

Dancer in the Dark

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I really enjoyed the camera placement in this film as well as the shots, especially during the interviews between Morris and McNamara. In fact, most of the time McNamara addresses directly to the camera as we have seen in class with Cook at the beginning of the semester. This fact enhances the importance of the story or anecdote the narrator (in this case McNamara) is telling because it establishes a particular kind of relationship between us and him. In addition, it creates an interesting credibility to the story because when he is addressing the camera makes us focus on what he has to say because it catches our attention.

I also enjoyed the camera placement mainly because of the shot durations. Sometimes the camera shows us McNamara speaking normally and when he speaks louder (to put emphasis on some facts for example) there is a sudden cut followed by a close-up on the subject's face. This editing technique is interesting in the sense that it brings your attention to focus on some words or facts that are more important, according to the director. In addition, it establishes an intimate relationship between the viewer and McNamara, especially in the more emotional scenes (e.g. the scene where McNamara starts crying when he talks about Kennedy's death)

The way the director uses editing as a transition is particular. In fact, the story is divided into different lessons of war (chapters) which increases this impression of reading a visual book. The director knows how to manipulate the audience. He uses a black screen and we see the lesson written in white letters. Finally, it also uses the teaching strategy, as we learned in class to makes us feel part of the film. We all know that documentary is a documentary's purpose is to inform someone so this person can learn or understand something easily.

A Fog War

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Another editing element which I think is interesting to explore is the use of slow-motion when scenes from past events are shown. In fact, the slow-motion effect itself is significant to the viewer because it aware him or her that these events are over

The first element that is interesting to talk about is of course the soundtrack. In fact, this film's soundtrack is rich in many aspects. We experience it at the very first time at the beginning credits. In fact, it is filled with violins, double bass, viol and cello. The rhythm of these instruments is rapid and keeps accentuating itself especially when the characters are anxious or panicked (e.g scene where the woman is followed by the policeman).

Another element that has kept my attention in this film is the way Hitchcock plays with the camera placements. At the very beginning of the movie, we see the city which is presented as Phoenix in Arizona and the camera scans the city to finally make a zoom in a random window. Then we can see a room and two characters inside. I think it is an interesting scene here because it is as if the viewer was following the characters in their intimacy. First of all they present us the city in which the story takes place and directly brings us to the characters which are involved in. Once the camera is inside their space, we see the characters kissing each other. Another interesting camera move is where the two characters lie on the bed. At this moment, the camera keeps following them and focuses on their personal space, which highly accentuates the feeling of intimacy between the viewer and the characters.

The scene where the woman (Mrs.Cane) is driving her car is also an interesting one. During the whole scene, we see the woman driving her car and her she seems bothered by something (obviously because she stole 40k), at the same time, we hear interrogation dialogues between Mrs.Cane siblings and the police, which clearly illustrates her paranoia. Hitchcock wants us to feel as the character feels, almost like when you know you did something wrong

For the Iranian Feminism section, I decided to choose the film *Under the Skin of the City*, directed by Rakhshan Bani-Etemad. This family drama film portrays the lives of different women struggling to evolve in a society torn between traditionalism and modernity.

The temporality in *Under the Skin of the City* has caught my attention in this film. In fact, it is mainly linear (oriented towards future) as it was seen in class recently, because the characters are constantly trying to evolve in their everyday lives. In fact, the character of Mr. Abbas is really ambitious and is willing to get a working visa outside of Iran in order to earn money for his family and provide them better living conditions. In addition, women in general in this film are also oriented towards future especially because they fight everyday for their rights as women. As a matter of fact, the opening-scene starts with a film-maker asking Mrs. Tuba and other women about their conditions as women, which are not really considered. However, the film ends with a set where women are waiting in line to vote and Mrs. Tuba states that she is there to make her voice heard in order to see some changes in her society.

