

# FILM LESSON PLANS: MIA AS

## Classic Hollywood Style

### Invisible Storytelling

**The main purpose of a mainstream Hollywood film is to tell you, the viewer, a story. But though all mainstream films are based around a plot or narrative idea and contain various scenes and sequences all of which contribute to the overall story, on a more fundamental level all films can be boiled down to just two core building blocks: the shot and the cut. As such, the use of camera and editing are crucial elements of moving image language. In the sections that you can link to below, we will explore both in closer detail.**

**Clips mentioned in this section are not available to view on the website but are readily available to buy or rent from the usual outlets.**

As cinema first evolved in the early 20th century, a particular style of shooting and editing geared towards making film narratives easier to understand developed. This became known as the **continuity style** and from the very outset, it proved popular with both filmmakers themselves and with audiences. The continuity style has since become the moving image's most conventional and dominant mode of visual storytelling.

The most important aspect of this particular style is that it encourages you the viewer to become enthralled and captivated by a story but actively discourages you from consciously noticing the editing and camera techniques that are being used to tell it.

The **continuity style** deliberately sets out to make the camera, camerawork and editing invisible or, at the very least, unobtrusive. The events on screen seem to take place within a world of their own. They look as though they have simply been captured by some kind of unseen observer, who just happened to be watching and recording the action from convenient and suitable positions or angles. This is the key to the continuity style; its ability to tell a story whilst at the same time hiding the storytelling mechanisms themselves.

You, the audience member, are drawn into the narrative. You feel as if you are seeing the story unfolding onscreen. The techniques are deliberately used in order to effect precisely the right emotional response in you and at the right moment. The result is seamless and engaging storytelling and great filmmaking can really make us feel as if we are actually participating in an event.

In his essay 'The Film Text and Film Form' in the Oxford Guide to Film Studies, Robert P. Kolker describes the key features of the Classical Hollywood Style as they were developed in the early years of Hollywood filmmaking.

"The continuity style developed as a way to present a story in forward progression.... Early filmmakers found that, as long as they contained some narrative glue, scenes placed side by side would

be understood as occurring either simultaneously, earlier or later than one another. Shots of a woman held captive by a menacing male (or caught in some other dangerous situation) are intercut with shots of a heroic male figure moving in a direction that has been established as that of the menaced woman. The result is quite easy to follow: the man is coming to save the threatened woman.

Filmmakers developed formal methods that made shooting relatively quick and easy:

- shoot whatever scenes are most economical to shoot at a given time (shoot out of sequence when necessary)
- cover any given sequence from as many different angles as possible and with multiple takes of each angle to give the producer and editor a lot of material to choose from
- edit the material to create linear continuity, cut on movement, keep eyelines matched (maintaining the direction a person is gazing from one shot to another)

The continuity style is a form that is economical to reproduce. Once the basic methods of shooting and editing a film became institutionalised in the early part of the 20th century it was easy to keep doing it that way. Although every studio during the classical period of Hollywood production (roughly between the late 1910s to early 1950s) performed slight variations on the continuity style, its basics were constant and used by everyone.

The basic components of the classical Hollywood style are:

- Narrative flow is pieced together out of small fragments of action in such a way that the piecing together goes unnoticed and the action appears continuous.
- Sequences that occur at the same time but in different places are intercut to create narrative tension
- Dialogue sequences are constructed by a series of overtheshoulder shots from one participant in the dialogue to the other
- The gaze of the viewer is linked to the gaze of the main characters through a series of shots that show a character and then show what the character is looking at.

The result of these constructions is that narrative proceeds in a straight trajectory through time. Any transitions that break linearity (for example, flashbacks) are carefully prepared for and all narrative threads are sewn together at the end.

The continuity style is a remarkable form because of its persistence, its invisibility, and because we learn how to read it easily and without any instruction than seeing the films themselves.”

An illustration of this is the opening scene of **Rear Window**: (00:01:28 to 00:03:51) This seminal film from Alfred Hitchcock can be used to illustrate many aspects of the continuity style. This opening scene is an excellent example of how Hollywood can relay information to us without resorting to a lot of dialogue. Simply by moving the camera around and using strategically placed props (the plaster cast, the broken camera, the framed photographs, the magazine cover), we find out that the lead character is a photographer who we infer has injured himself on a dangerous assignment. And he is going out with Grace Kelly who will enter the story soon. Any scene from **Casablanca** can be used to illustrate the seamless storytelling technique of the Classical Hollywood Style. The film is analysed as a key exemplar of the continuity style in part one of the documentary series, the American Cinema, which provides a comprehensive introduction to the Classical Hollywood Style.

## Cross Cutting

**Cross-cutting or inter-cutting is a primary narrative device of the continuity style. This technique pieces together sequences that occur at the same time but in different places in order to increase narrative tension. The literary equivalent of this device is simple narrative transition such as “meanwhile” or “in another part of town”. Some films borrow these verbal clues by using inter-titles or voice-over narration.**

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**Watch the opening scene of Strangers On A Train (1951): (00:01:00 to 00:02:20)**

The opening scene of Alfred Hitchcock’s thriller, Strangers on a Train, illustrates the technique of cross or inter-cutting where we are shown different events happening at the same time and we seamlessly connect these events in our mind. In this case, we are seeing the first view of the two main characters as they separately move towards the point where their paths will cross (the train tracks are a visual illustration of this).

This is an example of the technique of cross-cutting being used to set up the story and introduce the two lead characters in a novel and intriguing way. This scene can be returned to at a later stage to look at camera angle, positioning and framing as the use of low angle shots to introduce characters is an innovative use of the continuity style.

**Silence of the Lambs (1990):** (01:33:56 to 01:36:22)

Jonathan Demme's film is one of the most important films of the 1990s winning Oscars for best film, director, actor, actress and adapted screenplay. This was groundbreaking because a film with such lurid subject matter (it is the tale of two serial killers) had never achieved this status before. The film could be described as a hybrid genre film mixing the police procedural/detective thriller genre with the horror movie.

In terms of technique, the director based a lot of it on his study of Alfred Hitchcock's films and in particular how Hitchcock strikes a balance between identification and suspense. *"I have embraced it (the Hitchcock style) more and more in my own quiet way, not necessarily in terms of visual flamboyance but more in the use of subjective camera and how to photograph actors to communicate story and character points."*

In this scene building towards the climax of the film, the director is using the technique of cross-cutting to build up suspense, create narrative tension and to wrong foot the audience.. Will the FBI get to the house of the serial killer in time to save the woman whom he has imprisoned in the basement? At this point in the movie, the FBI believe that they have tracked down the address of the serial killer while the lead character, Clarice Starling (played by Jodie Foster) is searching elsewhere.

Because we are so used to this type of dramatic scene where two scenes cut together tell us that they are linked together in time and place, we are easily fooled into believing that the FBI are indeed closing in on the home of the serial killer. It is only at the end of the scene that we discover that they have, in fact, been misled (like the audience). They are at the wrong house, while it is the lead character who has tracked down the serial killer (although she doesn't yet know this). Now the narrative tension and suspense moves to a different level as we worry about what will happen to her as she finds herself alone with the serial killer.

## Point of View Shot

**Point of view camera and editing is a key device through which filmmakers create audience identification with characters in a film. This technique is often used to place the audience in the position of the main character. The Point of**

## **View shot (POV) begins with a character looking off screen – we then cut to the object the character is looking at.**

What distinguishes point of view editing is that the object is shown from the character's optical vantage point – i.e. directly through the character's eyes. (So if the character is drunk, for example, this might mean that the shot is deliberately out of focus with the camera moving from side to side – a rolling shot. Some of the most famous examples of the Point of View shot (POV) are to be found in the films of Alfred Hitchcock. (Martin Scorsese discusses Hitchcock's use of POV shots in part one of the documentary series, the American Cinema. This technique is also common in the horror genre where the director often places the viewer within the viewing position of the monster.

### **Rear Window: (1954) (00:31:15 to 00:34:33)**

Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* is an extended exercise in the use of Point of View camera and editing. The entire film takes place in one location as the main character is confined to a wheel chair and observes the world through his window. Throughout the film, we see events through the viewpoint of the main character as he spies on his neighbours. In this scene, a series of point of view shots allow us to see a murder mystery unfold.

### **Silence of the Lambs (1990) : (00:11:19 to 00:13:17)**

Point of view shots allow us to experience the emotions of the lead character, her anxiety and apprehension as she goes to meet the imprisoned serial killer, Hannibal Lecter, for the first time. Director Jonathan Demme discusses this scene and the influence of Alfred Hitchcock on the *Silence of the Lambs* in his interview with Mark Cousins as part of the BBC's *Face to Face* series. This scene is also an example of how the continuity style employs over-the shoulder dialogue. In the classic continuity scene, the dialogue begins with a two-shot of the participants in the scene. The editing pattern then starts as a series of over-the-shoulder shots from one participant to the other. As Robert P. Kolker explains, in his essay 'The Film Text and Film Form' in the *Oxford Guide to Film Studies*: "The constant cutting across the gazes of the characters slips us into their narrative space because we are continually asked by the cutting to expect something more. Someone looks, and we are primed to respond, 'What is the character looking at?' And the next shot inevitably tells us, by showing the person (or object) being looked at."

### **Silence of the Lambs (1990) : (00:37:04 to 00:39:31)**

The point of view shots here allow us to experience the emotions of the female lead character as she is left alone in a room full of policemen. In a very direct way, we gain an insight into the emotional vulnerability of the character played by Jodie Foster and empathise with her. This visit to the funeral home also triggers her childhood memory of the trauma she suffered when her father was killed. The point of view shot leads us into a flashback in a very subtle and seamless way – another example of the invisible storytelling of the continuity style.

