
Uso del cine en la enseñanza de la historia

Use of cinema in the teaching of history

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Resumen: La utilización del cine en las aulas como un medio a través del cual se puede enseñar la historia presenta algunos obstáculos y limitaciones que conviene, en primer lugar, conocer, y, en segundo lugar, superar, para poder incentivar la enseñanza y la aprehensión por parte de los estudiantes de los contenidos que se imparten. Entre los obstáculos están el desconocimiento del lenguaje cinematográfico, y el empleo de una metodología inadecuada para su uso en el aula.

Palabras clave: Cine; Medios de enseñanza; Proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje; Enseñanza de Historia Universal

Abstract: The use of cinema in the classroom as a medium through which history can be taught presents some obstacles and limitations that should be firstly known and, secondly, overcome, in order to encourage teaching and apprehension. part of the students of the contents that are taught. Among the obstacles are the ignorance of the cinematographic language, and the use of an inadequate methodology for its use in the classroom.

Keywords: Cinema; Teaching media; Teaching-learning process; Universal History Teaching

Introduction

The cinema was born on December 28, 1895 right when a small group of spectators gathered to see a show organized by the Lumière brothers in the Grand café in Paris. Today it is one of the most powerful industries in the entertainment world.

For Castro (1986), cinema is "a powerful means of mass dissemination and political and ideological confrontation" (p.209).

According to Bernal (1986), the cinema "constitutes by virtue of its characteristics an instrument of opinion and education of the individual and collective conscience and can contribute to make more profound and diaphanous the revolutionary spirit and to sustain a creative breath" (p.12).

Santovenia (1999) defines it as:

An abbreviation of the word cinematograph. It is a technical representation procedure using the illusory moving image. Art of expressing by means of luminosity, and a

moving image. By extension, the word came to designate the procedure of registration and reproduction of movement, and then, step by step, the spaces where films were projected (going to the movies), the trade (cinema is made), in short, art itself. The term has become a universal, abstract concept, which implies a world, a manifestation of life, a fact, and an idea of civilization, a science, an industry and an art (p. 42).

For Rojas (2014, p.43) it is "the art of coherent succession of audiovisual images recreated through a matrix and a surface".

Regarding the didactic cinema, the concept provided by González (1986) was taken as a point of reference for this research; the author, in agreement with what was said by Richar U. Toker, states that "didactic cinema is everything that has been developed according to the treatment of the contents of a study program and intended to take part in the official education system of a country" (p. 326).

Research works carried out by Pons (1986), Almagro (2000), Escontrela and Pereira (2000), Radedtich (2005), Badia (2006), Palacios (2006) are taken as reference in the use of cinema for the teaching of different subjects. Other researchers are García (2007), Bermúdez (2008), Dermn (2011), Ortega and Pérez (2013), Dias (2011), almost all analyzed it taking into account its link with the history of Europe, so the recommended films are mostly productions made in that continent.

Ferro (2000), J. M Caparrós (2008), Lillo (2005), Salanova (2010) have examined the use of cinema in the teaching of history, and the potentialities of historical cinema through some classics of universal cinema and productions made in Spain, and the United States. Their proposals are linked exclusively to the curricula of each country and adjusted to the profile of the professional models in European universities and schools, which are distant from the Latin and Cuban reality.

Other authors such as Sedeña (2011), de la Torre (2003), Santibañez and Gil (2003), Burgos (2013), and a working group known as Daytona, present didactic strategies for the use of cinema in the teaching of history and social sciences, emphasizing the potential it has to recreate history. It is valid to point out that these authors coined the term didactic resource when referring to the use of cinema in the educational process, a postulate that differs, to some extent, with Cuban pedagogy, in which cinema, video, television, and software are

used under the term education defined by the Cuban pedagogue Vicente Gonzáles Castro (1986).

Pendás (1981, 1989, 2007) highlights the potential of cinema for the teaching of history, placing it as a source of historical knowledge together with other teaching means. Hernández (1997) proposes an interesting approach to the use of the image (film and video) for education in the former Higher Pedagogical Institutes, makes recommendations to transform the curricula and proposes the application of courses that develop skills in order to educate through the image. The proposal is based on video clips and films, which themes contribute to the education of values, but does not analyze how they should be used within the subjects.

