

FS101 Lec 1

Monday, January 07, 2013
10:33 AM

Screening 1: singing in the rain

Screening 2: Earnst Hemingway's killers

Screening 3: CRAZY

Screening 4: Milk?

Introduction: What is Narrative?

The Study of Film Narrative

Ways of studying film

- a. Analysis - identifying a films parts and how they work together (eg what are their functions and effects- amount of shots, kind of lighting, etc)
- b. Interpretation - assigning a 'meaning' that depends on references to reality and audience expectations (in terms of what we know and what/how the movie portrays it)
- c. Evaluation -
 - i. Fiction
 - ii. The way story is told
 - iii. Voice over
 - iv. Perspective
 - v. Sets the mood
 - vi. Speech
 - vii. Story
 - viii. Communication
 - ix. Pacing
 - x. Sequence of events

What is narrative - is a chain of events in cause-effect relationship occuring in time and space

Cause-effect (casual), time (temporal), space (spatial)

Why study narrative- narrative is a universal human experience

FS101 Lec 2

Monday, January 14, 2013
10:30 AM

Narrative elements tell the story - characters, the way scenes are depicted

Stylistic elements - visual and sonic (auditory); camera movements, style of colour, soundtrack

I. Narrative Form

A. Definition of Film Form - a system of relationships among elements (what type of movie it is in terms of style)

Formal form- when parts of film are put together to tell story in a particular way

Documentary form - with actual people, not actors. With subtitles tells names and information during the movie (Fahrenheit 9/11)

Narrative form - uses actors, is fictional tell the story from one perspective (United 93)

B. Principles of Film Form

a. function: the role or effect of any element in a film's form (singing in the rain: car tire blowing up scene; crucial to the plot as it brings together the main characters)

Elements can have more than one function

b. repetition/variation [motifs, parallels] - when an element is repeated throughout the film, it becomes a motif (ie in Singing in the rain, the motif is the theme of appearance vs reality, aka thematic motif)

c. development [structure] - e.g four-act structure

Turning point - narrative movement that signals an important shift of some kind in character or situation
Setup/exposition [0-29:00/ 29 min]

Conflict between Don and Lina; arrival of sound cinema.

Turning point: don establishes goals: 1. reunite with kathy, 2. star in a successful sound film

Complicating action[29-66min]

1. Don't and kathy reunite but have to hide romance from Lina; 2. don stars in sound films. Does it succeed?

a) Turning point: preview of the dueling cavaliers fails but motivates idea for musical with kathy's dubbed voice

Development [66-90]

Production of musical at the monumental pictures

Turning point: lina discovers romance and the plan for dubbed voice; threatens to sue, ruin kathy's career

Climax / epilogue [90-103 min]

The truth about lina's voice is revealed. Result: personal and professional success for both don and kathy

d. unity/disunity - e.g. unity: narrative closure in singing in the rain

C. Elements of Narrative Form

a. plot/story [back story, ellipsis] - story (fabula): the sum total of all events that are explicitly presented and that the viewer infers. (ie in SIFR we don't see all of Don's biography, we only see the highlights as the whole biography would take years)

Diegesis - world of the story

Diegetic: belonging to the world of the story

- plot (syuzhet): all of the visual and sonic material presented explicitly on the screen

Non diegetic: not belonging to the world of the story

(see MLS week1 for the slide module)

b. characters (agents)- they cause things to happen, drive narrative action. Why? Bc they have motivation. Motivation is the main cause behind a character; maybe they're solving a mystery, getting revenge, etc.

