A Crowded Theater:
A Study of 1920s Cinematic Representations of the French Revolutionary Crowd

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For my ever supportive family

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INTRODUCTION

> I'm going to try to do pioneer work in the great task of universalizing motion pictures. They should belong to all countries and all times, the best picture stories, and should be so well made that the best of them could be placed in libraries for future use, just as the best books are. Thus great film masterpieces can be shown 100 years from now, just as old books are read. Imagine how valuable these will be, not only for story values, but for real information regarding our times passed on to future generations.[1]

In 1921, four months after his career-making film, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, debuted in New York, Rex Ingram's words were published in the *Los Angeles Times* and thus, immortalized.[2] Ninety years later they resurfaced in a search for information about the director and his film, *Scaramouche*.[3] Ingram's call for the immortality of films was answered. The study of film and its history represents a rich discipline in modern scholarship and this thesis represents only a fraction of the research conducted on the subject.

Over the years the focus and intent of film history's practitioners have changed drastically. According to Eric Smoodin, author of *Looking Past the Screen*, the key bifurcation in the discipline emerges around the question of how film should be studied, as a mode of art or through the history of its reception, production, and more general position within an historical context.[4] Early studies of film history largely focused on the latter issue. In the middle of the century, however, films began to be studied as pieces of art, leaving questions of context and reception behind.[5] Now the focus of the discipline, or at least some of its practitioners, has shifted once again, resulting in new studies exploring the historical

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[1] Grace Kingsley, "Rex Ingram to go to Europe," *Los Angeles Times* 24 Jul. 1921: III1, *ProQuest*, Web, 3 Jul. 2012.

[2] Liam O'Leary, *Rex Ingram: Master of the Silent Cinema* (British Film Institute, 12th Pordenone Silent Film Festival, 1993) print., O'Leary 81.

[3] Rex Ingram, dir, *Scaramouche*, adapt. *Scaramouche* by Rafael Sabatini, 1923, Turner Entertainment, 2009, DVD., "Scaramouche," *AFI: Catalog of Feature Films*, American Film Institute, 2013, web, 24 Mar. 2013.

[4] Eric Smoodin, Introduction, *Looking Past the Screen*, ed. Jon Lewis and Eric Smoodin (Durham and London: Duke Univ. Press, 2007) 1-33, print.

[5] Smoodin 6.

relationship between film and its audience.[6] Scholars focused particularly on audience-film

relations now push for the reexamination and ultimately redefinition of the early film

audience. These scholars insist on the abandonment of old assumptions regarding this

audience by exploring its intricacy (racial, gendered, and geographical) and how this

impacted the exhibition and reception of films. In accordance with these new insights, this

thesis avoids depicting the audience as homogenous mass and remains cognizant of its

heterogeneity

  In this thesis I look at how crowds came to be represented and explored in the two

films, *Orphans of the Storm* (1921) directed by D.W. Griffith and *Scaramouche* (1924)

directed by Rex Ingram as well as how these represented crowds enriched the discussion on

the crowd as it existed in 1920s American society.[7] In the end, what I wish to reveal is the

way in which the two directors utilized the figure of the crowd in their films to comment

upon the political and social issues of 1920s America, many of which also manifested

themselves, at one point or another, in the figure of the crowd. Both films are set during the

French Revolution, allowing the directors to dedicate a significant amount of screen time to

the crowd and its actions. Although this thesis relies heavily on the analysis of early films in

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[6] A few examples: Kathryn H. Fuller-Seeley and George Potamianos, "Introduction: Researching and Writing the History of Local Moviegoing," *Hollywood in the Neighborhood*, ed. Kathryn H. Fuller-Seeley (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 2008) 3-19, print., Melvyn Stokes, Introduction, *American Movie Audiences: From the Turn of the Century to the Early Sound Era,* ed. Melvyn Stokes and Richard Maltby (London: British Film Institute, 1999) 1-11, print., Miriam Hansen, Introduction, *Babel in Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1991) 1-19, print., Richard Maltby and Melvyn Stokes, Introduction, *Going to the Movies: Hollywood and the Social Experience of Cinema,* ed. Richard Maltby, Melvyn Stokes and Robert C. Allen (Exeter, U.K.: Univ. of Exeter Press, 2007) 1-22, print., Robert C. Allen, "Decentering Historical Audience Studies: A Modest Proposal," *Hollywood in the Neighborhood,* ed. Kathryn H. Fuller-Seeley (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 2008) 20-33, print.
[7] D.W. Griffith, dir., *Orphans of the Storm*, adapt. "The Two Orphans" by A. D'Ennery, 1921, Kino Intl. Corp., 2002, DVD., "Orphans of the Storm," *AFI: Catalog of Feature Films*, American Film Institute, 2013, web, 24 Mar. 2013.

and of themselves other sources created contemporaneously to their production are used to create a picture of the films within, rather than separate from, their historical context.

The first chapter provides contextual information for the other two chapters. Primarily, it presents the many manifestations of crowds in the 1920s, as well as the nature of one specific type of crowd: the film audience(s). In addition, I provide a brief examination of what I shall refer to as "crowd theory," as it existed at the time. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a basic framework through which to view the films.

In chapter two I begin the film analysis portion of the thesis with Rex Ingram's *Scaramouche*. Although Griffith's film was made first chronologically the order of the chapters is based on the complexity of the cinematic crowd. In Ingram's film there is one crowd and it develops in one unified form whereas in Griffith's film there are at least two distinct crowds which develop away from each other. Thus, the chapter dedicated to Griffith's film will follow Ingram's chapter.

Ingram's film promotes an ambiguous vision of the crowd, ultimately demanding that the audience make the final judgment. The revolutionary crowd's actions are given a degree of justification in scenes expressing the suffering of the French people under an unjust government. The director's depictions of the crowd as violent mob come to leach it of its humanity in the eyes of the audience. Yet, in the end, it is humanized once again. The film concludes with a metaphoric shrug of the shoulders, asking the audience members what they think. Ingram's sympathetic depiction of the revolutionary crowd as well as the position of the protagonist as crowd orator is curious considering the film's construction only a few years after the Red Scare.[8] His message, ultimately, aligns with elements of contemporary

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[8] Stephen J. Ross, *Working Class Hollywood*: *Silent Film and the Shaping of Class in America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998) print., Ross 69, 116.

crowd theory, particularly in the way the crowd is depicted as a potential source of "social renewal."[9] In general, Rex Ingram's film acknowledges the power of mass action and even condones it but only as long as the humane aspects of the crowd are maintained. Thus, he supports the possibility of and desire for a moral crowd.

        D.W. Griffith and his film, *Orphans of the Storm*, are the subjects of the third chapter. Griffith, too, holds sympathy for the revolutionary crowd. After all, his support of the great lynch mob, the Ku Klux Klan, a support he put on film in *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), reveals that he did not necessarily condemn crowds that worked contrary to the law.[10] Yet, he had strict rules about the structure of the crowds he would support. This is evident in the dual nature of the revolutionary crowd in *Orphans of the Storm*. The crowds in *The Birth of a Nation* were constructed in much the same way. Although the crowds in *Orphans* are racially homogenous in contrast to the racially differentiated crowds in *The Birth of a Nation*, he again creates a positively-valued and negatively-valued crowd. In *Orphans* the level of support he gives to the crowds depends on the nature of the crowd's leader. In other words, in this film the crowd is less important than the identity of those who lead it. Griffith's film, like Ingram's, agrees with at least parts of contemporary crowd theory, specifically the malleable nature of crowds.[11] This element of crowd theory influenced advertising and government propaganda at the time when Griffith was filming *Orphans*. As a crowd leader himself, a filmmaker controlling, to some degree, the views of his audience, Griffith was banking, literally, on the controllability of his viewers. In the end, he appears to have believed that as long as a crowd's leader was noble, so too, would be the actions of his

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[9] Eugene E. Leach, "Mastering the Crowd: Collective Behavior and Mass Society in American Social Thought, 1917-1939," *American Studies* 27.1 (1986): 99-114, *Jstor*, web, 20 Dec. 2012., Leach 101.

[10] "The Birth of a Nation," *AFI: Catalog of Feature Films*, American Film Institute, 2013, web, 24 Mar. 2013., D.W. Griffith, dir., *The Birth of a Nation*, 1915, Image Entertainment, 1998, DVD.

[11] Leach 103.

people. This means that he might have been less likely to assign a negative or positive moral value to any one type of crowd (revolutionary, striking, lynch, entertainment) and look, instead, at the individual crowd.

At the beginning of this introduction, Ingram invited future film-viewers to search his films for information about the society in which they were constructed. Answering his invitation, this thesis strives to isolate the crowd's meaning for Ingram, Griffith, and their audiences. A social construction that spans throughout the various areas of society (social, political, cultural, economic, etc.) a crowd is never just a crowd but always indicative of a greater phenomenon. Studying the crowd and its representations, one might hope to catch a glimpse of what inspired their formation.

CHAPTER ONE:
Introducing the Crowd

In this chapter I introduce the major contextual information necessary to analyze the films *Scaramouche* and *Orphans of the Storm* as well as the crowd embedded within their narratives. As mentioned above, this thesis explores the way in which the screened crowd reflects and comments on the crowd that surrounds it contextually and, more specifically, that which gazes up at the screen.

First, we will look at the early film industry and the composition of its audience. We must take care to avoid a view of the audience as homogenous across space, class, and race. Second, we will examine the historical crowds of the early 20th century, the actual crowds that presented themselves to the public eye. In particular, we will look at crowd theory, the revolutionary crowd, the striking crowd, the racist crowd, and the entertainment crowd. In this chapter I combine theory with historical inquiry in order to create a complex picture of the audiences that watched the films and how they related to the films on the screen.

The Audience and the Industry

The composition of the early cinematic audience is a contested issue. First, let us look at the "founding myth" of cinema.[1] For this, Stephen J. Ross's work is valuable as it holds many of the key assumptions that are now being questioned by film historians. That is, he sees early film as blooming out of and primarily serving a working class public. By working class, he refers to an urban poor composed primarily of immigrants.[2] The film industry itself began in small make-shift film theaters that displayed films made by anyone from workers to government agencies.[3] However, during World War I the film industry took the form of

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[1] Term used by Stokes, *American Movie Audiences,* 2.
[2] Ross 6-7.
[3] Ross 5-7.

Hollywood and came to be controlled by big corporations rather than small independent producers.[4] This, Ross argues, corresponded with a shift in intended audience away from the working class and toward the middle class.[5] The class composition of early film audiences is important for Ross because he believes that the prominence of the working class as consumers and producers resulted in the film industry's potential as distributor of radical ideas.[6] The sometimes radical nature of the films that came out of this industry, including the depiction of strikes and union activity made elites nervous, resulting in the censorship of the screen.[7] In the introduction of *Going to the Movies*, Richard Maltby and Melvyn Stokes elaborate on this anxiety, claiming that its origin lay in the middle class belief that the working class' lack of cohesion and homogeny might lead to disorder in its own ranks.[8] Moreover, the middle class' fear of the medium resulted not only from the power that the working class might find in it but also the power the medium had over its audience. Maltby and Stokes claim that film was perceived as having great power over the minds of the masses.[9] Thus, radicalism on the screen was seen as a threat because it had larger consequences than ruining a day's entertainment, having the potential to excite an entire class into action. Hence, the perceived need for censorship.

Ross' book is one of woe over the loss of radicalism in early American films. The utopia of worker expression that he describes early in his book falls under the pressure of a repressive middle class or, more specifically, an industry that begins to cater to the middle class.[10] He argues that the composition of the audience, the venue in which films were

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[4] Ross 10, 123, 175.
[5] Ross 10.
[6] Ross 6-7.
[7] Ross xii.
[8] Maltby and Stokes, *Going to the Movies*, 6-7.
[9] Maltby and Stokes, *Going to the Movies*, 6-7.
[10] Ross 4-5, 7-9.

shown, and even the tone of the films changed upon the construction of "Hollywood."[11] On the flipside, by the 1920s films came to be shown in movie palaces, ornate buildings that allowed members of the working and middle classes to mingle in a relatively egalitarian mass in "opulent surroundings" and the films screened were those that showed "cross-class fantasies of luxury, comfort, and consumption."[12] By the time *Orphans* and *Scaramouche* were produced, though workers were still invited to the show, they had apparently lost the pleasure of seeing "their struggles" on the screen. Having watched a once sympathetic medium turn against them, one would have thought that members of the working class would have begun to look at the screen with enmity. After all, their voices had been silenced.

Yet, here we must pause and remember that Ross's narrative of film history is not the only possible version. In fact, his view of the working-class nature of early film has been questioned by several recent historians.[13] Importantly, Ross seems to have forgotten a few audience members. The essays in Maltby and Stokes's *Going to the Movies*, for example, look at ethnic groups and their differing interactions with early film. Although Ross writes about the way film crossed language barriers among the working class, he seems to assume that people in the working class, independent of their native language and culture, ultimately experienced and interpreted films in a similar way.[14] The essays in Kathryn H. Fuller-Seeley and George Potamianos' collection, *Hollywood in the Neighborhood*, argue otherwise, revealing the problems inherent in attempting to define one unified early film audience.[15] The essays in this book look at differences in audience across space and specifically, the audiences outside of the big cities in comparison to the over-studied metropolitan areas in

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[11] Ross 6, 9.
[12] Ross 175, 190-191.
[13] Stokes, *American Movie Audiences*, 2.
[14] Ross 5.
[15] Fuller-Seeley and Potamianos, 6.

which Ross focuses his audience. In short, the picture of early film audience demographics provided by Ross is incomplete. Far from being unified and sharing one cinematic experience, early film audience audiences had greatly diverse backgrounds and experiences based on where they lived (urban or rural, North or South), their ethnicity, race, and even gender.[16] Thus, the ways in which film was used and the relation it had to its audiences must have been considerably more complex than Ross's simple class-based narrative would suggest. (Defining the working class from the middle class to begin with was a process prone to inaccuracy and oversimplification to begin with).[17]

However, Ross does provide us with some useful information worth reviewing. For example, Ross points to three key early uses of film: "propaganda," "education, and entertainment."[18] He argues that, from early on, films were constructed with the knowledge that they could make a difference in the minds of their viewers. (Remember again the middle class fear of the power the medium had over working class minds). This means that early films were much more than simple "entertainment," at least to the medium's critics and producers. Granted, Ross is referring to pre-Hollywood films constructed by interest groups such as "socialists, communists" and "government agencies." Still we can see the perpetuation of this belief in film's potential use as propaganda into the 1920s in a quote from Rex Ingram in which he supports film's use as such:

> Somebody is going to evolve a way of universalizing pictures, but he isn't going to do it by shutting himself away from the rest of the world. And it will be films and not armies which will bring about final world peace based on universal understanding. The screen is the mightiest agent to be used as a propaganda medium which the world has ever known; and though everybody goes around mouthing that fact, there's been precious little advantage taken of it, relatively speaking.[19]

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[16] Hansen, Stokes and Maltby, Fuller, and Robert C. Allen.
[17] Stokes, *American Movie Audiences*, 4-5.
[18] Ross 6.
[19] Kingsley, 24 Jul. 1921.

The passage above tells us several things about Ingram and the world in which he lived. First, he was a believer in the potential use of film as propaganda and he had faith in its power as such. Thus, one must expect that he would have taken care with his films to only express messages he believed in. Moreover, he tells us that we can trust Ross's assessment of early film's use. Ingram says, "though everybody goes around mouthing that fact," thus acknowledging that this idea was prevalent in the world around him although, whether he just spoke of his fellow film-makers or a broader "everybody," is unclear. It is important too, that he stresses the belief that film can unite people. In a postwar world, this undoubtedly sounded tempting. However, it also fits in with Miriam Hansen's claim that the early film industry tried to create a "unified subject," a homogenized audience, because of the perceived threat in a diverse film crowd.[20] Now, we can see what propaganda might be used for; although some feared that film may be used to excite working class misbehavior, it also provided hope of taming and homogenizing an audience across ethnicity, race, and class. This view of film and its influence ultimately led to a distinction between safe and unsafe narratives.

