**Advanced English: Film – Final Prep.**

**Instructor:** Prof. Yaeri Kim

Sungchan Yi

**1. Film Analysis**

First, you see the movie, and understand the movie. After that you can either just enjoy the movie, but also you can evaluate it. Going deeper, you analyze the film, and interpret the film.

- Text and Context

**Text** is the film itself. Motifs, parallels, themes, narrative, mise en scene, cinematography, editing and sound. **Subtext** is the implicit or underlying meaning or theme. Things that are not shown explicitly.

**Context**, on the other hand, refers to things outside the film. Historical/contemporary reference, cultural/political/social context, the star(s), director, film industry and technology, genre/type/trope, intertextual reference.

**2. Important Terms**

Now we go over the important terms for further analysis of the films.

A **frame** is a single still image, shown in rapid succession, that make up a motion picture. It can also mean the rectangular area within which the film image is composed by the film-maker. Roughly speaking, it’s what we see within the screen.

A **shot** is a single, continuous series of frames that are uninterrupted by editing or cuts. Shots are the basic building block or the unit of film narrative. *Long take* is an interrupted shot of more than some amount of time.

A **take** is a single, continuously recorded performance that may or may not be included in the film; It’s the every single version of a shot. Usually, multiple takes are made of the same shot during filming before the director approves of the shot.

A **scene** is a shot or series of shots that together comprise a single, complete and unified dramatic event, action, or element of film narration. Scene is the smallest unit that contains an event. Usually, one can tell what is happening in the scene. It also usually takes place in a single time and place, often with the same characters, but sometimes it may contain two lines of action, occurring in different spaces or different times. Then end of a scene is often indicated by a change in time, action and/or location.

A **sequence** is a scene or connected series of related scenes that comprise a single, unified event, setting or story within a film’s narrative. It usually refers to a longer segment of film than a scene.

To summarize,

**Take → Shot → Scene → Sequence → Film**

**Foreground/background** refers to the things that are relatively near/far from the camera.

Something is **diegetic** if it is part of the story world. Otherwise, if it exists outside of the story world, it is called **non-diegetic** or **extradiegetic**.

**3. Narrative**

**Narrative** is an account of a series of events and/or facts, given in order and with the establishing of connections between them. Roughly, it’s the *story*. We study the **narrative structure**, which is the way the story is told.

**Elements of Narrative**: We have the story, and the usual 5W1H about the story. The story is rearranged and represented, and it becomes a **plot**.

To understand the narrative, one must focus on: the **protagonist, antagonist**, **motivation or goal,** **conflicts**.

- Important parts of Film Narrative

Opening and ending are important. Turning point is a moment when a crucial change that affects a character or situation occurs. Often it is signaled through visual or sound techniques.

Climax is also important. Closure is the concluding moment that tie up all the loose ends, leaving no unanswered questions. A film may or may not have a closure.

**4. Themes and Motifs**

A **theme** is the central idea of the film. It’s what a film is really about.

A **motif** is an element that is repeated in a significant way or pattern. It may be an image, object, word, spoken phrase or sentence, symbol, stylistic device or sound. It is repeated throughout the film and *helps reveal the theme*.

The **theme** is usually an *abstract idea* such as freedom, ambition, violence, human dilemma, or lose of innocence/coming of age, while a **motif** is a *concrete and specific element* such as windows, birds, piece of music, shape of X, a color, a contrast between colors, or some act.

**5. Mise en Scène**

**Mise en Scène** is the arrangement of everything that appears on the screen. It refers to the things that already exist before the shooting. Note that *cinematography* comprises the techniques involving the camera and film stock (or its digital equivalent). It is everything that creates the visual ‘world’ of the film.

There are four elements of mise en scène: **setting, human figure, lighting,** and **composition.**

**Setting** is the place and time where the story of the film or the scene is happening.

**Human figure** is the costumes, props, makeups that appear in the movie with human.

In **lighting,** we see brightness/dimness, softness/harshness, contrast of such things, etc.

**Composition** refers to how objects are placed in the screen.

**6. Cinematography**

**Cinematography** is the aspect of film making that involve photographic or electronic process of producing images. There are four elements of cinematography: **camerawork, lenses and filters, film stock, special visual effects.**

**Camerawork** is everything that is done by cameras. For instance, manipulation of time by using slow motion, fast motion, time lapse, etc. Placement of cameras, such as height, angle and distance. Also the movement of camera, horizontal/vertical, 3-D movement, pan, tilt, and other techniques.

**Lenses** also play an important role. Lenses typically can manipulate depth, size and focus. The *depth of a field*, which is the perceived distance between foreground and background, can be controlled by the use of lenses. *Shallow focus* focuses on the foreground and blurs background. On the other hand, *deep focus* makes everything on screen remain in focus. **Filters** can manipulate color, contrast, sharpness, and light intensity in the images. It can be used to create the overall atmosphere/mood.

