Part 3: Pondering "C" Words---Creativity, collaboration and change

Part 3 is divided into four main sections:

1) Creativity and self in scholarly work
2) Collaboration, self-leadership and systems theory in film and digital media
3) Change and the resistance to change
4) The possibility of change: A matter of approach

Faculty members in the field of film and digital media are stymied by a difficult dilemma that necessitates change to the status quo for determining faculty priorities, institutional expectations and performance achievements. Part 3 examines scientism as an ontology perpetuating the status quo in performance evaluation and peer review systems, and observes that non-creative aspects of work are being prioritized; although the scope of work in film and digital necessarily relies largely upon creativity and a stylistic approach or voice that is personal and individual. Part 3 also suggests that the process of work in film and digital is collaborative, yet a collaborative approach to work (and creativity) is misconstrued and rarely valued in academic performance evaluation settings. Finally, Part 3 demonstrates the broad scope of resistance to change, but that change is inherently possible in higher education because its systems are learned; and that resistance to change in recognizing and evaluating artistic, scholarly and professional work by faculty in film and digital media is not inevitable, fixed, unchanging or unchangeable in nature or character.

1) Creativity and *self* in scholarly work

An erroneous perception prevails in higher education about the scope and nature of artistic, scholarly and professional work by faculty in the field of film and digital media; and about the ways that such work is to be evaluated. Perception is the process of setting up and using recognized patterns, and an erroneous perception would be a belief that is held in error.

Everyone naturally engages in the practice of pattern recognition---in situations, ideas or things---based upon prior experiences and knowledge, but recognition or analysis of perceived information will not necessarily yield new ideas or solutions.

The brain is the framework in which incoming information is organized into sequences of activity. In time, the perceived sequences become familiar and form a preferred path or pattern. Once established, the patterned sequences are recognized, based upon previous experiences. The patterns that are formed are not necessarily symmetrical or easily changed. The brain can only see what it is prepared to see or sense, formed into existence as patterns. When we analyze data patterns we are mostly selecting, consciously or subconsciously, the ideas, symbols, codes and patterns that are familiar and known beforehand. In this sense, the brain is a maker of patterns that operates in a way that is contrary to creativity. The lack of symmetry justifies a logical need for human creativity in an effort to find new solutions, responses and alternatives (De Bono, 1992). Creativity, and its counterpart---originality---rely upon that which is new; while pattern making and pattern recognition relies upon what is registered in the brain as familiar, or what can be construed to resemble what is familiar. The systematic operation of the brain operates in a way that is antithetical to conventional notions of originality and creativity, and has heretofore facilitated a rigidified continuation of the status quo that has determined faculty priorities, institutional expectations and performance templates in institutional settings.

The older scientific understanding of the brain, particularly an aging brain, portrayed it as rigid with no potential for growth after a certain chronological age and peak. All the neurons, in that view, are established in a human being by age two, and from there it descends along a downhill slope. According to that view, neurons are never to be regenerated again and are dying off at an alarming rates, especially after the age of fifty. While it was believed that dying cells in

other organs such as the liver, pancreas, and skin could be replaced, the brain cells, it was believed, once lost, were gone forever according to an older understanding. A newer model of the brain and its functioning shows that while the total numbers of neurons and the volume of available neurotransmitters may decrease with age, some functional parts of the brain have the capacity to grow in later life (Barnes, 2003). The potentiality of the brain as an organ that grows and improves with age, from a personal perspective, gives great hope to me as I grow older, and this also instills hope in the idea that an educational institution, like a human brain, can grow and learn and presumably improve myself with age.

Illustrating that the brain is merely a conduit wherein a process of learning and change occur, Capra (1996) wrote:

> the relationship between mind and brain is simple and clear…Mind is not a thing but a process---the process of cognition, which is identified with the process of life. The brain is a specific structure through which this process operates. The relationship between mind and brain, therefore, is one between process and structure (p. 175).

Capra (1996) reminds us that the mind is a process of cognition, and by implication, a facilitator of creativity. It relies on more than a synthesis of the organism's brain---and is more than the sum of activity by the nervous system, immune system, endocrine system, mind, matter, life, and the stability of structure. Creativity and problem solving rely upon the fluidity of change, and this ideal that can also apply to institutions of higher learning (Capra, 1996; De Bono, 1992). The notion of biological growth and learning over time is analogous to the possibility for institutional change. Institutions, like the brain or other bodily system, are the locus or things where change is made possible.

To more fully understand what constitutes faculty work in film and digital media it is

necessary to clarify the scope and nature of the term, creativity. Definitions of creativity abound in a broad range of literature, with richly layered possibilities for the making of epistemological connections and interrelationships. To *create*, a verb in the infinitive form is commonly defined as--to cause something new to come into being, as something unique. The traditional definition of creativity includes two parts: originality and functionality. Ambiguity, contradiction and semantic confusion are also possible and inherent, and there are broad ranges of applications for using the term, creativity. Work by faculty in the field of film and digital media relies upon the convergence of skills and knowledge---continuously reframed by the level of *creativity* generated by the practitioner. Sometimes, creativity and art are considered synonymously, but creativity is not merely limited in its application to artistic expression. As discussed above, the brain is a maker of patterns from what is familiar or known, while creativity and originality involve the making of new and unforeseen patterns.

Originality often pertains to the discovery, expression and/or production of something new and unique, something that nobody has done or said before; while functionality pertains to the utility, workability, efficacy, application, merit and value of the product or object has emerged. The concept of originality is inextricably and synonymously linked with creativity, genius, dynamism (personal and in content), divergent thinking, freshness, newness (in form, insight or knowledge), innovation, courageousness, heroism, or crossing a sacred firewall---to name a few. For the sake of comparison and enhanced understanding of originality in the context of creativity, terms such as plagiarism, mimesis, orthodoxy, convention, borrowing, forgery, reproduction, derivative/derived works, lack of X (i.e., ambition, energy, etc), or imitation come to mind as antonyms.