We must not look at the word propaganda and assume that all films were overtly political or nationalistic. Many films were based off of "popular novels, plays, biblical stories" in imitation of the successful European "photoplays" and catered, once again, to a middle class audience.[21] These novels and plays selected for film adaptations included *The Two Orphans* and *Scaramouche*, the literature on which *Orphans* and *Scaramouche* (the film) are based. "Propaganda," as Ingram referred to it, would most likely have been placed in these types of films, given their popularity. For the type of propaganda he, and perhaps

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[20] Hansen 16.
[21] Ross 30.

others in his position, wanted to disseminate, he would have needed to plant it in a narrative that goes beyond the home nation; the films would have to become as international as the people whom he sought to change. Thus, it makes sense that foreign material such as *The Two Orphans* and *Scaramouche* was picked up for translation into film. In short, we must view propaganda in a wide sense, not necessarily nationalistic or militaristic as is most propaganda we are now familiar with. Let us define it, for the purposes of this paper, as a material which disseminates a certain ideological message.

Given the prominence of propaganda in early film we must look at Ingram's and Griffith's films as though they were constructed with a message, as though they were built to influence an audience. This message had to be a carefully crafted one. Ross notes that strikes on screen sometimes could lead to strikes in real life and this caused censorship of such films, made mostly by worker-filmmakers.[22] This reminds us that we must never see the film as independent of the society in which it was made, the action on the screen could easily translate into action in the real world. However, the way in which films influenced the world depended on the intent of their producers, many of which were likely swept up in the general change in cinema's focus from "class conflict" to "class harmony" in the 1920s.[23] This, Ross argues, was an attempt to increase middle class audiences.[24] Unification of the audience, particularly across class boundaries was an ideological and pragmatic goal. Ingram wanted to unite the world, no doubt he wanted to unite America as well. In short, one aim of cinematic propaganda was most likely to promote peace within American society and to reject class conflict.

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[22] Ross 8- 9.
[23] Ross 10.
[24] Ross 10.

Ideological goals did not necessarily hold the reigns of the film industry. Instead, pragmatism must be considered. For instance, novels and plays were attractive to filmmakers not only because they attracted the middle class or because of the propaganda that could be embedded in them but because they had been "pre-sold to a substantial audience," providing certainty of a return of capital.[25] Another reason for the use of *Orphans* and *Scaramouche* in particular was their setting, the French Revolution. After all, at this time in the film industry, high production costs added to a film's appeal and these were made visible in "lavish sets and costumes, large crowd scenes, or elaborate lighting," the first two of which, at least, would have been easily splurged on reproducing the French Revolution.[26] Thus, money must be considered when it comes to films made in this time period, and undoubtedly throughout the history of the industry. Directors, at least for the most part, would have aimed for a success and to please their audience. This belies the prospect of an ideologically imbued film, after all, any ideology would not do; the film's message had to be one that did not clash too harshly with that of a majority of the audience.

Audience opinion was not the only consideration Ingram and Griffith must have taken into account when making their films. Censorship intensified with the onset of a new social issue, the Bolshevik Revolution and the spread of communism in the late 1910s.[27] Thus, filmmakers had to please the censor as well as their public.

Now that we have explored the relationship between the audience and the early film industry we can begin to look at the relationship between the screen and reality, particularly when it came to crowds.

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[25] John Izod *Hollywood and the Box Office* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988) print.
[26] Izod 58.
[27] Ross 117.

Crowd Theory

      While Griffith and Ingram worked on their film sets a new psychological theory of crowds was developing. Although the psychological theorists and the film directors operated in very different spheres they also dealt with the same issue, how to imagine and portray crowds as well as how to control them. For film directors the challenge was to learn how to guide and direct the hoards of extras who took part in their films as well as how to entertain and control a diverse entertainment crowd, their audiences. Psychologists were less openly restricted, able to take any or all crowds as their subject of study. Still, directors found a way to maintain their freedom of subject in the crowd; any crowd in history might be represented on the screen. Representing historical crowds was safer than portraying modern ones as images of social strife, including labor demonstrations, were restricted by increasing censorship. The crowds on the screen were located at a safe vantage point from contemporary reality but were able to stand in for any contemporary crowd whether racially, economically, or culturally motivated simply by the ways in which they were directed and composed. Crowds were a sensitive topic in 1920s America, resulting in the need for such evasion in their representation. Crowd theory shows us the reason for this sensitivity.

      First, let us, define exactly what "crowd" means. In this thesis I will define the crowd in relation to George Rudé's definition of the term.[28] In the middle of the 20th century, and thus, after the films were produced he wrote a new theory of crowds separate from the psychological and sociological approaches of the past and instead, looked at this social phenomena through the discipline of history.[29] His definition is as follows, "In the first place, I am assuming the crowd to be what sociologists term a 'face-to-face' or 'direct contact'

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[28] George Rudé, Introduction, *The Crowd in History, 1730-1848: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England* (New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1964) 3-16, print., Rudé 3.
[29] Rudé 3.

group and not any type of collective phenomenon, such as a nation, a clan, the general 'public,' or any other 'collectivity too large to aggregate.'"[30] This would seem self-evident, had not some previous theorists chosen to extend the crowd's boundaries to encompass far wider horizons."[31] He adds a few more exclusions,

> in general, we may exclude from our present considerations crowds that are casually drawn together, like sight-seers; crowds assembled on purely ceremonial occasions or crowds taking part in religious or academic processions; or 'audience' crowds (as they have been termed) who gather in theaters or lecture halls, at baseball matches or bullfights, or who used to witness hangings at Tyburn Fair or in the Place de Grève in Paris. Equally, we should generally exclude those more active, or 'expressive' crowds that come together for Mardi Gras, participate in dancing orgies or student 'rags,' or attend revivalist meetings to hear Billy Graham or Father Divine, as they listened two hundred years ago to George Whitefield and the Wesleys. Certain 'escape' or 'panic' crowds (again to use sociologist's jargon) are more likely to fall within our province: such manifestations have sometimes accompanied food riots and runs on banks, and these may be the very stuff of social history. Other outbursts of mass hysteria- from the convulsions around St. Médard's tomb in eighteenth-century Paris or the self-immolating orgies of Russia's Old Believers to the more recent frenzies stirred by Orson Welles' 'Martian' broadcast- are fascinating material for the student of crowd psychology, but they may be of only casual interest to the historian. In fact, our main attention will be given to political demonstrations and to what sociologists have termed the 'aggressive mob' or the 'hostile outburst'- to such activities as strikes, riots, rebellions, insurrections, and revolutions.[32]

Thus, Rudé provides a very slim definition of the crowd, at least the one he is interested in. He restricts himself, in fact, to politically motivated crowds such as "strikes, riots, rebellions…" As can be seen in the above passage, he omits more types of crowds than he chooses to study. We will resurrect some of these crowds including the "audience" crowd and "dancing orgies." I will do so for a few reasons: 1) Rudé's definition of history, which he uses to define the types of crowds that he looks at, is extremely limited, centering on politics. In fact, there are many other avenues down which a historian might tread in search of

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[30]Rudé 3.
[31] Rudé 3.
[32] Rudé 3-4.

knowledge and understanding, particularly the cultural and social history explored in this thesis. 2) Rudé notes in another passage that a crowd does not necessarily stay the same but can, in fact, change into another form of crowd. In this thesis we assume that, existing in the same society, crowds were not isolated from each other and that one participant might take place in several different forms of crowd. However, we will utilize Rudé's definition of crowd as "face-to-face." All of the crowds to be discussed in this thesis will physically manifest themselves in masses of bodies. In order to understand how this definition interacts with the crowd theories of the 20s as well as how the study of crowds developed we will take a quick tour through early theories of crowd behavior.

Conveniently enough, we can start our story with the French Revolution. According to J.S. McClelland, author of *The Crowd and the Mob*, the revolution led elites (those in political power) to think in new ways about those who lived their lives in a lower place on the social hierarchy.[33] Before the revolution, political theorists focused primarily on rulers as the center of political history.[34] After the French Revolution, the crowd, also known as the masses, became the focus of political and social theory.[35] McClelland argues that this is the result of the revolution which made European elites see "the crowd as a permanent political force."[36] The crowd took "any number of different guises; frenzied mob, misunderstood people, duped politics-fodder, vehicle of an ancient urge for justice, agent of regression to an animal past, threat to the present, hope for the future, but, no matter how it appeared social theory had to do more than notice the crowd or dismiss it as a passing phase." This quote

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[33] J.S. McClelland, *The Crowd and the Mob* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989) print., McClelland 6. Note: In McClelland's book she looks at a variety of crowd theorists but when she generalizes, particularly in the introduction, about crowd theories within one country and era she rarely describes whose theories she is referring to. In general, she refers to those who hold political power and wish to maintain a society's status quo.
[34] McClelland 1.
[35] McClelland 3.
[36] McClelland 6.

shows us just how important it became to look at the crowd critically; it was necessary to

explore the meaning and power of the crowd in order to define the way in which it

functioned in society as a whole. Moreover, we see why crowds may have been viewed as

potential threats by those who regarded them from their windows of high society. After all,

the crowd now had power as it had never seemed to before. After the revolution, the crowd

became the influencer as well as the influenced. According to McClelland, states began to

plan their legal systems in ways meant to keep the crowd happy and controlled. In fact, the

crowd was more than accommodated, it was feared:

> The spectre that was haunting Europe in 1848 was the ghost of the Bastille mob,
> which now became the mob that had been at all revolutions, failed and successful,
> past, present, and future. The French Revolution showed how permanent and far-
> reaching the effects of a bread riot allowed to get out of hand could be.[37]

 In this passage, McClelland uses a term that is deeply relevant to the two films to be

explored, "mob." She uses this word when expressing the anxiety inspired by the

revolutionary crowd. In this thesis it will be used in much the same way, referring to the

violent side of the crowd.

Like Rudé, McClelland defines crowd as a body of people holding some political

relevance but she also brings up another important point; definitions of crowds, in their

various forms, often held value judgments and moral connotations. This is one aspect of the

represented crowd in the films that we will explore later as the moral justification of the

crowd or lack thereof has extreme ramifications on the narrative and message of the films.

For now let us look deeper into how the fear of the crowd expressed itself in society.

The new-found power of the crowd meant that the people who had once spoken out against it

now began to see every "manifestation of public will," such as demonstrations to "legalize"

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[37] McClelland 6.

"trade unions," as having the potential to degenerate into a "mob." Thus, "The riot, the lynch-mob, the urban revolt, the *manifestation*, were all seen as the tip of an iceberg or the thin end of a wedge."[38] This was the view held by American and European "conservatives." It is to be noted that these elites or conservatives were not the same people who would have sat in movie theaters. Although we have seen that the middle class may have sat in seats besides members of the working class, film was in no way an elite-focused medium but rather one that sought to satisfy a variety of interests. The audiences in early film theaters would have held very different views from these conservative elites although, undoubtedly, opinion also varied within each class. However, it is likely that the opinions of elites regarding the crowd and mob as it manifested itself within their society would have influenced politicians and filmmakers alike, and thus become visible on the film screen through such devices as censorship.

Everett Dean Martin, an American professor of psychology, was one of these conservatives, expressing their fears as his in his book, *The Behavior of Crowds*. He wrote, "crowd-making is daily becoming a more serious menace to civilization."[39] Labeling it a "menace" and a "daily" one, he expressed disquiet and disapproval of what he called "crowd-making." In his book the crowd refers to a group that is psychologically held together, a group that thinks as one through one rhetorically defined ideology.[40] Thus, his crowd is a bit different from what we have seen before and follows the broad definition that Rudé refused. We get a sense of the variety encompassed in his use of the term in this passage, "Not only are mob outbreaks and riots increasing in number, but every interest, patriotic, religious,

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[38] McClelland 7.

[39] Everett Dean Martin, *The Behavior of Crowds: A Psychological Study* (New York: Harper and Brothers Pub., 1920) print., Martin, Foreword.

[40] Martin 5.

ethical, political, economic easily degenerates into a confusion of propagandist tongues, into extravagant partisanship, and intemperance."[41] Thus, any group, any ideology had the potential to form a crowd. He argued that ideologies that formed crowds become "caricatures," the people held together by an "idolatry" of phrases.[42] Thus, crowds, in his opinion, were not constructed out of people connected by reason and morality but empty words. He wrote that the Bolshevik Revolution was merely a consequence of the way in which crowds functioned in every society, that the world was *spiritually sovietized.*" Thus, America was in danger of becoming the victim of another revolution.[43] There are a few specific insights we can take from this. First, his beliefs were most likely an example of the kind of hysteria and fear that one might expect from the era of the Red Scare, a phenomenon to be discussed later in the chapter. Second, he makes a connection between the crowds in his own country and Russia. This provides us with a possible reading of the revolutionary crowds in the films. Why was the crowd perceived as so threatening? Martin, influenced by Freud's theories which had only recently been published, believed that crowds were formed out of a desire to release violent and sexual urges which were normally held in check by social constraints.[44] The satisfaction of these previously repressed desires might, he argued, come in the form of extreme acts of violence such as lynching. In short, crowds were irrational, dangerous, and uncouth.

No crowd, however, is complete without its leader: the orator. Martin believed that crowds were activated by an orator who established a "crowd-mind" with his oratorical

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[41] Martin 7-8.
[42] Martin 7.
[43] Martin 9.
[44] Martin 23, 35.

skills, particularly through the use of platitudes.[45] Orators have a profound role in both

Orphans and *Scaramouche* and thus, will play a large part in the later chapters of this thesis.

However, physical orators were not the only ones who had the potential to create a crowd, as

early crowd theorists came to realize. This meant a success and fortune for those who could

find the right way to harness the crowd.

There were some in 1920s America who, instead of fearing the crowd as Martin did,

sought a way to control and use it. Although in Europe distrust of crowds was strong, Eugene

E. Leach, a modern scholar, argues that in America the crowd presented an opportunity.

Leach tells us:

> the first interpretations of the mass society in America were developed by
> psychologists in the period between the World Wars. The crucial theoretical
> achievement of this generation was to evolve the concept of the mass, a dispersed and
> passive body of uprooted individuals, from the pre-World War I concept of the
> crowd, a physically united and active throng.[46]

Importantly, the "mass" was seen as controllable by "progressive elites" and moreover,

some believed that it would even function as a "perpetual social renewal."[47] Thus, here we

have a new term to replace the old, "mass" versus "crowd" and with that replacement goes

the threat, leaving behind promise. This alternate body, the "mass" was addressed by a non-

direct-orator based form of crowd control, advertising. The government, by way of the

Committee of Public Information (created in 1917) in charge of spreading propaganda during

World War I, and men such as Walter Dill Scott applied this new positive theory of the

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[45] Martin 26-27.
[46] Leach 100.
[47] Leach 101.

"masses" to American society for their own benefit.[48] What had formerly been "the crowd" could now be used to make a profit, its threat largely neutralized.