Characterization: the process of conveying information about characters

c. structure:

beginning

Middle

end

II. Classical Hollywood Cinema

A mode of cinema characterized by films that:

(a) were produced by companies ('studios') located in or near Hollywood, California;

(b) were produced between 1917 and approx. 1960; and

(c) follow a set of conventions that are stable and influential (hence, "classical")

Conventions:

- (1) Clarity
 - e.g. Each scene's temporal relation to its predecessor is required
 - e.g. sound recording is perfected to allow for maximum clarity of dialogue
- (2) Unity
 - ...of action: cause-effect relationship; "tightly-woven" causality
 - ...of space: each scene takes place in a definable locale
 - ...of time: each scene takes place in single, coherent time period
- (3) characters are goal oriented, casual agents who encounter obstacles
 - Characters have desires, those desires turn into goals; which cause changes in the plot
- (4) closure (usually of professional and personal lines of action)
- (5) style is subservient to narrative (style is self-effacing or 'invisible')

FS101 Lec 3

Monday, January 21, 2013
10:28 AM

Mise-en-scene- all objects in front of the camera 'putting into the scene'

1. Setting - physical environment in which the action takes place
 - a. Location - hurt locker
 - b. Studio set - singing in the rain, the killers
 - c. CGI - avatar
2. Human Figure -
 - a. Staging -
 - b. Acting - can be difficult as it cannot be measured
 - i. -realism?
 - ii. Brechtian distanciation - named after Bertolt; he wanted to show the fabrication of movie and not the audience to be absorbed into the plot/movie
 - c. Lighting - most crucial and controlled element
 - i. Works in subtle and powerful ways
 - ii. Can build suspense with use of shadows
 - iii. Can advance or reveal narrative information to us
 - 1) Quality: hard, soft
 - 2) Direction - the path of light from the source to the object
 - 3) Contrast - the relative intensity of key and fill lights
 - a) 3 pt lighting - key light, back light, fill light
 - i) What is the ratio of key : fill?
 - ii) "High key" = low ratio (1:1) = low contrast (eg musicals).
 - iii) "Low key" = high ratio (4:1) = high contrast (eg gangster films)
 - d. Composition - arrangement of objects and figures in the setting. When dealing with comp, it helps to think of the shot as a photograph or painting.

Cinematography - the art of lighting and making that light tell the story - stephen burum, writing in movement

1. Camerawork
 - a. space-based
 - i. offscreen/ onscreen
 - ii. Height
 - iii. angle {high, low, level, aerial, canted(leaning)}
 - iv. distance (shot scale) {xls, is, mis, ms, mcii, cii, xcu}
 - v. camera movement {pan, tilt, tracking, crane, reframing}
 - b. time-based {e.g. long take} - duration of a shot
 - i. Long shot vs long take: long shot deals with distance whereas long take deals with time
2. Lenses
 - a. depth of field - the range of distance in front of the lens within which objects can be photographed in sharp focus
 - i. shallow focus: foreground is in sharp focus, background and mid-ground is in soft focus (blurry)
 - ii. deep focus - all planes are in focus
Note: both deep and shallow focus portray a deep space; the background is deep
 - iii. Deep space - the effect of staging action multiple planes, regardless of whether or not the planes are in focus
 - iv. {deep space, staging in depth}
 - v. Deep focus+ deep space = staging in depth - is a technique through which filmmakers place objects in deep space and in deep focus

FS101 - Lec 4: Editing

Monday, January 28, 2013

10:39 AM

Cont'd from Lec 3:

1. Lenses

- a. depth of field - the range of distance in front of the lens within which objects can be photographed in sharp focus
 - i. shallow focus: foreground is in sharp focus, background and mid-ground is in soft focus (blurry)
 - ii. deep focus - all planes are in focus
Note: both deep and shallow focus portray a deep space; the background is deep
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Lec 4:

1. Types of transitions

This week's Movie: Rear Window (1954)

- a. Cut - instantaneous change
- b. Fade in/out - image gradually darkens or brightens
- c. Dissolve - brief superimposition
- d. Wipe - boundary line moves across screen
- e. Iris in/out - circular mass appears over shot A and closes in on the image. Iris out does the opposite

2. Relations between shots

- a. Graphic ('graphic qualities')
 - i. Graphic match - involves a graphic similarity between one shot and the next
 - ii. Graphic discontinuity - highlighting graphic dissimilarities or contrast
- b. Rhythmic (textbook: tempo)
 - i. 24 fps
 - 1) Eg 12 frames = 1/2 sec
 - 2) Eg 1440 frames = 1 min
 - ii. Unless its 'the hobbit' ; peter Jackson changed it up to 48 fps
- c. Spatial
 - i. Kuleshov effect - the meaning of a shot is determined not only by the material content of the shot but also by its association with the preceding and succeeding shots
 - 1) Two shots put together to formulate a meaning.
Meaning could change by changing the second shot
 - ii. Creative geography - editing to suggest that two locations exist in continuous space
- d. Temporal (textbook: timing)
 - i. Flashback/flashforward
 - ii. Montage sequence - highlight reel, temporal ellipses