**Film stock** can affect colors, depth and contrast inside the film. These are increasingly being replaced by digital cinematography.

**Visual effects** consist of optical illusions and digital techniques. It is applied during principal photography, and in post-production.

Note: Film stock = Film strip. Traditional film format.

Cannot distinguish easily between mise en scene and cinematography

Development of technology, lot of settings are created by computer generated images, lot of characters are made from special effects. It is hard to tell which is computer graphics and special effects. (Computer graphics these days blend in to the scene very naturally)

Animated films, nothing is mise en scene, everything is drawn with computers. Heavily computer graphic movies (planet of the apes) …

**Just remember how to watch, how to see.**

**You must be able to explain why something is interesting.**

Low height of camera – everything looks bigger

**For which purpose are those techniques are used?**

High angle – character looking up: shows anxiety

Low angle – character looking down: intimidating character

Shallow focus – emotional distance, perceptual distance

Deep focus – everything is focused (usually in action scenes)

Colors may give you a certain feeling.

Depending on the film stock, the picture may be more accurate with no distortion involved.

**7. Sound**

Sound and Image

- Onscreen vs Offscreen sound

- Objective Image vs Subjective Sound

- Diegetic Detail vs Non-diegetic sound

- Image Time vs Sound Time

- Image Mood vs Sound Mood

**Three components of Film Sound**: Dialogue, Sound Effects, Music

**Dialogue** is what is said (text) and what is unsaid yet implied (subtext)

It contains how the character speaks. Volume, pitch, speech characteristic (accent, diction – choice of words, vocal tic), acoustic qualities (the quality of a sound’s movement through a particular space)

**Sound Effects** may define the location, describe the mood of the environment, or portray the environment’s impact on characters.

Characteristics of Sound Effects: Acoustic qualities, volume, regularity, verisimilitude (the appearance of being true or real)

Effects of **Music**

- Establish temporal / spatial setting

- Impact the audience’s response

- Provide supporting or additional information to the narrative

Characteristics of Music: Repetition/change, lyrical content, tempo and volume, instrumentation, cultural significance

Lyrics from *Put on your Sunday Clothes*

**8. Editing**

**Editing** is the process of joining two or more shots.

It helps to establish the sense of time/space, to support the narrative, to achieve aesthetic qualities, express themes/motifs/other ideas.

Usually, editing is done in **order to make the audience forget about editing, perceive the film as a whole continuous story.**

Three attributes of editing are:

**Graphic qualities** is the combination of graphic images, changes and similarities

**Tempo** is the length of shots, shot transition

**Timing** is the transition of the shots in relation to other elements (narrative, sound, and other visual elements)

Editing styles and techniques:

**Continuity Editing** is the process of combining more-or-less related shots, or different components cut from a single shot, into a sequence so as to direct the viewer’s attention to a preexisting consistency of story across both time and physical location.

**Montage Sequence** is a series of shots are edited into a sequence to suggest the passage of time.

**Soviet Montage** is the editing style that highlights the **differences** and **discontinuities** between shots in order to produce **intellectual meanings**.

**The Godfather**

Visual style – lighting

The Marriage Scene (Opening)

Baptism Scene (**Intellectual Editing**)– Godfather: Spiritual father of the baptized person

**Glorification of the Mafia** – keeper of justice, humane and familiar; respectable speech and behavior, the police is worse; you cannot trust them, Mafia like aristocrats or royalty (Meeting in New York), **protecting the family as the main motivation** (Everything done in the name of family – financial stuff)

The double meaning of the word “**family**” and“**godfather**”

Double sides of the whole family business – word play (family, godfather, *An offer you cannot refuse*, friend) (As criminal business)

He lies to his wife.

**Q.** *In which way is the Mafia glorified, idealized, romanticized? Which elements of the movie make you think that way?*

- **Vito buying fruit**: This is a cultural thing. It’s nice that he actually buys the fruit from the street vendors. Rich people interacting with other people. This was unusual at that time. Nowadays rich people are segregated. It’s also what Vito usually did; that’s how assassins could have waited there, to kill him.

- **Glorification of people themselves**: Person and moral ground / life style – less problematic since it wasn’t entirely fictional (???)

**Q.** *Don Corleone’s original intention?*

Michael was supposed to be something else, not a criminal. Vito actually wanted all his children to be out of this criminal background. Well, Sonnie was the worst.

Criminal activity was supposed to be temporary. Vito wanted Michael to be legitimate. The whole narrative raises the question, *‘Does that really work?’* Until Michael kills off everyone else, the family gets less safe and safe. Killing the enemy, revenge, does not work.