A conceptual process creates a product, an object, a thing, in the first place, and creativity

involves the changing of concepts and perceptions. The product (the film, the auto/ethnographic essay, the painting, or whatever the final outcome might be) did not exist before it was created---and it might be original, unique and novel. It might not be directly imitative of previous patterns, despite its possible similarity with a previous example of work (Sawyer, 2006; De Bono, 1990; 1992; Csikzsmentmihaly, 1975; 1990; 1997). In the sciences, originality can be described as a fundamental goal of research scholarship, with the notions of functionality and creativity probably not being as highly prioritized. The most commonly held understanding of originality has philosophical affinity with a Newtonian worldview that requires that a work of scholarship, including any work of artistic or scholarly expression, to occupy a specific existential space and serve a specific function that is independent of and adjacent to other works, spaces and functions. But, it must be asked, how can real originality be achieved if the new work is expected to demonstrate this separateness and a symbiotic relationship with previous work(s) by others?

Scientists and artists are rewarded for making original contributions in relation to what existed beforehand, but there also must be irrefutable functionality in their work or ideas. The assumption in the sciences is that originality, in greater or smaller increments, facilitates the possibility that knowledge can be advanced (Merton, 1957, 1973; Lamont et al, 2007). In modern times, particularly in western societies for the past few centuries, originality has also been seen as a priority in the creative and artistic processes, and the ultimate criteria for determining the aesthetic value and inherent creativity of products, art works, and expressive innovations. Simply, there has been great value placed upon originality in modern society (at least from non-indigenous, western civilization perspectives)---and academic institutions of higher education are no exception. However, determinations that attempt to measure originality in academic settings, such as a faculty performance evaluation in institutions of higher learning,

can be questioned.

The co-existence of originality in scholarship and compliance with academic norms and measures makes for strange bedfellows. How can original scholarship be evaluated or judged if, by definition, originality means something that is new? If conventional practice in performance evaluation intends to measure and confirm continuity with norms, then how can it be relatively compared, quantified or assessed with that which is new? How can a film, an auto/ethnographic writing, or any form of scholarship for that matter (in its most broad context including creative output in addition to more conventional forms), be deemed as original work if it must be anchored with pre-existing sources, be contextualized by predetermined methods, and be consistent with conventional forms of output---to the exclusion of more creative forms (such as film, creative writing and other forms of scholarly output)? Even in the case of scholarly writings and other forms of conventional output--how can truly new and original work be expected to strictly adhere to APA and other external standards for the presentation of scholarship, if for some reason the author is seeking a different, original approach? How can originality be nurtured and sustained when deviations from norms, standards and other conventions are disallowed, not recognized, and not rewarded? These are fundamental issues and questions that are considered throughout this dissertation.

2) Collaboration, self-leadership and systems theory in film and digital media

> *You gotta walk that lonesome highway (or valley)*
> *You gotta walk it all by yourself*
> *No, nobody's gonna walk it for you*
> *You gotta walk it by yourself (American Folk Song).*

The notion of collaboration in filmmaking is fundamental, yet also illusory and short-lived. The real demand is for *self*-reliance. Faculty work in film and digital media---as in dance,

musicianship, surgical procedures, writing a book, deep-sea fishing, or even in digging a ditch---is done by one person with full responsibility over one's self, no matter if the person is a specialist or a generalist. The hole doesn't get dug because the boss wills the shovel to dig; the surgeon doesn't make the precisely correct cut because a scrutinizing team dictates how to slice the skin; the line doesn't get cast and the big catch reeled in through the actions of a committee of fisherfolk; the personalized use of language can not be choreographed with another person's fingers and mind; and the violinist doesn't play in tune or in rhythm as the relative result of group consensus. Collaboration is the result of an individual's intrinsic motivation and expertise in skill, emerging in a collective environment from a sense of personal leadership and informed autonomy.

Personal leadership, the autonomy of self, is a unique and specific attribute in the collaborative practice of work in the field of film and digital media. Filmmakers can work collaboratively under the direction of a client, producer, or other sole person with creative, technical or financial powers or control---but the final responsibility for the realization of any detail in work throughout the process rests with each individual autonomously doing a particular task to the best of that individual's ability. There is a connection that can be made between self-leadership and the experience of being a filmmaker with alternative theories of leadership. Gemmill and Oakley (2001) wrote:

> While leadership is viewed as a having a positive connotation, we suggest that contrariwise it is a serious sign of social pathology, that it is a special case of an iatrogenic (as in a disease that is induced by the treatment) social myth that induces massive learned helplessness among members of a social system. As social despair and helplessness deepen, the search and wish for a messiah (leader) or magical rescue

> (leadership) also begins to accelerate. We argue that the current popular writings and theories of leadership clearly reflect this social trend (Gemmill and Oakley, 2001 p. 273).

