

## **Hugo Scene Analysis (<https://youtu.be/nE70UbTl1rY>)**

Martin Scorsese's 2011 film *Hugo* is set in 1930's Paris, where we follow a young boy, Hugo Cabret (Asa Butterfield), who has recently lost his father (Jude Law). Hugo befriends a young girl, Isabella (Chloë Grace Moretz), in the train station where he lives and sets the clocks in. We follow Hugo and Isabella on an adventure about his father's automaton and the pioneering filmmaker Georges Méliès (Ben Kingsley). This film convinces the audience that everyone and everything has a purpose in this world. Scorsese conveys this through symbolic machines, cinematography, editing, Mise en scene, and the relationship between humans and technology.

At the beginning of this scene, the audience is introduced with a Point-of-View (POV) shot that indicates Hugo is reflecting on Méliès and suggests to the audience that they should also reflect on him. Hugo says that Méliès "has got real purpose" and perfectly connects how machines and humans are more connected than one might think. This dialogue introduces the symbolism of a "machine world" that Hugo will use throughout this scene. These machines "do what they are meant to do," like the Librarian, Monsieur Lebissee (Christopher Lee) who is "sending books to a good home". Hugo is questioning his existence, trying to evaluate what "his cog" does in this giant machine of a world.

We cut away to a shot that focuses specifically on Hugo struggling to put the screwdriver in the screw and is accompanied by Hugo describing how every machine has a purpose. This shot creates a feeling of him struggling with the machine, or in other words, struggling to find where he fits in the symbolic machine-like world. When we look into the city from their POV, we see how it actually is. Everything is moving at an average pace, but we see their perspective as young people trying to find their way. The cut moves into a timelapse of the city to show how they *feel*; the city is moving so fast that it is hard to keep up. After this time-lapse, the focus becomes incredibly shallow and focuses specifically on Hugo and Isabella, which leads to the dialogue of how these two fit into this big world (Figure 1).

At 1:44 (Figure 2), an extremely deep depth of focus allows the audience to see the gears moving in the back, much like Hugo's thoughts. This depth of focus suggests

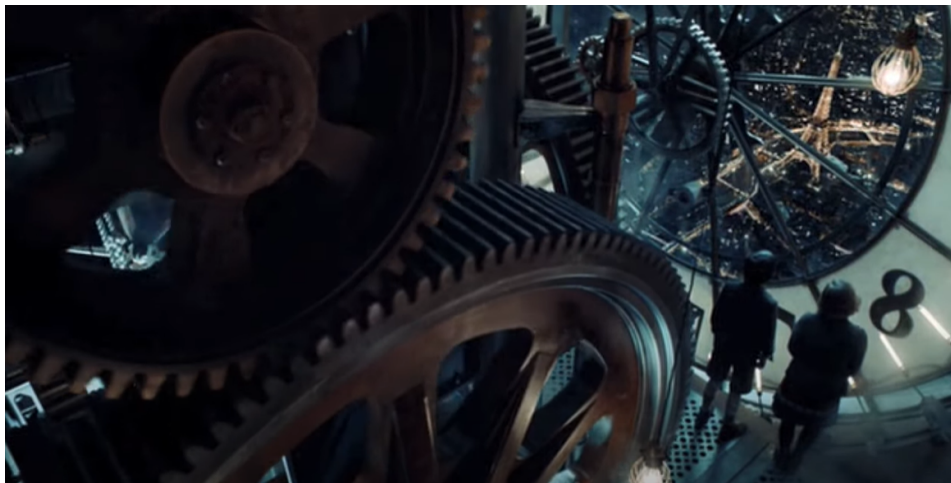
to the audience that we may want to draw attention to the similarities between the gears (machines) and humans. This part of the scene also has a high-angle shot, making the two of them seem vulnerable or minor in the sense of the gears, which symbolize the entire world. These combined make an excellent image for the dialogue where Hugo draws similarities between the whole world being a machine. We also see almost the entire city in this shot, with the depth of focus being so deep to convey how these two are a part of something much more significant—a small part of a giant machine and each part having its own essential and specific purpose. With the gears at the top of the high-angle shot, it gives a sense of authority, as if the machine is larger and more powerful than them, which is true; the world is so immense and limitless, but these two still have a place in it.

These previous elements set a mood of aloneness in addition to the highly cool tones. The cool bluish tones and deep shades can indicate a mood of loss and sadness of how big this world is and how little they are, but Scorsese challenges and contradicts what is going on visually in this scene through Hugo's words and his reaching for Isabelle's hand. Hugo is inviting her to join him in the optimistic idea that they are all essential gears in the giant machine of the world, despite all odds being against them, symbolizing his perseverance to find his purpose.

Overall, Scorsese does a fantastic job with painting a bigger thematic picture in this scene. Through dialogue, lighting, camera angles, editing, etc. He effectively illustrates to the audience one of the major themes of this movie. Strategically convincing the audience that everybody and everything has a purpose and encourages the audience to find their way, just as Hugo and Georges Méliès do.



*(Figure 1)*



*(Figure 2)*