Here I must note that the definition of the "crowd" that Leach follows is a bit different from that provided elsewhere in this chapter. Thus, "the masses" may not be used in exactly the same way as we use "crowd." Yet, Leach provides us with the valuable knowledge that by the time the films were produced the crowd/masses were no longer seen as "active" and "united" but rather "passive" and "dispersed individuals." Yet, as we will see below, the old "crowd" did not in fact disappear, but rather, Leach's writing indicates that attention simply shifted to a crowd/mass defined in a way that follows Martin's rather than Rudé's definition. That is, like Martin, "the mass" was not a body of people "face-to-face" but rather a group of people held together by bonds that existed independent of space such as religion or consumerism. Also, Leach gives us the sense that theorists began to recognize that the "masses," and thus, perhaps the crowds that still existed, were not in fact an homogenous body but an heterogeneous one.

In this section is a brief history of the evolution of crowd theory from the mid 19th century to the early 1920s, which in turn resulted in the evolution of distrust into a sense of opportunity. Entrepreneurs, social/crowd theorists, and government officials began to realize that the crowd could be manipulated for commercial and political ends and they put this new theory to the test. The controllability of this new crowd greatly reduced its threat level. In the two films we will see examples of crowds that are controlled and those which break free as well as the different ways in which both are treated.

In the next pages it is important to remember that all of the crowds listed were peopled by individuals with at least slightly different beliefs, goals, and identities. As usual,

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[48] Leach 103., Ross 123.

the classifications given them ("strikers," "audience members," etc.) describe merely their behavior at one point in time. The members of a "crowd" may act as one but in reality they are not one.

Types of Crowd

The Bolshevik Revolution

The Bolshevik Revolution took place in November 1917 in the midst of World War I as Russia fought alongside the allies.[49] The revolution, the second to take place in Russia in a matter of years, resulted in the rise to power of a party known as the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin.[50] The stated goal of the party was to spread communism throughout the world including the United States.[51] In America this resulted in the Red Scare, a phenomenon of fear centering on the belief in the potential for the revolution to spread to the United States, the results of which appeared to be the destruction of American society. This revolution would be powered by mobs furnished, according to conservatives like J. Edgar Hoover, by immigrants and members of the working class.[52] The Bolshevik Revolution was also resented by conservative elements in society for its negative effect on the Allied war effort, according to Richard Gid Powers, author of *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism.* A key platform in the Bolsheviks' rise to power in Russia was the end of participation in the war.[53] By pulling out of the conflict Bolshevik Russia left the Allies vulnerable, having lost a key component.[54] Fear and dislike of communists resulted in mass raids on groups believed to be associated with communism, resulting in turn in the

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[49] Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anti-Communism* (New York: The Free Press, 1995) print., Powers 1.
[50] Powers 1-3.
[51] Powers 18.
[52] Powers 43.
[53] Powers 3.
[54] Powers 2-3.

deportation and imprisonment of those unlucky enough to have been arrested.[55] This captured crowd was looked after by another form of crowd, one formed out of people (government and otherwise) recruited to arrest communists, resulting in mistreatment of one crowd by another: one condoned by the government, the other condemned. Although these raids were soon seen as unlawful, anticommunism continued.[56]

The fear of communists (external) led to a fear of specific internal minorities and discontents. As mentioned above, Lenin and the Bolsheviks openly attempted to spread their revolution beyond the borders of Russia. Consequently, strikes and other forms of collective labor activity perpetrated during the Red Scare (1918-1919) were seen as evidence that the revolution had come to America, a threatening notion to many. The 1919 Seattle strike which began with shipyard workers and spread to other labor groups was one strike to be connected, in the minds of the fearful, to the Russian Revolution.[57] Like in other cases, aliens were used as scapegoats to appease fears. Immigrants and Jews, already oppressed by existing prejudices, were further persecuted based on their perceived ties to communism.[58] However, its composition was not the only threatening aspect of the revolutionary mob. Leaders were equally important. In particular, "corrupt union leaders and IWW faithful" came to be associated with Bolshevism.[59] According to Ross, "anti-union voices" blamed "secret Red agents" for strikes.[60] Thus, the strike, one form of crowd that existed in early 20th century America was seen as the result of foreign rather than domestic activity and associated with a force that was believed to threaten the structure of American life and society. Consequently,

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[55] Powers 25-27.
[56] Powers 27, 31-33, 43.
[57] Powers 18-19.
[58] Powers 25-30, 45-47.
[59] Ross 115.
[60] Ross 127.

the strike and its crowd were perceived as extremely dangerous. The importance of the leader in defining the crowd is a consequence of the belief in a controllable crowd; an immoral leader has the potential to lead his followers not to "social renewal" but to social destruction. The belief in communist penetration of the country even influenced cultural production.

The Red Scare had a deep impact on the ability of silent filmmakers to express their opinions about the society in which they worked. In 1919 the American Committee of the Motion Picture Industry of the United States was formed.[61] Composed of the heads of various companies within the film industry, it was designed to "assimilate" immigrants and "combat Bolshevism and radicalism."[62] This emergence of this committee resulted in the increased conservatism of films, especially those which dealt with the lives and actions of workers.[63] "Anti-Bolshevik" films became lucrative.[64] This means that the fear and repression of communism was not entirely a top-down influence on the film industry but was also present in the minds of everyday movie goers from the middle and lower classes. These were the people to whom Griffith and Ingram were speaking. In 1922 another body of self censorship was created, The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association, resulting in the establishment of a system of "pre-censorship" which led "executives" to be even more conservative in their choices regarding films.[65]

The government also took part in expunging seemingly communist sympathetic narratives from the screen. According to Ross, the American government sponsored films about post-Revolution Russia. He writes, "No longer did audiences see romanticized scenes of revolutionary peasants fighting an evil Czar. Revolution now meant Bolshevism, and

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[61] Ross 129.
[62] Ross 129.
[63] Ross 69.
[64] Ross 134.
[65] Izod 69.

Bolshevism meant death and destruction."[66] We can see the same ideas operating in the two

films set during French Revolution, both of which take care to show the bloodthirsty,

irrational nature of revolutions. It would not be a surprise, in fact, if the depictions of the

separate revolutions (French and Russian) had influenced one another. The popularity of

these "Anti-Bolshevik films" declined after 1922 due to the decrease in "labor and

radicalism."[67] Thus, by the time *Scaramouche* actually debuted, these films would have been

a memory, but a recent one. The audiences would have been largely the same ones who had

seen the "Anti-Bolshevik films." Would they have made the connection between the two?

Deeply connected to the Red Scare and Anti-Bolshevism was a negative perception of

the labor movement and strikes, especially in film. As mentioned above, the Red Scare led to

restrictions on the acceptable way a strike and the working class people who took part in

them could be represented on the screen. In the following section is a brief overview of the

presence of strikes in late 1910s and 1920s America.

Strikes

As mentioned above, "anti-unionists" connected strikes in America with the spread of

communism. Although labor union membership "touched a peak" in 1920 it "fell

precipitously" by 1923 due largely to the ineffectiveness of the unions and, according to

Irving Bernstein, the shifting composition of the working class.[68] Bernstein argues that

business men's power in society combined with their antagonism towards collective action

(ex. strikes) and allowed them to disseminate the portrayal of "collective action" as "Un-

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[66] Ross 135.
[67] Ross 196.
[68] Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker, 1920-1933*, 2nd ed. *(*Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2010) print., Bernstein 48-49, 84-89.

American. [69] They were so successful, in fact, that, "By 1929, therefore, the strike as an instrument of collective bargaining, to say nothing of social protest, had fallen into almost total disuse."[70] This led to "a calm seldom if ever matched in American industrial history."[71] In short, unionism's decline, partially at the hands of businessmen, influenced the dynamics of American society, resulting in a calmer public relationship between workmen and businessmen.

During the years in which *Orphans of the Storm* and *Scaramouche* were being filmed and released American labor relations were fairly stable. Strikes were on a downswing and thus, people, including those in theater seats, would have become less accustomed to seeing strikes in the papers, on the screen, and in their own lives. However, film goers would have still known what a strike, whether real or reproduced on screen, looked like. The strike was lurking in their memories…and possibly on the screen, after having acquired a new disguise of course. The crowd of strikers is one potential connection a 1920s film audience would have made with the revolutionary crowd in the two films.

As mentioned above, the activity of strikers both in their daily lives as workers and their temporary status of strikers had to be depicted very carefully on the screen due to the Red Scare's influence on filmmaking. This depiction often was one of danger connected with the spread of communism. Crowd choreography was one way in which filmmakers determined the tone of their filmed crowd:

> Using the choreography of crowd scenes to deliver strong ideological messages, directors turned crowds of strikers into a dangerous mob by clustering large numbers of actors into a tightly bunched group and having them shake their fists or wooden bats at outsiders in a threatening manner.[72]

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[69] Bernstein 88.
[70] Bernstein 90.
[71] Bernstein 89.
[72] Ross 139.

The crowds in *Orphans* and *Scaramouche* take on this structure at times, suggesting that

Griffith and Ingram learned how to craft their cinematic crowds at least partially through

producing and/or watching cinematic representations of strikers.

Now, to move onto a crowd that is constituted through its innate rather than perceived

violence, let us look at lynch mobs.

Lynch Mobs

In the early twentieth century lynch mobs were a present danger in American society,

reflecting the racism present in the country. They were such a problem that in 1918 President

Woodrow Wilson drew attention to the issue in an address on "Mob Violence".[73] In wartime,

he argued, "lynching" was destructive to the American image and American society. Most

occurred in the South (roughly 3,500 of them between 1865 and 1920 at least) and were

motivated by "concerns about racial or ethnic 'purity' and social control." [74] They could be

public or private affairs.[75] Public lynching, of the two types, most resembled the mobs in the

French Revolution films and was, in a sense, motivated by the same thing: the fear and hatred

of an "other." However, for lynch mobs it was racial difference, not class difference that

motivated the violence. One type of lynching was the "spectacle" lynching, advertised and

ritualistic; it drew a large crowd and involved local authority figures.[76] Personal opinions on

lynching varied based on several factors including location in the country and whether

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[73]Woodrow Wilson and Lee Slater Overman, Senate, *Statement of the President of the United States Denouncing Mob Violence and Appealing to his Fellow Countrymen to Keep the Nation's Fame Untarnished*, 65th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington: GPO,1918), *Congressional Proquest*, web, 30 Mar. 2013.

[74] Randall M. Miller "Lynching in America: Some Context and a Few Comments," *Pennsylvania History* 72.3 (2005): 275-291, *Jstor*, web, 20 Dec. 2012., Miller 275, 278, 279.

[75] Miller 278-279.

[76] Miller 279.

inhabitants trusted the legal and justice systems to protect them. Other factors included race and even class.[77]

The Ku Klux Klan, the epitome of lynch mobs in America, received condemnation from many in the North.[78] Indeed, the U.S. House of Representatives investigated the Klan but was unable to prevent it from continuing its actions or recruiting. In the early twenties the Ku Klux Klan actually gained membership in the North, focusing on "post-war discontents."[79] It blamed racial, ethnic, and religious minorities for any hardship white men found themselves operating under.[80] Griffith's, *The Birth of a Nation* portrays this society of lynch mob members with admiration and thus, comparing the crowds he constructed in this film and those we see in *Orphans*, it is possible to see how the tone of a crowd's activity might be manipulated to create a different sense of its purpose and morality for film-goers. Moreover, we see how important the whiteness of the French revolutionary crowd would have been to an American audience.

Sometimes, however, the lynch mob was not so organized. Yet, even those not involved with the Klan were capable of intense racial violence. One significant race riot occurred in the same year that Griffith's film premiered. In June of 1921 a race riot took place in Tulsa, resulting in the devastation of an entire African American community in Oklahoma called Greenwood.[81] This riot, like many others, took the form of a white mob that was aided by local authorities, intent on harming and driving out an entire African American

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[77] Miller 283, 283.

[78] David T. Goldberg, "Unmasking the Ku Klux Klan: The Northern Movement against the KKK, 1920-1925," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 15.4 (1996): 32-48, *Jstor*, web, 20 Dec. 2012., Goldberg 32-33.

[79] Goldberg 33.

[80] Goldberg 33.

[81] Alfred L. Brophy, *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002) print., Brophy 1., Randall Kennedy. Prologue. *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation*, Alfred L. Brophy (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002) ix-xii, print.

population.[82] This example shows that a lynch mob might not target only one individual but an entire community. It is this crowd that is most reminiscent of that which pillages the homes of aristocrats in the films set in the French Revolution.

In this race-based example of crowd/mob violence there are similarities to the types of violence that exist in the films where race is made a non-issue by an all-white cast. This suggests that class difference in early 20th century America generated the same type of animosity as did racial difference. This would have been a huge problem for filmmakers who tried to assemble an audience that crossed class boundaries.

The next type of crowd that we will look at is associated with far less physical violence: the entertainment crowd. In this section we will explore a few forms of the entertainment crowd. Finally, though, we will return to the film audience as crowd and the concerns resulting from its passive/active and homogenous/heterogeneous nature.

The Audience as Crowd and other Crowds of Entertainment

In this section we will focus on the entertainment crowd, the type of crowd that appeared in movie theaters. However, this crowd also existed at other sites in 1920s American society such as film premieres and amusement parks.[83] Depending on the style of entertainment, the crowd's behavior differed. Film going crowds differed from the others mentioned above in a very specific and important way, their passivity.[84] While other crowds were defined by their activity, film going crowds were seen as passive receptors for a media which controlled them. This had great importance in debates about film's potential to

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[82] Kennedy ix.

[83] David Karnes, "The Glamorous Crowd: Hollywood Movie Premieres Between the Wars," *American Quarterly* 38.4 (1986): 553-572, *Jstor*, web, 20 Dec. 2012., Gary Cross, "Crowds and Leisure: Thinking Comparatively across the 20th Century," *Journal of Social History* 39.3 (2006): 631-650, *Jstor*, web, 20 Dec. 2012.

[84] Richard Butsch, "Introduction: Participative Public, Passive Private," *The Making of American Audiences: From Stage to Television, 1750-1990* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000)1-31, print.

influence society, especially children.[85] Before we move on to this passive crowd let us look at some of its active alternatives.

Amusement parks were one locus for entertainment crowds of the 1920s. In his article "Crowds and Leisure," Gary Cross examines what he calls the "pleasure crowds" that frequented amusement parks and similar leisure sites in the 20th century, comparing those in England to those in the United States. He looks, for instance, at Coney Island in the early 20th century and observes that, although it began as a place in which members of the middle and working classes could play together, in 1920 subway lines made the park a greater draw for the working than the middle class.[86] Cross's explanation of the middle class view on "pleasure crowds" is similar to the changing attitudes towards crowds Leach describes. Cross writes that, although all members of the middle class did not share one uniform opinion on crowds, many feared the crowd that sought entertainment in these places. Cross writes:

> Coney Island crowds inspired unrelenting anxiety from middle-class intellectuals and reformers. Seen as exemplars of unrestrained hedonism and irrationality accelerated by affluence, Coney crowds were viewed also as manifestations of 'boredom' and self-destructiveness that seemed to be released when workers had time free from work and other regular obligations…Of course, not all intellectuals and middle-class reformers condemned the saturnalian crowd at Coney (and instead praised its raw expressiveness, basic decency, or potential to be morally elevated).[87]

Here is the fear that we have become accustomed to. Yet, Cross also notes that in America, compared to Britain, "popular commercial culture" made an effort towards attracting multiple classes with the same cultural products such as amusement parks.[88] This, of course, is very similar to the way the film industry targeted and sought to please multiple classes.

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[85] Butsch 7.
[86] Cross 633-634.
[87] Cross 635.
[88] Cross 637, 643.

This was not the only way to draw crowds of Americans out into the fresh air for amusement in the 1920s, there were also film premieres.