Gemmill and Oakley (2001) affirm that whenever empowerment and autonomy are not prioritized, then self-reliance is replaced by a pervasive sense of helplessness. Gemmill and Oakley (2001) remind me that filmmaking is a lonesome highway where the buck stops with the *self*; and of the connection between pain and learning. As I try to define collaboration in the process of making a film or digital media work, there emerges a clear, distinct, practical and theoretical relationship between notions of personal responsibility, personal leadership and self-empowerment. A good team member in a film crew is one who is self-confident and competent as an individual with skills and knowledge, but this self-reliant conceptualization about collaboration is not widely understood recognized. As Gemmill and Oakley (2001) write:

> When pain is coupled with an inordinate, widespread, and pervasive sense of helplessness, social myths about the need emerges for great leaders and magical leadership, from the primarily unconscious collective feeling that it would take a miracle or messiah to alleviate or ameliorate this painful form of existence (Gemmill and Oakley, 2001, p. 273**).**

Based upon Gemmill and Oakley (2001), the need for a messiah, in the form of leaders, is a kind of social pathology, a fiction that has been introjected or assimilated without awareness, through cultural programming (Gemmill and Oakley, 2001).

The idea that a need for leadership is a form of social pathology has remained untouchable and threatening in everyday life, but is directly relevant to my analysis of artistic, scholarly, and professional work by faculty in film and digital media (Gemmill and Oakley, 2001; Gemmill and Oakley, 1992). Filmmakers will oftentimes work in a collaborative environment, or they may

work alone without overt logistical support from others, but in all cases the work in film and digital media requires self-leadership, self-motivation, self-reflection and a confident sense of *self*. Artists, scholars and professional practitioners in the field of film and digital media must be self-reliant and they must also work harmoniously and symbiotically with others. An understanding of the interrelationship of self-reliance and collaboration is a core issue in systems thinking, related to the idea that no one and no thing exists in a vacuum without some relationship to everything else.

Narrow specialization is a problem in many fields, particularly in sciences, and this may also be true in the field of film and digital media. Self-reliance, autonomy and the pathological nature of leadership should not provide an excuse for narrow specialization and isolation from the whole. An art director that myopically focuses upon art direction, an actor who cares nothing about the microphone or editing, or a cinematographer who is not cognizant of other aspects of the work such as sound or budget, can be considered to be examples of narrow specialization. Von Bertanaffly (1969) advocates the need for generalists in sciences, and this is related to the notion of praxis in the field of film and digital media production, with its requirement for the convergence of knowledge and skill---in optics, the physics of light and sound and the physics of digital and analog technologies, and reaching infinitely outwards to include poetry, music, commerce, budgetary accounting, interpersonal psychology, interpersonal skills, psychology and so many more aspects. Von Bertanaffly (1969) argues that professional practice in film and digital media requires the fullest range of technical, creative, legal and business matters; and Boyer (1990) argues for a holistic approach to research that includes discovery, application, integration and sharing of knowledge. The unique and specific attributes of scholarship and professional work in film and digital media constitute a convergence of interrelated systems,

performed by individuals in a collaborative environment.

Based upon the theoretical work of von Bertanaffly (1969), it is clear that institutions of higher learning would benefit by integrating a systems view of scholarship and professional work by faculty, replacing the older paradigm of research that is solely based upon scientism, replacing it with a view that is integrative, in a way that is more consistent with Boyer (1990)---as recommended in Chapter 5. The *systems* view is relevant and adapted to the true scope and nature of scholarship and professional work by a significant range of faculty members, including those who work in the field of film and digital media. As an analogy, rather than delegating the fields of physics, biology, education, social sciences, art and design, linguistics, and everything else to separate domains, with ever-increasing numbers of specialist sub-domains that emerge and separate into even smaller sub-domains, a process that endlessly repeats itself until each specialty is reduced to microscopic smallness, detached, disconnected and distinct from its neighboring fields and domains of knowledge and practice, rather, systems theory and systems thinking facilitate and emphasize inter-disciplinarity and commonality in basic principles, leading to synthesis, integration, and communication. Von Bertanaffly (1969) uses the example of a community of ants and termites to illustrate the ideal of a whole; and his example can apply to human society and the current state of narrowness in universities and their administrative policies:

> …a community of ants or termites, governed by inherited instinct and controlled by the law of the super-ordinate whole, is based upon the achievements of the individual and is doomed if the individual is made a cog in the social machine…the Leviathan of organization must not swallow the individual without sealing its own inevitable doom (Von Bertanaffly, 1969, p. 52).

As argued in chapter 5, institutional paradigms about the individual and collaborative nature of work in the field of film and digital media should not emerge from and be rooted in the hegemony of scientism or its counterpart of narrow specialization. As argued in Chapter 5, the unique and specific attributes of individual and collaborative work in film and digital media should be wholly recognized and evaluated upon its own merits, by practitioners within the field, guided by a new paradigm that defines scholarship more broadly and inclusively.

3) Change and the resistance to change

Why are academic institutions so resistant to embrace and prioritize the notion of change? Why do old ideas continue to dominate at institutions of higher learning in the context of faculty rewards and research? Academic faculty members are living in an era of unprecedented change, compounded by a reality of conflicting pressures, demands, and priorities. Like other fields and domains of knowledge that incorporate emergent and evolving technological systems, the academic field of film and digital media is undergoing rapid and constant change. The base of our knowledge is becoming increasingly differentiated, diversified, and inter-dependent; complicated simultaneously by many conflicting external factors---institutional budgetary limits and constraints, demands for instant and multiple results from all concerned parties, influences from monopolistic commercial manufacturing interests, and ever-present resistance from adherents of the status quo in higher education, only to mention a few. As this base of knowledge expands, the inter-disciplinary nature of scholarship and faculty work has "blurred boundaries within and across disciplines. In some fields, as much difference exists within the boundaries of the discipline as between the discipline and others" (Diamond and Adam, 2000, p. 1).