In this film, the space is mainly masculine but also feminine. In fact, we can notice that even if the women are seen as inferior individuals than their husbands or even their brothers, but they are also portrayed as indispensable people and are worshiped and respected by their sons (especially because Mr. Abbas has an intimate relationship with his mother). However, a man character gets emasculated (Mulvey lecture) once in the film, because one female character slaps him in the face. The man, humiliated seems confused and does not even return the act. Another interesting element I noticed is the theory of the lesbian gaze from Mulvey. In fact, women in this film have a strong relationship between themselves. The best scene which

illustrates this concept is the one where Masum returns and her best friends start hugging her. What makes me think that there is a reference to the lesbian gaze, is the fact that the Iranian society condemns homosexuality. There is also a scene where the women in the neighbourhood learn that Masum left home and they all start crying. This scene also suggests that they are really supporting each other despite their miserable lives.

Nosferatu (1922)

The famous horror film *Nosferatu*, from the German Expressionism movement is a unique silent masterpiece, both emotionally and musically. Two of the most important elements of this film, are without doubts the soundtrack and the sound effects. Both of these crucial aspects of the movie highly contribute to make us feel the rythm of the scenes. First of all, the music is mostly composed of violins, bells, percussions, flutes and disturbing piano notes. The whole soundtrack helps us imagine the strange world in which the characters live as well as the intensity of each scene. For example, the aggressive mix of instruments and the accelerated music when Hutter meets Count Orlok is extremely significant and suggests that this place is odd and something is going to happen there. Another scene that is interesting is the one where Hutter cuts himself with the knife and that Orlock comes to him and wants to suck his blood. Again, the sound effects amplify the situation, especially by the high-pitched sound of bells. Still in the same shot, the facial expression of Hutter clearly shows that he is afraid, and what is interesting there is to see how the actor slowly steps back. While he does so, a repeated echo sound corresponds exactly to the pace of each footstep. I think that the actor wanted us to feel how frightened his character was in front of this unexpected reaction from this creature. In addition, the sound used to emphasise each footstep of the characters adds a feeling of suspense, and makes you wonder what is going to happen next. It brings me to the next question; what if the movie didn't contain music? Would we steel feel the story as well as the intensity of the scenes?

Emotions have also an important role in this movie, especially because of the absence of speech. In fact, this movie could be summarized with a popular expression; a picture is worth a thousand words. The whole cast of this film have such impressive facial expressions, and this talent is clearly noticeable in the scene where Hutter tells the barman he is going to meet Orlock. At this moment, people stop their normal activities and we can sense fear and hostility in their faces. In addition, the scene where Hutter reads the book of vampires, which should make him worry about his future encounter with the count, is really interesting when we look at his facial expression. In fact, he clearly demonstrates indifference and ignorance about future danger, as if he didn't care. However, one of the characters who have the most interesting emotions is the vampire. In fact, his frightening eyes wide-open clearly confirm the reputation he has earned. I also think that the actor who plays a silent vampire would still be a more credible vampire than Edward Cullen in *Twilight*!

Cure (1997, Japan)

The film I have chosen from the east-Asian expressionism category is *Cure*, a 1997 Japanese movie, directed by the film-maker Kiyoshi Kurosawa. Many elements have caught my attention during the viewing of this Asian psychological thriller. One of the first interesting elements sustained, is the cause-and-effect phenomenon, as it was discussed in class with the film *Run Lola Run*. In fact, I noticed this concept during the first minutes of the film, in the scene where the viewer can see a man walking in a tunnel and removing a pipe from the canalizations. The second shot shows the same man in a bedroom and a naked woman-a prostitute-lying on a bed, with whom he obviously just had sexual intercourse. A few seconds later, the same man takes an object (the pipe) and smashes the woman to death. In the second shot, we can see his shadow in the shower, washing himself from his victim's blood, which sinks on the bath's curtains. Finally, there's a close-up on the siren wailing on the top of a police-car suggesting that the authorities were alerted and are heading to the crime scene.