**Baptism Scene**

Killing and baptism are combined. Normally, this wouldn’t be combined, thus creates **contrast**.

(Mafia so easy to kill…?)

Michael: “***I renounce Satan***”

Killing the other families begin right after this. Shots are combined in a way that emphasizes that Michael is **lying to the priest**. Emphasizes **moral corruption**. **Hypocritical**.

**Visual Similarities**

- Some liquid put on the baby, and then the shot with man putting on shaving cream is shown. It adds to the connection and contrast of baptism scenes and murder scenes.

- The **continuous sound** shows the connection between two things happening in different places. It is also disturbing since we keep hearing the church music while the murder is going on.

- Similar to the opening wedding scene: It is cheerful and happy on the outside, but on the inside, some serious, dark business is going on. (**Contrast**)

- Preparation of the baptism is intersected with preparing murder. Actual baptism is intersected with actual murder.

**Q.** *What does the director want to show us by constructing this strange sequence? What are we supposed to get out of this?*

This baptism scene is the **dramatic visualization** of the **double sided family, hypocrisy**, Michael becomes godfather (**pivot of transformation, corruption, moral downfall –** killing his brother in law and lying to his wife is **not an escalation**, it’s **what he does now**.)

**Editing, Elements of famous sequences**

The editing is done in a way to emphasize **differences** rather than similarities.

The **baptism scene** is an example of **intellectual editing**. Baptism is going on in church, but murder is going on outside. This effectively shows contrast between sacred baptism and sinful murder. It shows Michael’s **duplicity**.

On the **surface narrative**, it delivers that baptism and murder are happening in the same time.

Intellectual idea of **corruption, tragic transformation, duplicity and hypocrisy.**

***Do you wanna build a snowman? - from Frozen***

This is a **montage sequence.** It’s a series of shots edited into a sequence to suggest the **passage of time**.

(Several years are condensed into a song)

Changed appearances of Elsa and Anna.

Note. Musical sequences in Disney films are timed carefully.

**Timing** is the transition of the shots in relation to other elements. Usually, you need other elements to talk about timing.

The 5 knocking is timed exactly in the same way according to the music.

In **Godfather**, the baptism background sound is continued throughout the whole sequence. When Michael denounces Satan, immediately after his words, murder scene is followed.

First shot **dissolves out**, and second shot slowly appears. We see two scenes simultaneously.

**The montage sequence from Scarface –** Push it to the limit (Making a lot of money)

Director wants to show how Tony’s life changed gradually, or at least step by step. He is a guy who started from the bottom. It’s important to show what he is becoming of.

Usually in a sports movie, the training session is usually made into a montage sequence.

Al Pacino – Not similar to the wealthy gangsters in *The Godfather*

There isn’t just one way to show this character is really rich/middle class/poor. In Godfather, it’s not problematic whether or not the gangsters are depicted wealthy. Don Corleone is obviously rich. House, clothing is very clean and formal, which is another example of their wealth begin dignified.

**Sound**

We usually use the phrase, “watch the film”, but sounds can also deliver a lot of information.

Clip from **Belle**, Harbor (seagull sound), past (lack of engine sounds), tension (music)

**Sound effects** include anything that is not music or speech.

**Music** - repeated lyrics **emphasizing repetition and unchanging relation** in Frozen lyrics.

**Music from Lion King**

The music has **English lyrics** and it is composed by **English language user**, but sounds like an African tribal / ethnic song. The background chorus and the instruments used sound very traditional. (Drum sounds)

**WALL-E**

**- Settings of WALL-E**

The abandoned, lifeless Earth. People depend their entire lives on machines in the ship “Axiom”

**- Depiction of humans and robots**

It seems that the **roles of humans and robots are changed**. Humans do what they are told to do so, they lack autonomy. They have no physical life, since they only live on their chair, chat with others online and they even lack bones and are pretty obese. They also don’t have any romantic relationships.

On the other hand, robots have feelings. WALL-E felt lonely on the Earth, and he desired for companionship. Also, it is shown in his affection for EVE. Robots also have desires and are capable of sacrificing themselves and cooperating among themselves. The sound of robots are mechanical, but not cold. They have accents and it lies somehow on the borderline of dialogue and sound effects, but they convey emotions.

**- Contrast between the music and the visual image**

The opening music is very bright and cheerful while the visual elements are very grim and dystopian.

The song *Put on Your Sunday Clothes*’ lyrics is about a city and romantic encounters of human, while the visual elements show the deserted Earth without people.

**The song is an old music from an old movie, but movie is set in the future.**

While WALL-E plays and listens to the music, the music volume changes when WALL-E goes in and out of the screen.

WALL-E likes to collect things and keeps a pet cockroach.

WALL-E wanted to use the trash can as a hat for dancing.

