scene where they visit a small-town doctor for advice is therefore crucial to his development. While calling local doctors from a phone booth, Ray's escape from the car is fleetingly reflected in the booth's glass panes, unseen only by Charlie. To reinforce the weight of the reflection motif, even when they get to the doctor's reception, Ray is still avidly taking pictures with his camera, leading up to the most crucial reflection scene in the movie, by which time the attention Charlie pays to Ray has transformed from cynical reluctance to something resembling true brotherly concern. He thus achieves self-reflection.

Award Details for *Cuckoo's Nest*

Golden Globe Awards:

Best Motion Picture; Best Acting Debut; Best Actor;

Best Actress; Best Screenplay; Best Director

Academy Awards:

Best Picture;

Best Adapted Screenplay;

Best Director; Best Actor;

Best Actress; Best Actor in a Supporting Role;

Best Cinematography;

Best Editing

Reflection in *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*

The pivotal scene in *Cuckoo's Nest* occurs when the all-powerful nurse overturns the will of the patients to reschedule cleaning duties to watch the baseball world series on television, despite the majority of them (who Mac convinces against all the odds) raising their hands to vote to do so. At the moment of defeat, McMurphy uses inspiration to win the day by pretending he's watching the game anyway in front of a blank screen, as the nurse has disconnected the TV. His fellow patients, one by one, abandon their work to gather round him acting out viewing the most exciting moment when an imaginary home run is scored, with all the excited feelings of the real thing.

But it is only their own reflection that they're watching. That triumph of democratic will over institutionalized tyranny epitomizes what is possibly one of the best movie scenes ever produced. Mac (for short) arrived at the psychiatric unit after being kicked out of jail for his anti-social misdemeanors as someone who didn't believe in anything. His newly forming sense of belief digs them out of their fear of authority and suppressed sense of self-worth.

Comparing Kesey's novel (1962) and then Hauben's shooting script (1976) reveals how the movie's inspirational creativity literally flew over its origins. The novel rendering only includes a vague suggestion of the movie scene: "And we're all sitting there lined up in front of that blanked-out TV set, watching the gray screen just like we could see the baseball game clear as day, and she's ranting and screaming behind us. If somebody'd of come in and took a look, men watching a blank TV, a fifty-year-old woman hollering and squealing at the back of their heads about discipline and order and recriminations, they'd of thought the whole bunch was crazy as loons." (pp. 65 to 66)

Next we can see how the scene gathers detail in the shooting script (1975): "(McMurphy continues looking at the blank TV screen as the Acutes look from McMurphy to Big Nurse, not knowing what to do next when --)

McMurphy (jumping up and shouting at the blank TV screen):

A hit! It's a hit! (The Acutes are stunned at McMurphy's outburst.)

Big Nurse (over loudspeaker):

Mr. McMurphy, you are deliberately violating the rules!

McMurphy: He's into his wind-up. Here comes the pitch. Strike on the inside!

(Some patients get up and cross toward the TV. Only one doesn't join them.)

Big Nurse (over loudspeaker): You men remain seated!

McMurphy (focusing in on the screen):

He's into his wind-up. Here's the pitch. It's a hit!

The others (jumping up and down): I saw them!/ Me, too!/ Yes, I see it!

(The other Acutes pick up on him and start shouting at the blank TV screen.)

McMurphy: 'Kay, it's two outs, bases loaded as Koufax steps up to the mound. And it's a fly ball into deep center. Mantle is going back! Back! His back is up against the wall... and... he catches it! He catches it!

(Acutes are shouting, cheering, stomping and dancing in each other's arms.)

Big Nurse: You men stop this! (Her last words overload the intercom and the system peaks out. Her mouth continues to work in frantic circles as her assistants rush to quell the uproar.)" (Pages 62 to 64)

The stage version (Wasserman, 1963) closely follows the novel and shooting script versions. What all three of these written renderings don't include that the movie does have is the perfect visual image of the television screen reflecting Mac and the patients going wild. This additional stroke of cinematography carries the weight of the moment's significance to a new plane by underscoring the power of the imagination to transcend the actual.

