

CS3343: Digital Media Production

Assignment 3: Dramatic and Aesthetic Analysis of a film

****INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT****

Assigned: Sep 9th, 2009

Due: Sep 18th, 2009 (Friday, midnight if by IVLE, in Lab or under my door by 6:00pm if on CD/DVD)

Purpose of this Assignment

- To understand and analyze dramatic structure/story telling in films
- To understand shot framing, transitions, composition by analyzing a film
- To learn to be critical of film and its direction

TASK

Choose any film preferably one that you like (must be a film, cannot be animation). I encourage to consider selecting a film by a famous director that you may not have seen before (see <http://www.filmsite.org/greatdirectors-totalfilm.html> -- note this site is western centric).

Create a power point presentation composed of slides + video clips that analyze two key parts of the film: the “story/drama” and the “shots/directing”. In essence, you are going to describe *what* the story in the film is and then give some insight in *how* it is told visually by the director.

Your PPT presentation should have the following format (introduction slide and 2 parts):

0. INTRODUCTION

1. Your name
2. Title of the movie and the director (and total running time of the movie)
3. Film’s Genre: Comedy, Action, War, Fantasy, etc. . .

1. STORY/DRAMA

Synopsis

Provide a 1-paragraph synopsis of the film. For a famous or recent film, you can probably find a synopsis online, but I’d like for you to attempt to do this in your own words. You can accompany this by a screenshot from the film (or even better, a movie poster of the film).

Characters

Define the characters in the film. Do this by showing a picture of the character (clipped from the movie) and a 1-2 sentence summary of their role along with the type of character they (central, primary, etc – see Lecture 3). If your film has lots of characters, you can decide to choose the most important ones (maximum of 10 characters).

Drama*

Identify the main 3 acts of the story: Act I (exposition), Act II (rising action), Act III (climax, resolution)

For each act, use a single slide and provide the following:

1. A screen shot from that Act
2. Give a short (1-3 sentences) that describes the events that take place.
3. Describe roughly at what point in the movie where do you think this Act starts (for example, 30minutes into the film Act II starts) and how much of the film is dedicated to is (0-30minutes, 25% of the film).
4. (Optional) If there is a very clear point where the conflict is engaged or Act starts you may consider providing small movie clip to show this. If you do this, have an additional slide (after the slide with items 1., 2., and 3) with this video clip.

* NOTE: If it is a western-style film, it most likely will have this dramatic structure; however if your movie doesn’t follow this typical ACT I-II-III dramatic style, then do the best you can to describe the drama in some logical format.

2. SHOT COMPOSITION ANALYSIS

Create short video clips of your film to demonstrate the following:

Aesthetics Techniques

5-10s* x 4 **Rules of third**

Show at least 4 shots examples that use rule of thirds.

5-10s x 2 **Camera-shot change**

Show at least 2 clips that have very distinct camera shot changes.

Give a short description of the camera shot changes (e.g. xws -> ws -> ms -> cu -> xcu)

30-60s x1 **Camera motion changes**

Show at least 1 reasonably long clip that has very distinct camera motion.

Give a short description of the camera-motion, panning, tilting, etc.

(You can have more than one of these clips, but have at least 1)

15-30s x 1 **Closure**

Show one clip that demonstrates closure and provide one-two sentences that describe how closure is being used.

30-60s x 2 **Scene transition**

Show at least 2 clips that demonstrate scene transitions.

Provide a short description of the transition. Explain if the transition was used to create a shift in time, a jump to a new scene, maybe it is a cut-away, etc. . .

15-30s x 2 **3D effect**

Show at least 2 clips where the director is creating a 3D effect with the subjects.

Directors Touch/Your Favorite

30-60s x 2 (at least 2) **“Directors style” or “a scene you like”**

Most good directors have their own distinct style. It may be hard to find this in a single film or in some “cookbook” films (i.e. Hollywood films for mass consumption). If you can identify some unique style in the film, show 2-3 clips to demonstrate this style and write a few sentences that explains the style. If you aren’t able to find a very distinct style, then provide 2-3 clips that are *your* personal favorite, and write a few sentences that says why you like these clips.

*** I won’t be strict on the time, if you need more or less time it is OK. But keep it under 3 minutes per clip.**

TOOLS THAT CAN HELP

For movie playback (on DVD), try VLC player (you may have to disable hardware support)

<http://www.videolan.org/vlc/>

For clip capture, consider Camtasia Studio (30day free trial)

<http://www.techsmith.com/camtasia.asp>

ASSESSMENT

Grading Criteria

- Part 1: Story (35%)
 - Synopsis (5%)
 - Quality of your analysis of the characters (10%)
 - Describe of the drama (20%)
- Part 2: Shot Composition (40%)
 - Clip examples (30%)
 - Quality/detail of your description (10%)
- Misc (10%)
 - Overall neatness of your presentation
 - Quality of your vide extractions

Here is the way you should think about this assignment. Imagine that you are giving a lecture on this particular film and want to 1) explain the story; and 2) show how well directed this film is. This is what you are trying to convey and demonstrate.

Why this assignment? Because the next (and final) assignment is going to be a “short feature drama” and I want you to start thinking in more details about story telling and directing.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Create a directory with your name and the films name separated by an underscore. Then have the PPT (with the same naming convention) and all supporting clips in the same directory. Here is an example

```
~\Brown_SevenSamurai\Brown_SevenSamurai.ppt
~\Brown_SevenSamurai\RuleofThird1.avi           (please give meaningful name to your videos)
~\Brown_SevenSamurai\RuleofThird2.avi
...
~\Brown_SevenSamurai\CameraShotChange1.avi
~\Brown_SevenSamurai\CameraShotChange2.avi
...
~\Brown_SevenSamurai\DirectorStyleN.avi
```

If you can zip this into under 35MB, then submit it via IVLE. I suspect you may have trouble getting this under 35MB, if that is the case submit it on CD to Hossein during lab on Friday (or to me directly before the deadline), or under my door by 6:00pm on Friday Sep 18th. If by IVLE, you can submit it before midnight Sept 18th.