Attempts to advocate or implement change in the expectations of the status quo are commonly and fiercely met with resistance---but what is the cause of such fierce resistance to change? Diamond (1993b) argues that by striving for a "framework for change" one faces many difficulties, across academic areas, including resistance from certain faculty itself (p. 19). Diamond and Adam (2000) observe: "Faculty and disciplines most comfortable with traditional definitions of scholarship are most apt to resist changes in faculty roles and rewards" (p. 5). Diamond (1993b) and Gray, Froh and Diamond (1992) demonstrate that faculty groups in the

sciences, engineering, and some of the social sciences tend to be most comfortable with the status quo, and therefore these groups are the most resistant to paradigmatic change; and presumably the most unwilling to yield their advantage, position and access that exists in the forms of social capital. Social capital refers to the value of who one knows and who is known; and cultural capital refers essentially to the social value of what one knows (McNamee and Miller, 2004). The result is the privilege of acceptance and access to those in the highest circles of power, including those with the greatest authority to allocate available relatively scarce resources.

The walls and pockets of power that resist change in higher education, in the context of systems for recognizing, evaluating and rewarding faculty work, can also be sustained by administrative inaction, and by an endless litany of doubts about alternative or unconventional forms of research being able to exemplify long-accepted standards of scholarship, about whether or not a change will satisfy the demands for rigor and depth that are expected of qualitative research. The result is a marginalization of some approaches in qualitative research that deviate from the mainstream in form or content; and the prioritization of scientism and scientifically based research over all others. The status quo that resists change is exemplified by the expectation that research can only be discovery-oriented scientific research, published as text in a peer-reviewed journal or book, and that it must be replicable, applicable and transferable in other settings.

Change implies the possibility of *difference*---in the distribution and access to power and authority and the rewards that can be bestowed by those with power and authority. Power is "the ability of individuals or groups to realize their will even if others are opposed" (Smith and Deemer, 2000, p. 412). Authority, power, and politics are sustaining the status quo, and this

truth can never be extricated from the judgments that emerge from a process of informal or formal evaluation, where the value and merit of artistic, creative or professional work by faculty in the field of film and digital media is reviewed for recognition and reward. Social interactions determine and confirm the epistemology of an institution's evaluation criteria, sustain the process for determining how the criteria will be put into practice, and are a legitimizing factor in the formation of all subsequent decisions about faculty performance and faculty work. As with all social interactions, individuals and groups will work to further their own interests, both legitimately and illegitimately, to accomplish their intended end. Even those judgments about what is legitimate versus what is illegitimate "are socially determined, and these conditions make the process of determining criteria for performance evaluation of faculty work, in any field, and how the criteria are to be applied, is unavoidably contestable, and hence, political" (Smith and Deemer, 2000, p. 412). These judgments are the result of social activity carried out in a social context that is imbued with power and authority, and thereby are socio-political in nature.

The socio-political nature of institutional power and authority, when faced with the prospect of change, is fierce and entrenched in resistance. Although there might be nothing wrong with power and politics and the exercise of power *per se* in performance evaluations of faculty work, there are pertinent questions to be asked about the operational processes of the performance evaluation---how is power being exercised by those with authority to guard the status quo, and what are the goals of all concerned parties in the process of decision-making and the seeking of institutional rewards? Politics can be defined in a conventional sense "as the process of allocating scarce resources" (Smith and Deemer, 2000, p. 412). Any desired resource that is not totally abundant---money, social prestige or recognition, promotion to a higher academic rank, the competitive awarding of research grant support, or whatever else---must be

divided up through a political process with some people getting more and others getting less of whatever is desired. Any judgment about artistic, creative and professional work by faculty in the field of film and digital media during performance evaluation is political and social in nature, exemplifying a process of allocating scarce resources to faculty. The prospect of change poses a challenge to the controlling systems that have authority to allocate scarce resources, and threatens paradigmatic notions of what can considered as allowably *different*; and such attempts at change have rarely been tolerated in institutions or organizations of higher learning.

Resistance to change has also been explained by Capra (1992) and Wheatley (1992), as they describe a notion of equilibrium in the context of open systems and closed systems. An open system purposely maintains a state of non-equilibrium, continuously pushing toward change. There is engagement with the environment, continuing evolution and growth. Wheatley (1992) writes that open systems do not seek equilibrium but, rather, "continuously import free energy from the environment and export…entropy" (Wheatley, 1992, p. 78). Conversely, a closed system is not open to external influences and pulls away from change (Capra, 1992; Wheatley, 1992; Rodriguez, 2001). Religious institutions could be an example of a closed system where resistance and slowness to change are the long-standing norm. Educational institutions with conventional notions about the top-down hierarchy---administrators reigning above teachers, staff, and students; sustained by long-held notions about the conveyance or dissemination of knowledge as a commodity, unilateral teacher-centric models of learning, and an elitist, detached and narrow concept of pedagogy---are examples of closed systems. Military organizations can be viewed as both open and closed---the hierarchical structure of a military organization can be described as closed, but the organizational response to disorder or disaster is necessarily open---in the case of unanticipated threat or danger might require instantaneous

change, adaptation and sudden openness to change. Professional sports teams, experimental improvisatory theater or musical ensembles, and profit-focused business enterprises are possibly on the other side of the ledger, necessarily willing to respond by perpetually changing, in lieu of repercussions from the dire consequences of inaction or non-adaptation to change in organizations and institutions of higher learning has created a "hostile political environment" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 11).

An analogy about resistance by insiders toward outsiders when faced with the prospect of change is characterized in the behavior rats, as described by Lorenz (1966), who wrote:

> …man's social organization is very similar to that of rats which, like humans, are social and peaceful beings within their clans, but veritable devils towards all fellow-members of their species not belonging to their own community (Lorenz, 1966, p. 229).