Reflecting the transformation in the television screen may have been a seemingly obvious feature to include, but its sheer simplicity intensifies and perfects the impact of the three versions preceding it. First Mac is reflected by himself looking beaten, then reinforcing the visual thrust of the scene's magic, moments later we see his triumphant expression accompanied by Martini (a fellow patient) and the others he wins to his side. Following this scene, we see the patients, especially Chief, returning to humanity. It's a cinematic homerun!

Rewards of Reflection in *Rain Man*

While the expressive portrayal of reflection in the movie visualization of *Cuckoo's Nest* is stunning, it is confined to the masterful T.V. baseball scene. There are instead many other features of the movie (in particular the sporting scenes like basketball, deep-sea fishing and so on, not to mention Chief Bromden's revelation that he can speak and ultimate escape) that its single use in no way detracts from the phenomenal impact of the scene described above. The difference is

Rain Man's surfacing leitmotif of reflection imagery underpins the whole movie, an amazing achievement for a film that travelled over one of the bumpiest production tracks in film history, as indicated above.

A similar spirit of release to *Cuckoo's Nest* is the undercurrent of *Rain Man* and underpins the entire movie. The confinement for Mac was being committed to the psychiatric institute. Ray was a voluntary patient, but his autism confined him at the care home. For Charlie, his hatred for his father, and by extension the whole world, confined him psychologically and emotionally, but after springing Ray, Charlie is himself sprung from his own confinement to despair by the hope of finding a new family with Ray and his girlfriend Suzanna. But that is only possible by reflection, not just in a physical but also a spiritual sense.

The scene that turns the whole movie on its head for Charlie is the direct result of their visit to the small town doctor, from which point on Charlie's former selfishness turns into the full embracing and cherishing of his new found family. At a drive-in motel where they spend a night on the way to L.A., the experience there "turns the movie" (Bass, 2006). The process is visually finessed by use of reflection. The brothers stand in front of a bathroom mirror talking as Ray loudly brushes his teeth. The sequence, though filmed in a single take, couldn't be more demonstrative in its use of the reflection imagery. In rapid succession we see them reflected together then individually, the intensity of the camera angle perfectly echoing their conversation during which learns Ray had actually lived with him and even lovingly taken care of his baby brother, despite his many limitations. Charlie's sole imaginary friend, he finally realizes, was his brother, whose name he had mispronounced as 'Rain Man' instead of Raymond. The shared memory re-establishes their relationship as loving brothers, Charlie subsequently taking care of Ray with real dedication and human warmth. The tragedy of their separation is reinforced after Ray, who has finally come to trust Charlie despite all the latter's recent mistreatment, shows his greatest treasure – an old creased photo of when the two had lived together. When Charlie starts running a bath, Ray has a seismic flashback to the event that sentenced him to Wallbrook – just after their mother had died, and Ray was trying to give his baby brother a bath, a mistake with the water temperature risked scalding Charlie. Immediately after, their father institutionalized him, and never told Charlie. Morrow, Bass' fellow script writer, described the two brothers as "magnets" (2006). They are even more like mirrors of the soul.

In that context, the multifaceted way they reflect one another is the movie's unique achievement. Charlie loses his arrogant self-assuredness, frequently reflecting his older brother's honest admission of his limitations by repeating Ray's movie-long heard mantra, "I don't know". The process is two-way as Ray also adjusts his reality to Charlie's input. For example, we see this in the closing scenes when he reiterates his younger brother's "K-Mart sucks" to Dr. Bruner. Their mu-

tual improvement of each other's communicative range is one of the perfect touches of the movie, reinforced by the way Charlie is able to help Ray communicate (albeit simply) with numbers, the latter's forte. Thus "Two" comes to mean good and "One" bad after their gambling spree allows Charlie to recoup his huge losses from losing the sports car sales. The many other reflections include their identical suits and even Ray's much more fashionable hairstyle. The most immediate sign of Charlie's new-found humility is calling Suzanna immediately after the motel bathroom revelations to beg her forgiveness and admit his own weaknesses. Though she can't immediately accept this huge turnaround, she is audibly moved on the phone and resolves to sleep on the prospect of re-uniting after his terrible conduct had ripped them apart.

