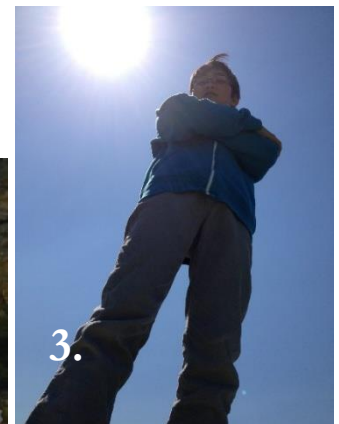
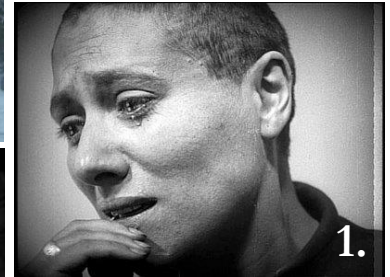


Watching, Analyzing, & Critiquing Film

Terms:

1. **Close up:** a tight, close shot (often of a face) that can be used to provide the viewer with intimacy, detail, or information about a character's emotions
2. **Long shot:** the camera is filming the subject from a distance; provides the viewer with information about the background and/or setting; may be used to give the viewer a sense of location and/or place
3. **Low Angle Shot:** the camera is positioned well below the subject (with humans, radically below the actor's eye-line), looking up; often used to suggest that a subject is large and/or powerful; can be used to position a subject as threatening
4. **High Angle Shot:** the camera is above the subject looking down; often used to make a subject seem small, powerless, and/or overwhelmed by his/her/its setting or circumstances
5. **Slant or Tilt Angle:** the camera is tilted so that what would normally be viewed horizontally is filmed on a diagonal; this has the effect of unsettling the viewer and can be used to promote a sense of unease or activity in the scene or for the audience
 - o **Horizontal lines** generally promote a sense of calm and rest (think of a landscape), **vertical lines** suggest power (a skyscraper), and **diagonal lines** most often communicate dynamism and action (which can then be cast positively or negatively)
6. **Tilt:** when the camera moves along a subject from top to bottom (or vice versa)
7. **Pan:** when the camera moves from side to side
8. **Jump cut:** an abrupt transition between scenes (contrast with fades which are less noticeable and often feel more "smooth"); a "smash cut" is a jump cut used for emotional, narrative, or artistic effect
9. **Montage:** a series of semi-rapid cuts or transitions between scenes or images, may be set to music; the juxtaposition of images in a montage may be used to create a visual metaphor, linking two images in an unexpected or productive way (such as cuts between a peacock and the figure of a pompous leader).



Things to Watch For:

(Consider selecting one and attending to it for the majority of your first viewing. When you return to your film, you will have a stronger sense of its plot and can watch for more elements as you re-view.)

- **Background vs. Foreground:** Try to attend to the background and what is going on there. What makes up the setting? Are there people in the background? What actions are occurring around or behind the shot's focus? Do these less obtrusive moments influence or add information to the way you understand the scene?
 - Conversely, you might attend to what each shot seems to focus on. What does the director want you to concentrate on at key moments? How does the director encourage you to focus your attention to or away from certain things? What is the effect of this and/or why might the director want you to focus on one thing over another?
 - **Distance:** Who/what is seen up close and who/what is seen from far away? (*For example, if we only see a key subject in long shots does that change our understanding of and/or relationship to him/her/it?*)
- **Color and Lighting:** What are the predominant colors in any given scene? Are the color tones warm (red, oranges, and yellows) or cold (blues, greens, and purples)? What feelings, ideas, or attitudes do the colors evoke in you and what does that communicate to you (visually) about the scene, the action, and/or the character(s)? How does the culture that produced the film influence the color symbolism you see, if at all? Does the color suggest the action is taking place in the past, the present, or the future? (*If the coloring indicates time, how does it do this and what does that suggest?*)
 - **Dark and Light:** How much can you see at any give time? Does it vary? Does the light direct your gaze, create mystery, or emphasize contrasts in plot, location, or character? What is the quality of the light? Is it harsh, with high contrast, juxtaposing intense brights and darks? Is it calming and soft? Is it natural? Neon? Fluorescent? Does the quality or source of the light communicate information about tone, setting, characterization, or plot?
- **Editing and Camera Movement:** How do the pieces of the movie go together? How do edits direct attention, create a mood or tone, influence pacing, and/or create visual metaphors? Are cuts between scenes emphasizing existing contrasts between different things or building connections between similar things? Why would the director want you to either contrast or connect these things, actions, places, or people in this way? If you think of the camera like your eyes, are you aware of shifts in POV between scenes? Are the transitions between scenes smooth or abrupt? Do you tend to register the editing or do transitions happen without your noticing?
 - **Shaky Cam:** How stable or unstable is the camera? How does this influence your feelings about the action, the characters, and/or your comfort level while viewing the film?
- **Perspective/Point of View (POV):** Whose perspective does the camera take? Do you feel you are watching from a particular character's POV or are you a "god-like," "objective" observer? Does your perspective ever change or vary? How does the placement or movement of the camera create POV? How does POV affect the way you view or interpret the characters, settings, and actions of the film? How does POV shape your understanding of the text, its subject, and/or its views on or attitudes about that subject?
- **Sound and Sight:** How are sound and visual paired in this movie? Does the musical tone augment the visual action, color, choice, etc. or does the music radically contrast with or seem to differ from what you are seeing at any particular moment? How are sound effects used? How is silence used? What do you hear that you didn't expect to hear and what do you not hear that you expected to hear? Are you aware of the music (if present) or does it seem to blend in and become part of an auditory background?
- **Repetition:** Are certain colors, camera angles, images, sounds, cuts, etc. repeated throughout the film? How does that repetition create visual or auditory motifs? What do the repetitions suggest about the message or interests of the film? When, if ever, are the patterns interrupted or varied? What does that communicate?

**Remember, you will want to re-watch your film before writing!*