Lorenz (1966) argues that an instinctive, pre-determined, and biological cause permanently explains resistance to change in the form of aggression and aggressive behaviors, including the "militant enthusiasm" that is observed in rats (p. 272). Lorenz (1966) argued that the aggressive behavior of a particular group of rats toward another group that are perceived to be non-members of that particular group would be biologically predictable, natural and instinctual. As Lorenz (1966) describes in his reference to the aggressive behavior of rats, when outsider members of the same species are treated with antagonistic militant enthusiasm by insiders, an analogy can made to the problems that face faculty and their work when they are deemed by their peers to be located outside of the boundaries of tradition, convention and prioritized norms in higher education.

The argument that aggression toward change is natural and unavoidable, with implicit relation to territorialism, exclusion, and other divisive behaviors, is appealing to many "for that

explains everything. But what explains everything in fact explains nothing" (Montagu, 1968, p. xi-xii). In response to Lorenz (1966), Montagu et al (1968) countered with a significant body of behavioral science research that directly rejects the "wholly erroneous interpretation of human behavior," refuting the argument that instincts have control over behavior, thereby corroborating the argument that "human behavior is dominated by learned responses" (p. 16). Friere (1998) writes that learned behavior can be considered to be a form of conditioning, with possible negative implications from unchecked conditioned behavior:

> We are conditioned beings but not determined beings. It is impossible to understand history as possibility (in comparison with determinism) if we do not recognize human beings as beings who make free decisions. Without this form of exercise it is not worth speaking about ethics (p. 37).

When human groups impose or reach the nadir point of dehumanization, meaning "a state of oppression that thrives in the absence of ethics," although a concrete historical fact, it "is not a given destiny but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the form of oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed" (Friere, 1998, p. 25-26). Any situation wherein person X objectively exploits person Y, with person X hindering person Y's pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person, is an example of oppression. It "in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human" (Friere, 1998, p. 37). There would be no oppressed class or condition of oppression had there been no prior situation of violence to establish the subjugation, and a significant portion of the present situation can be explained by what has happened previously. Administrative systems in higher education, for better or worse,

are learned systems that have emerged over time---yet have evolved to become intractable, rigid, and oppressive in the eyes of some outsider-members of faculty.

Montagu (1968) explains that the militant enthusiasm of humans toward their own kind is learned behavior, and not instinctive. Because such behavior is learned it is logical to question whether it can also be un-learned. But, as insider-members of the faculty clan continue to prioritize their ontology of scientism, their trilogy of expectations and the traditional template as the sole measures of inclusion in the group and as the sole measure of successful performance, then a prejudiced, antagonistic and oppressive view is implied---one that marginalizes and compels some fellow-members of faculty, particularly those in the field of film and digital media, to remain as outsiders---deemed as unworthy of membership in the community of insiders.

I have referred to Lorenz (1966) and the example of rats to illustrate the existence of aggression that resists change in higher education, an abhorrence to change, and aggression by insiders (adherents of the status quo in academe) toward those perceived to be outsiders of the group (faculty in the field of film and digital media)---contextualized by the philosophic humanism of Montagu (1968) and Friere (1998). Power and administrative systems in higher education are reifications of what is known and what has been learned from the past. Faculty members, including administrators, learn their aggressive and territorial behaviors, and exhibit their resistance to change toward *difference*, based upon historical, cultural and social precedents. Admittedly, the situation within academic systems may have become intolerably oppressive or illogical in many cases, but these are systems that have been learned over time and not biologically derived, and on that basis, are changeable.

The status quo of expectations in all disciplines is that faculty (fellow-members of a

community?) will write and publish any of the following----articles in refereed journals, book chapters, scholarly books or monographs; with the subsequent expectation that completed work will be assessed or evaluated by peers (fellow-members of their community?) according to a template that strictly measures compliance with norms. Journals and other conventional scholarly publications are intended to target specialist professionals in a particular field with very narrow deviation. Some publications target practitioners in a field, some allow a mix of theory and practice as content, and some remain primarily as research oriented. For example, the editorial policy of a journal in sociology states: "Research methodologies may be quantitative or qualitative and may used data gathered through historical analysis, surveys, field work, action research, participant observation, content analysis, simulations, or experiments" (Holt, 2003 p. 2). Another publication aims to "facilitate research that enriches (the discipline) and disseminate findings to professionals and the public" (Holt, 2003 p. 2). The status quo is maintained, determined and controlled by insiders with access to the reins of power, by those with no incentive to support paradigmatic change and plenty of incentive to preserve and maintain the status quo. The requirement to publish (or perish) can also include a process of repeated rejection and re-submission, over and over, until success is achieved (or not). There are nuanced variations from one to another, but the requirement to publish (or perish) is constant and unwavering in institutions that prioritize research over service and teaching. A typical university faculty handbook will have a statement such as:

> Excellence in scholarly activities typically reveals itself as continuing scholarly work documented primarily in publications appearing in the relevant journals, in the form of books published by companies respected in the professional community.

Jamison (2004) provides a theoretical perspective that clarifies how individuals within a system might subconsciously or overtly block change, thwarting the personal development and growth of a colleague (or an organization), perhaps reinforcing a systemic status quo or injustice without even knowing it. Jamison (2004) explores the nature of self-diminishing behaviors and teaches us how to identify ways in which we nibble on ourselves and upon others, and how others do the same to us (Jamison, 2004). Jamison (2004) presents a deceptively simple work that evokes a child-like innocence, but it is, in fact, a deeply meaningful and transformative work, relevant to the reality of daily life's human interactions. Jamison (2004) writes about words, actions and beliefs that inhibit one's ability to grow into the best person one can be. Sometimes those diminishing behaviors come innocently from others who are unable or not ready to grow themselves, thus they say and do things that stifle or quash personal growth. Other times, nibbles come from within yourself, and are directed at yourself and others. This happens when you are not ready to accept your own unique strengths. In response, you behave in ways that keep you and others from growing (Jamison, 2004).