### **Silence of the Lambs (1990) : (1:37:15 to 1:45:03)**

Often filmmakers will employ point of view shots to place us within the perspective of two characters – in this case, the heroine and the villain. This final scene from the Silence of the Lambs is filmed in the conventional style of the horror movie. First we experience the fear and anxiety of the lead character as we see the serial killer's lair through her eyes. The narrative tension is created by our knowledge that the man is the serial killer and so we wait anxiously to see when she will realise this fact and take action to arrest him. As an audience, we are allowed to see something that is withheld from the lead character (the fact that the serial killer has a concealed weapon). So we don't see everything that she sees, only what the director wants us to see to increase the dramatic tension.

In the climatic battle of wits between the heroine and the villain, we see the lead character through the eyes of the serial killer as he stalks her in the dark using night goggles. This is a terrifying moment in the film and a key feature of the horror genre – seeing the action through the eyes of the monster who stalks his prey.

### **The Terminator (1984) (00:35:00 to 00:36:00)**

As our heroine and her protector are chased by an unstoppable killer, the director cuts between them and their pursuer's POV. The digitally processed look of the Terminator's POV shots reveal his robotic nature.

# Introducing Genre

## Studying Genre

The word **genre** comes from the French meaning **type or category**. Its roots are in the Latin word *genus*, a word which is now used to describe classification in biology. Using the concept of genre in relation to the moving image serves much the same purpose. Approaching films in relation to genre inevitably means treating individual films not as unique works of art but as members of different categories or groupings.

**There are two major approaches to film genre: The Descriptive Approach and The Functional Approach.**

The aim of the **descriptive approach** is to place a large number of films into a small set of groups based on common characteristics such as theme or visual style. This means concentrating on the formal and stylistic qualities of films. Try the following introductory exercise to familiarise yourself with this approach:

The **functional approach** to genre, focuses instead on the role genre plays in society itself. The Functional approach examines film and the viewing of films as a shared, social ritual, with different audiences sharing common expectations and experiences. In relation to genre in particular, try the following exercise to gain an insight into the expectations and perceptions of your friends and colleagues.

### **Genre Classification**

The main identifying characteristics of a film will inevitably fall into one or more of the following categories, or "repertoire of elements".

- **Iconography**
- **Setting**
- **Characters**
- **Narrative**
- **Style**
- **Theme**
- **Audience Response**
- **Genre hybrids**

Despite often clearly definable characteristics, however, it is important to remember that genres are not fixed entities, but are instead constantly evolving. Often the boundaries between genres become blurred. In most cases films represent a “genre hybrid” – or a combination of attributes from several different genre backgrounds. Studying genre reveals a pattern of repetition and difference. In other words, some films do have identifiable similarities, but they also contain new elements or similar elements used in new ways. Try the following exercise to find out more about the fluid and complex nature of genre classification.

### **Genre and Production**

Of course Genre isn't just a useful tool for classifying and criticising films. Genre acts as both a gauge of shared target audience expectations and preferences and as a useful guide for film producers.

In their ongoing attempts to find “formulae” which will bring guaranteed box office success, producers frequently play on audience familiarity with genre characteristics, both in the making and promotion of their films. The rationale behind this approach, is the belief that product recognition makes it easier to sell a product. (see Film Industry).

Film producers are obviously interested in what characteristics make a film successful. By identifying formulae and refining them, they are contributing to the ongoing construction and development of different genre categories.

### **Viewing Extract - A Personal Journey through American Movies: (00:22:15 – 01:10:53)**

The introductory section of the BFI DVD 'A Personal Journey through American Movies with Martin Scorsese' provides a useful starting point for the study of genre. Beginning with the section 'The Director as Storyteller', Scorsese discusses how the genre system developed in the earliest days of the Hollywood Studio System. He then proceeds to explore three of the principal genres of Hollywood filmmaking: the Gangster film; the Western and the Musical.

**This clip is not available to view on the website but is available from the bfi**

**Mortice:** clip 1 (to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

An example of the Horror Genre. An unfortunate couple find themselves locked in a cellar with a creepy landlord and become terrified believing that they are about to become his next victims. This turns out not to be the case, however, as the director is parodying the genre for comic effect.

## Genre Elements

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# Film Lists

## The Horror Genre

**Frankenstein (1931):** (00:01:58-00:04:56) and (00:22:04-00:24:16)

The opening sequence of Frankenstein contains many of the key elements of the horror genre – the graveyard setting, the religious icons, the mad scientist and his deformed assistant. The creation of the monster sequence is one of the famous scenes in the history of the genre.

**Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992):** (01:29:30-01:31:50)

This modern version of the Dracula story was directed by Francis Ford Coppola (the director of The Godfather trilogy and Apocalypse Now). The lush colour cinematography, high production values and special effects signal that this is a big budget movie, but the genre elements are drawn from the earlier film versions and the original novel itself.

**Halloween (1978):** (00:02:08-00:06:40)

Some genres have specific stylistic characteristics or employ techniques that are a key way of generating suspense or fear. Point-of-view is one of the principal techniques of the horror genre (for example, the sequence of the serial killer stalking Jodie Foster in Silence of the Lambs in Lesson 1). This extract from Halloween is one of the most famous examples of the use of point-of-view in film with the movie beginning with the point-of-view of an anonymous murderer as he stalks and kills a victim and then the camera draws back at the end of the scene to deliver the final shock – the revelation that the eyes that we have been looking through are those of a child.

**The Sixth Sense (1999):** (00:40:17-00:43:32)

Another example of the use of point-of-view. The director employs the identification techniques of point of view in a particularly powerful manner drawing us into the young boy's fearful world. A whole series of techniques are working together to create fear, claustrophobia and paranoia in this scene - the low angle view looking up the stairs/the high angle view looking down, the lighting, the sinister music, the staircase, the use of slow motion at the very end of the scene. As with many of the viewing extracts, this sequence can be used to study all aspects of the Classical Hollywood style.

**The Blair Witch Project (1999):** (00:07:14-00:08:49) and (00:44:20-00:45:25)

These sequences provide an opportunity to compare different storytelling techniques. For example, the documentary-like feel (the use of black & white and a shaky, hand-held camera) of The Blair Witch Project is very different from the high production values and digitally generated special effects of Bram Stoker's Dracula. The Blair Witch is not shot using the conventions of the Classical Hollywood style as it is filmed as a mock documentary.

## The Science Fiction Genre

**Metropolis (1926):** (00:16:07-00:17:02) and (01:07:00-01:09:49)

Fritz Lang's silent Expressionist masterpiece is one of the most influential films in the history of the genre, inspiring key scenes, characters and set designs of films such as Star Wars and Bladerunner.

**Blade Runner (1982):** (00:03:05-00:04:41) and (00:07:19-01:08:54)

Ridley Scott's adaptation of the Philip K Dick novel, 'Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep' has become a classic of the genre. Bladerunner retells the Frankenstein myth retold for our age. With their artificial memories and tragic quest for eternal life, Ridley the replicants – the real heroes of the story - are on the side of humanity, while man is unmasked as both God and Monster. The visual style, noir cinematography and set design of Bladerunner created a hypnotic vision of the city of the future that is so far unequalled.

**The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951):** (00:07:17-00:12:04)

The Science Fiction B-movies of the 1950s explores the fear of nuclear war and mass destruction in the cold war between America and the Soviet Union. This film conveys a message of pacifism through the story of an alien visitor who warns mankind to give up weapons of mass destruction.

**Independence Day (1996):** (00:20:18-00:23:09)

In this big budget version of the alien invasion B-movies of the 1950s, the White House is reduced to an inferno. Independence Day revisits many of the genres most enduring elements to explore American anxiety about race, sexuality, disease and war.

**Terminator 2 (1991):** (00:50:18-00:03:26) and : (00:27:40-00:30:47)

The second extract from Terminator 2 is a good example of the use of inter or cross-cutting to create dramatic tension and tell the story visually until the narrative gets to the point where all three characters meet.

**The Matrix (1999):** (00:33:55-00:39:38)

These two genres often contain similar elements. For example, compare the 'creation' scenes of Metropolis and The Matrix (Science Fiction) with Frankenstein (Horror).

## German Expressionism

### Formalism and Realism in the Cinema

**The first school of thought to defend film as an art form were the formalists. Formalists argue that film's specific property is its inability to perfectly imitate normal visual experience of reality. Formalists believe that these limitations define the expressive potential of film and offer the filmmaker the opportunity to manipulate and distort our everyday experience of reality for artistic ends.**

A filmmaker is therefore in a position to express his/her unique vision of the world, made possible by film's specific properties – editing, fast and slow motion, the use of low and high camera angles, etc. It is these specific properties that distinguish film from the other arts and define film as an art.

Realists believe that by means of its automatic mechanical recording of events, film does indeed perfectly imitate our normal visual experience of reality. In polar opposition to the formalists, realists argue that it is film's ability to imitate reality that defines film as an art form. Film's specific property is its photographic representation of reality

To realists such as the French film critic Andre Bazin, the long take and deep focus camera shots as the elements of film style that realize film's specific property to imitate reality. By allowing for a number of actions to be composed in the same shot, deep focus cinematography dispenses with the need for editing and supports the use of long takes. Using these two techniques, filmmakers are able to maintain the spatial and temporal unity of a scene, thus imitating reality (in the eyes of the realists).