The film industry did not just support one crowd but two, film audiences and premiere attendees. The latter crowd resembled an uncontrolled mob more often than one might think. Premieres were not just the first local screening of a film. Instead, they were events attended by many more people than could afford a ticket or fit into the theater.[89] They appealed to the American film public's desire for spectacle, showcasing the presence of major film stars who "tangibly embodied movie culture's capacity to bridge the two realms [reality and cinema]."[90] Cameramen and spotlights were added to increase the sense of spectacle. In short, a film premiere became "a brilliantly orchestrated scene of show business fantasy."[91] Although the film industry created the attending crowds through their design of the event they did not necessary control it. In fact, the assembled crowd would at times become uncontrollable "mobs" which added even more to the premiere's appeal.[92] These events became more prominent throughout the twenties; the first big premiere took place in 1922.[93] Thus, we are looking here at a crowd that was not fully defined by the time *Orphans* or even *Scaramouche* were produced. Nevertheless, when this crowd was finally constructed it would be composed of the same people who sat in the theaters watching these films. In a way this was the same crowd but as of yet un-activated.

Finally, let us return, once again, to the audience as crowd. Although in a previous section the demographics of the film-going crowd were explained, now we turn to theories on audience-film relations. Early film theory resembled crowd theories in its emphasis on the

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[89] Karnes 555.
[90] Karnes 554.
[91] Karnes 554.
[92] Karnes 561.
[93] Karnes 555, 559.

controlled versus uncontrolled/ independent nature of its subject. First, let us look at Miriam

Hansen's historical work on American film audiences. She proposes that early Hollywood

came to make its films and exhibit them in a way that would create one mass audience, one

homogenous crowd, out of the diverse early film audience.[94] Griffith, she claims, attempted

to create a "universal language" in his film, *Intolerance* (1916), for example.[95] However, she

believes that this failed due to the individuality of experience in exhibition.[96] Richard Butsch

also addresses the historical discourse regarding audience-film positioning. He writes that,

oddly enough, concerns over the cinematic audience revolved around the issue of its

passivity.[97] I say oddly because for the other crowds we have explored thus far, it was their

active nature that caused people to fear them. When it came to film and its audiences,

however, the concern was that the audience and particularly its child members were passive,

increasing the influence the entertainment had on them.[98] The active versus passive nature of

the audience depended on how it interacted with the entertainment.[99] In theater, an active

audience took part in the show, interacted with the actors and in general, the "fourth wall

between actors and audience" was absent.[100] Unfortunately, efforts "to prohibit vocal and

rowdy behavior" led to the end of audience "sovereignty" and thus, activity.[101] This occurred

in the nineteenth century.[102] According to Butsch, the theater audience, before its

pacification, was seen as a political body, a collective engaged in political discussion.[103]

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[94] Hansen 17.
[95] Hansen 17., "Intolerance," *AFI: Catalog of Feature Films*, American Film Institute, 2013, web, 24 Mar. 2013.
[96] Hansen 18.
[97] Butsch 6.
[98] Butsch 6-7.
[99] Butsch 8-9.
[100] Butsch 15.
[101] Butsch 15.
[102] Butsch 13.
[103] Butsch 14.

With the termination of the active crowd, this political definition and collectivity ceased and political talk moved elsewhere.[104] However, through an examination of Hansen's work he notes that there were exceptions to the passive audience.[105] In essence, Hansen and Butsch, bring up important questions. How did the audience relate films? According to Butsch, film goers were believed to be passive receptacles of film's messages. This, then, was the controllable crowd, the dream of 1920s advertisers, and apparently the fear of others. After all, who knew what messages these passive audiences would be given? Hansen, on the other hand, believes that attempts to homogenize and control audience reception of films failed.[106] In this thesis, I will take Hansen's view and assume that the audience had some independent thought. After all, not all films were successes. If films were able to brainwash completely passive audiences, there would have been no flops, no controversial films, because every film's message and arguments would be absorbed by the audience who would not have resisted. Also, some directors attempted to make their audiences active once again. Ingram does so at the end of *Scaramouche* by breaking the "fourth wall" and reviving the audience. What does this mean? In particular, what is the significance of this break's placement at the end of the film? We shall see.

The Represented Crowd

In a way, all of the crowds mentioned in this chapter are represented ones. After all, I have not seen these crowds first hand, certainly not in their 1920s forms. Thus, I only have access to the representations of them passed on by modern and historical theorists and scholars. Moreover, I am creating yet another representation as I write these words. Still, the cinematic crowd is by far the most constructed of all. It is the product of a creative process

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[104] Butsch 16.
[105] Butsch 16.
[106] Hansen 17.

meant to entertain. Although Griffith and Ingram may have researched the crowds of the French Revolution, a lot of creative energy went into the directing and filming of their crowds. In the end, what was most important was that the crowd scenes be spectacular. While the other crowds in this chapter existed in flesh-and-blood in the 1920s the crowds in these films were constructed out of extras who were motivated only by monetary conception and the chance of fame. The cinematic crowd in these films is, in fact, a combination of at least two different crowds: 1.) Crowd as actor and 2.) Crowd as character. The first is the crowd composed of extras, guided by Griffith. The second refers to the crowd created out of the images of the first and placed in the film's narrative to take on new form and meaning. Yet, in the finished product the audience, through the film's realism, is meant to see both as one. This assembled monolithic crowd may have spoken to the crowds existing in 1920s American society but it was not one of them. It was a fabrication. Thus, we cannot view this as another 1920s crowd but only as the filmmakers' creation.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have looked at both the composition of the 1920s cinematic audience as well as the crowded nature of 1920s American society. Having defined some of the ways in which crowds appeared, acted, and were theorized we can now move on to look at the films themselves.

The questions to be answered in the next few chapters are as follows:

- Why did the directors craft the crowds in the way they did?

- As both directors believed in the potential for film to act as propaganda, what were they trying to say through their crowds?

In these films we will see represented entertainment, political, social, and revolutionary crowds. More importantly, we will see the led and the un-led crowds and the possibilities of both for anarchy. We are led through these crowds by the films' protagonists who never become crowd members but whose narratives interweave with that of the crowds. Thus, we are placed in a position to judge objectively, or so we might think. But as members of the audience crowd we must ask ourselves, are we led or free?

CHAPTER TWO:
Ingram, *Scaramouche*, and the Active Audience

In 1923 *Scaramouche* appeared on the American screen.[1] Based on a popular novel by Rafael Sabatini, the film follows the popular early-Hollywood trend of adapting novels and plays into a new type of film, the feature-length film.[2] It also followed a common theme, the French Revolution. In fact, by the time the film was released, the American mind and eye were so saturated with stories of the French Revolution that one reporter wrote, "I would not have believed that a veteran film-goer could get another thrill out of the French Revolution in pictures but Rex Ingram has infused new spirit into the old material." [3] In fact, only a few years earlier, D.W. Griffith, had released *Orphans of the Storm*, the other focus of this thesis.[4] So we must ask ourselves why this time period was of such interest. How was it possible that a foreign historical event continued to captivate an audience which had seen it recreated many times before? I would argue that one of the main reasons the French Revolution was such an oft-used setting was because it resonated with 1920s American concerns. That is, one of the main actors in any French Revolution story is the revolutionary mob.[5] Although America may not have been experiencing a "revolutionary" mob, mobs, and their more innocuous counterparts, crowds were present in the American imagination as well as in the American cultural, economic, and political milieu.[6]

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[1] O'Leary 124.

[2] Ross 30., O'Leary 119.

[3] Helen Klumph, "Highbrows are for it," *Los Angeles Times* 7 Oct. 1923: III33, *ProQuest*, web, 24 Mar. 2013.

[4] Richard Schickel, *D.W. Griffith: An American Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984) print., Schickel 455.

[5] Rafael Sabatini, *Scaramouche* (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2005) print.

[6] Martin., McClelland., Wilson.

I argue that depictions of the French Revolutionary crowd allowed both Ingram and Griffith to express their beliefs, even if subconsciously, about the various crowds in their own social context. Moreover, their views on crowds provide much more information than whether they enjoyed or detested the sight of random groups of people. Instead, their opinions on the value of various crowds in society imply more general beliefs regarding politics, racism, and even cultural consumption. After all, crowds are merely expressions of some larger component in society. For example, lynch mobs are symptomatic of extreme racism, strikes of labor unrest, and audiences of consumerism. If we read Ingram's film with this in mind it becomes clear that even he was unsure of his position on the value of crowds in society as well as what they represented. On one hand, his revolutionary crowd, as we will see, becomes a bestial violent mob. Yet, from the very beginning of the film, he justifies the revolution and even returns the crowd members their humanity at the film's narrative climax. Ultimately, as we will see, he breaks the "fourth wall," and thus, asks his audiences to decide on the issues he has raised such as the implications of economic inequality and the potential for a regenerative form of revolution.

The film's ultimate message does not enforce its own power but that of the audience. It poses a question rather than sending a message; it asks the audience what they believe about the crowd and thus, revolution, or more generally collective action. It is safe to assume that at a time when filmmakers, reform groups, and countless other organizations and individuals believed in film's influential power on its viewers, a society where this new medium was utilized as a form of propaganda (a use that Ingram, himself, espoused) films came with some meaning, some message. One message of

Ingram's film can be found in the crowd's development and the tone of its portrayal. As we have already seen in chapter one, the choreographing of crowd scenes had already been used in films about labor unrest to create a certain tone and thus, moral justification or lack thereof for the crowd. In this film, it is used in the same way. Here, however, the meaning is a little more ambiguous.

To begin our analysis, let us look at the film's roots, Rafael Sabatini's *Scaramouche*.

From the Page to the Screen

In order to analyze the film, *Scaramouche*, it is necessary to know about the novel from which it was adapted. Who was Rafael Sabatini? Why was his novel of interest to American filmmakers and film-viewers?

Rafael Sabatini's novel, in fact, was exactly what American filmmakers were looking for. Born in Italy in 1875, Sabatini began his writing career in England and once *Scaramouche* was published in 1921 he became an "overnight sensation and best-selling author."[7] It is unsurprising, therefore, that the novel was turned into a film only a few short years after its publication.

One need only look over contemporary newspapers to recognize Sabatini's fame. While introducing Rex Ingram's film adaptation of Sabatini's novel, one newspaper reporter writes that the film was derived from Sabatini's "famous novel."[8] Another article's headline reads, "Flashes: Ingram's Latest: Will Film Sabatini's Tale

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[7] John D. Cloy, "Rafael Sabatini," *Scaramouche*, Rafael Sabatini (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 2005) print.
[8] "On the Shadow Stage," *The Washington Post* 20 Apr. 1924: A3, *ProQuest*, web, 24 Mar. 2013.

'Scaramouche.'"[9] The cavalier way with which Sabatini's name appears in the title of the article tells us several things: 1.) His was a household name, one that people would recognize and 2.) It was a name that would draw a potential reader's eye, one that would make someone interested in reading the article, in buying a newspaper. If his name failed to do either, there would have been no reason to place it in such a prominent spot. In short, what it tells us is that *Scaramouche* was a good choice for a film adaptation since, given the fame of both the novel and the novelist, the film would have a guaranteed audience. *Scaramouche* would have been a particularly attractive choice for one reason; it was set in the French Revolution.

In the 1920s the French Revolution was a common theme in works of fiction. In 1921 D.W. Griffith gave America his version of the revolution as we will see in the next chapter. Moreover, in 1927 a pamphlet was written called, "The French Revolution Told in Fiction" by William Sterns Davis.[10] This pamphlet is addressed to "those who wish to learn about the French Revolution by the pleasant means of fiction" and was published by the American Library Association. Davis informs us that by 1927, when the pamphlet was published, six books (five novels, including *Scaramouche* and a history) about the French Revolution were "available in any general library or may be obtained through any good book store."[11] Thus, American culture was saturated with tales of the French Revolution. Davis's compulsion to write the pamphlet in the first place shows that he recognized the interest his contemporaries had in the time period. In short, another aspect

[9] Grace Kingsley, "Flashes: Ingram's Latest: Will Film Sabatini's Tale 'Scaramouche,'" *Los Angeles Times* 22 Sep. 1922: II11, *ProQuest*, web, 26 Mar. 2013.
[10] William Stearns Davis, *The French Revolution as Told in Fiction: Reading with a Purpose* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1927) *HathiTrust*, web, 19 Oct. 2012.
[11] Davis 5.

of *Scaramouche* that would have made it attractive to filmmakers such as Ingram was the recognize-ability and popularity of the setting.

Early film and the revolution naturally complimented each other, the French Revolution demanded a show of extravagance in its presentation and early film thrived off of displays of excess.[12] Reviewers remarked on the film's grandiose sets and hoards of extras. [13] Importantly, these extras became the very character at the center of this thesis, the revolutionary crowd. Even the historical research conducted for the sake of historical authenticity became a point of interest, an element of the film's spectacle:

> It is now a matter of record that a period of seven months of research work of the most exhaustive nature was completed before even the first scene was filmed, that a complete and comprehensive library treating on the French Revolution was gathered together at the studio, that antiques, documents, and facsimiles of historical papers were imported from abroad and that a small coterie of historians was attached to the Ingram staff during this production.[14]

 Anything of great scale, even "research," added to the film's intrigue. The French Revolution, an important and turbulent historical event in a foreign country supplied any number of possibilities for grand displays and gestures, on and off screen. In turn, great hoards of movie-goers, attracted by the film's advertised grandiosity, would flock to theaters to see it.

So far we have established why the French Revolution and Sabatini's novel in particular would have been of interest to a filmmaker such as Rex Ingram in the 1920s. Now let us look at the film he made of this raw material.

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[12] Izod 58.

[13] Edwin Schallert, "Playdom: 'Scaramouche': Artistic Pictorial Apex in Rex Ingram Film," *Los Angeles Times* 18 Jan. 1924: A11, *ProQuest*, web, 25 Mar. 2013., "France of Eighteenth Century Lives in Picture," *Los Angeles Times* 22 Jul. 1923: II14, *ProQuest*, web, 25 Mar. 2013., "On the Shadow Stage," Apr. 20, 1924., Mae Tinée, "'Scaramouche' Big, Well Done and Expensive: And You'll Likely Find Thrills Galore in it," *Chicago Daily Tribune* 1Oct. 1923: 21, *ProQuest*, web, 25 Mar. 2013.

[14] "France of Eighteenth Century…," Jul. 22, 1923. Note: "enormous possibilities for spectacle" is one of the reasons Schickel gives for Griffith's choice of film, *Orphans of the Storm*: Schickel 454.

A Revolution in Action: Ingram's Film

The film centers on a young law student of unknown lineage named André-Louise Moreau. Following his companion's murder-by-duel at the hands of a vicious aristocrat, the Marquis de la Tour D'Azyr, he takes up his friend's revolutionary ideas and sets off to get revenge, not only on the Marquis but on the entire aristocratic system that licenses his behavior.

He becomes a revolutionary leader after he is denied justice for his friend's death by the King's Lieutenant in Rennes, a man who is meant to dispense justice but instead bows to the Marquis' prestige. Finding himself abandoned by legal channels, Moreau turns to the crowd assembled around a revolutionary student orator in the square outside. This crowd, although peaceful when he first entered the Lieutenant's building, had been stirred up by the murder of the student orator by governmental guards. Moreau uses the crowd's anger to his advantage, replacing the orator's voice with his own, leading them to pelt the Lieutenant's house with food until forcibly dispersed by the "dragoons."

He then finds himself a wanted man, hiding out among a theater troupe. Eventually, he becomes a part of the National Assembly, a segment of the revolutionary government. He leaves Paris (the center of the revolution) only after his heart is broken one too many times by the aristocratic woman he loves, Aline, who in turn courts the very man he despises, the Marquis de la Tour D'Azyr.

