

Dylan Bollard ~ Week #3 ~ Walters ~ ENG 196

**** MOVEMENT AND SPACE (6:15~)** While Lou Bloom is driving down the road after having been denied a job with the scrap metal company, we see a blank facial expression and a centered frame. He appears “out of it” or slightly off after having just put on a great show for the possible employer. When the cop car crosses from lower left to upper right of the screen, (in the background) it’s a hard movement, and shows that something is being forced into his life. A safe movement in the space would have been from upper left to lower right. The director could be suggesting cinematically that the police and this new world he’s about to peak into, are being pushed onto him out of nowhere. When the cop car flies by, we see Joe’s face move into a visual intersection often thought of as “the rule of thirds”. He switches from one world, into the next, and through careful camera placement, we see it happen with simple knock of the head and squinting of the eyes.

****** When Lou pulls over to actually look at what has happened he pulls his car up from top right to bottom left, an easier movement pattern, to assess what has happened. Even though Lou is not tightly into one of the intersecting rule of third’s nodes, he is dead center of the rebatement of the frame, just as are the cop cars. It could be suggested that while Lou is trying to make sense of what is going on in the scene, the director is changing placement so frequently so that we feel the same confusion as Lou. When he walks closer, the cop car is always at an intersecting point but Lou flows through the frame effortlessly. When the camera moves from left to right, it’s an easy motion, suggesting that the world now is moving for him in a positive way. Contrary to the cop car flying by earlier in a hard movement, this one shows a juxtaposition between the fiery car crash and soft movements of the world, further showing the confusion that Lou is feeling.

** When Lou is walking closer still, the camera van with independent nightcrawlers shows up and while Lou looks over, his face moves into a comfortable position at an intersecting point. The camera van moves from upper left to bottom right, the easiest of movements you can show in a frame. When they move out of the van, we see the decent into the frame along the y-axis, again an easy movement cinematically. They also are on both sides of Lou which visually suggests they're pulling him into this dramatic, fiery car crash. However, the next second, we see them ascending towards the car crash along the y-axis, while simultaneously moving into interesting points in the upper left and upper right spaces of the frame.

** The other nightcrawler led by Joe Loder moves into an intersection that is also occupied by the fire from the burning car. This suggests that the director is trying to use the fire to convey two different meanings. One is creating the environment into which these characters have now been thrown into. The other is to create literal distance between the victims/first responders and Joe, but at the same time by showing fire (a destructive force) next to Joe, it seems like we are supposed to feel that Joe is indeed a destructive force as well. This sets up his character early on. When Joe is yelling at his assistant he is in center frame, therefore out of his element slightly because he has to direct another to do his job. Again, later on we see Joe with his back to the fire but now the fire has grown. Here, the director used a telephoto lens to shorten the depth of field so that Joe looks like he IS the fire. All while being in perfect sync with intersection points. Meanwhile, Lou is moving in and out of these intersection points because he's still learning about what it is that he's seeing in front of him. When they both are walking back to the car and talking together, Joe has a moment when he's looking at the footage. When asked about it, he moves into an intersecting point. When the van leaves with Joe inside, it once again moves from

upper left to lower right in the frame, suggesting a easy movement and that there job, even though Joe explains it as being terrible, is easy when you understand it. I think the director is trying to show here that it's a tough job, but that when Lou (and the audience) sees the fluidity of it, we understand that it's something we desire. Now that Lou is established as looking for a career in something lucrative, he is given the chance to see it for himself, and sets up his intrigue with it. It all just suggests that we can tell what they're feeling and thinking, by where they are in the frame. The director seems to have a commanding knowledge of it and he exploits it's use in this scene to a really fantastic end.

**** (FRAMING SUGGESTIONS)** One of the following scenes is Lou on the beach watching people go about their lives. In the opening of the scene, there are people riding their bikes on the boardwalk. What appears to be a happy day for most. (Quick note: the biker who is about to lose his bike rides from top left to bottom right. An easy movement that suggests he's a target.) When Lou comes into frame, both him and the biker are at intersecting points in the "rule of thirds" diagram. It sets up Lou, feeling that he's in his element, and the biker, in his element as well. The frame at 11:25 is absolutely spectacular when looking at framing and how it influences the human perspective on the film. (Short note on color theory: red is associated with chaos, disaster and distress. The fact that the bike, a signature of his life, is red and that he means to steal it, means that we're further painting this picture of his world as a dangerous place. Everything else in the frame is a gentle color and he's in a gentle place, but he has to steal the red bike. So beautiful.) The bike is in the lower third of the frame and Lou is staring out to the right. Looking to the right, things passing from left to right, is normal. The audience reads the film from left to right. After Lou sees this world of night crawling, he's drawn away from his old life slightly.

When he's shut down looking for a job, he is deterred but still now is trying to make it a reality.

The fact that the bike is on the left means that for him to look to the left is going against the grain in a way. Almost as if he even knows that it's the wrong decision to steal it. There are people behind him and off to the right suggesting that people together on the beach are having a good time, but Lou alone is not. He's framed between two trees which provide him some sort of safe, lonesome space on the beach. It separates him from others and puts him into his own world. The tree on his left also splits the frame into two distinct worlds as well. He's contemplating how to get to the point of nightcrawler and his old life is literally moving behind him. In terms of reading from left to right, we see his old world changing into his new world. The fact that he's looking to the sea, flowing without constraint and wild, suggests that he is ready to be that way as well. The wind is moving towards him, showing us that the sea, his new life, and now his thoughts are moving his old life further away, and helping him move forward.