- iii. Crosscutting (parallel editing) - two events are taking place at the same time in different places
 - iv. Temporal expansion - repeating the same shot consecutively
3. Continuity Editing - a system of rules that create the illusion of continuous space and time, and thereby maintain narrative coherence and clarity; allows for a smooth flow of continuous shots over time
- a. Establishing shots and re-establishing shots (Long shots and extreme long shots)
 - b. Axis of action (180-degree rule)
 - a) Shot/reverse-shot
 - b) Screen direction
 - c) Eye-line matches
 - c. Match-on-action - joins together two views of the same action

FS101 Lec 5 - Soundtrack

Sunday, February 10, 2013

9:33 PM

Lecture 5: Sound

“The most exciting moment is the moment when I add the sound...At this moment, I tremble.” – Akira Kurosawa, director (Rashomon, Seven Samurai)

History of Sound Film

1. Silent era (1894-1929)
 - Be hired to provide sound effects, orchestra, travel lecturer (explain films to audience as the crew making sound)
 - Film almost always had sound
 - Problem: synchronization of sound and the image of movement of a sound source (i.e. actor's lips)
 - By 1930 it was possible for sound to be mechanically synchronized with the image...
2. Transition to sound (ca. 1927-1930)
 - i.e. Vitaphone Projector: developed by a company Warner Bros. owned. It worked by connecting a reel of film to a phonograph record.
 - Phonograph record was recording sound during shooting.
 - During exhibition, they will use this projector in order for it to work
 - Problem: theatre owners didn't always want to invest in a vitaphone projector, so Warner Bros. had trouble distributing this.
 - Turned out not to be a very vital system...
3. Sound era (ca. 1930 – today)
 - Now companies developed new recording sound technology
 - Sound does not emerge naturally from film, at all.
 - Dolby Analog, Dolby Digital & Sony Dynamic Digital Sound
 - Some film theatres are equipped with only the Dolby Analog; others can play the more expensive Dolby Digital. And then engineers have found SDDS (Sony Dynamic Digital Sound), which other theatres are equipped with this.
 - This is very efficient because you know the theatres have at least one of these Sound technologies, so you know for sure that you're film will be able to be played with Sound.
 - i.e. Lord of the Rings – most of the sound production is added afterwards, then they make a final mix

Components of the Soundtrack (do readings for it)

1. Dialogue
 - Externalize thoughts & feelings of characters & in doing so it can enhance the film
 - a) Text – dialogue as it is written
 - Subtext – implicit meaning of dialogue; i.e. tone of voice, Do the Right Thing with Jade & Pizza Owner – subtext is the flirting (eye contact, attention to detail, the two slow tracking shots – visual cue)
 - E.g. Woody Allen makes comedy of the fact that subtext does exist in Annie Hall, 1977
 - b) Direct sound: sound recorded at same time as image

c) ADR: automated dialogue replacement

- A lot of dialogue is not recorded at the same time as image, more often or not actors will have to record their lines in a studio

2. Sound effects

- Define location, mood of a scene – the fact we don't notice editing or sound effects, shows how good it is

a) Fidelity: the degree to which a sound is appropriately matched to its apparent onscreen source

- i.e. if we see someone jump into a pool of water, and we see and hear the splash
- Can a sound be faithful to the source?

b) Foley: the art of matching live sound effects to the action of the picture (names after Jack Foley)

- i.e. Star Wars and laser guns noise. (No real laser guns in real life, so they took a wrench and banged it on something)
- Chewbacca (mixture of animal sounds)
- We have been conditioned that these sounds have fidelity, even though we know the sound is not related to its apparent source (i.e. Star wars)

3. Music

- Music helps establish a setting, evidently.

a) Leitmotif – a recurrent musical motif; when music sets a motif it is called leitmotif

- Sometimes music can help establish characters
- i.e. Wizard of Oz – Follow the Yellow Brick Road!