Moreau returns in the end to save Aline and the woman with whom she is living, an aristocrat who he comes to discover is his mother. Not only is his mother an aristocrat but his father, previously unknown to him, is the Marquis. In the end it is Moreau's status in the revolution that allows him to save his mother and his love, if not his biological

father, while other aristocrats are being attacked by the mob of revolutionaries, much grown and more violent since the day Moreau gave his first speech.

The film begins with the killing of the companion, the death of a martyr. Before he is murdered, the martyr-to-be reads out the Declaration of the Rights of Man which succinctly tells the audience the ideals on which the early stages of the revolution will be based.[15] The film connects the ideals of the revolution with those of America, suggesting sympathy for the revolutionaries. Likewise, the opening intertitle of the film provides the film's audience with a sense of the justice of the coming revolution: "The reign of Louis XVI, King of France, marked the passing of the French Monarchy, Bankrupt, abandoned to the rule of an all-powerful Nobility and an indifferent Clergy, the nation faced starvation—or revolt."[16] Thus, the film immediately situates the audience in a position of understanding and sympathy with the people of France, the people who will become a bloodthirsty "mob" by the middle of the film. For now they have no choice but "starvation-or revolt." Theirs is a choice between life and death, they merely choose life. Moreover, the aristocrats are the first to attack. The film makes this obvious from the beginning. After all, Moreau's quest for revenge is set in motion by his companion's death at the hands of an aristocrat. This, again, places the audience on the side of the French people. When they finally form the mob, there are no more easy answers about right and wrong.

The mob, once fully formed, is treated with more horror than sympathy. An intertitle reads, "And through the endless hours of night- the screaming of the grindstone,

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[15] Unless otherwise mentioned when the "audience" is mentioned in Chapters 2 and 3 it refers to the "audience" constructed or addressed by the film rather than the heterogeneous audience whose reactions are more difficult to determine.
[16] Intertitle, *Scaramouche*, 00:02:10

the roll of drums, the shouts, the bestial laughter of the marching hosts of Terror."[17]

Thus, the film presents an ambiguous vision of the mob as both justified in its malcontent

but demonic ("screaming," "bestial laughter," "Terror"). This second definition of the

mob appears best, not when it is killing but, instead, when it is dancing. The theme of the

"carmagnole" is common to other fictions set in the French Revolution, appearing in

D.W. Griffith's film *Orphans of the Storm* and Charles Dickens' novel *A Tale of Two*

Cities, although it is not referred to as such in *Orphans*.[18] This is not an orderly, reserved

dance of men but instead a crowd of mixed sex, an oversexed crowd in fact. In this

celebration women dance half-dressed in front of the fire and aristocratic women are

threatened with rape.

        The ambiguity with which Ingram treats the crowd is not what one would expect

from his biographer's claim that Ingram saw people "in terms of black and white" The

lines of right and wrong, black and white are blurred in this film. Like the color of the

picture, everything is grey. The aristocrats are evil but terrorized with violence; the

people composing the mob are justified but demonic. Ingram's vision of the revolution is

complex.

        Let us take a step back for a moment and look again at the evolution of the crowd

by examining a few key sequences from the film. Note: the crowd (which develops into a

mob) is the force but not the brain of the revolution, orators and politicians show it where

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[17] Intertitle, *Scaramouche*, 01:48:01

[18] Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, ed. George Stade (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2003) print., *Orphans of the Storm*.

to attack. However, once pushed into action by orators the crowd cannot be reigned in, even by André-Louis Moreau.[19]

Ingram's Cinematic Crowd

Figure 2.1: *Scaramouche.*

  One of the first scenes in which a crowd is present finds Moreau in Rennes. For now, those who listen and ponder revolution are of a cultured, educated class. They appear to be students. The still above shows the crowd members as Moreau first enters the city square. They appear sedate, listening, arms down, hats on. They stand in clusters but not in one mass. Here they are relatively unthreatening. However, their behavior soon begins to evolve. The figure below reveals their reaction to the murder of their orator.

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[19] Note: The crowd scenes of this film will be read with the aid of a brief lesson on descriptions of crowd choreography in 1920s films provided by Ross. In discussing a 1922 film about a 1919 strike he writes, "Using the choreography of crowd scenes to deliver strong ideological messages, directors turned crowds of strikers into a dangerous mob by clustering large numbers of actors into a tightly bunched group and having them shake their fists or wooden bats at outsiders in a threatening manner:" Ross 139.

Figure 1.2: *Scaramouche*.

Here, there is no doubt that there is more violence than we saw before. The space is tight: people are packed together, angry, and in constant movement. More importantly, the audience gets a brief glimpse of the image of the "mob," with hands raised, weapons waving in the air. However, these "weapons" are improvised in the minute, they are not swords, they are not axes, they are walking sticks. This is instant retaliatory violence against an enemy that had attacked first. It might even be termed defensive violence. Moreover, this shot is a close-up. As the camera pulls back the audience is able to see that most of the crowd remains uninvolved, although more and more push into the vicinity of the vengeful act until Moreau takes the dead orator's place. The real violence must wait until the ideological, educated crowd is put aside in favor of the impoverished crowd who fight, not for ideas, but for life itself.

Figure 2.3: *Scaramouche*.

When Moreau replaces the dead speaker the crowd refocuses, relatively passive once more. As they were under the eye of the previous orator, they are peaceful, hands and hats waving in the air this time in agreement and salute rather than violence. However, he soon whips his listeners into a fury once more.

Figure 2.4: *Scaramouche*.

When Moreau speaks out against the Lieutenant his listeners return to violence as shown in Fig. 2.4. Although earlier the crowd's violence was spontaneous, relatively individual, and defensive, this violence is en masse and instigated not by an act of the enemy but by the words of a sympathizer, a man who claims to be on their side. This is the first case of offensive crowd violence in the film. Yet, it is relatively harmless. The crowd is throwing what appears to be food, not anything truly dangerous. Ingram is introducing his audience to the violent nature of the crowd slowly. Soon, however, the crowd develops into a mob. Violence takes over.

Below is an image from the scene in which Moreau takes advantage of his position as stage actor to whip up a riot in a theater, one specifically directed against the Marquis but which threatens Aline, as well.

Figure 2.2: *Scaramouche*.

The scene depicted above is an important one to the film in that it is the first time we see the power Moreau's words have on his listeners. Once spoken, his words and the message they hold form his audience into an uncontrollable mob that threatens not only the man he hates but the woman loves. The film does not take this theme as for as it could. Although a modern viewer might expect this experience to scare Moreau, to make him realize that the revolutionary message he has been voicing is wrong or terrifying instead, he continues his work. Temporarily horrified, he remains loyal to the revolution.

After Moreau leaves Paris the film takes a look at another powerful orator, one that *Orphans* also takes an interest in, Danton. Below are a series of images from one of

the first speeches we see Danton make to the downtrodden urban poor who will become

the mob.

Figure 2.3: *Scaramouche*.

Above is an image of the crowd at the beginning of Danton's speech. The people

are utterly intent and packed together (he has attracted a large audience). Moreover, their

eyes, some of them anyway (note the woman in the bottom left corner) hold a variety of

intense emotions: fear, fanaticism, despair, etc. In a word, they are poised for action but

at the moment still. This soon changes.

Figure 2.4: *Scaramouche*.

Above is an image that is quite different from what we have seen before. This is a compact and ecstatic crowd. This shot follows the announcement that "Austria and Prussia invade France to aid the King!"[20] Danton urges the crowd to action with the words, "France has been betrayed! To arms patriots!"[21] Like Moreau in Rennes, Danton stands above the crowd, inciting them to action. However, he is asking them not to throw food but to take "arms." Never before in the film have the people of the crowd actually been asked to gather weapons. It seems that the crowd is receptive to his demand. It is ready to fight…and so it will.

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[20] Intertitle, *Scaramouche*, 01:31:58
[21] Intertitle, *Scaramouche*, 01:32:07

Figure 2.5: *Scaramouche.*

Figure 2.6: *Scaramouche.*

Figure 2.7: *Scaramouche.*

Figure 2.8: *Scaramouche.*

These are the scenes that follow, in a matter of minutes, Danton's speech to the crowd. This is the beginning of the violent revolution when the crowd becomes the mob. In Fig. 2.8 the threatening image of an ax being sharpened shows the realization of proposed violence. No longer will the people be waving sticks and hands in the air, but axes. Fig. 2.9 and 2.10 show the march of the mob, led by Danton himself. Fig. 2.10 gives the audience an idea of who is in the crowd. Flanking the fully clothed, proper Danton, are a bare-chested man and a woman whose blouse is hanging from her as she raises her hands in the air, leading on the mob. Fig. 2.11 depicts the mob as it comes away from its successful raid on the Tuileries, the king's home and the destination of the earlier march. Here violence is no longer threatened. Instead, the violence has already

occurred and now it is being brutally celebrated. With heads on pikes the crowd marches forth. Importantly, the crowd is no longer led by an orator but an over-sexualized woman. The message here is that reason has been lost; the beast has been unleashed through the act of spilling blood. From its meal of human death the mob marches forth without its rational leader, not in shame but in triumph. This sense of the mob's animosity is prominent throughout the rest of the film as it becomes more and more of a threat to Moreau's loved ones.

Even in revelry it remains uncontrolled and animal-like, dancing around a fire lit in the middle of the square. Instead of returning home for rest or sleep the members of the mob rage around the fire, satisfying a different desire now.

Figure 2.9: *Scaramouche*.

In its celebration, the crowd is violent and animal-like, no kindly sentiments are displayed, no sympathy, no fear (by the mob members anyway), no shame, but simple crazed joy. With weapons still in hand the mob celebrates destruction in Fig. 2.12.

The last scene of the film, and the one which holds the last depiction of the crowd, finds Moreau struggling to get his mother and Aline out of Paris. The trio is halted at the city gate where Aline is threatened sexually by a drunken reveler. This is all to be expected, of course, after the past scenes of the degenerative nature of the mob. Yet, something surprising happens next. Moreau shoves the drunken man aside and insists on being recognized as the prominent revolutionary he is. But what could this mean to this irrational and animalistic mass of violence and sex? A lot, apparently. The mob lets him go, touched by his demands for gratitude and sympathy for his love of Aline. In short, the mob manifests superior and honorable human emotions that prior depictions assured us it was no longer capable of.

Figure 2.10: *Scaramouche*.

Led still by the bestial woman, the crowd turns from beast back into human. This change asks the audience, was it really ever a beast at all? After all, the mob looks the same as it did as it left the Tuileries Palace but it has surprised the audience with an

unexpectedly sympathetic act. What is the audience to believe now? Where is the black

and white, right and wrong sense of order to the diegetic world? It has been abandoned.

The audience's last glimpse of the mob finds it marching towards the camera. The city

gates are no longer a barrier to this mass of determined, threatening beings. Instead, its

participants gaze directly at the camera, walking forward without restraint. There is no

"fourth wall" for the first time in the film, no separation between audience and diegetic

crowd. With this ending, Ingram is asking, once again, for his viewers to challenge their

conceptions of the mob. By breaking the "fourth wall," he demands sympathy for this

crowd and asks his audience to find itself among the faces on the screen. Moreover, he is

activating his audience.[22] Asking them directly, what do you think? What do you feel?

Figure 2.11: *Scaramouche*.

Led by a woman the audience is familiar with now, the crowd continues to march

onward even as the main characters leave the screen and the gate of Paris is closed behind

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[22] See introduction for discussion on passive/active audience, 34-35.

them. Without a realistic place in which the mob can march in the world of the film, they move forward as if through the screen and towards the audience. Another potential reading of this ending leaves the mob as destructive force, now threatening to break through the screen and bring the revolution to America. This ending would have major connotations in a society which had so-recently feared the coming of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Either way you read the end of this film, Ingram seems to be delivering a message about the crowd/mob. Below we will discuss what those messages are and what they would have meant, to a larger extent, in 1920s American society.

Empowering the Crowd

Throughout this thesis we have addressed the film as if it was Ingram's own creation. However, now we will explore what specific influences he would have worked under besides the ones experienced by all 1920s Americans and to what degree we can attribute this film to him alone.

First, let us look at how influential he was in the film industry and in his own work. He was, it turns out, very much in control. His biographer, Liam O'Leary, writes:

> Ingram's position with his company was supreme. His name on a production was as much 'box-office' as that of a star, and his films made money. Ingram was not the man to compromise with the new bureaucratic controls of filmmaking. He was arrogant, with no respect whatsoever for authority. Nor was he exactly easy to get on with. He was an individualist to the point of eccentricity.[23]

In short, he was popular enough with audiences that he was in control of his own work. After all, his unwillingness to "comprise" for the sake of bureaucracy in conjunction with the popularity of his name would have made him difficult to control or coerce yet too

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[23] O'Leary 137.

valuable to dump. Moreover, as O'Leary mentions in this passage Ingram disliked the Hollywood system that had recently developed. In a quote from Ingram that originally appeared in an interview in *Motion Picture Studio* magazine published on October 20, 1923, we find that this dislike was at least partially due to Hollywood's concern for giving the audiences what they wanted which Ingram did not consider a priority.[24] In short, according to O'Leary's assessment, Ingram would have been unlikely to capitulate either to superiors or the audience when it came to how he made his films. Thus, his films would, one would suppose, be his creation and ultimately, would say what he wanted them to say, not what he believed others wanted to hear. When analyzing this film it is safe to say "Ingram's message was…"

This does not mean, however, that Ingram was not influenced by anything. In fact, *Scaramouche* brought with it a whole set of separate sources of influence. By this I refer to other fictional portrayals of the French Revolution and its crowd. For instance, D.W. Griffith had released his film on the French Revolution, *Orphans of the Storm*, only a few years earlier. Moreover, in Ingram's biography, O'Leary mentions that Ingram was inspired to go into the film industry by none other than a cinematic version of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*.[25] Then, of course, the novel *Scaramouche* was most likely influential in how he portrayed the crowd as it provided the film's source material. In short, Ingram was not working from scratch but instead building off of and from earlier representations of the French Revolutionary crowd. Yet, there is one aspect of the crowd that seems to be unique to his work, the end.

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[24] O'Leary 139-140. Cannot locate original article from Motion Picture Studio magazine.
[25] O'Leary 25-26.

One of the most meaningful and yet unclear parts of the film is the last few shots in which the mob proceeds towards the camera, unobstructed. This means…well that is the question. Neither *Orphans* or *Scaramouche* (the novel) end in this way. In this moment of differentiation from the sources, we find a small window of pure directorial intent. Why did the film end this way with the main characters having already exited? Why is the crowd given the closing seconds of the film? The answer: it tells the audience what Ingram really wanted them to think about as they left the theater, the crowd.

Importantly, the audience, at least as represented by newspaper columnists saw the crowd. If one had any doubts that the masses of choreographed extras in the film had an impact on its audience(s), newspaper reviews of the film dispel them. For instance, in a 1923 article from the *Los Angeles Times*, (written prior to the film's premiere), the unknown author describes one scene in the film and the set constructed for it and asserts that "1500 persons will participate in the scenes in this setting."[26] Most likely, the majority of the 1500 can be found amid the mob in the final version of the film. The author's interest in the number indicates that, even before the film premiered, the size of the crowd was already important to how the film was and would be perceived. (Part of this interest derived from the same aspect of early Hollywood culture that led another writer to state the number of hours of research that went into the film. Magnitude, in early Hollywood, was attractive as has already been mentioned.) A reviewer from *The Washington Post* also comments on the number of cast members in the film, showing that the *Los Angeles Times* reporter was not alone in his interest."[27] Feedback on the film post-release also brought up the figure of the "mob." In an otherwise negative review,

[26] "Ingram's Film to be Started," *Los Angeles Times* 15 Mar. 1923: II10, *ProQuest*, web, 25 Mar. 2013.
[27] "On the Shadow Stage," 20 Apr. 1924.