Despite these studies, there are inadequacies in the teaching-learning process of history using the seventh art, expressed in aspects such as the following:

- Teachers are unaware of the didactic variants they can use within the teaching-learning process to teach or evaluate historical knowledge using films.
- Little mastery of the filmography that can be used in correspondence with the contents taught in the program.
- Abuse of the technique of film debate, which limits the potential of cinema as an art and as a source of historical knowledge.

Students do not know the codes used in certain films to distort some historical contents. An important scientific mission in the teaching of history is to encourage students to discover the internal aspect of the processes reconstructed based on facts, characters and dates supported by real data, fragments of written documents, oral testimonies and other resources that constitute a source for their study, and the cinema efficiently contributes to it, provided that it is subjected to a convenient critical study that allows dissecting the historical elements that underlie it.

As Martin A. Jackson, founder of the Historians Film Committee, puts it:

The cinema (...) is an integral part of the modern world. He who refuses to recognize its place and its meaning in the life of Humanity will deprive History of one of its dimensions, and will risk completely misinterpreting the feelings and actions of the men and women of our time. (Pons, page 46)

It is necessary to provide the students with a cinematographic culture that allows them to understand the torrent of alienation (process by which the individual or a collective transforms their conscience until it becomes contradictory with what should be expected from their condition) that many films contain, and become conscious and active spectators.

In the achievement of such purposes, the history teacher can use different variants such as the presentation of a film at the end of a unit or an epigraph to consolidate the contents taught and recreate with images the events described in the classroom. For such purpose, with a clear and precise language, it is informed on the technical file of the tape in question the title, country, director, producer, scriptwriter, protagonists, duration, year, etc. It is worth recognizing that some variations may exist and a didactic guide is suggested.

A good example is the film *The Name of the Rose*, of the director Jean-Jacques Annaud, of the year 1986, starring Sean Connery, Cristian Slater, Micheal Lonsdale, which lasts 126 minutes, and is based on the author Umberto Eco's homonymous novel. It recreates the life in a Benedictine abbey in Italy in which a monk is found dead in mysterious circumstances that lead to an investigation that will have an unexpected outcome.

For the analysis of the film, the didactic guide may contain questions such as the following:

- The crisis of the middle ages as a way of life, how do you recreate yourself in the film?
- How is the situation of the peasantry recreated in the film?
- Do you consider that medieval art and iconography mark the aesthetics of the film?
- The struggle between the old and the new is a historical constant conflict, how is this recreated in the film?
- There are several thinkers of medieval times mentioned in the film. Make a list with their names and a brief characterization of each.
- How is the film related to faith and reason, scholasticism and nominalism?

Other variant to be used by the history teacher to motivate the students in any of the three moments of the class is the screening of fragments of films or documentaries. Thus, for example, with the documentary *Fascismo Corriente*, the subject Contemporary History taught in the tenth grade can be supported with films, in order to characterize the establishment of fascism in Germany from the analysis of its causes and the Nazi ideology, to develop in the students' feelings of rejection towards this regime. Once this documentary

is watched, students can answer questions such as: who supported the rise of fascism? Why can we say that Hitler applied a demagogic policy? What features of the fascist ideology are recreated in the documentary? What were the consequences of fascism for the people?

Commenting on certain films, which themes consolidate the contents received in History classes, so that students can be motivated by their search and observation is another of the variants that the teacher can use. Some of the films that can be used for this purpose are: *Pearl Harbor*, starring the popular actor Ben Affleck, which recreates a love triangle and provides a historical overview of the events related to the time when the United States took part in World War II; *The War of Hart*, starred out by the popular actors Colin Farrell and Bruce Willis, which recreates how a prisoner of a war camp faces the Nazi ideology and fights for the prisoners' honor; *Caravana*, a Cuban film in which actors as Patricio Wood and Fernando Gattorno recreate the solidarity aid provided by Cuba to Angola in its fight against the apartheid regime.

Conclusions

The mentality of a society, an ideology, or a political change are clearly reflected in the cinema, so this means can be an excellent source for historical knowledge; and if it is used properly within the teaching-learning process, it can also contribute to the education of values and enhance the general culture of the students.

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