The intended content and container of the movie is often ambivalent – is autism the tenor, or just the vehicle, revealing the condition of human nature as witnessed by Charlie's metamorphosis from selfish individual to responsible family member? That in itself is a symbolic reflection. While it may seem like reading too much into the original intent, the mysterious way the movie's unfolding mesmerizes the viewer's absorbed attention up until the final scenes and beyond has accounted for the longevity of *Rain Man*'s relevance and popularity. So much so that the very term 'Rain Man' has become a persistent part of daily language, and the movie viewed many millions of times. What the actual intent was we may struggle to fix under any critical microscope, but the undeniable result is plain to see. It's there in front of our eyes. Of course, whether we actually see it or not is another matter unless we re-view it enough.

Take as a final example the coast-to-coast journey unfolding the vast scenery of American life and landscape. The opening scene's haziness seems like something blocking Charlie's vision. After hearing his father died, showing no emotion, he U-turns a dust cloud from the roadside desert. His father's roses, Suzanna notes, are dying. Indeed the whole montage seems bleak, with sparse gray vistas even evoking the death of human emotion in Charlie's heart and life. Scene by scene, the background becomes greener and more vibrant, highlighted by the victory ride in the once forbidden car his father taunted him with, which now drives his new family (Suzanna, himself and Ray at the wheel) with a lively sunlit spray from the L.A. hotel fountain cascading all around. Subjective or not, such scenes suggest a spirited renewal imbued with hope.

Key Scene Development

While experiencing a movie means assimilating the story in its entirety, like music, there is a crescendo (composed of a nadir and zenith) by which we come to feel it as a whole. Therefore, to perceive this point in any work of art helps us both grasp and appreciate its excellence as a total vision. The central scenes discussed above are the heart of both movies, pumping their respective

life's blood around the plot, and thus bringing their latent essences to life.

A movie's 'DNA' becomes clearer by researching its origins; novel, shooting script or play. Golden Globes are visually worlds wrapped in reels of film strip. Some winners succeed in creating such worlds. Undeniably, *Cuckoo's Nest* and *Rain Man* were two such movies. The exact process is hard to identify and define, but attempting to do so may lead to new insights that inform our understanding both of a movie and ourselves. Although an oversimplification, we can display the mechanism in these two famous films to some extent by summarizing the trigger scenes, the results, the modes of their revelation and the actual changes or benefits to the characters involved in the figure below. In both, reflection means seeing oneself honestly and then trying to improve. (For comprehensive plot development discussion, see Wood 2000 and 2002.)

Comparison of Key Scene Development

Movie	Trigger	Result	Reflection	Value
<i>Cuckoo's Nest</i>	Tub Room	Second Vote	Television	Freedom
<i>Rain Man</i>	Second Doctor	Ray's Photo	Mirror	Family

McMurphy's low point is his discovery that (apart from the "lost causes" like Chief Bromden) he is almost the only non-voluntary patient, meaning his existence is completely at the mercy (or lack thereof) of Head Nurse Ratched. This is followed by the triumph of his spirit over the nurse's when he uses pure will and imagination to bring the others back to life. For Charlie, after his dream of great fortune evaporates (first the car sales and then the inheritance he had set his sights on) his past identity disintegrates. Thereafter, both Mac and Charlie exchange spirits with Chief and Ray in mirroring maneuvers. Chief takes Mac's spirit and escapes, while Charlie passes on \$250,000, winning the love and trust of his brother, Ray, who takes back to Wallbrook Charlie's loving spirit, symbolized by the clothes and small TV, gifts straight from Charlie's heart.