Another interesting detail from the film is the use of the P.O.V camera technique. As far as I remember, this technique was used twice in this film. The first time was in the bathroom, still during the first minutes of the film, where inspector Takabe enters the bathroom with his colleague. There is a close-up on Takabe's face and then the P.O.V shot starts. We see a knife covered in blood in a sink, then the character looks at the shower curtains stained with blood and he finally looks at a pea coat, his right hand appears in the shot and he takes it to find someone's ID. The P.O.V technique is an excellent way to make us feel how the protagonist perceives the scene. After this scene, still in the same shot, Takabe leaves the bathroom with his associate and go back to the crime scene. What is interesting in this scene is that the camera doesn't leave the bathroom. Instead, it lowers itself slightly and keeps following the two characters. We can clearly see that the frame of the door surrounds the camera. For a moment, I felt like I was spying on them.

Finally, the last element I thought was worth mentioning is the use of sound-effects. The scene in which I noticed an interesting use of sound-effects, it the one where Takabe comes back from work and arrives home. In this shot, the inspector opens the door and there is a constant close-up on his face, showing how preoccupied he seems to be from the situation he is facing (series of murders, suicides and of course the wicked personality of the mysterious suspect, Mamiya). While the camera shows his face, there is a kind of disturbing non-diegetic buzz sound. The way I have interpreted this aspect is that there was something wrong in the inspector's mind and both the close-up and this echoed buzz builds a kind of an intimate relationship between the viewer and the protagonist. In fact, for a few seconds I could almost feel what he was going through. It was kind of a psychological shot, where the emphasis is put on the facial expression of the character and the recurrent echo of the sound accentuates this idea.

The Big Heat (1953, Fritz Lang)

The film *The Big Heat* is an excellent example of the definition of a typical film-noir. Despite the fact that this film begins with a crime and that an investigation follows (which is a common subject explored in film-noir), many other elements contribute to the intrigue. In fact, Lang constantly plays with contrasts and lighting effects as well as the camera placements to accentuate the lugubrious world in which the characters evolve.

One of the camera placements that have kept my attention is the one at the beginning of the film, where Bannion investigates and interrogates Mrs. Duncan. In the *mise en scene*, we see both characters sitting on different sofas, but the camera shows the two of them in the same shot. Then Duncan gets angered and gets up, and at the same time and so does the camera. I think it was an interesting camera move, especially because it is as if I was looking at the scene from their living room and that I was reacting to their actions. I also think that it helps building a more intimate relationship between the viewer and the characters.

The character of Debby (Gloria Grahame) is the typical portrait of the *femme fatale*, one of the six features of film-noir. She's a seductive woman, who masters both the art of manipulation and provocation. She even puts inspector Dave Bannion (Glenn Ford) in trouble, when she meets him after the melee at the bar. Accused of having an affair with Bannion, Vince (Lee Marvin) decides to punish her by throwing boiling coffee in her face. The *mise en scene* for this scene is really interesting. First of all, we see Debby putting make up in front of a mirror and the coffee-maker in background. Then Kevin step in, starts talking to her and grabs her arm. The woman begs him to leave her alone, and there's a close-up on Kevin's face, expressing his anger. At the same time, we hear the sound of the boiling coffee getting hotter, which emphasises Kevin's anger as well. Finally he looks around, confused and looks at the coffee maker from a P.O.V shot and we see his hand appearing in the shot and taking the object. This act could be related to Mulvey's article, suggesting that the woman has to be punished for her indiscipline, as we also saw in *Notorious* from Hitchcock. Debby wears permanent scars (physical scars which also reflect her hidden emotional ones) since this barbaric act, which affected her pride (judging by her narcissist behaviour, emphasized by her obsession for mirrors) and therefore seeks revenge towards Vince. As a matter of fact, she avenges herself by revealing all she knows about her aggressor to detective Ballion. At the end of the film, she will even throw boiling coffee to Kevin's face, in order to make him feel all her suffering. In the scene where she does so, she even claims that she is the one who has fixed all the troubles she was indirectly responsible for. It is precisely at this moment of the film, that I discovered another Debby, who affirms herself as a strong woman and not as a weak one, like she used to be, during her relationship with Kevin.