

WEEK SIX, LECTURE SIX: Temporal Design

I. Mise-en-Scène - review

- A. Definition – the use and arrangement of the objects (actors, sets, props, lighting) within a frame in relation to camera position and movement
 - 1. The control of space within and out of frame
 - 2. Literal meaning = put into the scene
- B. The combination of performance, visual design, and composition
- C. Employed/controlled by the director.

II. The Temporal Dimension (introduced with an explanation of the Kuleshov Effect)

- A. Film is images in time, as dance is movement in time and music is sound in time.
 - 1. Duration - The director and editor decide when a film, a sequence, and a shot begins and ends.
 - 2. Classical Rule for editing – start at the rise of content intensity and end at the peak.
- B. Space and Time are Reciprocal/Co-Dependent
 - 1. When you alter time you affect space.
 - 2. A high degree of aesthetic complexity (more visual information) will make the scene play faster
- C. Pace, Tempo, Timing – the same concept under different names, affected both by intra-shot rhythms and editing rhythms
- D. Temporal Units
 - 1. The Shot – the basic temporal unit of a film, usually 1-10 seconds
 - a. The average number of shots in a feature film is somewhere between 1000-2000, even higher for fast-paced action movies (over 2700 for Mad Max: Fury Road, according to George Miller; see lecture graphic drawn from Vashi Nedomansky's blog, Vashi Visuals, for an explanation of shooting ratios)

- b. A long take goes longer than 10 seconds
- 2. The Scene – a series of shots related in both time and space (and sometimes connecting two spaces – as with scenes including phone conversations)
- 3. The Sequence – a series of scenes that constitute a movement of a film
 - a. i.e. All the scenes from the night of the premiere in Singin' in the Rain constitute the first sequence of the film.

III. Relationships Between Shots

A. The relationship between shots creates movement, pace/timing/tempo, and rhythm

- 1. Movement - three types in film:
 - a. Object/person moves within the frame (sometimes across edge of frame)
 - b. Camera movement (moving the frame itself)
 - c. Movement between shots -> editing (from frame to frame)
- 2. Pace/Timing/Tempo
 - a. Cutting speeds up the pace of a film
- 3. Rhythm – a pattern of beats/edits/movements

B. Why stitch shots together instead of using continuous shots?

- 1. Creates coherence, smooth thrusts
- 2. Relates objects in space and time (which 'feels' more like real life, subjectively, as compared to the static, distant third-person shot)
- 3. Continuity
- 4. The link between film and theater – duration of performance
- 5. Practical reasons – complexities emerge with longer shots that are sometimes difficult to manage

C. Continuity Editing

- 1. Developed in the early silent period, to make film space and time feel unbroken.

2. Creates spatial contiguity and temporal continuity
3. Rules for connecting shots in Continuity Editing:
 - a. 180 degree system - staying on the same side of the plane
 - b. 30 degree rule - there must be a shift of at least 30 degrees in angle, or about 30% in size, otherwise the edit feels like a jump cut
 - c. cutting on movement – connects the movement between shots
 - d. shot/reverse shot – standard dialogue scene set up
 - e. Eye-line match – if the 180 degree rule is respected, in a simple face-to-face dialogue setup between two actors, their eyelines will naturally seem to “match” (i.e. one of the actors will be looking slightly to camera-left and one slightly to camera-right, giving the impression that their eyelines are “connecting” in a shot-reverse shot pattern)

D. Breaking the Continuity Rules

1. When you break the rules of continuity editing it creates spatial discontinuity and temporal discontinuity.
2. Reasons for breaking the rules – contrasts, impact, drawing attention to the filmmaking process, creating a different rhythm, drawing attention to the mechanics of editing
3. Jump Cuts – usually the result of breaking the 30 degree rule; a noticeable shift between shots (whereas those above are generally unnoticed by the audience)

IV. Scene Building

A. Theatrical Editing/Mise-en-Place/Theatrical Mise-en-Scene

1. This construction uses a continuous shot for each scene that imitates the view from fifth row center by the position of the camera
2. This was used in very early silent film.

B. Cutting to Continuity

1. Getting more sophisticated, using only the important parts of the action to cut unnecessary parts that slow the scene
2. Still maintains the façade of continuous time

C. Classical Cutting

1. Further fragmentation to create dramatic meaning
2. Rules of cutting for dramatic meaning:
 - a. Perspectivization – following the rules of continuity editing (above) so the audience remains orientated; shots let you know where you are.
 - b. Avoiding Displacement – maintaining continuity between shots not just through continuity but also with placement of props, sets, etc.
 - c. Eye Contact – following the eye-line rule and looking at least 5 degrees away from the camera.
 - d. Establishing and Resolution shots – wide shots at the introduction and conclusion of the scene to establish the setting.
 - i. This allows you to fragment the scene without disorienting the audience
3. Classical Cutting Techniques
 - a. Action/Reaction
 - b. Action/Detail of Action
 - c. Cutaway – cutting to something other than the action
 - d. Multiple points-of-view of an action
 - e. Matching shots for formal and thematic properties
 - f. Crosscutting between parallel actions, four types:
 - i. Same place, same time (different lines of action)
 - ii. Same place, different time
 - iii. Different space, same time

i. The Godfather baptism example

iv. Different space, different time

V. Montage

A. Collision/Soviet Montage

1. A juxtaposition of shots
2. Creates a psychological effect; invokes a concept that is not present in either of the two shots by themselves
3. E.g. Strike – cutting between Cossacks attacking peasants and sheep in a slaughterhouse – the killing of innocents

B. Thematic Montage

1. Linked through themes, ideas; sometimes, there might not be a relationship in space and time
2. Montage Sequence/Hollywood Montage – usually linked as a time lapse of events
 - i Elapse of time through a sequence of events, usually set to music.

VI. Cinematic Time

A. Editing manipulates time in ways that are unavailable without editing

1. Flashbacks, flashforwards, simultaneous lines of action, contraction, expansion
2. Transitions between shots – types of cuts
 - a. Direct cuts
 - b. fade-in/fade-out (the end of a movement) – black in between
 - c. Dissolve or crossfade
 - d. Superimposition – stay on top of each other longer to show connection
 - e. Wipe

B. Types of Time in Film

1. Story Time – the duration of the film's narrative; diegetic time
2. Running Time – the length of time the film takes to play
3. Psychological Time – the time we experience, how long it feels

C. The Objective/Subjective Experience of Time and Space