These two different approaches date from the very earliest days of filmmaking. The Lumiere brothers' set up their film camera to record real life events such as a train pulling into a station or workers leaving a factory. Just a few years later, the French film pioneer and magician George Melies used special effects and stop motion camera tricks to create spectacular fantasy sequences in short films such as A Trip to the Moon (1902).

## The Cabinet of Dr Caligari

**In the chapter 'The Moments of Caligari' from the full study of The Cabinet of Caligari: Texts, Contexts, Histories, Mike Budd argues that although the film is often thought of as a modernist or avant-garde work of art, in many ways it is very conventional. He contends that we need to understand the unconventional aspects of the Cabinet of Caligari as transgressions of the norm of an otherwise commercial narrative film.**

According to Mike Budd, "Caligari is famous in large part precisely because its techniques draw attention to themselves: the setting and the acting, costumes and make up of Werner Krauss as Caligari and Conrad Veidt as Cesare, and the uncanny narrative reversal at the end. But these strange elements are so effective, I believe, only because of more familiar, less visible elements of realism and continuity that have received little attention."

Budd points out that much of the film is constructed as a conventional search, a kind of detective story with Francis looking for the murderer of his friend Alan. The search gives the central character a goal and drives narrative forward. The film is structured as a conventional, classical narrative relying heavily upon the continuity device of crosscutting to weave together two or more narrative lines.

The expressionist settings of Caligari are the first and most important way in which the film deviates from the realist norms of classical narrative cinema. They seem insistently to force their attention on us, to refuse the subordination of "background" to narrative action and character demanded by classical cinema. But, according to Mike Budd, "the strong narrative momentum generated by the protagonist/narrator's search works against this and tends to put the settings back in their place."

The extract listed below is from Mike Budd's commentary on the Eureka DVD release of The Cabinet of Dr Caligari explores the film's role in introducing modern art to the cinema. This clip is not available on the website.

**Cinema's first art film:** (00:05:23 to 00:08:53)

"Caligari was made within the German Studio System and was first shown in commercial theatres. Later it was shown in art theatres, film societies and film courses. It became famous as the film that introduced modern art – expressionism specifically – into the new medium of the movies. Modernist art is often difficult for many people to understand. Caligari helped bring this new art into the larger world of popular culture..."

This extract listed below from Mike Budd's commentary on the Eureka DVD release of *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* explores the use of Classical Hollywood Style in the one scene from the film. This clip is not available on the website.

**Scene analysis: Framing and Frame Cuts:** (00:27:00 to 00:28:06)

"Following the rules of the continuity system, Francis exits one shot, then enters the next, thus perceptually, our eyes will follow the movement of the central character. The first shot in this next scene, establishes the whole space of Jane's garden. Then cuts into a closer shot at the point in the scene where the audience is likely to want to see the character's faces more closely. In particular, the film director wants us to focus on the emotions of the characters as Francis tells Jane of Alan's murder. The editing, as with other film techniques, follows the dictates of the story. This shot eliminates the space around the characters, emphasising their gestures and facial expressions. Like the previous scene with Francis on the steps, the shot ends with the characters leaving the shot. And the next shot begins with the characters entering the shot. These are called frame cuts."

The extract listed below from Mike Budd's commentary on the Eureka DVD release of *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* explores the relationship between Expressionism and Classical Hollywood Narrative in the film. This clip is not available on the website.

**The Classical Narrative Style:** (00:01:07 to 00:05:23)

"The key to understanding this film is to understand the two broad and opposing cultural traditions operating within it. First, the popular, commercial tradition of story continuity and realistic imitation of the world. And second, the artistic, non commercial tradition of discontinuity, modernism and active transformation of the world...the narrative and continuity style was a major popular and commercial success."

This extract listed below from Mike Budd's commentary on the Eureka DVD release of *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* explores how the makers of *Caligari* combined Expressionist techniques with the continuity style. This clip is not available on the website.

**Expressionism meets Classical Narrative:** (00:14:42 to 00:16:361 )

"The makers of *Caligari* carefully selected those elements of expressionism that would fit into a popular and commercial context. Rejecting the most radical elements, they appropriated certain themes, settings and other elements. Whereas the story and editing continuity in *Caligari* is thoroughly conventional and untouched by expressionism, the settings introduced the most disturbing and modernist elements. Make-up, costumes and acting are also stylised and expressionistic.....The angular, splintery shapes, the titled houses, leaning walls and distorted spaces seem to infuse the world of the film with strangeness and dread. These uncanny shapes came from the artistic world of the expressionist avant-garde. But when they became part of a story told in the continuity style, they also became part of the popular tradition of the horror film, exemplified by *Frankenstein* and *Son of Frankenstein*. Both disturbing and familiar, *Caligari* is

caught between the innovations of an artistic avant-garde and the reassuring familiarities of commercial culture.”

## **Expressionist Mise-en-scene in The Cabinet of Dr Caligari**

**The Cabinet of Dr Caligari uses stylised sets, with strange, distorted buildings painted on canvas backdrops in a theatrical manner. Caligari showed how studio-built sets could approximate the stylization of Expressionist painting. Performance works hand-in-hand with the other elements of mise-en-scene. Conrad Veidt’s dance-like portrayal of the sleepwalker Cesare makes him blend in with the graphic elements of the setting. According to David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, “the graphic design of the scene where Cesare’s body echoes the tilted tree trunks, typifies the systematic distortion characteristic of German Expressionism.”**

The extract listed below from Mike Budd’s commentary on the Eureka DVD release of The Cabinet of Dr Caligari explores one of the most famous scenes from the film. This clip is not available on the website.

**Scene Analysis:** (00:40:08 to 00:40:49)

“One of the most famous and memorable scenes in the film begins with Cesare creeping along the wall. One critic has said, ‘it is as though the wall exuded him.’”

The extract listed below from Mike Budd’s commentary on the Eureka DVD release of The Cabinet of Dr Caligari explores the connection between mise-en-scene and character. This clip is not available on the website.

**Scene Analysis:** (00:42:52 to 00:43:06)

“In this shot of Cesare carrying Jane across the deranged perspectives of the town’s rooftops, character, action and setting seem to fuse into a simple, but powerful expressionist image.”

The extract listed below from Mike Budd’s commentary on the Eureka DVD release of The Cabinet of Dr Caligari examines the visual representation of the character of Cesare in the film.

**Scene Analysis:** (00:43:52 to 00:44:24)

“David Borwell and Kristin Thomson have noted that an actor is always a graphic element in a film, but a stylised film, like the Cabinet of Caligari, underlines this fact. They point out, “Conrad Veidt’s dance-like portrayal of the somnambulist Cesare makes him blend in with the graphic elements of the setting. His body echoes the titled tree trunks. His arms and hands, their branches and leaves.”

The extract listed below from Mike Budd’s commentary on the Eureka DVD release of The Cabinet of Dr Caligari explores the relationship between character emotion and an expressionist mise-en-scene. This clip is not available on the website.

## Genre Worksheet

## Genre Worksheet

### Dominant conventions of the Science Fiction Film

**Conventions are elements that allow us to recognise a film as being part of a genre, and help us to know what to expect from a film.**

### **TASK - In pairs or groups**

**Identify the conventions of the Science Fiction Film used in these films. You should write your answers under the following headings.**

**Setting (Where is the film set?)**

**Iconography (What kind of buildings, costumes, objects, machines, cars, etc are familiar aspects of the Sci-fi genre)**

**Style (What aspects of the film's style are common to the Sci-fi genre?)**

**Narrative (What aspects of the story are characteristic of Sci-fi?)**

**Range of characters and relationships with each other**

**Themes (Are there any social themes or messages in the film?)**

**Audience response (What is the particular appeal of this film to an audience? What audience would it appeal to?)**

# Worksheet

After viewing the film *The Untouchables*, answer the following questions

## Film language

What genre conventions can you identify in the film?

To what extent does *The Untouchables* conform to the conventions of the Classical Hollywood style?

Can you describe one scene that you feel illustrates the characteristics of the continuity style?

How is suspense generated in the extended scene in the train station? What techniques does the director use?

Can you identify one scene that is particularly remarkable for its use of either

1. camera technique (framing, shooting angle, movement, etc)
2. mise-en-scene (setting, costume/make-up, performance and lighting)
3. editing
4. sound (including music)

**Scene Analysis:** (00:26:24 to 00:26:59)

“At this point Francis is walking down the stairs from the police station and his path of light is painted directly onto the steps he walks on. Crazy patches of painted light adorn the walls. And if we reflect that this character is about to begin the logical and rational process of solving a murder mystery, the bizarrely irrational nature of his surroundings becomes even more striking.”

# Cinematography

## Three Point Lighting

**The classical Hollywood studio film is an example of three-point lighting – key, fill and back lights used in combination to light the subject. Three-point lighting is the most commonly used lighting scheme and it can enable us to understand how lighting affects one’s perception of a character or a setting.**

The **key light** is the main source of illumination, but if used alone it will leave shadows.

Another light is therefore required to fill in these areas of darkness and to soften the shadows the key light has cast. This has become known as the **fill light**, a secondary light source of slightly less intensity than the key light which is placed at eye level.

Yet even this combination of key and fill light must be supplemented further if a director is seeking to create a sense of depth. The third light source that provides the necessary depth is known as the **back light**, as it is placed above and behind the subject. Used on its own, the back light alone would create a silhouette of the subject. But the triple combination of key, fill and back lights, separates the subject from its environment and creates a feeling of depth.

Lighting techniques can be divided into high key or low key categories. A low-contrast ratio of key and fill light will result in an image of almost uniform brightness. This is termed **high-key lighting**. This is a standard, conventional lighting scheme employed in Hollywood genres such as the musical and the comedy.

