

Terms

A

AUTEUR: Fr; a director who creates a personal style

AVANT GARDE: leading edge of a movement, not meant for a large audience.

ASPECT RATIO: The height-to-width ratio of the projected screen image.

B

BACK LIGHTING: Lighting which comes from directly behind the subject, placing it in silhouette.

C

CHIAROSCURO: contrast from light to dark

CINEMATOGRAPHER: Part of the film crew who selects film, filters, lighting and composes the frame with the directors 'voice' in mind.

CINEMA VERITE: A way of filming real-life scenes without elaborate equipment, playing down the technical means of production (script, special lighting, etc.) and emphasizing the "reality" of the screen world. (utilized first by the French New Wave Directors of the 1960s)

G

GOLDEN SECTION: Compositional mathematical relationship based on "universal formulae" developed during the Humanist period (renaissance) which defined man as the measure of all things. In film it "optimizes" spatial relationships within the frame to be aesthetically pleasing. The ratio (1:1.618) of a picture size, as well as the placement of the main subjects in the frame has been used since Ancient Greece in sculpture and architecture to create "perfected" forms.

H

HIGH-KEY LIGHTING: Distributing light within the image evenly so that the bright tones predominate, and darker tones may be washed away. Lights are positioned usually high above the actors.

J

JUMP CUT: A cut that jumps forward within a single action, creating a sense of discontinuity.

A) (QUICK CUT: A creative editing technique which sometimes juxtaposes one scene with another to create a thematic sense of continuity which may assist in the storytelling.

L

LOW-KEY LIGHTING: Lighting that is usually very low to the ground in relation to the actors and objects being lit to create a dramatic effect, often used in film noir.

LEITMOTIF: A recurring theme which may be used in conjunction with a particular person, place, concept or object which in turn has a relationship to the overall design of the film.

M

MISE-EN-SCENE: A term used in the theater to refer to the staging of a scene, in relation to the setting, the arrangement of the actors, the lighting, etc. In film, the term is used to describe the arrangement of elements within the frame of a single shot.

MONTAGE:

1. French: The joining together or splicing of shots or sequences - in a word, editing.
2. American: A rapid succession of shots assembled, usually by means of super-impositions and/or dissolves, to convey a visual effect, such as the passing of time.
3. Russian: The foundation of film art. "The building up of film from separate strips of raw material," or "An imagist transformation of the dialectical principles, montage as the collision of ideas and cinematographic conflicts." (Quoting Pudovkin and Eisenstein, respectively.)

S

SCORE: Music composed for a film.

SET: An artificially constructed environment in which action is photographed.

SEGUÉ: Transition between one scene or one event to the next.

STORYBOARDS: A time and money saving device used by some directors to “map out” what a series of shots will look like by drawing roughs on paper before composing it in camera with sets and actors.

KNOW THESE HISTORICAL FIGURES AND MOVEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ART FORM KNOWN AS FILM BASED ON THE SHORT FILM CLIPS WE WATCHED IN CLASS PRIOR TO EACH MOVIE PRESENTED.

SIEGMUND LUBIN: CAREER SPAN~1897-1917

One of the first film pioneers, Lubin’s name is not as known as DW Griffith, Sam Goldwyn et al, but maybe he should be. It was his vision that spawned much of what we take for granted in the movies. “At the height of his career in 1912, he was world famous and one of the most colorful and popular men in the American film industry. An immigrant optician who settled in Philadelphia, he became America’s first movie mogul a generation before that term was ever used. Beginning in 1897, he became the first to attempt the mass-marketing of the movies, the first to build a chain of movie theaters, the first to build an empire of studios, and the first to use film to combat anti-Semitism.” (Joseph P. Eckhart Professor of History)

ACTING REALISM: Initiated by Russian Konstantin Stanislavsky (the father of the system also know as method acting) Eisenstein and Expressionism

SERGEI EISENSTEIN was a “Soviet motion-picture director and theorist who experimented with the intellectual and expressive possibilities of editing to create a revolutionary new form of cinema” (Film-North, “Eisen”, September 16, 2011). As a Russian formalist and expressionist, Eisenstein was “clearly concerned with the organization of film and how it was constructed.” (Barnes and Noble Website, “Film Glossary - Formalism,” September 16, 2011). As an expressionist, Eisenstein encouraged the use of symbols to distort reality. Moreover, he favored the use of many brief shots with numerous cuts to give the general impression of the film story. By using many shots through the editing process, he believed that the cumulative number of cuts would build one upon another. Through expressionist editing techniques, Eisenstein believed that the director could work with the imagination of the viewing audience.

CLASSICIST: Relies on efficient story telling and originated in the Grand Hollywood studio days of film.

DIRECTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MOVEMENT: HITCHCOCK, HUSTON, FORD, CAPRA

REALIST: Focuses on characters, place and spontaneity of action. Originating in Italy in Post WWII. Stories have less structure and may have much more improvisation in the dialogue.

DIRECTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MOVEMENT: STANISLVASKI, ROSSELLINI

FORMALIST: A overt or covert approach to exploring ideas, abstractions and aesthetics without relying too much on traditional storytelling.

DIRECTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MOVEMENT: EISENSTEIN

GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM: An artistic form developed after WWI whose severe angularity conveys a sense of disorientation.

Used in the film “Metropolis” by Fritz Lang, and “The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari” Robert Wiene

DIRECTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MOVEMENT: Fritz Lang, Robert Wiene

FRENCH NEW WAVE: New wave often used ground breaking techniques to allude to American films that they often paid homage to. Their philosophy was to absorb the old films into a new narrative to create an interpretation which may the effect of accentuating its historical relevance.

DIRECTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MOVEMENT: Francois Truffaut, Jean Luc Godard , Quentin Tarrantino

ITALIAN NEW REALISM: Realism born out of the expedience of WWII Italy films from this period dealt with political intrigue and melodrama. The use of Jump cuts to conserve film, and exterior shots without elaborate sets were necessary after the impoverishment caused by WWII.

DIRECTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MOVEMENT: Roberto Rosellini

SEMINAL DIRECTORS (AUTEURS) NOTED FOR THEIR SPECIFIC FILM STYLES:

JOHN FORD: Westerns and Irish period works; noted for expansive shots in Monument Valley (“The Searchers”)

C B DEMILLE: Showman ship and Biblical epics; Hays Code object for “*The Sign of the Cross*”

ALFRED HITCHCOCK: Thrillers/slashersMaster of Suspense (“*Psycho*”, “*Vertigo*”, “*The Birds*”, “*Rear Window*” to name a few)

JOHN HUSTON: Prolific Master of many genres including Film Noir (credited with inventing the style) “*The Maltese Falcon*”

ORSON WELLES: Director of the world’s most studied film and often called greatest film “*Citizen Kane*”

KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THE CONCEPTS BEHIND THESE PHILOSOPHIES THAT WE SPOKE ABOUT IN RELATION TO THE MOVIES WE WATCHED. AND THE HISTORICAL FIGURES ASSOCIATED WITH THEM.

NIHILISM

PLATO

NIETZSCHE

WHAT IS AN ALLEGORY?

WHAT IS METHOD ACTING?

COMMUNISM

FASCISM

HOW TO EVALUATE A FILM. AN OBJECTIVE APPROACH.

Analysis is a form of writing which requires a methodical approach. You formulate assumptions based on scenes and characters that support your argument. Watch the development and **EXPOSITION** of their characters. **EXPOSITION** meaning the part of the story that puts the characters in a believable time and place and builds relationships, or personality characteristics of the actors' parts.

You will analyze a number of the aspects of the movies you watch and define them in terms that we will try to learn. Analyze in relation to its form, but you must go further than that while you watch it. We will endeavor to remain objective. This requires a thoughtful approach that requires more than passive viewing where you can roughly outline a plot summary or then formulate descriptions based on your personal preference. It requires some guidelines.

Evaluative claims express whether the film is good or bad, but it must be made in reference to many factors. You might argue using the story as a starting point and compare it to others of the same type offering reasons which establishes why you might believe it is good or bad. Other evaluative techniques involve how well it is acted, how is the cinematography, lighting, costumes and how do they compare to others in the same genre. Comparing apples to apples and casting aside personal bias against a particular actor or theme, you must describe events that are particularly interesting (or not) and evaluate in terms of that which can be quantified. Do not be passive about this. If you see a motif is being developed jot it down, chart how it is established and how it develops.

Interpretive claims may try to relate to a film's significance in terms of meaning and significance to its genre. Or it might argue that in terms of the response you have toward it as long as it is intellectually based. Your argument might be organized around how the **exposition** of the characters differs from traditional movies of the same style. You might define your point of view around the underlying theme of gender roles, or race, interpreting the movie you are watching in terms of some hidden meanings or symbology that relate to the outside world away from the limits of the movie industry.

Remember: Your goal is to cast aside personal bias and observe what you see in relation to the film's historical reference, and place within its **genre** which may be **Screwball Comedy, Noir, Western, science fiction, War story, Love story**, or something else. Genres are films built around themes, styles, subjects or characters that are often used, and familiar.

Defining the different types of character development, as to which ones are richer in content and layered more realistically might figure into your evaluation. Characters can be labeled as 2 types. **Flat characters** or stock characters and **Round Characters**. Flat characters are stereotypes whose actions and emotions are stylized to preconceived notions of what we believe the character to do based on the exposition of the character at the beginning of the film.

To some writers and directors the "flat characters" are what makes a comedy. Despite all efforts to change, these characters are stuck within certain rules of action which limit them from doing anything but what is expected by the initial exposition of that character. They are compulsive and limited in their actions. Robert Townsend the writer of the movie "Chinatown" believes that this is what makes a comedy funny.