Relationship Between Sound and Image

1. Diegetic and non-diegetic

- Diegetic: has a source in the world of the story (i.e. Chewbacca)
- Non-Diegetic: has a source outside the world of the story (i.e. Music)
- Good clue is: we assume the characters in the film cannot hear it
- Blazing Saddles – first we assume it is non-diegetic then we see it is diegetic

2. Onscreen and off-screen – Diegetic

- Generally not a problem to identify onscreen and off-screen diegetic screen
- Onscreen – when we see the sound happening, Off-screen- when we hear the sound happening but it is not on screen (i.e. Do the Right Thing, in Pizza Shop before big fight)

3. External (objective) and internal (subjective)

- External Sound: Comes from physical source in the scene; objective i.e. boombox from Do the Right Thing
- Internal Sound: comes “from the mind of” a character; subjective i.e. Voice over (Prof's Example: The Nutty Professor, Psycho (lady driving, she gets lost in her thoughts))

4. Simultaneous and non-simultaneous (Look for this in tonight's Movie, M)

- Simultaneous Sound: -diegetic sound that occurs at the same time in the story as the images it accompanies (e.g. a character speaking on screen – even if ADR, it can be an illusion)
- Non-Simultaneous Sound: Diegetic sound that comes from a source in time either earlier or later than the images it accompanies. e.g. voice-over i.e. Double Indemnity (1944);

a. Sound bridge: occurs when the sound from scene A continues after we've cut to the image from Scene B (moment of non simultaneous sound or the “bridge”)

-Image Track: Scene A, last image ----- > Scene B, First Image

-Sound Track: Scene A Sound ----- > Scene B Sound

i.e. Silence of the Lambs: she's talking about the store, and the store image comes up as she's still talking about the store “right outside of downtown Baltimore, sir” (sound bridge) – so now we know we're in downtown Baltimore

5. Parallel and counterpoint – not necessarily only Diegetic
- Parallel: rhythm or mood of image & sound are matched (e.g. Mickey Mousing)
 - Counterpoint: rhythm or mood of image & sound are contrasted
- a. Rhythm > Mickey Mousing
Mickey-Mousing: the synchronization of onscreen actions w/ accompanying music
-Rhythm does not have to be steady?
- b. Mood: matches the mood of someone crying, i.e. sad music; sad scene i.e. Face/Off, 1997;
they used a romantic song during an action/violent scene b/c of the innocent boy; mismatch of mood; and it might be what the child is feeling, and may symbolize hope

FS101 Lecture 7

Monday, February 25, 2013

10:49 AM

early cinema

1. pre history of cinema (pre 1894)
properties of optical toys and entertainment
 - visual spectacle (magic lantern (mid 1600)
 - often religious stories
 - phantasmagoria (1798 etienne robertson)
 - magic lanterns evolved over time as technology improved. used at fairs, carnivals and homes by 1800s
 - illusion of motion
 - zetrope (you spin it and you see movement)
 - illusion of 3D reality
 - wax museums, stereoscope, panorama (large sets, create a new world, room moving with soundtracks), cyclorama (360 degrees)
 - keys dates:
 - 1889, george eastman invents flexible film stock - forms eastman Kodak co. (roche ster NY)
 - DEC 28, 1895, 1st commercial screening of motion pictures (grand cafe, paris), produces by louis and august lumiere
 - actualities - recorded brief real time events such train arrival
2. cinema of attractions (1895-1906)
 - Actualities (non fiction) vs fiction
 - Actualities - workers leaving the factory in Lyon (1895)
 - Fiction - 'Transformation by Hats (Louis Lumiere, 1895)
 - Stylistic Features
 - Single take of 30-40 sec
 - Long shot
 - Exterior location
 - Non-narrative
 - Cinema of attractions (1895-1905) vs. Narrative cinema (1905 -)
 - The CoA emphasized:
 - Visual spectacle - shows animals, acrobats, fireworks
 - The illusion of motion - (train clip)
 - The act of looking
 - Narrative is a pretext (excuse) for attractions/ stylistic effects (rarebit bread clip - man getting sick bc of eating rarebit bread; its an excuse to show attractions)
 - In CHC narrative dictates style (Sherlock Jr, Pool shot)
 - Early Narrative cinema (1906 - 1915)
 - (race for sausage)
 1. Change in audience taste
 2. Less expensive - Working in Studio is cheaper
 3. Greater control over production