A high-contrast ratio of key and fill light will result in **low-key lighting**, producing dark shadows and a night time effect, faces will often be bleached white against a black background. Genres such as horror and film noir employ low-key lighting for its atmospheric shadows and intense contrast of light and darkness.

Cinematographers use light and shade to direct the audience’s attention to a particular part of the filmic space. Lighting can often be used as a characteristic of the style of a whole film or over a number of scenes. The classic Hollywood film is usually characterised by a full lighting effect – high key lighting. This approach to lighting was developed in the early days of the studio system to ensure that all of the money spent on creating the image, designing the set, etc, could clearly be seen.

The use of low-key lighting to create shadows and atmospheric effects originated in German Expressionist cinema. These stylised techniques were incorporated into the Hollywood style of

lighting in the 1940s and 1950s in a series of films that later became collectively known as film noir. Many of these films were directed by German émigré directors who had worked on the original German Expressionist films.

**Deep focus cinematography** is a technique used to keep several planes of the shot in focus at the same time (foreground, medium ground, background). By allowing several actions to be filmed simultaneously, deep focus cinematography offers an alternative approach to the use of editing to present actions in a series of separate shots. More often than not, directors employ a combination of deep focus cinematography with extended long takes to enable them to dispense with editing. Some directors, such as Woody Allen, use these techniques in order to generate a better, more assured performance from the actors.

**Flying Saucer, Rock 'n Roll:** clip 3 (to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

This black and white sequence is an example of low-key lighting. The director employs this lighting style throughout the film to create a mood of threat and danger.

'Visions of Light' is a 90 minute documentary, available from the British Film Institute, that charts the history of cinematography. Many of the most accomplished light-cameramen in cinema history feature as well as key films such as Citizen Kane and the Godfather. The opening sequence provides a useful introduction to the art of cinematography. The documentary includes many examples of both high-key and low-key lighting. 'Visions of Light' also contains a short section devoted to the work of Greg Toland, the cinematographer on Citizen Kane. It would be useful to view this feature on Greg Toland in combination with the Citizen Kane clip listed below.

**Citizen Kane:** (00:17:58–00:21:55)

**This clip is not available to view on the website but is readily available to buy or rent from the usual outlets.**

In the work of Orson Welles, the long take and deep focus cinematography are combined to create stunning black and white compositions. Orson Welles is one of the most celebrated directors in film history and his first film, Citizen Kane (1941) has been consistently voted the best film ever made in successive polls by film critics and filmmakers. In this famous scene from Citizen Kane, Welles uses the long take with deep focus cinematography to execute a brilliantly expressive backward tracking camera move and keep three planes of the shot constantly in focus – the young boy in the background; his father in the medium ground; and his mother in the foreground. This technique is also known as composition in depth and for Welles it was an aesthetic in itself.

## The Influence of Rembrandt

**For cinematographers, as well as generations of art lovers, Rembrandt is the acknowledged master of light and shadow. His chiaroscuro technique has influenced some of the most important light-cameramen in cinema history. In her study of the relationship between painting and the cinema, 'Moving Pictures', Anne Hollander argues that without the paintings of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch master, many of the masterpieces of the cinema would not have been possible.**

**Clips mentioned in this section are not available to view on the website but are readily available to buy or rent from the usual outlets or from other mentioned sources.**

"The great Northern European painters", Hollander writes, "beginning in the 15th century, used light as if it was alive, inviting it and coaxing it to expand and create its own visions. Light and shade, the essential components of photographic and cinematographic art, were first given their true freedom by Rembrandt, their decisive enlargement into the imaginative world. Moving camera poetry was made possible by him. It was Rembrandt who single-handedly raised the stakes, and set the standard the camera would have to meet."

Anne Hollander points to paintings by Rembrandt such as the very late Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis or the 1646 Adoration of the Shepherds as examples of artwork which generates a deep emotional response in the viewer through the play of light and shadow: "Inspired lighting puts the atmosphere into motion, so that it overflows the space and reaches toward the viewer; meanwhile the figure style and compositional mode suggest continuous motion in a shifting frame. The result is moving drama without strong colour, vigorous action or surface detail."

Jack Cardiff and Gordon Willis, both Oscar-winning cinematographers, have spoken about the influence of Rembrandt on their approach to lighting. Jack Cardiff is the cinematographer of the Red Shoes and Black Narcissus. Gordon Willis is the cinematographer of the Godfather trilogy, All the Presidents Men, Kluge and Woody Allen films such as Annie Hall and Manhattan.

The BBC series Moving Pictures includes a 20 minute feature on the work of Jack Cardiff in which he discusses his love of painters such as Vermeer and Rembrandt: "I believe that if they had existed today, these painters would have been magnificent cameramen. Most of the painters used a front light which is 45 degrees high which went onto the face making a shadow under the nose. Here you can see a painting by Rembrandt that uses the same lighting as this photo-image of Marlene Deitrich."

**Black Narcissus: (01:16:00–(01:21:25)**

This unsettling film explores the dangers of both emotional restraint and unchecked passion. *Black Narcissus* is one of the most visually stunning technicolour films ever made. This scene is a famous example of Michael Powell's expressionist technique.

A 3 minute feature on Gordon Willis is included in the DVD of extras in the *Godfather* collection. Willis discusses his approach to period lighting in the *Godfather 2* and analyses a number of key scenes from *Godfather 1* and *2* that employ chiaroscuro techniques derived from his study of the paintings of Rembrandt.

## From German Expressionism to Film Noir

**The term Expressionism has a deep resonance in the history of the cinema. As Thomas Elsaesser explains in 'Weimar Cinema and After', it is not just a stylistic term for some of the films from the early 1920s, but "a generic term for most of the art cinema of the Weimar Republic in Germany, and beyond Germany, echoing down film history across the periods and genres, turning up in the description of Universal horror films of the 1930s and film noir of the 1940s."**

**Clips mentioned in this section are not available to view on the website but are readily available to buy or rent from the usual outlets or from other mentioned sources.**

The journey of German Expressionism from art cinema to the Hollywood mainstream began with the exile and expulsion of many film producers, directors, writers, actors, and music composers from Germany after Hitler came to power in January 1933. Settling in California, these German emigres had a significant artistic influence on Hollywood filmmaking. This influence was most clearly felt, Thomas Elsaesser writes, "in the existence of that famous 'Expressionist' genre, the film noir, combining the haunted screen of the early 1920s with the lure of the sinful metropolis Berlin of the late 1920s (the femme fatales, Louise Brooks and Marlene Dietrich) mixed with the angst of German emigres during the 1930s and 40s as they contemplated personal tragedies and national disaster."

The term film noir was first coined by French film critics in August 1946 to describe a daring and stylish new type of Hollywood crime thriller, films such as *The Maltese Falcon*, *Double Indemnity*, *Laura* and *Murder, My Sweet*. Standard histories describe film noir as a synthesis of hard-boiled crime fiction and German expressionism. The term is also associated, James Naremore writes in 'More Than Night: Film Noir and its contexts', "with certain visual and narrative traits, including low-key photography, images of wet city streets and romantic fascination with femme fatales." Most commentators locate the period of film noir as beginning in 1941 with *The Maltese Falcon* and

culminating in 1958 with Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil*. Some commentators believe that noir began much earlier and that it has never gone away.

The hard-boiled private eye stories of authors Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, James M. Cain and Cornell Woolrich provided the narrative source for many classic film noirs. John Huston began the trend of crime novel adaptations with his 1941 version of *The Maltese Falcon*. This was quickly followed by *Double Indemnity* (directed by German émigré, Billy Wilder who went on to write and direct *Sunset Boulevard*), *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Mildred Pierce* and the Raymond Chandler adaptations, *The Big Sleep* and *Murder, My Sweet*. Other classic film noirs that feature an investigative narrative structure include *The Killers*, *Out of the Past*, *The Big Heat*, *Kiss Me Deadly* and *the Big Combo*.

A direct connection between the crime films of the German Expressionist cinema and the American private eye movie is made in the work of Fritz Lang, the German émigré director who fled into exile in 1933. Lang brought the dark vision of criminality of his Expressionistic classics, *Dr Mabuse*, *the Gambler* and *M* to Hollywood and became one of the most prolific directors of the noir genre. His films include *The Woman in the Window*, *Scarlet Street*, *The Big Heat*, *The Blue Gardenia*, *The Secret Beyond the Door*, *While the City Sleeps* and *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*. Lang's special subject was the paranoid mentality. According to Martin Rubin, "No filmmaker has conveyed more powerfully than Lang a sense of overwhelming entrapment, of a world whose every circumstance, every twist and turning, every corner and corridor, seem to conspire against the individual and draw him or her more deeply into a spider's web."

It is the visual style of film noir, rather than story or character type, that is seen as its defining characteristic. The noir look was created by cinematographers, costume designers, art directors and production designers. Its enduring influence on all genres of Hollywood filmmaking can be seen today in films as diverse as *Bladerunner*, *Seven*, *Barton Fink* and *Sin City*.

The visual style of film noir, James Naremore writes, "is characterised by unbalanced and disturbing frame compositions, strong contrasts of light and dark, the prevalence of shadows and areas of darkness within the frame, the visual tension created by curious camera angles and so forth. Moreover, in film noir, these strained compositions and angles are not merely embellishments or rhetorical flourishes, but form the very substance of the film."

