Interpretation of the Film *the Godfather* From Sound Effect, Movie Frame, Filming Technique and Narrative

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ABSTRACT
The Godfather tells a romantic gangster epic in a sober, brooding style. It is one of the greatest gangster movies in the history. This paper attempts to interpret the *Godfather* from sound effect, movie Frame, shooting techniques and movie narrative, which would be helpful for today's film shooting and film appreciation.
Keywords: *Sound effect, Movie Frame, Filming technique, Movie narrative*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Godfather is a gangster film directed by Francis Ford Coppola and starred by Marlon Brando and Al Pacino. In 1973, it won the best film, best actor and best adapted screenplay awards at the 45th Academy Awards.

The Godfather's success is not only because it tells a good story, but also because of its excellent sound effect, movie Frame, shooting techniques and movie narrative. For example, in terms of sound effects, this movie amplifies the sound of something irrelevant, just in order to help to highlight the tense parts of the plot. In terms of filming technique, it uses the method called "dome light lighting" to shape the characters, which can deepen the characters' pupils and make them looks enigmatic.

This paper would help to understand the various filming techniques and narrative techniques of the *the Godfather*, which has the same reference and learning value for today's film shooting and script production.

2. SOUND EFFECT

2.1. Metaphorical Sound

Metaphorical sound means intentionally using a dislocated or unrealistic sound to accentuate the effect of the frame [1]. The scene of the film when Michael attempted to kill Sollozzo and sheriff McCluskey in an Italian restaurant, we could easily hear the sound of a subway wheel hitting the tracks. The audience can't see the train or the tracks, but we can hear the sound clearly. The heavy sound of wheels crashing the rail adds to the tension.

2.2. Amplified the Sound of Unrelated Things

Same scene in the Italian restaurant, there was a time when there was no sound in the film. The silence was broken with an intimate sound--the oak stopper was wrung from the wine bottle. It was a small sound at ordinary times so that we may not notice it in our daily life. However, this sound was amplified in this silent and nervous scene, in order to draw attention to a weak, realistic sound, then an overwhelming sound field appeared, force the audience to interpret it in a different way. By this way, we could easily speculate that the dramatic scenario is going to happen--Micheal is going to kill them.

2.3. Hide the Subtitles

Another element of the scene in the Italian restaurant is that Francis uses Italian without subtitles. Walter Murch called it "aphasia" because we don't know what they're saying, so the only way to understand the scene is to pay attention to how they're saying it, the tone of their voice and their body language [1]. Even today, it is a bold move to have large chunks of dialogue between the two main characters in an English film in another language without subtitles. The effect is that you pay more attention to the way they speak and the body language they use. You're perceiving things in a very different way. You're listening to what words say, not what they mean. Using Italian without subtitles forces you to focus on the sound and prepares you mentally for what is about to explode.

3. MOVIE FRAME

3.1. Brass Tones

Brass tones are a combination of different elements, and brass tones makes the film warm and retro [2]. This makes the film, which is based on the cruel and merciless gangster theme, warmer and warmer, without making the audience afraid. It is a good reflection for the audience.

3.2. The Contrast of Light and Dark

The Godfather's most visually engrossing and impressive part is in the final scene, when Michael completely and truly shut himself off from his wife, and cut off his last contact with the legitimate future [3]. When Kay stood in the hallway, looking back to see Michael receiving the clerk's salute in his office, some characters in the film went to the door and shut it. Just before the door closes, the scene cuts back: Kay stared at the camera as the door closes, while darkness slowly slipping into the frame. Then she was shut out of the door.

A visual image leads to the whole story through its implication. Kay is superficially shut out, but you get a sense of meaning. It reveals that Michael is now a member of the Mafia and completely isolated from the outside world. It means that Michael and Kay are now separated, if not in marriage, at least in trust. This effect is created by taking advantage of the huge contrast between light and dark, which can be seen everywhere throughout the film.

4. FILMING TECHNIQUE

4.1. Dome Light Lighting

Different from the traditional way of lighting in filming, *the Godfather* uses dome light lighting. If this is really a movie about a godfather and his glorious deeds, it would be helpful by using the traditional way of lighting. However, *the Godfather* in this movie is so different and mysterious. It is a complex character who has a sacred title, but behind the scenes, he is a gang leader. Therefore, dome Light Lighting does a good job of adding mystery to the character. It draw the outline of the dark figure, so that the audience can not see his expression and appearance [3].

Unique dome light lighting, which sometimes plunged character's eyes into darkness, was a revolutionary and controversial lighting technique in the 1970s. "Sometimes you don't really want to know what a character is thinking." says Gordon Willis, the director of photography of *the Godfather*. He thinks it might be better to make the whole movie this way, adding mystery and suspense to the characters [2].