Lecture 9: Art Cinema 1

Monday, March 11, 2013
10:14 AM

Today's lecture emphasizes your course packet reading: David Bordwell, "Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice." Be sure to complete this reading before going to tutorial. Remember, you can take notes on the reading and use them during your quizzes.

I. Definition

- 1) Mode of film practice
- 2) Brief history

II. Conventions

- 1) Realism
 - a) objective
 - b) subjective --characters with no clearly defined goals
 - loosening of causal unity (*episodic structure*)
 - lack of narrative closure
- 2) Authorship (authorial expressivity)
 - a) violations of CHC style --jump cut (violates continuity editing)
 - mismatched or ambiguous relationship between image and sound
 - other unmotivated devices of style
 - b) self--reflexivity (calls attention to the medium of film)
- 3) Ambiguity

III. The Nouvelle Vague and *Cleo from 5 to 7* -- see Bordwell reading TODAY'S CLIPS

ARE FROM:

Breathless (Jean--Luc Godard, 1959) *Cleo from 5 to 7* (Agnes Varda, 1962)
Distant Voices, Still Lives (Terence Davies, 1988)
Persona (Ingmar Bergman, 1966)

Film adaptation in the age of intermediality

Monday, March 25, 2013

10:34 AM

- Moving of a work from one medium into the medium of cinema (Lord of the rings. Novel to media cinema)
 - Challenge was to recreate the world of the novel into a cinematic experience
 - Filmmakers want to be faithful to novel material
 - Hamlet, Watchmen, Charlie's Angels (recreation of the tv medium to cinematic medium), psycho, resident evil, dog day afternoon
 - "the book was better!"
 - Its not always about being faithful
 - Filmmakers may not wish to recreate novels faithfully
 - Filmmakers may not be able to recreate novels faithfully
 - Eg. The catcher in the Rye
 - Filmmakers may want to 'rewrite' novels
 - Filmmakers may want to connect novels to new contexts
 - Eg. Bride and Prejudice (2004)
 - How do we speak about adaptations
- Borrowing
 - Here the artist employs, more or less extensively, the material idea, or form of an earlier, generally successful text
 - The analysis needs to probe the source of power in the original by examining the use made of it in adaptation
 - Gran Torino (does it borrow a well known myth)
- Intersecting
 - A refraction of the original
 - The cinema works with the original format, highlighting elements we might otherwise not see
- Transforming
 - The task of adaptation is the reproduction in cinema of something essential about an original text
 - The original work is transformed to fit the specific capabilities of cinema, so as to preserve it best
 - Hamlet (Branagh, 1996)
- Problems we should be aware of:
 - These approaches assume a relationship to one source
 - These approaches assume a relationship to a source clearly manifest in a narrative medium
 - These approaches do not readily account for the widespread appearance of characters and narratives
 - Eg. Batman movies + comics, graphic novels
- Intermediality: a useful alternative
 - The presence of different media within one another
 - Not a working, but a continual working out
- In theory
 - Every medium shapes its material in a unique way
 - Media-engineering
 - Every medium can offer us something we cant otherwise experience
 - Moving characters and narratives across media continually extends our experience of them
 - BUT, also continually explores what make them relevant, interesting, and valuable

What about Run Lola Run? What might thinking about adaptation and intermediality might reveal about this film?

- A case for adaptation?
 - This painting, as well as the film's structure, appears to refer back to Hitchcock's vertigo
- Adaptation is more about making new meaning than replicating existing meaning
- Adaptation should be treated as works in their own right, not as derivatives
- Adaptations cannot account for wide reading activities of cultural production, like the ongoing series of works about batman
- Intermediality can more readily account for such streams of work
- Intermediality can also shed light on places where adaptation doesn't quite reach