The noir world is corrupt, threatening and violent. French film critics saw the typical noir narrative as an existential nightmare from which the protagonist can never awaken. He is a doomed figure journeying through an underworld of crime and deception until the final betrayal by the femme fatale that he has fallen for. Expressionist lighting schemes and camera angles convey a sense of entrapment as the hero makes his way through an often labyrinthine plot.

In film noir, Expressionism found a worthy subject in the archetypal American anti-hero as film scholar Janey Place explains: "The visual style of film noir conveys the dominant mood (male

psychological instability and moral uncertainty, paranoia, claustrophobia, a sense of doom and hopelessness, etc) through expressive use of darkness: both real, in predominantly underlit and night-time scenes, and psychologically through shadows and claustrophobic compositions which overwhelm the character in exterior as well as interior settings. Characters (and we in the audience) are given little opportunity to orientate themselves to the threatening and shifting shadowy environment. Silhouettes, shadows, mirrors and reflections (generally darker than the reflected person) indicate his lack of both unity and control. They suggest a doppelganger, a dark ghost, alter ego or distorted side of man's personality that will emerge in the dark street at night to destroy him. The sexual, dangerous woman lives in this darkness, and is the psychological expression of his own internal fears of sexuality, and his need to control and repress it."

### **A Personal Journey through American Movies: (02:06:36 - 02:28:00)**

The BFI DVD 'A Personal Journey through American Movies', contains a 22 minute dedicated to film noir. Martin Scorsese discusses the work of key émigré directors such Fritz Lang

### **The American Cinema television series (available on video)**

The second volume in this series contains a 50 minute programme on film noir. A dedicated section of the programme explores noir lighting techniques.

## **Painting with Light: John Alton**

**John Alton is considered by many to be the greatest of all noir cinematographers. Alton perfected many of stylised camera and lighting techniques of film noir, including radical camera angles, wide-angle lenses, deep focus compositions, the baroque use of low-level cameras and a sharp depth of field. His groundbreaking work with director Anthony Mann on films such T-Men, Raw Deal and He Walked by Night is considered a benchmark in the noir genre.**

**Clips mentioned in this section are not available to view on the website but are readily available to buy or rent from the usual outlets or from other mentioned sources.**

John Alton also gained fame as the author of the seminal work on cinematography 'Painting with Light', which is still in print. In the book, Alton discusses the importance of 'Jimmy Valentine lighting' or the positioning of a key light directly below the faces of villains, so that they take on a grotesque look. There are examples of this lighting composition in his films with Anthony Mann and in the noir classic, *The Big Combo*. Another unique Alton visual trait is eerie, off-center compositions in which an isolated figure is briefly glimpsed at the extreme lower corner of a frame.

The BBC series **Moving Pictures** includes a 20 minute feature on the work of John Alton in which he discusses how he studied the paintings of Rembrandt in European art galleries. The feature explores Alton's black and white work with Anthony Mann as well as his celebrated colour photography on films such as *An American in Paris* and *Elmer Gantry*.

**A Personal Journey through American Movies:** (02:23:00–(02:25:22)

In the BFI DVD 'A Personal Journey through American Movies', Martin Scorsese discusses the work of John Alton in his exploration of the noir genre.

**T-Men (directed by Anthony Mann):** (00:34:32 - 00:35:00)

In this sequence, two men hold a conversation over a lampshade, and Alton photographs them from below the lamp, aiming straight upward at their chins and using an extreme wide-angle lens that makes them look grotesquely elongated.

## **Mise-en-scene and Tim Burton**

### **Introducing Mise-en-scene**

**The meaning of this term of French origin (pronounced “meez-on-sen”) is “put into the scene” and was first used in theatre in the direction of stage plays.**

**In the context of the moving image, it describes both the content of what is filmed and the way in which it has been filmed and signifies the director’s control over what appears in the film frame. The use of camera is regarded by some as one aspect of mise-en-scene but we have devoted a separate section and lesson to it on this site. Similarly, we will deal in detail with cinematography.**

When studying a film’s Mise-En-Scene the key elements to look at are:

Setting & Props

Costume, Hair and Make-Up

Movement, Positioning and Performance

Lighting and Cinematography

Within the context of the Classical Hollywood style, each of the above aspects must be considered in relation to its significance and function with regards to characterisation and narrative.

#### **Setting and Props**

Settings used in films are rarely just backgrounds but are integral to creating atmosphere and building narrative within a film. In some cases a particular location or building can even be regarded as a character within the film itself. Famous examples of this feature in Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968) and The Shining (1980).

Prop is a term given to objects which are seen and used within the world of a film (originally referring to the “properties” of characters). Props, like settings, also contribute significantly to characterisation and atmosphere but also form an integral part in the action of the film. Props can often play a very important role in the cause-effect logic of a film’s narrative. They may also carry symbolic meaning. An example of such symbolism might be the famous last dying word of Charles Foster Kane in Citizen Kane (1941) and what it refers to taken in the context of his great wealth of material possessions.

## **Costume and Make-Up**

Costume and make-up play a large part in mise-en-scene because they can give you a very immediate sense not only of a character's personality but also of their status in the film and how they function within the world around them. They also give you an instant idea of what period a film is set in and the culture it is centred around.

## **Movement, Positioning and Performance**

The positioning and movement of characters within a frame is also very significant for both characterisation and narrative within a film. A filmmaker can successfully draw an audience's attention to an important character merely through placing them in the foreground of the frame. Likewise placing a moving body in a stationary background or vice versa has the same effect. Positioning can also be used to indicate relationships between people; for example, creating physical distance between two characters in a frame can indicate emotional distance that they might be experiencing at that point in the film.

Performance in film includes an actor's facial expressions and body language. With film's ability to create a close-up of an actor's face, for example, there is a much wider and subtler range of emotions and feelings that can be conveyed and expressed through the medium by means of performance. Eyes give particularly important signals when trying to read someone's expression. Likewise movement and the way in which actors hold and move their bodies shows how they are thinking and feeling.

**Lighting and Cinematography (see Lesson on Cinematography, painting and film noir)**

## **The Influence of German Expressionism: Tim Burton**

**Tim Burton is the visionary director of Beetlejuice, Edward Scissorhands, Ed Wood, Sleepy Hollow and the first two Batman movies. Burton began his film career as an animator for Disney Studios where he made the animated short film, Vincent in 1982. The horror characters and taste for the macabre that are the hallmark of Burton's later feature films were already present in his early animated short films, Vincent and Frankenweenie (1985).**

**Clips mentioned in this section are not available to view on the website but are readily available to buy or rent from the usual outlets**

As a Hollywood director, Burton is a flamboyant visual stylist who creates fantasy landscapes and characters from a wealth of artistic styles and influences, including German Expressionism. Drawing on a wide range of references spanning decades of the history of film and architecture, Tim Burton operates at the forefront of contemporary culture.

**Beetlejuice (1988) The world of spirits:** (00:32:06 to 00:32:52)

This room within the world of spirits features the distorted perspectives of Expressionism, with bizarre painted backdrops clearly reminiscent of *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*.

**Batman Returns (1992) Gotham City:** (00:06:50 to 00:07:50)

The wintry mise-en-scene in *Batman Returns* is like the inside of a giant snowstorm, a fairytale landscape where it is snowing softly. The urban design of Gotham City closely resembles a dream (or nightmare) landscape. The cityscape of *Batman Returns* can be read as a reflection of the schizophrenia of the characters within it. Bo Welch, *Batman Returns*' production designer, was able to borrow from a great variety of architectural styles, from Expressionism and Cubism to Fascist Modernity. Fragments of these styles, reflecting in their variety the characters themselves, are to be encountered everywhere.

**Batman Returns (1992) The Birth of Catwoman:** (00:22:13 to 00:32:25)

While the rich and powerful like Max Shreck (Christopher Walken), are seen in impressive surroundings – monumental buildings with ornaments in front of them reminiscent of Nazi sculpture – the ordinary people, represented by Selina Kyle (Michelle Pfeiffer), live in an untidy environment, overloaded with scenery. The brilliantly realised barbie-like pop design of Selina's home reflects her dreams of fairytale romance. As she destroys her childhood innocence in a fit of hysteria and transforms herself into Catwoman, Tim Burton once again brings the colourful and the gothic into dramatic confrontation – as in *Edward Scissorhands*.

**Batman Returns (1992) In the Penguin's lair:** (00:16:47 to 00:17:50)

The Penguin and his carnival of grotesques have stepped straight from *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*. The Penguin's home in a cathedral-like cave under a deserted park called Arctic World, is furnished with elegantly curved Gothic arches and dark vaults. There is a touch of Art Deco in Max Shreck's head office and some hi-tech design in Selina Kyle's pink room.

**The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993) Opening Montage Sequence:** (00:01:00 to 00:02:40)

The entire design of this animated film is in keeping with Burton's predilection for the distorted perspectives of Expressionist silent films, as indispensable in this instance as the stylistic recourse to the Universal horror films of the 30s and 40s. Almost all the inhabitants of Halloween Town are derived from Burton's singular cabinet of curiosities, from his unmistakable iconography, which is added to and raided again in his later work.

The special edition DVD of the film contains a feature on the conceptual art, storyboards and character designs which demonstrate the strong influence of German Expressionism.

## Studying Edward Scissorhands

**Tim Burton really unleashed his imagination for the first time when he made the pop fairytale Edward Scissorhands in 1990. Just as Burton's success is associated with Batman, his artistic reputation is inextricably linked to Edward Scissorhands. Modern narratives are often updated versions of timeless stories. Edward Scissorhands adapts the structure and conventions of the European fairytale to a contemporary American, suburban setting.**

**Clips mentioned in this section are not available to view on the website but are readily available to buy or rent from the usual outlets.**

The film can be read as a dark, romantic fable for adults, another take on the disparity between the individual and society, on the unique nature of one single character and the horror of conformity. The Frankenstein story provides the model here.