Conclusion

We discussed two movies chosen for this study, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Rain Man*, from a newly focused perspective by examining the mechanism of key (or trigger) scenes and their outcomes in close up, to focus on how they grew out of their very verbal origins into timeless visual virtuosos. Examining the visual transformation of a story's verbal roots can reveal patterns of imagery which we might otherwise not see. In *Cuckoo's Nest*, this chosen feature occurs most explicitly once, but with a critical impact on the entire film. In *Rain Man*, the phenomenon appears in almost every scene to become a symbolic leitmotif that powers the movie toward ever deeper insights.

Communication is at least two thirds visual and the rest not simply verbal. Translating written ideas from a novel or script into moving images successfully means letting others see one's vision shaping words into new dimensions astride dreams and reality, to push both beyond what had been expressed before, and reach past what we have ever known, felt, seen or heard previously.

We investigated the role that shooting scripts and other sources played in the genesis of these two highly acclaimed films, while acknowledging that fame was no solid indicator of true worth. What the two shared was how their central characters came to see themselves with greater understanding than at the outset of their respective stories, in how they achieved deeper perceptions of themselves and those around them by reflecting determinedly on their lives.

Attaining this vision meant exceeding film's verbal origins. Neither hinted at the insights made possible by their movie transformations. The protagonists refused to see themselves for what they really were at first, mere hustlers, while the people they most affected were unable to see themselves clearly for different reasons, until the protagonists lead them to new self-understanding.

The common denominator between the characters was the visual expression of their transformation in the form of imagery, such as their reflections on shiny surfaces. After they had first failed to see their true selves, both came to higher levels of self-realization, enabling them to help the most important people in their lives, whom they had originally taken for granted. Especially in *Rain Man*, this process was so deeply entwined with the whole story that it became a symbolic leitmotif. While we focused only on one key scene employing self-reflection in *Cuckoo's Nest*, the impact was fundamental to the film's meaning.

Reflection in the original written renderings of the two stories may have been in the backs of writers' minds, but in the movies, it is foregrounded again and again, albeit subtly. We may need to watch a great movie repeatedly to finally see such crucial elements plainly. Accordingly, we treated the process in some depth to elicit the true importance that reflective imagery exerts on both titles. This meant in-depth comparisons of the movies' sources to pinpoint the exact features that brought the words to life in dynamic film shots and sequences.

We also discussed the ambivalence of the films' metaphorical focus in terms of the tenor and vehicle to consider how they communicated their purposes, especially in *Rain Man*, and by inference, *Cuckoo's Nest*. While the latter has been the object of voluminous critical response over the decades since the novel version originally appeared (e.g., Bloom, 2007) it would be presumptuous of this study to assert any definitive conclusions to the story's real intent. Nonetheless, in the context of the movie version, it is hoped that this contribution offers some original options and opinions on the matter.

How deeply reflection percolates these movies is a matter of interpretation. The surface sense of the word water in *Rain Man* leads to ever more profound areas of associated meanings. Still water is nature's original reflector, just as the eye's lens is life's mirror, and that of the camera, civilization's own. When Charlie first meets Ray, they go to his favorite haunt, a duck pond. But is it the ducks he's trying to see, or what lies beneath the pond's surface? As mentioned, the baseball riddle about identity ("Who's on first") points to a quest for enlightenment. At the small town doctor's, when asked if he's autistic, Ray is adamant that he isn't. The definition of autism suggests changing to the level of self-awareness needed to answer that may be the biggest riddle of all.

Raising one's hands in *Cuckoo's Nest* begins as a mirror reflex when Mac tries in vain to teach Chief to play basketball, and apparently fails. However, the lesson is learnt, and hand raising quickly assumes the dual meanings of democracy and the release of free will, especially for the latter's submerged identity. The other patients similarly reflect Mac's lust for freedom, the process deftly reflected in the role reversal of patients becoming doctors on the fishing trip. In just the same mirror reversal, the psychiatric hospital's staff from doctors to orderlies and nurses seem insanely bent on repressing the identities and free wills of their charges. In this reversed image of existence, like a mirror on Mac, Chief frees the former's soul (imprisoned by lobotomy) and lifts the control panel to gain freedom, intimating even at the meaning of mankind itself.

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