When the movie makers choose music, they often choose the music that is coherent to the background. But in WALL-E, it is not coherent. Opening song is a really carefully chosen song. The whole purpose is **contrast**.

This song actually hints us about what is actually going to happen.

“There’s a world outside of Yonkers” → WALL-E goes to outer space (outside of the Earth)

“Won’t come until we’ve kissed a girl!” → WALL-E returns after he kisses EVE.

**Q.** *Does the interpretation change, if we change the scope to the entire movie?* **No.**

The music played when WALL-E follows EVE everywhere: “**La Vie en rose**”

When Captain rises to defy Auto: “**Also sprach Zarathustra**” (from Space Odyssey)

**Q.** *Why is this music appropriate or why is it funny?*

It’s appropriate in the sense that since it is an important moment, where humans stand up to the robots for the first time, and justice is served to the antagonistic robots.

It’s funny in the sense that “standing up” is just normal to us. It’s only impressive when babies stand up for the first time. But to the people in the Axiom, it seems impressive to them. Moreover, all the humans are depicted like fat babies.

Space Odyssey clip – how monkeys started to use a tool for the first time

The thrown bone immediately changes to a spaceship.

The bone was used by monkeys to fight other monkeys. By **contrast**, it shows that the spaceship is a really really developed type of bone. (The movie is mostly about human progress)

**WALL-E collects all those old stuff and the movie also collects old things from older movies**.

**Q. *What are all those old things doing in this future-set movie? The reference to older movies, older things, what are they doing there? Why are they there?***

**Emphasis on old(er) values**. The movie wants us to think about old values of mankind. Relationships (including love), being close to and taking care of nature (also farming), emotions, independent thinking, autonomy. It also laments how humans lost a lot of traditional qualities that make humans exclusive.

When the captain stands up for the first time, the captain retains the qualities of human.

**Q.***Why do you think that the movie is not telling you to go back to the past, although it has so much reference to the past? (Why is the movie not anti-technology?)*

The main protagonists are robots. It doesn’t make sense to set robots as protagonists if the movie supported anti-technology.

The ending credits show the development of human civilization and technology, and robots were included in them. It implies that humans and robots can coexist and develop the civilization.

WALL-E and EVE disrupt the future society in Axiom, where humans have lost their human qualities and the robots motivate the people to be real “humans” again.

Without the computers, the Captain wouldn’t even have known about the human civilization and about the live on the Earth.

So the movie wants to say that **technology and old values can coexist, they aren’t really opposite of each other**.

**Q.** *Where did WALL-E learn all those human characteristics?*

Probably from all those things he collected from the trash of human civilization. From his collections, WALL-E knows what humans used to be like. Since he is a robot, he survived on the Earth and he is the only one that could preserve the human qualities and former values.

**Marie Antoinette**

Editing and Music

Dogs eating cake: Explicit remark of luxurious life of nobles.

The montage sequence is mostly focused on feet or hand, or even no body parts at all. Even the people are shown as looking at the luxurious items.

→ The sequence is trying to show all those luxurious items, and the luxurious life of nobles.

**The film is set in 18th century but the music feels very contemporary**. **What is the purpose?**

Things that makes the scene feel contemporary. (Familiar to us)

- Gambling. It reminds us of Vegas.

- Speed of shot changes (tempo of the sequence) is very fast. This style of editing is used in the contemporaries. If you want the shot to feel old, it should change slowly and should focus on the people, not the objects.

Marie is depicted as a historical cause, (responsible for the French Revolution) not a person. She is incomprehensibly stupid, and she is acting in a way any ordinary teenager would have. (If she had a lot of money) So, she is a spoiled, unwise teenager → makes her look just like current day people.

**Sound Effects – The Restaurant Scene from Godfather**

The 2 **train sounds**, first when Michael comes out of the toilet, second just before Michael shoots the gun.

Comparison with the train sound from Inception; Cobb and Mal uses the train to commit suicide.

“You’re waiting for a train. A train that will take you far away. ...”

Why was it trains?

The main difference between trains and cars is that cars go on road and they can make U-turns. But trains, they can only go on railroads, and they are fixed. You cannot stop until the train reaches the station.

The road Michael chose, it’s a railroad. He cannot stop now.

**Final Exam Overview**

Mainly focused on Sound and Editing but there might be a question on theme.

Talk about visual elements or narrative, whichever I find the most effective.

Might want to voluntarily write about those stuff, but other questions will strictly be about sound and editing.

Soviet Montage, intellectual editing, emphasis of contrast (trying to convey deeper meaning)

**Sound -** Composed of dialogue, music, sound effect.

How music can be used for multiple purposes such as showing similarity between 18th century and contemporary, and making the 18th century understandable to us. Also, the opening music of WALL-E is used for establishing the character, emphasizing the setting by contrast.

WALL-E: reference to older culture to express the theme