'A monster with a heart' was one of the central themes of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, with an emphasis on sympathy, and intellectual and emotional identification particularly characteristic of English Romanticism. Edward Scissorhands takes up this tradition in so far as the creature becomes an object of sympathy and makes the world around him appear monstrous in comparison with his own innate goodness.

Burton sets his story in a contemporary American suburb. He has given each generation represented in Edward Scissorhands its own system of symbolic shorthand representing the different eras they grew up in, different times associated with different tastes, each expressing a particular aesthetic. The parents generation is characterised by familiar 50s and 60s icons; the

conformist, consumer-led boom of those years represented by lava lamps, functional interiors and social rituals like the barbecue.

The younger generation wears the insignia of the 80s: jeans, T-shirts and the dream of fast money symbolised by a Landrover decorated with flames, all very reminiscent of the familiar aesthetics of Slacker films. Ultimately Edward represents two apparently disparate cultures. His clothes – a tight black leather suit with metal accessories – look like the rebellious uniform of punk, whose ‘no future’ attitude and rejection of bourgeois society were actually directly descended from the self-isolation and self-obsession of the Romantics as embodied in our lonely, misunderstood hero.

Extract from ‘Edward Scissorhands Study Guide.’ Reproduced with kind permission of the Film Institute of Ireland.

**Edward Scissorhands (1990) The town and the mansion: (00:05:06 to 00:14:28)**

There are two distinct locations in the film: Edward’s home in the mansion on the hill and the town which it overlooks. While they are very different places, they are similar in the exaggerated fashion in which each is presented. The gothic style mansion with its forbidding exterior, decorated by monstrous stone carvings, and its huge cavernous interior, lit only by long spindly windows, is the archetypal haunted house of the fairytale or Hammer horror. It is also reminiscent of many of the films sets of German Expressionism.

By contrast the town at the foot of the hill is a pretty, peaceful, traditionally ordered society (men go to work each day, women are housewives) as represented in American TV shows of the 1960s such as the Brady Bunch and Bewitched.

The contrast between the two locations is established in this sequence. The lush, colourful landscaped garden of the inventor’s castle filled with flowers contrasts greatly with the flat unimaginative lawns which form a neat little pattern in the town below. The film set for the mansion is very dramatic, with windows and arches all slightly askew, adding to the feeling that not everything is as it should be. Peg, the Avon Lady’s entrance to the house is framed by a long shot which shows her suddenly engulfed by a huge bare interior. However, her vulnerability is counteracted by her inappropriate comments while exploring this chilling environment; “This is some huge house. Thank goodness for those aerobics classes.” The cheery lilac figure, climbing the stairs of a huge gothic house, is completely out of place. The music, which has been warning us of imminent danger, reaches a climax as Peg tells the dark approaching figure: “I’m Peg Boggs..your local Avon representative.”

It is only when Edward emerges from the dark that Peg feels afraid, but is soon reassured when he speaks. The music changes sharply at this point into something a little more melancholic as a stunned Peg looks at Edward’s hands and asks him what has happened. Again the mood quickly changes to optimism as she begins to heal the cuts on his face.

**Edward Scissorhands (1990) The Barbecue Scene:** (00:34:03 to 00:34:57)

**Edward Scissorhands (1990) The Television Interview:** (00:52:25 to 00:54:26)

**Edward Scissorhands (1990) The Diner Scene:** (00:57:43 to 00:58:47)

These three sequences illustrate the bold use of primary colours in Tim Burton's mise-en-scene. The vibrant colour scheme conveys the emotional excess and unstable behaviour of the inhabitants of the town. The contrast with Edward's gothic punk style of clothing, hairstyle and make-up is striking and it marks him out as an outsider – a fish out of water.

**Edward Scissorhands (1990) The Ice Sculpture:** (01:12:45 to 01:14:20)

In Edward Scissorhands, as in many German Expressionist films, realism is rejected in favour of artificiality which adds to the fairytale quality of the film. In this scene, the dream-like atmosphere of a romantic fairytale is evoked by the strong use of the colour white; the slow motion cinematography of the falling snowflakes (like a glass snowball); and the haunting music of composer Danny Elfman. Elfman has written the score for every Tim Burton film and his music perfectly expresses the kind fantasy world with menacing undertones that Burton aims to create in his work.

**Edward Scissorhands (1990) The Death of the Inventor:** (01:21:27 to 01:23:06)

In this sequence, Tim Burton's mise-en-scene brilliantly conveys the strange world of the inventor that we are familiar with from the horror genre. However, the director's intention is to subvert genre expectations. For this dark gothic interior, drained of life and colour, does not house an evil force or wicked character.

## Worksheet

**Tim Burton has a very distinctive style of filmmaking. Consider the use of the different elements of mise-en-scene in his films: Edward Scissorhands, Batman Returns, The Nightmare before Christmas and Beetlejuice.**

**Settings/Set design. How is it used in the films?**

**Costume/Make-up. How is it used in the films?**

**Colour. How is it used in the films?**

**Acting/Performance. How is it used in the films?**

**Lighting/Cinematography. How is it used in the films?**

# Camera Techniques

## Camera Framing

Camera framing refers to three key areas:

Shot Type

Camera Positioning

Camera Angle

Shot Type - types of shot refer to the positioning and distance between the camera and its subject. The main types of shot include:

Long shot

Medium shot

Medium close-up

Close-up

Shot extremes include extreme close-up and extreme long shot

Some of the clips mentioned in this section are not available to view on the website but are readily available to buy or rent from the usual outlets.

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Medium close-up

Close-up

Shot extremes include extreme close-up and extreme long shot

**Mortice 7:** (01:05 to 01:10) (to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

The film begins with a series of close-ups of bolts, locks and door bells inter-cut with the title MORTICE immediately establishing the mood of threat and menace that will grow stronger as the film progresses.

**Do Armed Robbers Have Love Affairs:** clip 6 (to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

The final shot of the film is an extreme close-up of the human eye.

**The Third Man (1949):** (00:12:40 to 00:15:02)

In Film Art by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (page 219-220), the authors use a scene from The Third Man to illustrate these different shot sizes from long shot to close-up.

Camera Positioning - In addition to considering framing in terms of shot type, it is also important to consider shots in relation to their point of view and perspective within the scene. Where is the camera positioned within the scene?

Camera Angle – A final, important consideration in relation to camera framing is shot angle. Camera angle can play an important part in a film's narration strategy (providing an omniscient bird's eye view of events, for example). It can also contribute to characterisation (in increasing a sense of dominance or inferiority, for example). The two main types of angle are:

High Angle

Low Angle

**Mortice 6:** (01:05 to 01:10)

In this high angle shot from Mortice the positioning of the camera makes the characters seem smaller and more vulnerable.

**Mortice 2:** (02:53 to 03:20)

Low Angles in this clip from the same film the positioning of the camera creates a sense of unease and suggests that all is not well.

**Mortice 3**

An unconventional low angle camera perspective from inside the toilet sets up a moment of grotesque humour.

# Camera Movement

The main types of camera movement that are used in film are:

- **Panning**
- **Tilting**
- **Crane**
- **Tracking**
- **Zooming**

**Panning** – a panning shot is where the camera moves slowly across from side to side from a fixed axis.

Some of the clips mentioned in this section are not available to view on the website but are readily available to buy or rent from the usual outlets.

**Rules of Golf 1:** (01:18 to 01:32) (to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

In this clip we see each of the young golfers teeing off in a quick panning shot.

**Rear Window (1954):** (00:01:29 to 00:04:00) In a series of panning shots director Alfred Hitchcock shows us first the view outside the rear of our hero's apartment before using the same camera technique to show us the interior of the central character's apartment. Before a line of dialogue is even spoken he's provided us with a wealth of information about the central character and his world.

**The Untouchables (1987):** (00:48:16 to 00:50:12)

In a series of panning shots from left to right and back again, Elliot Ness watches the movement of the gangsters towards the bridge

**Tilting** – a tilt shot is where the camera moves up and down from a fixed axis.

**Crane** – a crane shot is where the camera, mounted on crane, moves around at a distance above ground level.

The BBC series Moving Pictures contains a special feature on the expressive use of the crane shot in the history of cinema featuring interviews with directors such as John Carpenter and Barry Sonnenfeld.

**Tracking** – a tracking shot is where the camera follows the action, moving along tracks laid for that purpose, often pulling backwards from a scene. In some cases, a crane is used to make it possible to move the camera vertically and horizontally at the same time.

Two examples of tracking camera movement from 'Do Armed Robbers Have Love Affairs?' that create a feeling of entrapment as two bank robbers wait in their car before outside a bank.

**Do Armed Robbers Have Love Affairs:** clip 1(to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

**Do Armed Robbers Have Love Affairs:** clip 2(to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

**Do Armed Robbers Have Love Affairs:** clip 3(to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

These three short forward tracking shots closing in on the two characters from different sides of the car powerfully convey a mood of entrapment. There is a tangible feeling of metaphorical walls closing in on the bank robbers as the time nears when they must initiate the bank robbery.

**Rules of Golf:** clip 2 (to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

In this clip we see a tracking shot as our narrator is wheeled through a hospital corridor on a gurney. The fast tracking shot reflects the urgent pace of the scene.

**Rules of Golf:** clip 3 (to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

In this clip a backward moving tracking shot leaves the character stranded in space.