Jamison (2004) suggests ways to change those behaviors into positive actions and statements as a starting point. From a personal perspective, Jamison (2004) has provided a catalyst for my journey within a dysfunctional institution for higher learning, one that has culminated with an infused sense of hope and a dash of impatient disdain. Jamison (2004) has helped me to find "my own kernel of power, the central part of myself that is my source of joy and serenity, balance and respect, competence and stability, and most of all, power" (Jamison, 2004**,** p. 50). Jamison (2004) writes about nibbling as a deterrent to change, and an action that happens every day, in emails or in official administrative memos or in passing conversations at the drinking fountain. People in a workplace, colleagues and bosses, nibble each other, directly

and indirectly, to one's face and behind one's back. The challenge in the context of the faculty's quest for acknowledgement, respect and equity in their pursuit of successful evaluation of performance output, is to understand when nibbling is happening, and when it does happen to step away and not become the bait, appetizer or main course of the nibbler (Jamison, 2004).

Another example of resistance to change is the prevailing view that faculty and individual departments or colleges should not be able to determine their own fate, and that a paradigm for evaluation should be centrally determined by administration. Faculty who work in creative domains and fields such as film and digital media production have little or no role in determining what kinds of creative research scholarship will or will not be rewarded, or what performance criteria will be used to evaluate their work. The marginalization of faculty stakeholders from the process of performance evaluation conjures impressions of Group Think theory (Janis, 1972; Janis, 1982), where change is determined by self-proclaimed insiders that exclude ideas that are not perceived as emerged from the inner circles of power.

The status quo that resists change in an institution of higher learning can also be maintained through incompetence of administrators, as uninformed and inconsistent decisions are made. For example, a supervisor (dean, chair) has been promoted beyond his/her real capabilities to understand the job requirements or beyond his/her ability to knowledgeably assess the skills and on-the-job performance of a supervisee (faculty member) in a particular area of specialization (educational institution). This circumstance, particularly when it results in an unfavorable or insufficiently comprehensive evaluation, is highly de-motivating, and it is unfair to the supervisee (faculty). Details that are pertinent to the scope and nature of work and performance, yet beyond the understanding of the unknowledgeable supervisor, would go unnoticed or undervalued, and it would be nearly impossible to receive meaningful direction or

feedback about ways to improve performance if the supervisor is not keenly aware of the scope and nature of the complex and specialized work being performed. The intention of the supervisee to enter programs of study for the development of new skills might be dismissed by an unknowledgeable supervisor, further exacerbating a growing feeling of disappointment and de-motivation. This kind of situation is not uncommon, and in fact can be made much worse when the supervisor (Chair or Dean) has the backing of an upper management person or insular group that is also not directly aware or knowledgeable about the specialized and meaningful contribution of a faculty member. In this way, the supervisor's evaluation is taken on face value as correct (Peter and Hull, 2009). In these ways, conventional institutionalized systems do effectively yet counter-productively de-motivate workers (faculty) who have been previously highly motivated---an unfortunate situation that is not uncommon (La Pelle, 1997).

The status quo, its hierarchical power structure, and the resistance to ontological change is also sustained by doubts about the trustworthiness and verifiability of *self* as a source of data (Holt, 2003), and allegations that unconventional and alternative perspectives are only for "academic lightweights" (Diamond, 1993c, p. 20). Even van Maanen (1988), a pioneer and staunch supporter of an alternative approach, ethnographic writing, specifically, has expressed:

> ethnographies, as quasi-formal documents based upon fieldwork, are full of persuasive, yet questionable, rhetorical appeals…This is unavoidable. I can only notify readers in advance of the self-indulgent, involuted, circular, ironic, and slightly iconoclastic aspects" that are found in personalized, alternative forms of writing, research and scholarly work (p. xv).

It is common to find artistic, scholarly and professional work by faculty in the field of film and digital media that relies upon self-criticism, self-reflection and *self* as the primary source of data,

but it would be arrogantly shortsighted to categorize such work as lightweight. A perspective that emphasizes self might be viewed as quixotic from a conventional standpoint, yet the subjectivity of the researcher is most highly valued in artistic and other personalized forms of faculty work. An emphasis upon *self* can also be seen as a valuable resource for generating a deeper and unique understanding the problematic world under investigation, as something to capitalize on rather than to exorcise (Holt, 2003 pp. 6-7; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Other doubts and problems oftentimes mentioned in critiques about an alternative approach or form of scholarly work might mention the work's lack of demonstrated theoretical relationships and conceptual patterns, an inherent incompleteness of first-person narratives that lack sufficient kinds and numbers of references to other sources, and a possible insufficiency in "holding the phenomenon up to serious inspection" (Holt, 2003 p. 3). A predictable progression of argumentation follows such critique---that if standards for qualitative research are not met, then the writing is nothing more than journalism (or art) with a smattering of theory (Holt, 2003 p 3). To define scholarly work narrowly has benefited some individuals and groups, but not others---to the detriment of all.

Despite my idealized post-humanist and post-materialist rhetoric, I perceive an implicit (sometimes explicit) X versus Y obsession for reductive oppositions and dichotomous contradictions throughout the systems and processes of higher education. The tendency toward dichotomous thinking, denoting the dialectical conflict between opposing social forces, is manifested in processes for the recognition and evaluation of faculty scholarship and work---for example, conventional *versus* alternative, us *versus* them, teaching *versus* research, scientific *versus* artistic, creative *versus* empirical, hard science *versus* soft science, physical *versus* mental, quantitative *versus* qualitative, I *versus* we, we *versus* they, soul *versus* body (or body

versus mind), intellect *versus* senses, superior *versus* inferior, and so on. However, in the conventions of scientism that thrives in systems of higher education, a dualistic separation of conceptual terms is more aptly described as monistic because the binary contrast focuses only upon one pole while dismissing or disregarding the other pole (Hanrahan, 2003). Wertheim (1998) has written: "It is a complete misnomer to call the modern scientific world picture dualistic---it is *monistic*, admitting the reality only of physical phenomena" (p. 153).