Mae Tinée of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* writes, "The photography, costumes, and mob scenes are splendid."[28] She goes on to critique the grandiose nature of the film just as the other two reporters above celebrated it. Nevertheless, she still finds the mob, independent of its size, important enough to mention, suggesting that size was not the only aspect of the crowd's presence that made it significant to the film. She, after all, calls its scenes "splendid" even though she disdains the way the film "resolves itself into a gigantic effort to call attention to itself." This reveals that as audience members, at least those which the above reporters spoke for and addressed, watched the film, their interest would have been piqued by the figure of the "crowd" turned "mob." In short, the crowd had the audience's attention. Why was the crowd of such interest to members of the audience? As mentioned above, it was familiar, it related to their lives. This meant that the way in which Ingram and his coworkers directed the crowd was more than an artistic choice, it had social meaning for a world in which crowd meant, in some cases, Bolshevism and labor disputes. Labor films, after all, had carefully choreographed and tonally defined crowds just like this one. Thus, this character was not notable because of its uniqueness as much as it was most likely notable for its familiarity.

Now that we have established that the crowd was a focal point both for film viewers and makers, let us now look at what exactly it meant for the audience which Ingram would have had in mind. Once again, one way in which the targeted audience may have perceived the oncoming mob in the closing shots is as the realization of the Red Scare threat, the coming of revolution to America. Thus, the revolutionary mob of the film, in this interpretation, would be connected to the imagined revolutionary mob of

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[28] Mae Tinée, 1 Oct. 1923.

the Scare as well as the actual crowd of working class strikers which became connected, in anxiety filled minds, with the spread of communism.

This reading of the film becomes more plausible as one realizes the connection some of Ingram's contemporaries made between the two revolutions, Russian and French. For instance, a journalist from the *Los Angeles Times* wrote an article about a Russian woman, who, having escaped the revolution, ended up as one of Ingram's "10,000 extras" in *Scaramouche*. The journalist writes that Ingram "was impressed with the fine spirit she put into her bit in one of the mob scenes," and, "To his surprise, Mr. Ingram learned that Mlle. Chevolier [the extra] is an expert on revolutions, being a veteran of two Russian affrays."[29] Thus, the journalist, by way of this woman, connects the Russian Revolution and the represented French Revolution of the film. His readers are led to believe that Ingram saw this connection as well in the woman's skill at mobbing. In effect, the journalist makes the two revolutions equal, a revolution in his article is a revolution, a sentiment that Everett Dean Martin would no doubt agree with.[30] The very title of the article, "She's Real Revolution Daughter: Mob Scenes Natural to Mlle. Chevolier: She's Been Through Two of Them," asserts this connection. More specifically, the journalist is arguing that all revolutions manifest in a mob and that this mob is the same in all revolutions. In other words, mobbing in one is mobbing in them all. Another of Ingram's contemporaries to make the connection between revolutions is another reporter, this time for *The Independent*. His article directly compares the two revolutions (the French Revolution appears as historical event this time rather than cinematic event). The author writes, "It is worth noting that in this case, as in so many

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[29] "She's Real Revolution Daughter," *Los Angeles Times* 30 Dec. 1923: III25, *ProQuest*, web, 25 Mar. 2013.

[30] For more information on Everett Dean Martin refer back to Chapter 1.

others, the history of the French revolution exactly parallels that of the Russian."[31] At this point in the article the author is talking about the violent overthrow of an older, privileged order by "peasants." He is working with politics and history, not choreography and anecdote as the other reporter had, yet he comes up with the same message in the end: this revolution is the same as that revolution. Thus, these reporters, and one would assume some of their readers, believed that the French Revolution and the Bolshevik Revolution were comparable if not identical. This makes it even more likely that audiences viewing a revolutionary mob on the screen would connect it, unconsciously at least, with contemporary fears of the Bolshevik Revolution. The audience which followed this interpretation of the film would have received a thrill derived from fleeting contact with that which is feared. Although this would have been a strange way to end what was purportedly a romantic historical epic, this is one possible way in which to see the film's ending in historical context but not the only way.

The film's other potential message has everything to do with the breaking of the "fourth wall." For this interpretation, we must work through Butsch's theories on the pacification of entertainment crowds in America. Butsch argues that previous to the 19th century the audience (as it manifested in dramatic theaters) was an active audience, interacting with the performers and ultimately, formed a collective political entity. However, in the 19th century consumption replaced social interaction in these spaces, leading to the de-politicization of the audience as its collective identity disintegrated into individual rather than communal experience (ex. when the lights were turned down).[32] The "fourth wall" was constructed on the stage and subsequently used in film as part of

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[31] "Five Reigns of Terror," *The Independent* 20 Mar. 1920: 439, *ProQuest*, web, 25 Mar. 2013.
[32] Butsch 8-9, 12-14.

this deactivation of the audience.[33] However, the removal of this "fourth wall" once again creates an active audience. The last shots of *Scaramouche* are an example of this "fourth wall" being broken. The characters stare at the camera and thus at the audience, directly addressing them. If we perceive the end through Butsch's theories it appears that Ingram is attempting to activate his audience. He is turning the audience members into producers of messages and thought rather than passive receptacles for his own message. In the end, he is asking the audience to decide on the moral value of the crowd. At the same time, they would be deciding, in essence, what they believed of collectivity. Is a mass of people necessarily destructive or can they be productive? Consequently, they could bring their newfound decision to bear on the multiple collectives or active crowds as they existed within their own lives. Ingram seems to give his answer to the question of the nature of crowds. After all, by activating his audience he is purposefully returning their collectivity to them (according to Butsch, at least).

In the end, Ingram tells us how to interpret his film:

> Somebody is going to evolve a way of universalizing pictures, but he isn't going to do it by shutting himself away from the rest of the world. And it will bring about final world peace based on universal understanding. The screen is the mightiest agent to be used as a propaganda medium which the world has ever known; and though everybody is going around mouthing that fact, there's been precious little advantage taken of it, relatively speaking. I'm going to try do pioneer work in the great task of universalizing motion pictures. They should belong to all countries and all times, the best picture stories, and should be so well made that the best of them could be placed in libraries for future use, just as the best books are. Thus great film masterpieces can be shown 100 years from now, just as old books are read. Imagine how valuable these will be, not only for story values, but for real information regarding our times passed on to future generations.[34]

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[33] Butsch 8-9, 15.
[34] Kingsley, 24 Jul. 1921.

Film is a form of "propaganda." His audience, as he imagined it, is more "universal" and eternal ("future generations") than restricted within the temporal and geographic borders of 1920s America. He dreams of "masterpieces," that will cross time and space. The value he places on films indicates that rather than pander to audiences he would more likely have placed in his films only that which he believed and supported. Thus, they are a product of his will rather than his subservience to that of others. However, he also says that, although his audience may be universal, he knows that films contain "real information regarding our times…" This is, in the end, what this thesis searches for. The depiction of the mob tells us not only Ingram's views on the crowd as it manifested in 1920s America but also about the crowded environment in which it was constructed.

Conclusion

Ingram, once referred to by a contemporary reviewer as Napoleon, believed in film's power as propaganda.[35] Propaganda has a target, an intent, and most importantly a message. The only question is, what message or messages did Ingram embed in this film? In the figure of the crowd, we find one. Whether he is sending his audience the signal to be afraid of revolution or opening their eyes to their active potential he uses the crowd to communicate. The prevalence of crowds in 1920s society meant that the audience might use this new information within their everyday lives. Did anyone come out of the theater after seeing his film and join a strike or prepare for a communist invasion? Perhaps not, but his voice contributed to those of his fellow film makers, politicians, and progressives to help direct the audience, a crowd in its own right, to view others of its kind in new ways. Crowds span the extent of society, reaching into politics and economics,

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[35] Herbert Howe, "Finds Kings and Jokers," *Los Angeles Times* 19 Aug. 1923: III33, *ProQuest*, web, 30 Mar. 2013.

entertainment and international relations. Any discourse on them including in the form of a film naturally reflects on each aspect of society. By addressing his film audience, Ingram was speaking to strikers, industrialists, communists, progressives, blacks, whites, men, and women. Did they all hear the same message? Most likely, no. However, Ingram planned for that, leaving the ultimate decision up to the audience. Are crowds destructive or productive? In essence, he held a mirror up to society and asked it what it saw.

CHAPTER THREE:
D.W. Griffith, Anarchy, and the KKK

In the previous chapter, we explored the development of the crowd in Rex Ingram's *Scaramouche*. We discovered that although the crowd changed throughout the film, it changed as a singular entity; the crowd, in the end, was the crowd. However, Griffith's film, *Orphans of the Storm*, adopts a more complicated narrative of crowd development creating multiple crowds which are each assigned their own distinct level of permission by Griffith. This, as we will see, is a more accurate portrayal of what crowd meant in 1920s America. Different kinds of crowds operated in different spaces and in different ways, although as mentioned in chapter one a crowd could shift types. However, what is most important in Griffith's film is not why the crowd is gathered but rather who leads them. In Griffith's film the ordered crowd under the strong control of one moralistic leader is depicted as hero, the last minute savior of two of the film's main characters. This crowd is positively represented. However, the independent crowd, improperly led and prone to anarchy, is depicted as corrupt and violent. In *Scaramouche*, in comparison, the anarchic crowd (the only one that exists in that film) is left entirely without a leader by the second half of the film, resulting in an unled crowd rather than a crowd with ineffective leadership. In the end, though, the results are the same. However, in Griffith's film two types of crowds develop and exist until the last moments of the film.

If we compare the crowd movements in Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* to those in *Orphans* the roles and values he gives to both the anarchic and the led crowd in the latter film become much clearer. Griffith depicts the crowd in a similar way in the two films and thus, *Birth* becomes a useful tool for reading *Scaramouche*. Like in *Scaramouche, Nation* holds two different types of crowds upon which Griffith levels two

different value judgments. One crowd takes the form of the Ku Klux Klan, the group that

Griffith perceives as the savior of the South during Reconstruction. The KKK protects the

South, in Griffith's view, from the anarchic crowd of freed slaves and other free African

Americans. "Anarchy" is a key word as Griffith uses it as a pejorative in both films.

Griffith makes clear his perceptions of both types of crowd in the way he choreographs

their movements as will be discussed later in this chapter. In his mind, Danton's crowd

represents a liberator and protector like the KKK in *The Birth of a Nation* while the

anarchic crowd, that which is improperly led, provides the threatening force against

which the heroic crowd acts.

The belief in the potential for crowds to be controlled was widely held in

Griffith's time, resulting in advertising efforts on the commercial end of society and such

machines of propaganda as the Committee of Public Information on the side of

government and politics. Griffith, like others of his time, believed that crowds such as the

one led by Danton in his film could play an extremely positive role in society whereas

out-of-control crowds posed a threat. However, even the dangerous crowd could be

reformed and brought under control. Even the crowds that appear anarchic and call for

death after death of noblemen can be convinced, in the film, to release their victims by a

proper leader, Danton. The key here is not the nature of the crowd but the nature of the

leader. If the leader is powerful and righteous, the crowd's dangerous potential is not only

neutralized but transformed into a boon for society.

In fact, Griffith was the master of a crowd, the film audiences.[1] In the previous

chapter, there is a quote from Rex Ingram on the potential of film as propaganda. What

he meant was that film could be used to change people's behavior; in his case, to pacify

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[1] Thesis Advisor Meeting, Giorgio Bertellini, Oct. 2012.

them. Griffith, like Ingram, had the power to create films that influenced his audiences.

His abilities as crowd leader were determined by the success of his films both in the box

office draw and their ability to spread his messages; in *The Birth of a Nation*'s case, fear

of freed slaves and alternately, faith in white supremacy. In *Orphans*, Griffith espouses

the internal peace of the United States. This is indicated by an early intertitle which reads,

"The lesson- the French Revolution RIGHTLY overthrew a BAD government. But we in

America should be careful lest we with a GOOD government mistake fanatics for leaders

and exchange our decent law and order for Anarchy and Bolshevism."[2] There is that

word "Anarchy." "Bolshevism" is also a key word here. These two words become very

important when dealing with the crowds (real and imagined) of 1920s America.

In the following pages we will explore Griffith's use of the crowd in *Orphans*

with the aid of his film *The Birth of a Nation*. We will place him among the

contemporary discussion of crowd theory and behavior and ultimately, show that

although his view of the crowd's potential was hopeful, he still held a conservative fear

of an uncontrolled lower-class crowd similar to the fear which Leach mentioned

dominated Europe after the French Revolution.[3] In short, *Orphans* was a product of both

the promise of the future and the fear of the past. In the end, however, the positive crowd

wins out, suggesting an optimism that would have suited Griffith as a leader of his own

crowd.

The Origin of *Orphans*: *The Two Orphans* by Adolphe D'Ennery

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[2] Intertitle, *Orphans of the Storm*, 00:01:31.
[3] Leach mentions that this fear was prevalent in Europe after the French Revolution: Leach 101-102.

Orphans of the Storm did not originate on the screen but rather on the stage as *The Two Orphans (Les Deux Orphelines)*.[4] Adolphe D'Ennery's play was extremely popular by the time Griffith began to work with it. A *Los Angeles Times* article reads, "Three generations have their memories stirred at the mention of 'The Two Orphans.' Grandfathers, fathers, mothers and children together build a vivid mind image at the name of this stage classic."[5] It goes on:

> Of course the screen has clamored for 'The Two Orphans.' The play has been filmed twice under that title- productions which are now obsolete because of the advance in technique. D.W. Griffith, desirous of giving this appealing story a production really worthy of it, was able to secure the screen rights, and now as 'Orphans of the Storm,' the old play lives again today as one of the most tremendous achievements of Griffith. The background is the French Revolution. The story in its new form is said to be full of tumultuous action.

 Thus, Griffith was by no means working with new material by the time he began filming *Orphans of the Storm* anymore than Ingram was with *Scaramouche*. Presumably, many of the film's viewers would have been familiar with the play. Thus, Griffith assured himself am audience like many other filmmakers including Ingram.[6] Even so, we may ask why this play?

The Two Orphans would have been attractive to Griffith in particular for a few reasons. For one, his favorite leading lady, Lillian Gish, suggested it to Griffith because it offered both herself and her sister, Dorothy, a role. [7] Besides, it was already a hit on the stage. Second, Griffith considered it a "classic" and believed that it had great dramatic

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[4] David Mayer and Yuri Tsivian, "Orphans of the Storm," *The Griffith Project*, gen. ed.   Paolo Cherchi Usai, vol. 10 (London: British Film Institute, 2006) 116-137, print., Mayer and Tsivian 116.
[5] Grace Kingsley, "D.W. Griffith Flays Picture Methods," *Los Angeles Times* 19 Dec. 1926: C21, *ProQuest*, web, 25 Mar. 2013.
[6] Schickel 426.
[7] Schickel 454.

potential, with two endangered heroines and "enormous possibilities for spectacle."[8]

These were his reasons for choosing the play, according to his biographer Richard

Schickel.