4.2. The Long Shot of the Beginning

At the beginning of the film, including the lens of Sara request to entrust to *the Godfather*, continuous zoom lens is used. The action of pull the zoom lens is very slow, they use a computer controls the speed of the camera zoom process nearly 3 minutes, gradually from inclusive Sarah close-up of zoom out into *the Godfather*'s Over the Shoulder Shot, intentionally make *the Godfather* to back off, increase the suspense [4]. In this scene of the film, Gordon creates dramatic tension by using the way of concealing.

4.3. Visual Metaphors

The last scene of *the Godfather* can be taken as an example. Michael faced to his wife, kay, and tried to escape from her gaze, eventually lying to her and denying the plan of the murder. Kay breathed a sigh of relief and left his office. Then the shot cut into a panoramic shot of kay out of focus in the foreground, and the focus was on Michael, who was in the background. Then the shot was cut again into a long shot of a lot of people kissing Michael's hand. At the end the shot cut to Kay when she looking at their backshot, the blurry door was closing and gradually covered her, slowly turning to black. Then the screen turn into dark slowly.

The final two simple back-and-forth shots reveal everything: Michael becomes the man he initially despises, a murderous gangster, and his beloved wife is locked away from his dark new world. The bright curtains behind Kay enhance the contrast, and Gordon Willis once again lays the tragic foundations of the story with the blur of the focus of the foreground [3].

5. MOVIE NARRATIVE

5.1. Unprecedented Theme

The Godfather has an unprecedented theme. Hollywood has a lot of gangster movies, but nothing about Italian gangster families has ever been made. According to Coppola, the story of *the Godfather* novel is a microcosm of every family in America. The things we should know that is, Italian people had a bad reputation in American society at that time because most people thought that they were rude and uneducated. So it's interesting because *the Godfather* seems to be helpful to the image of the Mafia[5].

5.2. Highly Tragic

The Godfather has a highly tragic. *The Godfather* tells a story of the process of two generations of godfathers' succession. When the family was in danger, Michael stood up and fought with the all the forces which against to the Corleone family. However, he also paid a price. He killed someone. He also deceived to his wife. And he took over the family Mafia business that he hated at the beginning. At last, he finally fell into the darkness, becoming the last person he wanted to be. This is a tragedy of the highest order, and it's never seen in a Hollywood film.

5.3. The Whole New Narrative Perspective

The Godfather has a whole new narrative perspective. Traditional movies about gangsters, mostly contain elements involves bloody, conflict, violence and cruelty. However, *the Godfather* is different. It's content goes deep into the family -- father, son, son-in-law. No one ever told a

story like that at that time. So it can also explain the brass tones of this movie, which make us feel warm and bright, but not cold and dark.

One of the most classic scenes is the end of *the Godfather 2*, when Michael recalled the life when everyone sat at a table and had the dinner. In this memory, the voices of family members discussing, arguing, joking are full of family flavor. The scenes like this are always show to us in *the Godfather*. Because the film has a lot of real detail, the story is "thick" and ready to go.

5.4. Religious Perspective

It's an interesting perspective because the "godfather" is a religious concept, and the film is full of religious symbols. The characters in the film wear the appellation of godfather, but what they do were the opposite of religion. In the climactic scene of the film, the protagonist came to be a godfather, making holy baptisms for believers, and killing people at the same time, the two scenes overlap, create a visual aesthetic feeling with the contrast.

6. CONCLUSION

Although *the Godfather* is an old film from the 1970s, the techniques from *the Godfather* are important.

In the sound effects, we can use "metaphorical sound" to increase or decrease the volume to create an atmosphere of tension or calm. For example, when there is a scene the war is going to break out, we can make the scene silence, but the only sound we could hear is the rapid breathing of the soldiers. This way could help to show that a conflict is going to happen.

In the movie frame, we can consider the color of the film. For example, white means purity and integrity, black means evil and darkness, pink means love. But it's also important for us to consider to think in a different way, just like what's *the Godfather* did, uses a worm color to tell the story of the gang. It's important for us to use color to help express emotion.

In the filming technique, the "dome light lighting" could help to make the characters mysterious. This applies not only to gang characters, but also suitable for someone who has complex identities. The "visual metaphors" can used to show the meaning of the movie, for example, the black screen means the end of something, a train running away could means the end of a relationship, and a dove flying away could means the peace. Sometimes we don't have to express directly, we could try the "visual metaphors".

As for the narrative, what we could learn from *the Godfather* can be summed up in one sentence--think of things in a different way from the universal. *The Godfather* tells a warm story of a big family, a tragic story of two generations of a gang family, a story aimed to change people's bias of the Italian immigrants. All of these aspects are worthy to think about when we try to create a good story.

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