Dualistic oppositions imply a contradiction that is not resolved by merely seeing the other half of the dichotomy as the other side of one coin. The other half of the binary opposition is a reality that denies or ignores the relevance of discourse and the making of connections. In fact, from the perspective of systems thinking, it can be that both sides of the coin combine to form a composite systemic whole, with both sides mutually dependent upon each other, with neither being able to be defined effectively in isolation from the other. In actuality, there are no sides at all, there is only one whole. Knowledge that emerges from the approach of dichotomous modeling triggers an experiential chain of memories, emotions and other behavioral responses that are rooted in history and present circumstances, differing from individual to individual---an interaction of terms---not a one-way street (Friere, 2004; Hanrahan, 2003).

Defining faculty work according to dichotomies---sometimes as contradictions but always oppositional---generates dualist models that thwart change---becoming self-defeating; pitting one side against another side, denying the integrative nature of academic and life systems. Oppositional dichotomies emphatically underscore systemic conflicts in higher education---and demonstrate the inherently closed nature of a structure that marginalizes faculty members in the field of film and digital media who strive for successful careers in the academy. In the context of performance evaluation, it must be asked, why is the territory of scientism so aggressively

defended as the best and only way, and what is preventing a more open and inclusive approach to the definition, recognition, evaluation and rewarding of scholarly work by faculty in higher education?

There is no surprise in stating that alternative, qualitative forms of inquiry and output have remained doubted, mistrusted, highly scrutinized, marginalized and misunderstood in the hierarchical settings of academia. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) write:

> Politicians and 'hard scientists' sometimes call qualitative researchers journalists or soft scientists. The work of qualitative scholars is termed unscientific, or only exploratory or subjective. It is called criticism rather than theory or science, or it is interpreted politically, as a disguised version of Marxism or secular humanism (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p 10).

Marchese (1992) wrote that system, not the individual, "dictates what faculty do, and that deflates morale. From the trenches, it's a system of contradictory messages from above…it's a system that demands more as it gives less and frustrates best intentions time after time" (p. 4). The challenge is to define the possibilities for faculty work with a creative and innovative view that enriches, rather than restricts, the quality of the educational experience enjoyed by students; and one that recognizes the talents and great diversity of scholarly activities performed by faculty. As Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997) wrote: "Without a better balance among professional priorities, gaps will widen between fields of knowledge, between faculty and students, and between campus and the larger society. Members of the community of scholars will drift farther apart" (p. ix). The result has been proliferation of what has been called "establishment research" (Diamond, 1993b, p. 8).

Greater weight continues to be placed on traditional research and publication "than

seems appropriate given changes to institutional priorities and disciplinary epistemology and model modes of inquiry" (Diamond and Adam, 2000, p. 1). Gray, Froh, and Diamond (1992) show that change is essential because the nearly-exclusive emphasis upon published research has had a detrimental impact on the quality of teaching and the scope of research being conducted, on students' attitudes toward the science disciplines, and consequently, on the numbers of students selecting science and engineering as careers. "Colleges and universities must change, and in order for change to occur those of us in higher education must modify what we do" (Diamond, 1993c, p. 21). But, what do those of us in higher education actually do that needs to be changed, who determines what is being done and in need of change, and how is the status quo ever going to be changed? As a wise but now-deceased friend once told me that---with attribution to Gandhi—change is possible, but change can be slow, and real change is slower (O'Brien, 1987). Change and learning share a symbiotic relationship. It takes time to learn, and even more time to un-learn and then learn again something that is new.

Power and decision-making at institutions of higher learning are implemented have been sustained in a top-down manner, power-pyramid style, with a Board of Directors and a Chancellor at the apex, alone and all-powerful, situated above a cluster of vice chancellors, deans and chairs, all of whom are positioned above the faculty who are located somewhere near the bottom of the organizational chart. Academic decision-makers isolate themselves at the top tier of power. It is difficult to imagine occurrences of change in ways that power is distributed or in the decision-making processes at institutions of higher learning. Protectors, guardians and gatekeepers of the status quo in higher education are inclined to filter out, restrict or banish ideas and influences that are perceived as new, different or not compatible with existing ways, cleansing the status quo of any threats that threaten or potentially disrupt the existing hierarchy

of power in which they reside. Old ideas and bad habits die slowly, even in the face of new, convincing and meaningful possibilities—and the resistance to ontological change in institutions of higher learning concerning the scope and nature of what constitutes academic scholarship is reinforced by a hierarchical authority that values and sustains a status quo that benefits some, but not others. This dissertation demonstrates that structures and systems in higher education for the recognition and evaluation of faculty work in the field of film and digital media are sorely lacking and in need of change, particularly so in light of changes that are emerging in society, the cultural milieu, and in the world that is embodied within the academy (Diamond, 1993a).

4) The Possibility of Change: A Matter of Approach

If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading.
Lao Tzu.

Faculty members in the field of film and digital media seek structures and systems for performance evaluation where the self-determined, intrinsic and extrinsic pursuit of success through rewards, competency, and self-esteem is a realistic and attainable goal. Faculty colleagues in the field of film and digital media seek a professional environment and educational workplace that is replete with optimal challenges, one with rich sources of intellectual and creative stimulation, one that operates in a context that prioritizes autonomy and self-determination. Knowing that change is possible, the challenge is to determine how and/or if such change occur for the benefit of faculty in higher education, and specifically those in the field of film and digital media while recognizing the resistance from guardians of the status quo.