**Paths of Glory** (1957) (00:06:00 to 00:07:30)

In this sequence from legendary director Stanley Kubrick's anti-war classic the director uses a 90 second long continuous tracking shot to follow a visiting general as he visits a frontline trench during World War One.

**Twelve Monkeys (1995):** (00:20:26 to 00:22:00) (DVD Chapter 4)

This sequence begins with a tracking shot as we move around the room in which the main character is being questioned by a psychiatric review board. The LOW ANGLE of this first shot helps emphasise the main character's helplessness by making him seem smaller within the frame. The slow movement of the tracking motion helps establish the clinical mood of the setting.

**Tracking shots using a crane:**

**Once Upon a Time in the West (1968):** (00:25:26 to 00: 27:18)

As a woman at a train station in a frontier era town waits for someone the camera tracks in front of her as she walks to the Station Office to ask for directions before Craning upwards to reveal the whole town.

**Touch of Evil (1958):** (00:00:56 to 00:04:06)

In a bravura continuous mobile crane shot we begin with a close up of hands planting a bomb in a car before pulling back and travelling above and through the streets of a small town on the Mexican American border.

**Zooming** – a zoom shot is similar to a tracking shot in that it is possible to zoom in (giving the impression of moving forwards) and out (giving the impression of moving backwards). In the zoom, however the camera itself remains still and so the effect is a little different. A zoom enlarges or decreases the size of its subject. This can increase or decrease the subject's degree of importance, for example.

**Mortice:** clip 5 (to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

In this clip a zoom shot is used to convey shock and horror as the film's heroine makes a disturbing discovery.

**Jaws (1975):** (00:16:00 to 00:16:50)

In this suspenseful sequence from Spielberg's first hit, the director uses a dynamic zoom to convey the hero's stunned and horrified reaction to a shark attack.

**Spider-Man2 (2004):** (01:26:57 to 01:27:48)

A series of very fast camera zooms accompanied with ominous sound effects announce the arrival of super-villain, Doctor Octopus.

## Camera Technique and Technology

**Some of the clips mentioned in this section are not available to view on the website but are readily available to buy or rent from the usual outlets.**

The Steadicam Shot – The invention of the Steadicam in the late 1970s has enabled directors precise control of camera movement bringing a virtuosity and sweeping grandeur to tracking camera movement never before experienced in the cinema Famous examples of the expressive use of the steadicam occur in the work of directors Stanley Kubrick and Martin Scorsese.

**The Shining (1980):** (00:41:11 to 00:41:50)

Stanley Kubrick employed a low angle steadicam to place us in the exact perspective of a young boy as he drives his tricycle through the corridors of the haunted Overlook hotel.

**Goodfellas (1990):** (00:30:15 to 00:33:09)

In this celebrated shot, Scorsese used the steadicam in an extended long take to follow the young couple as they move through the corridors of the nightclub. The camera movement is majestic and exhilarating perfectly communicating the glamour, excitement and romantic feeling of the young protagonist as he sweeps his girlfriend of her feet.

**Panic Room (2002):** (00:15:02 to 00:17:40)

A long take using a highly mobile tracking camera to explore the interior space of the large house – a shot achieved through digital special effects. This is the scene early in the film where the three burglars arrive at what they think is an empty house, unaware that Jodie Foster and her daughter have just moved in.

Hand-held Camera Technique – the jerky, hand-held camera made famous by the documentary filmmakers of Direct Cinema or Cinema Verite is the precise opposite of the Steadicam. Many contemporary directors use a hand-held camera to generate various emotional and psychological effects such as a greater feeling of realism and immediacy, a restless energy, or a feeling of events spinning out of control

**The Blair Witch Project (1999):** (00:45:23 to 00:16:50)

This film is photographed in documentary style as the protagonists are actually making a documentary about a local folk legend. A hand-held camera is used throughout to create the feeling that the story is 'real'. The black and white photography, jerky movement and off-kilter framing of the camera is very effective at communicating the terror of the unknown threat that menaces the main characters as they explore the dark woods.

**Point Break (1991):** (01:04:33 to 01:07:30)

The speed, violence and dramatic force of the bank robbery is communicated by the fast-moving hand-held camera movements. A hand-held camera is also employed during parts of the daring chase sequence along with Point of View camera to place us in the perspective of the protagonist and communicate his adrenalin-fuelled state.

### **Camera speed**

Film's ability to manipulate time is one of its most distinctive qualities. Slow and Fast Motion cinematography are achieved by varying the speed of the camera during filming. Directors can use camera speed for a variety of expressive purposes. Action movies will often employ slow motion to

extend the feeling of terror or suspense in key scenes of high drama and emotion. The director Sam Peckinpah employed slow motion to stunning effect in his western *The Wild Bunch* and has inspired contemporary directors such as John Woo to make frequent use of this technique in high octane action movies such as *Face Off*.

### **Terminator 2: Judgement Day (1991)**

The moment where Sarah Connor comes face to face with her greatest fear is extended by the use of slow motion.

### **Panic Room (2002):** (00:54:58 to 00:56:40)

The race against time is one of the most common sequences of the action genre. When Jodie Foster decides to run out of the Panic Room to get her mobile phone to call for help, she has only seconds before the three burglars (who are on the bottom floor of the house) realise that she has left the room. The director stretches time and wracks up the suspense as we wonder will she make it back into the safety of the Panic Room in time?

### **Face/Off (1997):** (01:49:08 to 01:51:54)

This is the climatic scene of the film when the final showdown takes place between the hero and the villain (who have actually swapped faces). The sequence has an operatic quality created by the slow motion, the music soundtrack and the editing together of evocative shots (i.e. the close-up on the crucifix).

### **Do Armed Robbers Have Love Affairs:** clip 5 (to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

In this the final sequence of the film, the director's uses slow motion to extend the climax and convey the hopelessness of the two men's predicament as it becomes clear that they have walked into a trap – a iconic moment in the history of cinema made famous by the Western, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*.

### **Rules of Golf:** clip 4 (to view this clip go to 'archive' section)

The speeded up, fast paced moving camera of the film's opening sequence races through the city. Cut to a pumping musical score, the speeding camera conveys a sense of exhilaration and excitement – the energy rush experienced by joyriders, the subject of the film.

## Editing

### Editing: An Introduction

**On its most basic level, editing is simply the joining together of individual shots to create visual sequences.**

**There are different types of editing joins that can be used between shots, and each can serve a different purpose or function within a narrative:**

The most common means of joining two shots together is the **cut**. In traditional filmmaking this involves literally trimming film with a sharp edge or razor and splicing shots together with tape or adhesive cement. Even though most editing is now carried out digitally and doesn't actually involve the physical slicing of film the term "cut" is still used. Fittingly, most digital editing systems use razor or scissor icons to represent cutting.

a **fade-out** darkens the end of a shot, turning it into black.

a **fade-in**, by contrast, lightens a shot from black

a **dissolve** briefly overlaps shots by superimposing the end of one shot onto the beginning of another

#### **Aliens (1986)**

In an early scene in this sci-fi horror film a shot showing the face of our heroine Sigourney Weaver asleep in suspended animation dissolves to a shot of planet Earth. The images overlap, subtly suggesting her links with Earth and deliberately evoking associations with female religious icons like the Madonna.

a **wipe** switches from one shot to a second shot by moving a boundary line across the screen.

*Once a staple of 1930's and 40's serials, including the Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon series, these are used constantly through the STAR WARS films as a means of paying homage to that era. Wipes are also featured prominently in Classic Hollywood westerns and in the Samurai films of Akira Kurosawa including Yojimbo and The Seven Samurai.*

As already mentioned in the introduction to **Classical Hollywood Style**, the main editing technique to have evolved in narrative or story-based film is **Continuity Editing**, a core component of the Continuity or Classical Hollywood Style.

The basic purpose of Continuity Editing is to arrange shots together so they tell a story in a clear and easily understandable way. If footage is edited correctly in this style it should be seamless and we will too be focused on the story itself to notice the editing. That's why this editing style is often called "invisible editing."

The role of the editor is to take a selection of different footage filmed earlier, and to weave it together, creating an apparently seamless narrative, complete with the illusion of space and time. By sticking to a number of key principles, continuity editing succeeds in creating the *appearance* of continuous action, manipulating your viewing expectations and emotions, and ideally positioning you the viewer so that you become involved and engaged in the story.

The key techniques and principles used in Continuity Editing are:

the 180 Degree Rule / Axis of Action

the Eyeline Match

Shot-Reverse-Shot

Point of view Cutting

the Match on Action

Directional Continuity

Cross or Inter-Cutting

**180 Degree Rule / Axis of Action** – We've already mentioned that the role of continuity is to create a sense of unity in terms of space and time so that you as a viewer become fully involved in the story on a number of emotional levels. This also involves "positioning" you and giving you the best possible view of the action. If you go to the theatre, the action takes place on a stage space surrounded by three walls. You, as a member of the audience are, in a sense, looking through an invisible fourth wall. Borrowing the same idea, the assumption in film is that shots will be filmed and cut together so that you, the audience, will always be on the same side of the story's action – occupying the position of that invisible fourth wall. This creates an imaginary "180 degree axis of action" which acts as an invisible boundary for the direction of on-screen movements, character positions and glances in a scene and which the camera should not go beyond.