The material of the play, however, was not restrictive. The story had its uses and

Griffith took full advantage of them, but he was not afraid to move beyond what he was

originally given. Schickel mentions that Griffith was a great fan of Charles Dickens and

that, consequently, the director's work on *Orphans* was inspired by Dickens' *A Tale of*

Two Cities.[9] This fits with an observation that Yuri Tsivian made in the "*Orphans of the*

Storm" article in *The Griffith Project*: the original play, *Les Deux Orphelines* was set four

years after the Revolution, not at the center of it as the film was[10] Much of the article

devoted to *Orphans* in *The Griffith Project* details the significant amount of matter and

meaning Griffith added onto the original play. Thus, we cannot view *Orphans* as a simple

cinematic version of the play. Unrestricted by a strict adherence to the story's original

form, Griffith had the opportunity to improvise.

Now let us look at the film Griffith developed from the play. Specifically, the

story he sought to tell.

When the Classes Mixed and the Storm Began

At its essence *Orphans of the Storm* is what Stephen J. Ross would call a cross-

class fantasy. It is also an historical epic and romance.[11] It centers on the lives of two

"orphans," Henriette and Louise. Louise is the daughter of an aristocrat and commoner, a

union that results in the death of Louise's father. Subsequently, Louise is abandoned on

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[8] Schickel 454.
[9] Schickel 113, 455.
[10] Tsivian 123.
[11] Ross 175.

the steps of a church, ripped out her mother's arms at her aristocratic family's will. Henriette, on the other hand, is the daughter of an urban poor family. However, the two are raised together as sisters when Louise is taken in by Henriette's parents. After the parents die and an illness leaves Louise blind, the two sisters determine to go to Paris to seek out a cure. It is Paris where the main action of the film begins, including the revolution.

Nearly as soon as the two sisters make it to Paris, Henriette is kidnapped by an evil Marquis who has her brought to his orgi-esque party for aristocrats. There she is saved by another aristocrat, the man who very quickly develops into her love interest: the Chevalier de Vaudrey. Meanwhile, Louise is left to walk blindly in the streets, saved by her own rather dirtier knight-in-shining armor, the son of a beggarwoman, Madame Frochard. The story continues with Henriette's desperate search for Louise and Louise's wretched captivity by Madame Frochard. Henriette, moreover, is exposed to the class-based discrimination of the upper classes as the Chevalier's uncle sends him out of Paris and away from her and his aunt urges her to let him go. After all, it was not proper for an aristocrat to marry a commoner.

When the revolution begins in earnest the Chevalier returns to Paris, only to be caught by the Commune police and dragged off to the guillotine. A new law has been created: no aristocrat can enter Paris or his life is forfeit. Those who shelter him receive the same punishment. Thus, Henriette is brought to trial alongside her love. Meanwhile, Louise's love interest rebels against his family and brings Louise to safety at last. The two sisters only meet again at Henriette's trial and subsequent trip to the guillotine. But this ending will not do for a romantic epic! No, a savior must come. Danton, the true

leader of the people, a prominent member of the revolution, rushes in to save Henriette at the last minute, repaying her for saving him once before.

In the end the two sisters reunite. Louise meets her mother, the Chevalier's aunt, and gives Henriette her blessing to marry the Chevalier. Paris, too, is healed by the wonderful Danton. The last intertitle reads, "Danton's plea for mercy finally spreads throughout France until justice returns. Not until after Robespierre himself is guillotined does a REAL DEMOCRACY begin to dawn. Then are rights restored and do gardens bloom again."[12]

On the surface this film is a romance and a predictable one at that. Yet, Griffith frames the story with political intertitles, suggesting a greater purpose for the film. Griffith's film, *The Birth of a Nation*, was at its core a piece of racist propaganda, bemoaning the lot of post-reconstruction white families in opposition with an influx of vengeful freed blacks. As we shall see later in Griffith's biography this was a subject near and dear to his childhood experiences. Thus, it is unsurprising that Griffith would use *Orphans* as a soapbox from which to preach about other societal concerns such as Bolshevism. In the opening intertitle Griffith uses the words, "Anarchy", "Bolshevism", and "Democracy" in a way which assumes that "Anarchy" and "Bolshevism" are bad while "Democracy" is good. Indeed, he ends up sounding like one of Martin's mob leaders, speaking in "principles" that come, in themselves, to mean nothing.[13] In fact, Griffith was a propagandist and crowd leader, roles he takes advantage of. He connected the characters and the stories of the film to words and ideas that resonated strongly with

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[12]Intertitle, *Orphans of the Storm*, 02:26:55: "The lesson- the French Revolution RIGHTLY overthrew a BAD government. But we in America should be careful lest we with a GOOD government mistake fanatics for leaders and exchange our decent law and order for Anarchy and Bolshevism."
[13]For more information on Martin see Chapter 1, section "Crowd Theory.," Martin 27-28.

his audience, allowing them to become part of the film's diegetic world. What, exactly did his viewers see? The crowd.

What They Saw

Compared to that in *Scaramouche*, the crowd in *Orphans* comes into the film late. Let us follow its progress since, just as in Ingram's film, it develops and changes throughout the film. First, we will take a look at the men and women who will soon become the mob but, as of yet, are engrossed only in their ordinary and unfortunate lives.

Figure 3.1: *Orphans of the Storm*.

In Fig. 3.1 we see the city folk who soon will find themselves beating aristocrats and participating in mass orgies. The still above is one of misery. Women huddle against buildings, helpless. Children sit playing in the dirt. There are no smiles among them and they are all clothed in rags. The point of this shot is to help the audience understand why these people act as they soon will.

This group is represented by the man in the center of the frame, the most prominent figure in the foreground. He is staring at a spot just right of the camera, presenting the film's audiences with a scowl but his proud frame remains intact; he stands upright, strong, and unbent despite his labors. He is the mob waiting to break free.

Figure 3.2: *Orphans of the Storm*.

Another shot (Fig. 3.2) provides more information about the people's motives to revolt. Although the intertitles tell us the reasoning behind the revolution the audience can now see for itself: hunger (and not just that which comes from lack of food). Thus, Griffith is pointing to a legitimate reason for the revolution. For him the revolution itself was not necessarily wrong but it was led astray. This shot invites us into the midst of these hungry folk, a pathway is left for the viewer to step inside, to see the faces of these people. Notably, there are only two men in the shot and they are greatly outnumbered by women and children, presumably a device intended to inspire the audience's sympathy. Unlike in the previous shot there is no one man to represent the whole and no expression

of stubborn discontent to lend the audience a clue to the resilience of the impoverished, no clue as to how they will come to fight for a better life later on. Instead, we see only desolation. This is because this particular scene serves another purpose, to ally the audience with the Chevalier de Vaudrey, Henriette's lover. After all, upon seeing their hungry faces the aristocrat goes into the shop to buy an armful of bread and comes back out to the crowd to dispense it among them. This is one way in which *Orphans* resembles *Scaramouche*. Both Ingram and Griffith present positive and negative characters from each sphere, aristocratic and working class, complicating any blanket judgments on the moral superiority of one class over another, an important tactic for filmmakers displaying their films for a dual-class audience.

Figure 3.3: *Orphans of the Storm*.

The first time we glimpse the crowd's potential for violence is when it acts in immediate retaliation of an aristocrat's crime, the murder of a street urchin. After the aristocrat's carriage hits and kills a child of the impoverished class, the surrounding

crowd swarms the carriage, intent on revenge. This, again, is reminiscent of *Scaramouche* where aristocrats throw the first stone in the battle between the classes. The picture above shows the moment when the aristocrat and his carriage are attacked. One aspect of note is that the people do not go after the aristocrat's driver but, instead, they move to attack him directly, indicating that they have a very clear idea of where to place blame. These are also the same type of people we saw before, impoverished and dressed in rags. However, they are in much greater number now. They pack together and hurl themselves all in the direction of the carriage. Their arms are raised and the frame is busy with their presence. The aristocrat and his carriage are pressed to the side of the screen, overwhelmed in substance by the people who attack them. Yet, the attack does not inspire any substantial degree of fear. A footman stands in front of the carriage door, scowling with no real menace as the people rush him and his master. Thus, the crowd's/mob's presence and actions have not yet reached a caliber deemed unusual or particularly dangerous. The aristocrat will soon see, however, that he should be afraid; a revolution is coming.

The crowd's development into mob comes largely at the hands of orators who take two forms in the film, effective and moral versus ineffective and petty: Danton versus Robespierre. These orators hold a prominent place in the narrative. Whereas orators are also key in *Scaramouche* (the main character after all is a revolutionary orator), Griffith presents us with a whole culture of oratory, an entire city square where multiple orators are surrounded by multiple crowds. Thus, in *Orphans* we see how many voices are involved in stoking up the people of France into a revolution and how, even before the revolution, the people's problems were in fact being heard by members of the aristocracy who might have had the power to help. Thus, the aristocracy is shown to be

dismissive rather than ignorant. This culture of oratory is depicted in Fig. 3.4.

Figure 3.4: *Orphans of the Storm*.

The frame is tightly packed with spectators but they do not seem menacing as they are all intent not on a hated member of another class but rather on orators who, even if their oratory runs counter to their own beliefs, holds their attention. Thus, no weapons are raised, only faces. Moreover, this crowd is composed of aristocratic men and women as indicated by their ornate dress. This is different from the student crowds we saw at the beginning of *Scaramouche* as well as the downtrodden folk we have seen before in this film.

Soon enough the film moves on to the real protagonist of the revolution, the mob, as it becomes fully-formed out of the urban poor. In Fig. 3.5 we watch as the people are called to revolt, led by the representative of the people's anger and vengefulness, Jacques Forget-Not (the man in the forefront of the shot). On the right of the frame is a man beating the drums, urging the people to revolt. Griffith mentions this drum as a metaphor

for revolutionary fervor in an intertitle and places it in the shot to enhance the metaphor's potency.[14]

Figure 3.5: *Orphans of the Storm*.

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[14] Intertitle, *Orphans of the Storm*, 01:33:18.

In Fig. 3.6 we see the mob at its full strength for the first time.

Figure 3.6: *Orphans of the Storm*.

Men and women clamber together down the streets of Paris, filling the frame entirely with their bulk. Weapons are raised high. Both sexes take part in this mob and both are armed. It moves off-screen just to the left so that its energy is aimed toward the camera and the film's audience. These are now a people in continuous motion. In comparison to previous shots, the crowd is much more dynamic; there is no standing in place and looking at an orator, no slumping on the side of the road in hunger. There are not even stalls where people continue with their industry. On the contrary, the audience is presented with a moving wall of people with faces full of determination and anger (granted, some extras put more effort into voicing these emotions than others). Still, just a few moments previous to this shot, we see that Danton is still leading the mob and thus, it is still relatively controlled. This notion of control is only further secured by the fact that

the square of orators is still active and is now calling for revolutionary action, too (see Fig. 3.7).

Figure 3.7: *Orphans of the Storm*.

What is remarkable about the shot in Fig. 3.7 is that the demographics of the audience have not changed. Wealthy men and women still watch as the orator calls for revolution. This suggests, as *Scaramouche* does not, that the revolution was not purely the act of students and lowerclassmen. This, in turn, suggests a wider acknowledgement of the corruption in French society, a product of the great economic disparity between the classes. Thus, the revolution is legitimized in a way that would have been impossible if it were supported only by members of the lower class.

The films by Ingram and Griffith share a certain feminization of the mob (see Fig. 3.8).

Figure 3.8: *Orphans of the Storm*.

Like Ingram, Griffith shows women leading the way to violence. Granted, in this shot a woman is leading her fellow women, suggesting a limited power for this particular revolutionary leader. However, this frame also shows us in no uncertain terms that the revolution is powered not only by men but women. Women are even beating their own drums. Everywhere there is action.

However, in just a few shots we see Griffith, once again, doing something different from what Ingram would do two years later. Griffith constructs a few of his early mob scenes as pitched battles, Danton's mob versus Paris guards. This presents the mob with an entirely new identity, one that does not exist in *Scaramouche*.

Figure 3.9: *Orphans of the Storm*.

In Fig. 3.9 Danton rushes forward with his army of poor folk, beginning the part of the revolution dedicated to tearing down the state's symbols of authorities including prisons. At first the guards in the forefront of the screen oppose Danton's forces, as the figure above reveals. This confrontation resembles a stand-off between two armies, a relatively disciplined and controlled image compared to that of the general street mobs that attack aristocrats in *Scaramouche*. Granted, later in the film we will see this other type of mob but for now the mob that Danton leads resembles an army troop.

Figure 3.10: *Orphans of the Storm*.

At the end of this scene we see the guards listening to Danton's oratory and becoming part of the mob that presses at his back. This suggests, again, that the revolutionary cause is a just one (Fig. 3.10). This is still the part of the revolution where Danton and the people following him wear smiles on their faces. This is the glorious part of the revolution. However, as Danton is left behind by the narrative and we begin to see more revolutionary actions and crowds that are not directly led by him, the crowd splits into two forms, the controlled and the anarchic, the righteous and the dangerous. Images such as the ones just below (Fig. 3.11-3.13) begin to appear, indicating the wild nature of an uncontrolled mob.

Below in Fig. 3.11 and 3.12 are shots of the crowd as they dance the carmagnole, a dance both films identify with the French Revolution. It is composed of a string of mob members joined at the hands and dancing with abandon. This, too, includes members of both sexes.

Figure 3.11: *Orphans of the Storm*.   **Figure 3.12:** *Orphans of the Storm*.

It is a dance that shows the people's lack of control and discipline and yet, at the moment it is less threatening than delirious. In Fig. 3.12 Griffith surprises again as he jokes with the revolutionary crowd, choreographing its sexual excess into slap-stick sketches and dance sequences. These are scenes of the mob that do not threaten but delight the viewer as the Chevalier's servant, the film's comedic representative of aristocrat excess, is played with by drunken members of the impoverished masses celebrating their recent revolt. In short, Griffith has a lot more fun with the crowd than Ingram who painted a much more serious picture of the people who propelled a revolution.

In the shot below, however, there is the alternative depiction of the mob as mass murderer. Fig. 3.13 depicts the killing of an aristocrat.

Figure 3.13: *Orphans of the Storm.*

This shot was staged extremely carefully. It depicts the murder of one woman by another. The two women are positioned in the center of a directed clearing in the mob with its forces raging around them. This is Griffith's way of directing special attention to the two women while making clear that they are a part of something much greater.\

Even though Danton did not lead any of these latest revolutionary acts he is still part of the revolution and a major influence on its forces. A few aspects of Fig. 3.14 catch the eye.

Figure 3.14: *Orphans of the Storm*.

First of all, this is a new type of crowd. It is a mix between the violently revolutionary one and that which interacted with orators earlier in the film. The faces of the crowd are upturned but instead of attention they display reverence. The wide shot is filled with what must be hundreds of extras but this is a peaceful parade with the orator positioned as kindly father or even new king. This is the picture of a good leader. He is in complete control of the crowd and its members literally and figuratively support him on their backs. This is the picture of triumph and peace. The revolution has been won. The audience is asked to see Danton in the same way the people surrounding him do through the use of a masque on the shot, blurring the edges of the frame to subjectively place him

in the middle of a dreamy, reverent gaze. In this shot, he becomes the only person in the diegetic world. He is a benevolent leader and at the height of his influence.

In the following shot, Griffith leaves Danton and takes us to the den of the improper leaders, the corrupt and weak Robespierre and Jacques-Forget-Not. Interestingly, these leaders have appropriated the space typically associated with justice and proper legal process, the courtroom.

Figure 3.15: *Orphans of the Storm*.