Montagu (1968) and Friere (1998) have freed me from the hegemony of biological determinism that has been illustrated by Lorenz (1966) who argued that human individual and group behavior as an inevitable result of instinct. I am empowered by the knowledge that behavior and social systems can be changed because they are learned and not genetically inherited (Montagu, 1968; Friere 1998). This gives me confidence to express, negate and denounce the rigidly accepted limits that sustain the status quo in higher education. The possibility of change awakens my critical consciousness and frees the expression of my discontent. This dissertation presents a possibility for change, calling for a new ontology that re-defines scholarship and scholarly work by faculty in all fields and domains, including the academic field of film and digital media. Ontology refers to a socially shared understanding with its own vocabulary of terms and specifications about definitions, meanings, and

interrelationships, a conceptual model or a meta-model that defines or represents the collective knowledge of a domain, whether or not it is explicitly stated (Allert, Markkanen, and Richter, 2005; Jasper and Uschold, 1999). Ontological change, according to an alternative view and as advocated in this dissertation, infers that institutional rewards and faculty advancement in academic settings must become more accessible to all concerned parties---including those who pursue unconventional priorities by making films and electronic/digital media projects as part of their artistic, scholarly or professional practice, research and work.

Change can occur when an institutional climate is conducive to change, and when those affected by the changes---faculty, chairs, and deans---are involved in the change process (Diamond, 1993c). Institutions of higher learning, just like all other professional organizations, demand and posses the right to assess the professional performance of colleagues, (Braxton, Luckey and Helland, 2007), and the final decision of a faculty evaluation is usually made at the higher levels of administrative hierarchies. Conversely, faculty scholarship in the field of film and digital media *should* have equal significance with scholarship in other fields and disciplines, and all faculty *should* be free to pursue whatever new forms are most appropriate for personal, professional, artistic and technological growth, both for themselves and for their students (Davis, Gollifer, MacLeod, Rhabyt, Rubin, and Weintraub, 2007). All motivational factors, including the merits that emerge from intrinsic motivation, *should* be recognized during the process of evaluation (Diamond, 1993a, Deci and Ryan, 1985). Theoretical perspectives suggest that if faculty are not encouraged or rewarded for doing their intrinsically motivated work, perhaps the result of unresolved and conflicting priorities, then it is likely that de-motivation will follow (Deci and Ryan, 1985; La Pelle, 1998).

Change, including a resolve to change, will follow a tangible, first step in action, without

regard to what seems to be an insignificant, tiny, or basic the first step. One may never know what will come of a particular action, but if one does nothing in the first place it is unlikely that result the change that is desired will emerge. Paradigmatic change in the faculty reward system is unlikely to occur through inaction, or by mere rhetoric, argumentation or poorly targeted action. The difficulty and arduous process of change involves issues of interpersonal social and political relationships, in a unique and specific sense of identity, and changes in deeply held beliefs---all of which are difficult to change and which might be resisted to varying degrees. Requiring much more than logical thinking and consensus by a majority, ontological change requires conscious assent and effort, and subconscious processes of thought and feeling that facilitated an awareness of the problem in the first place.

In a hierarchical power structure, such as that found in educational institutions, change that is based upon a new idea can be sustained and successful only when faculty are equally involved with administrators, with both sides sharing an active role, from planning through implementation---in the process of setting priorities, establishing criteria, and determining how the entire process will be developed and assessed (Diamond, 1993c). The conservative perspective does not advocate a complete upheaval of the pyramid structure of power in higher education, but much of the literature affirms that leadership (i.e., the boss or bosses), and the values, mindset, attitudes and inclinations of the boss at educational institutions, are key change agents if any possible shift is to occur (Colbeck, 2006; Bukalski, 1990; Braxton, Luckey and Helland, 2007). Short of a revolutionary restructuring of the power pyramid in higher education, it must at least be acknowledged by those on top (i.e. administrators) that their privileged roles and positions of power would not be unreasonably compromised or jeopardized if participation is inclusive, involving the entire community of faculty and administrators,

sharing the responsibility for systemic change in the ways that faculty work is recognized, evaluated and rewarded in the field of film and digital media.

Part 4: A new template for work in the field of film and digital media

Judge no man until you've walked a mile in his moccasins.
Unknown.

As with traditional research methods, the intellectual foundation of *discovery* in conventional research, as described by Boyer (1990), is also fundamental to artistic, scholarly and professional work in film and digital media. Part 4 affirms the importance and usefulness of building a larger and more inclusive meaning of scholarship and scholarly activity by faculty, but argues that the unmet issue revolves around finding ways to fairly and meaningfully evaluate, assess, and ultimately find ways to reward new, alternative and innovative forms of scholarship and scholarly work.

In most institutions of higher learning there are four major occasions when the review and evaluation of scholarly activity occurs: tenure, post-tenure, promotion and contractual renewal (Diamond, 2002). Review and evaluation of faculty work can also be related to accreditation processes, merit salary increases, the awarding of grant funds, and other extrinsic rewards. The expectations and priorities for each type of review can widely vary, but the scope and nature of the questions asked about the faculty dossier and the data under evaluation are fairly consistent, as are the range of extrinsic rewards (Diamond, 2002).

Differences among educational institutions of higher learning have been described as "remarkable" (Bukalski, 2000, p. 1). Some departments and institutions have developed and implemented clear and relevant criteria that define expectations and for faculty work, and criteria