### **Stage Coach**

Sometimes it is easiest to illustrate a rule by showing an example of where it has been broken. In the clip above, the camera is initially positioned on one side of the coach. It is then suddenly positioned on the opposite side. Using normal conventions, the camera's position would have moved around

the coach in stages, for example rather than immediately being positioned on the opposite side of the coach, it might have been positioned behind or in front of the coach first, thus keeping the audience's sense of orientation within the space of the scene. However, breaking conventions can and does often create new techniques which can often develop specific functions of their own. In this particular instance, the breaking of convention, though possibly an oversight, can be seen as actually heightening the tension of the scene by subconsciously disorienting the audience.

**Eyeline Match** – In the eyeline match, a character in one shot looks over at something that is off-screen (or out of the frame) and a cut to the next shot reveals the object the character is looking at. The line of the character's glance has therefore "matched" the two separate shots together, creating a sense of coherence and spatial orientation. The point of view of you, the viewer, is successfully linked to the point of view of the main character, again increasing your identification with him/her and your emotional involvement in the film's action.

**Shot-Reverse-Shot** – This is a classical device which can be used in a number of ways, but most often is seen in basic dialogue sequences. The dialogue begins with a two-shot of the participants in the scene. The cutting pattern then starts as a series of over-the-shoulder shots from one participant to the other.

**Manhunter** (1986) (00:21:32 to 00:26:29)

*A tense conversation between an incarcerated killer and the lawman who captured him plays out in **shot-reverse-shot**. Director Michael Mann ensures that the bars separating the two occupy the same space in each shot, deliberately blurring the lines between visitor and prisoner and suggesting a disturbing similarity between the two.*

**Point of view cutting** - this is a variant of the eyeline match. The structure is the same: a character looks off screen – we then cut to the object the character is looking at. However, what distinguishes point of view cutting is that the object is shown from the character's optical vantage point – i.e. directly through the character's eyes. (So if the character is drunk, for example, this might mean that the shot is deliberately out of focus with the camera moving from side to side – a rolling shot). This particular technique is even more powerful in terms of how effectively it places the audience in the position of the main character.

**Match on Action** – in the match on action cut, the cut from one shot to another occurs when an action is being performed, in which the action is continued from one shot to the next. It's this continuity of the same action across the cut which creates coherence and orientation, helping you the viewer find your bearings.

**Directional Continuity** - this refers to the movements of characters/objects across the frame. For example, if a character exits the shot from the right of the screen, he should enter the next shot from the left of the screen, moving in the same direction.

**The Matrix** (1999) (01:54:10 to 0:1:55:30)

As our hero Neo faces his adversary Agent Smith for a climactic showdown they face each other directly on a subway train platform station. Watch how the scattered newspapers sent flying by the recently passed train travel from left to right from Smith's side and, in a perfect match cut, from right to left on Neo's side. The fight sequence which ensues fully adheres to the rules of Directional Continuity.

**Cross or Inter-Cutting** – this technique is a primary narrative device and pieces together sequences that occur at the same time but in different places in order to increase narrative tension. The literary equivalent of this device is simple narrative transition such as “meanwhile” or “in another part of town”. Some films borrow these verbal clues by using inter-titles or voice-over narration.

## Soviet Montage

**The Soviet filmmakers who emerged in the aftermath of the 1917 October revolution in Russia were part of an artistic avant-garde committed to innovation and experimentation and the creation of new artistic practices. Directors Sergei Eisenstein and V. I. Podovkin were part of the formalist tradition in film history. These Russian directors believed that editing was the foundation of film art and they set out to shatter the illusionistic storytelling and seamless continuity cultivated by Classical Hollywood. The pattern of editing established by Hollywood pioneer D.W. Griffith (1915) in his films *The Birth of A Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1919) taught these filmmakers how different shots sizes and camera angles could be combined together in the editing suite with powerful narrative force. The Soviet filmmakers wished to harness the power of cinema as a tool of education and propaganda and they therefore wished to go much further than simply entertaining audiences with spectacle and historical romance.**

The medium of film could be used to shock, excite and disturb a cinema audience. In the three films he made in the 1920s about the revolutionary struggle of the Russian masses – *Strike*, *Battleship Potemkin* and *October* - Eisenstein pushed the boundaries of this new medium with his radical approach to film editing (known as montage). In the *Odessa Steps* sequence of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), the director created one of the most influential sequences in cinema history. *Battleship Potemkin* and Eisenstein's theory of montage has inspired directors such as Alfred Hitchcock

(Psycho) Stephen Spielberg (Schindler's List), Martin Scorsese (Raging Bull) and Brian De Palma (The Untouchables).

As Marilyn Fabe explains: "Eisenstein held that proper film continuity should not proceed smoothly, but through a series of shocks. Whenever possible, he tried to create some kind of visual conflict or discontinuity between two shots with the goal of creating a jolt in the spectator's psyche. The visual explosions on the screen were intended to create a continual source of stimulants or shocks to keep the audience wide awake." "The dynamics of montage serve as impulses driving forward the total film", Eisenstein wrote.

For Eisenstein conflict was created by the juxtaposition of shots of high visual contrast. In *Battleship Potemkin*, An extreme long shot of fleeing crowds cuts immediately to an extreme close-up of the legs of a man about to fall down the steps. Directional continuity is also disrupted. A shot of the crowd fleeing towards the left of the screen is followed by an image of the crowd fleeing in the opposite direction. Similarly shot composition also created visual dissonance and disunity. A shot emphasising vertical movement down the vast Odessa steps cuts to a shot composed along horizontal lines. Diagonal lines from the left are juxtaposed with diagonal lines from the right.

The dramatic impact of Soviet Montage broke all the rules of the smooth, invisible editing of the Classical Hollywood Style. A style of filmmaking that evolved to immerse the audience in a story and disguise technique was turned upside down in order to create the opposite emotional effect – to bring the audience to the edge of their seat, and in the case of the Odessa Steps sequence, to push the viewer towards a feeling of vertigo. As Marilyn Fabe points out, the time-bending techniques of Soviet Montage pushed the cinema beyond the realism of Hollywood into new psychological territory. "Eisenstein was not striving to give us a literal, realistic picture of the massacre on the steps. Through his innovative, time-expanding film technique, he conveys the subjective reality of what it would feel like to be trapped in a traumatic situation that seemingly goes on forever. In the Odessa Steps sequence Eisenstein creates the time-space continuum of a nightmare from which there is no waking."

### **Battleship Potemkin (1925): Odessa steps sequence (00:49:00-00:55:43)**

The average film in 1925 was 90 minutes long and had around 600 shots. At only 80 minutes long, *Battleship Potemkin* contains 1346 shots, some of them only a few frames long, fractions of a second. "Eisenstein's theory of montage was built around the collision and conflict of images and ideas." (Renny Bartlett)

### **Art that Shook the World**

*Battleship Potemkin* is the subject of a 50 minute documentary in the BBC series *Art That Shook the World*. The presenter, Renny Bartlett, examines the background to the making of the film and its reception at the time. The programme considers the enduring influence of Soviet Montage and the

Odessa Steps sequence, featuring interviews with contemporary directors such as Sally Potter and Ken Russell. Sally Potter comments: "With hindsight a lot of things were invented for the film that people think they are inventing now – such as a strapping a camera to the body and running down a flight of steps; a dolly shot; cutting from a wide to an extreme close-up; lots of jumps and a sense of movement through time as well as through space.'

### **Montage and Art**

The Open University regularly screen a 30 minute programme on Soviet Montage on BBC 2 as part of cultural studies. The programme discusses the aesthetic of montage as it was applied by the Russian avant-garde to graphic art, photography and film. Scenes from Eisenstein's films Strike and October are featured as well as extracts from the ground breaking experimental documentary, Man With A Movie Camera, directed by V. I. Podovkin

### **The Untouchables (1987): (01:23:00 to 01:32:00)**

In his big screen remake of the television series The Untouchables, director Brian De Palma uses a key image of the Odessa Steps sequence – a baby carriage hurtling down the steps – as the centre-piece of the film's climatic shoot out between the FBI and the gangsters. This 9 minute suspense sequence is worthy of close study for its stylish use of slow motion, high and low camera angles, tracking camera movements, close-ups of faces juxtaposed with long shots of the entire scene, etc. It is a brilliant illustration of how the technique of editing can manipulate time.

## **The Expressive use of Camera and Editing Technique**

**The films of Martin Scorsese offer an important case study of how a filmmaker can employ a wide range of often contrasting camera techniques for expressive effect. Two of the Scorsese's films are particularly remarkable for the director's radical camera and editing technique.**

### **Goodfellas (1990)**

Strongly influenced by the visual style of the French New Wave of the 1960s, this gangster film uses camera and editing techniques such as THE JUMP CUT, SLOW MOTION and the FREEZE FRAME. Film Critic Michael Wilmington described Goodfellas as "a fantastic bravura display. Technically, its staggering: a feast of virtuoso Steadicam tracking shots, ironically pell-mell editing, and a mix of baroque visual satire, off-key realism, and brilliant, scabrous dialogue that elevates gutter badinage to the high verbal style of a Jacobean drama or thirties screwball comedy. Tying it all together is a barrage of period rock songs and an ingeniously shifting camera style that evokes each decade

from the fifties to the eighties for us." The BBC series Moving Pictures contains a 20 minute feature on the making of the film with on the set interviews with all the key contributors to the film, including the screenwriter, the production designer, the cinematographer, the editor and the director himself.

### **Raging Bull (1990)**

Martin Scorsese's Raging Bull uses expressive camera movements and varying camera speeds to place the audience in the subjective perspective of a boxer trading and receiving punches in the ring. In a special feature on the DVD, editor Thelma Schoonmaker (who won an Oscar for her work on the film) discusses how the director employed a variety of different camera speeds in several of the key fight scenes.