Their courtroom is filled with drunks and prostitutes, the picture of corruption and social decay, as a mockery is made of the American justice system. Although this scene takes place as Danton is paraded through the streets, it reminds us that the revolution is still going on, or rather, the excessive part is. In this courtroom aristocrats are ordered to death without any sort of due process as it would be defined in American courts; Robespierre controls the jury's decisions with a flick of his fingers and takes revenge upon Henriette for a petty former grievance. Also, even though Robespiere and Jacques

seem to hold the court and thus, the citizens who settle themselves within it, in control the whole crowd is ready to turn on them in a second. The leaders are not really in control. This is best shown in Fig. 3.16 as the crowd in the courtroom moves to attack the jury in support of Danton and his demands for Henriette's pardon.

Figure 3.16: *Orphans of the Storm*.

Danton is the true leader of the revolutionary mob and were he in their sights more often the crowd would be moved to pity their victims more often just as they come to feel compassion for Henriette. Still, this immoral crowd stays behind as Danton fits himself with a more efficient and single-gendered crowd of former guards. Riding on horses, they rush to the guillotine with a pardon for the lovers, Henriette and the Chevalier.

Figure 3.17: *Orphans of the Storm*.

They move like a wave through the streets: here is the return of the militaristic, disciplined crowd. They have a moral purpose and they literally ride above the less controlled mob that walks the streets of Paris and gathers around the guillotine. Moreover, this crowd strongly resembles the KKK riders in Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* which suggests that Griffith gives this crowd the moral crown.

Figure 3.18: *Orphans of the Storm*.

Fig. 3.18 shows the crowd that is awaiting the lovers the guillotine. Now the violence has become so institutionalized that the revolutionary crowd no longer has to take part but only to watch from the sidelines to satisy their blood lust. A remnant of the old active revolutionary crowd appears in this scene as well, complete with sickles, drums, and heads on pikes. This contrasts strongly with the organized mass of man and horse hurling itself forward to save the couple about to be guillotined.

In the end, the couple is saved by Danton's arrival with the pardon and with this the potentially dangerous, uncontrolled revolutionary crowd is neutralized. Danton is the great leader who brings reason and obedience rather than anarchy to the masses who surround him. Thus, this film ends with a clean termination, the mob is dispersed, the revolution is over, and this is all thanks to Danton and his power as leader.

Now that we have seen how the crowd is depicted in the film let us examine why it appears so. First, let us look at the man behind the film, D.W. Griffith.

Griffith, Crowds, and *The Birth of a Nation*

Griffith was born in Kentucky in 1875 to a recently impoverished former slaveowning family.[15] Like many other country families suffering under the hardships that plagued rural America, his family moved to the city.[16] Schickel, his biographer, tells us that for nine years he lived in New York City without much money. "From this experience," Schickel writes, "would come that vigorous sympathy with the poor, the suffering and the lost that caused his early films to speak so direcly and unpatronizingly to the nickelodeon audiences."[17] This "sympathy" is reflected in *Orphans of the Storm* through the multi-faceted portrayal of poverty and the impoverished. The audience is made to watch women and children starve and a peasant man save a freezing baby girl from the steps of a church even though he does not have enough to feed his own child. Yet, the poor also turn into a frenzied mob. Griffith, it seems, may have "sympathized" with the poor but he did not always believe in their capacity for reason. After all, the most morally condoned crowd in the film is that which is held firmly in control by a leader from a higher class.

Griffith's films often provided commentary on social problems of the day. Although Schickel asserts that Griffith was "self-absorbed" and "only dimly aware of the larger political issues of the day,"[18] this seems like an unreasonable analysis of the director. After all, early on in his career, Griffith worked for Biograph, a film company

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[15] Schickel 16-17.
[16] Schickel 16, 35-36.
[17] Schickel 54.
[18] Schickel 81.

that dealt with the contentions between workers and employers, generally sympathizing with the workers.[19] In Keith M. Booker's research guide, *Film and the American Left* (1999), Griffith is mentioned in relation to his treatment of the "Left" in his films. Referring to Griffith, Booker writes, "although often remembered for his racist politics in films such as *The Birth of a Nation*, had certain working-class loyalties and made numerous early films of protest against the exploitation of workers by emergent American capitalism."[20] Thus, even if his views on political issues were ambiguous, he knew how to compose films that were very much political, perhaps for the sake of satisfying audience interest. This is far from something you would expect of a "self-absorbed" filmmaker. Moreover, *The Birth of a Nation* was a highly political film in its racist and pro-Confederate stance. Thus, we can assume that Griffith knew politics and used issues of the day to draw people into theaters and sell his work.

Griffith was suffering under economic troubles at the time he filmed *Orphans*, suggesting that he would have tried his best to make this film successful.[21] How did he do this? Schickel suggests, "in this case Griffith was at pains to draw parallels between the French and Russian revolutions, not at all above enlisting his picture in the anti-red crusade then sweeping the country."[22] This explains one of the film's early subtitles mentioned above: "The lesson-the French Revolution RIGHTLY overthrew a BAD government. But we in America should be careful lest we with a GOOD government mistake fanatics for leaders and exchange our decent law and order for ANARCHY and

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[19] Schickel 103., Scott 36.
[20] Keith M. Booker, *Film and the American Left: A Research Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999) print., Booker x.
[21] Schickel 460.
[22] Schickel 460.

Bolshevism."[23] Thus, Griffith manipulated political messages in his films in order to satisfy the demands of his audience and, more likely, the censors. Through this intertitle he tells the censor that his film subscribes to the official anti-red position. Moreover, he also created a patriotic message that was both the safest and most popular reaction to the Red Scare.[24] Indeed, his ears seem to have been particularly attuned to the audience's demands in this film as one newspaper man notes that Griffith changed his film based on audience reviews including extending the carmagnole scene.[25] Thus, this film was as much a portrait of the audience and what Griffith believed it wanted as it is a picture of the man himself.

Still, as a film innovator and icon he would have had the ability to express himself and to have his message heard. Although his film career declined throughout the twenties so that he became "unemployable as a director" he is still referred to in modern times as "the first film director who became a superstar."[26] Thus, we are not looking at some director who was a blip in the early days of cinema. No, we are looking at a man who had great influence, an innovator even. This means that anything he said, people heard and responded to. Now let us look at what they would have heard, what was he saying to his audience through his crowd direction? We can approach this analysis through the film, *The Birth of a Nation*, as its crowds were defined in similar moralistic ways.

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[23] Intertitle, *Orphans of the Storm*, 00:01:40.
[24] Powers 2-10.
[25] "Griffith and History," *The Washington Post* 26 Mar. 1922: 64. *ProQuest*, web, 25 Mar. 2013.
[26] Christopher P. Jacobs and Donald W. McCaffrey, "D.W. Griffith," *Guide to the Silent Years of American Cinema* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999) 137-140, print., Jacobs and McCaffrey 137., Schickel 594.

Decoding the Film

The films, *Birth* and *Orphans* share several qualities when it comes to crowd direction. As we have already seen *Orphans*, let us take a look at Birth.

Right: Figure 3.19: *The Birth of a Nation*. The militaristic side of the freed slave crowd. This is reminiscent of previous shots in the film which showed Confederate soldiers going off to war. The crowd is of mixed sex and, at the moment, is celebratory.

Left: Figure 3.20: *The Birth of a Nation*. The violent side of the freed slave crowd. Like the anarchic crowd in *Orphans* this crowd fills the streets with no sense of order. They are tightly packed and wave weapons in the air. One difference is the fact that no women can be found in this crowd and some men wave military-grade weapons in the air, reminding viewers that they fought in the Civil War too.

Like *Orphans, Birth* depicts two leaders: the white Southern man who fought in the civil war on the Confederate side (as Griffith's father once had) and forms the KKK to "protect" the South from the newly freed slaves counterpoised against the "mulatto leader" who leads them.[27] This second leader is helped into place by a Northern white abolitionist who realizes his mistake in supporting the man after the "mulatto leader" tries to rape his daughter.

In essence, this film depicts a white South besieged by a newly-freed African American population. The KKK leader is depicted as heroic; his actions are motivated by a need to protect his family. In contrast, the leader of the freed slaves is depicted as corrupt and sexually aggressive towards a white woman (an offense that led to a lot of the race-based violence in America in the early 20th century).[28] In this film, the crowds are racially defined. The white crowd wears white robes and appears on horseback. The crowd of freed slaves fills the streets of the town. The first fights like military men and the latter, appears as uncontrolled mob. However, this is complicated by the fact that both sides fought in the Civil War. Many of the freed slaves still wear their military uniforms. Yet, the white KKK members fight as officers (on horses), the same role they played in the war whereas the freed slaves fight from the ground, foot soldiers as they had been in the war. Thus, the war hierarchies are maintained. Not every soldier is equal and once again, the white members of society are put in a higher place of honor in relation to their African American counterparts. In general, the KKK crowd members are disciplined and motivated by a perceived need to protect their families and the South in general, whereas the freed slaves are propelled by a need for vengeance (like Jacques Forget-Not).

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[27] Schickel 19.
[28] Miller 278.

Figure 3.21: *Orphans of the Storm.*   **Figure 3.22:** *The Birth of a Nation*.

Unlike in *Orphans* the crowds cannot change from one state to the other, controlled and uncontrolled, led and misled. Instead, they are restricted by their race whereas in *Orphans* the nature of the crowd is liable to change based on leadership. In *Orphans*, the heroic crowd resembles the KKK riders (Fig. 3.22). Until the end, both purportedly positive crowds hold a steady line and appear more restrained and disciplined than the other crowds in their respective films. Granted, this last heroic ride was a staple of Griffith films; one newspaper man calls it the "Ku Klux Klan climax."[29] Yet, importantly, we can tell that Griffith took care to fashion the members of his heroic crowd in a specific way. They are all white men. In *Orphans* race means less as the film is entirely acted by white actors and extras. Yet, sex still matters. In previous areas women have piled into the crowd and now they are excluded. This suggests, ultimately, that the women had no part in the led, orderly crowd, highlighting their irrationality which, unlike men's, could not be dissipated by proper leadership.

Conclusion

In *Orphans of the Storm* we see Griffith's entry into the debate about how a crowd may function in society. Griffith straddles the boundary between an old and new

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[29] Robert E. Sherwood, "The Silent Drama," *Life* 2 Feb. 1922: 2, *ProQuest*, web, 25 Mar. 2013.

theory of crowds where a crowd has the potential to be an anarchic mess with an extreme

capacity for violence and destruction (such as the mob that Martin feared) but alternately,

could be a force of morality and a society's savior. In *Orphans*, part of what allows a

crowd to be one or the other is its composition, male, female or both. If it is composed of

both or simply female than it is more likely to be of the anarchic type. However, there is

more to the definition of the crowd than gender.

A crowd's leader is essential to determining the overall quality of the crowd. The

film goers are presented with two leaders, Danton and Robespierre. Danton is an efficient

leader, holding the admiration of his subjects and able to convince them with a speech to

do as he wishes. Robespierre and his henchman Jacques Forget-Not fear their crowd and

are unable to control it. Thus, we find that a crowd's nature depends on who leads them

and how well. This fits in with the dialogue on crowds of the day. A led crowd is a safe

crowd. From advertisers to the government, elites were attempting to capture the

attention of the public who they hoped would buy products, support the war, and more.

Film was viewed as one way to control the public as can be seen through both the

increase in censorship laws (the result of the government's fear of improper leaders) and

film's use by various interest groups to speak to and influence their public.[30] In fact, film

seemed adept at influencing people as displays of collective action on screen at times led

to strikes off screen in the early days of cinema.[31] Griffith is just another leader in this

society. In one newspaper article we find this passage, "State Senator James J. Walker

spoke of the great power which is Griffith's as the result of his pre-eminence in the

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[30] Ross 6, 117.
[31] Ross 8-9.

picture world and of the fact that he has never abused it."[32] Was Griffith a proper leader?

The author of the above quote seems to think so. But who is defining a proper, moral

leader here? A government man. There are other interpretations of what a moral leader

could be: a reformist, a religious preacher, a KKK leader (God forbid), a communist, a

union leader? This is all dependent on the eyes of the beholder.

In the end, Griffith's direction of his crowds tells us one thing: in a society of

crowds, controlling the crowd was the way in which order was maintained and the man

who controlled the crowds was key. If he was moral, courageous, and charismatic, an

orator could wield his listeners as a tool to create nothing less than a "REAL

DEMOCRACY." Speaking to a democratic country, controlled by censors under the

thumb of a democratic government was there anything better, was there anything safer?

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[32] "Dinner for D.W. Griffith," *New York Times* 28 Mar. 1921: 14, *ProQuest*, web, 25 Mar. 2013.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have explored the way in which crowds, crowd theory, and film interacted in the 1920s and the messages the crowd leaders, Ingram and Griffith, presented to their audiences. Ingram provided a moment for self-reflection. Looking at the screen, the audience was asked to define the film's crowd and, to some degree, the crowds in which they participated, themselves. Griffith, on the other hand, told his audience merely to listen to a proper leader and not an ineffective or immoral one. Speaking to his crowd, he said, "Obey!" For him this meant refusing to follow a leader who incited class based violence. This would include such actions as participating in strikes or a spreading Bolshevik Revolution. Race, on the other hand, was something that he was all right fighting over. Ingram indicates the existence of crowds within American society through the film's last shot. However, he does not necessarily condemn class-based violence or conflict (his tale is not one of cross-class fantasy) but, instead, he prizes the preservation of a human sentimentality no matter what the crowd is reacting to. In the end, the crowd must recognize an immoral, unacceptable act such as the murder of Aline or Moreau from the acceptable bounds of justice, the killing of the other aristocrats. Although Ingram does not necessarily condone the latter the most important thing to him is that the first does not occur. Virtue and human sympathy must remain even as a crowd acts out in fury. Thus, his message to his viewers is an ambiguous one. He refuses to condemn class-based violence as Griffith came to do and we have no *The Birth of a Nation* to show how he felt about race-based violence. In the end, he refused to make blanket judgments and by leaving the ending with the crumbling of the "fourth wall," he resigned leadership. He created the anarchic crowd that Griffith was so afraid of.

There are undoubtedly many ways in which these films were read in the days when first released by people across and within different class, races, and sexes. We can never know the true diversity of opinion on these films. Moreover, the majority of viewers most likely left the theater without making any connection between the cinematic crowd and their own society at all. Yet, as Ingram informed us in the prologue, the stamp of 1920s society and its concerns lays imprinted in these films. It only takes an interested and informed eye to see it.

In this thesis I have sought to analyze the crowds within the 1920s films *Scaramouche* and *Orphans of the Storm* and to do so in a historically relevant way. Art, including film, is made for someone to view and interpret. A film's meaning changes with its audience. What I have tried to do is read the films as much as possible in light of their historical position. The crowd presents the perfect opportunity to do so as it connects the films and the world in which they were displayed. It had both diegetic and ideological meaning. As much as any other text, films can be used as materials through which to explore history and vice versa. Historical research allows for a unique reading of the films but reading the films results in the discovery of a larger discussion surrounding crowds in their many forms and their impacts on society. Neither discipline, film or history, need be privileged, they are mutually supportive.

Film, in other ways, is a unique medium through which history may be explored. It touched people across race, class, gender, and geography. It was a "universal language." Yet, it became a site over which different groups battled for control, even minorities to some degree fought and won this battle. While censorship originated in the government and the upper strata of society, the people at the bottom of society, the

working class had power as consumers within the industry. Thus, film lies in an area between powers. Foregoing the idea of the passive audience for the idea of the active consumer, it becomes evident that there was in fact control from both above and below. In the middle, the filmmaker. Influenced from both sides, filmmakers created films with the stamp of several authors: the audience member, the critic, the censor, and finally their own voice as individual. Thus, films present the opportunity to witness a dialogue between individual and community, orator and crowd, government and the ruled. This makes film a particularly important historical resource. Much more can be done to utilize film's potential. This thesis provides but one example.

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