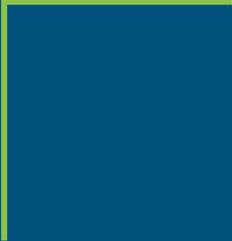


Film Theory

Theoretical Approaches to the
Production or Interpretation of Films

Written by Grade 11 students at Lower Canada College, Montreal, Canada



Realism

Film Theory By Zack



What is Realism?



This collection of the Lumiere Brothers first movies, which were Realist, allowed people to see the world from the perspective of the spectator.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nj0vEO4Q6s>

- Showing the actual World
- Does not mean it shows the actual world, but try to make it look like it
- Propaganda
- World from different views
- Bias Views made to look normal
- Started by The Lumiere Brothers



Summary

These films often don't build any sets



They use real life people (SO not gorgeous models, to make everything look as real as possible)

The point is to show how the world looks:

Primary Source:

<http://tonymckibbin.com/course-notes/cinema-realism>

In the great train robbery, by Edwin Porter, spectators get a glimpse at the horrors of train robberies in a real life way.



Magical Realism

Making it look real

In *A Trip To The Moon*, By Melies, Magical Realism is the theory used to make the film come to life. While on the moon, the magicians encounter aliens, this is all made to look real with the use of special effects



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FrdVdKlxUk

Propaganda

A Film will often use bias views, Propaganda to make something look as if it were real and normal. This is an aspect of Realism. When used correctly, Realism can be used to influence an audience into believe what they're watching is real.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u52sOb_hFuE



In *Moscow Strikes Back*, the spectators are forced to see that Moscow is a strong and independent nation that can stop at nothing to win. The film takes on a propaganda side which inevitably forces the viewer to see Moscow from an almost heroic perspective.



Realist Film Theory

The beginning

Realism began by the Lumiere documentaries which is all about showing the real world. It doesn't mean they show the whole world but they to make it look like they do.

About realist films and documentary example

Most realist films can be on people and their everyday lives so for example a realist film can be a documentary about sport teams, musicians or con spiritual figures. So for example a documentary that can be considered a realist film is 24/7 road to the winter classic, this documentary follows two hockey teams that are going to face each other in the winter classic. There are no professional actors in this documentary the people play as themselves otherwise this wouldn't be considered a realist documentary.



Movie example 1

A good movie example is the movie straight outta compton this is a realist film because it's about the rapper group N.W.A and how they became a group and how they got to where they are now. Some people might think that this is not a realist film because their are professional actors playing the roles of the actual people but since this is based on a true story and is a movie about the lives of the early days of N.W.A who separated a few years ago this is a realist film.



Example 3

For my third and final example another movie that is a realist film is the movie the Titanic because it is based on a true story of the cruise ship that hit an iceberg and sunk in the middle of the ocean and they decided to make a movie on this terrible accident that actually happened. This is a realist film and is based on a true story because it actually has to do with the actual events of the titanic but they exaggerate the events like the accident itself and create some characters that were never actually a part of the accident that happened.



Sources

<http://www.prettygoodfilms.com/realismformalism.html>

<https://www.google.com/search?q=rise+planet+of+the+apes&espv=2&biw=1227&bih=657&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj6-a-z4>

<https://www.google.com/search?q=rise+planet+of+the+apes&espv=2&biw=1227&bih=657&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj6-a-z4a3>

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Dualist

Film Theory



Dualism is the concept of two separate but connected parts that denote a whole system. Up and down, Yin and Yang, etc. It is also the philosophy that Mind and Body are separate and divisible entities, which is often exploited to great and varied effect in hollywood through beloved plot devices such as the body switch, the out of body experience, the possession, and many others. What makes duality so popular as a plot device is the great amount of variation with which it can be used. Fantasy, science fiction, romance, comedy, propaganda, and horror

genres can all employ duality to fantastic and creative effect.





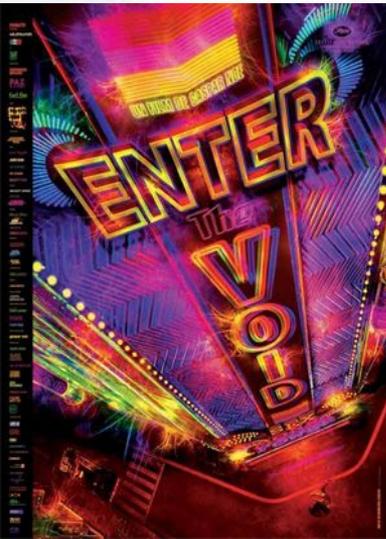
Out Of Body Experience

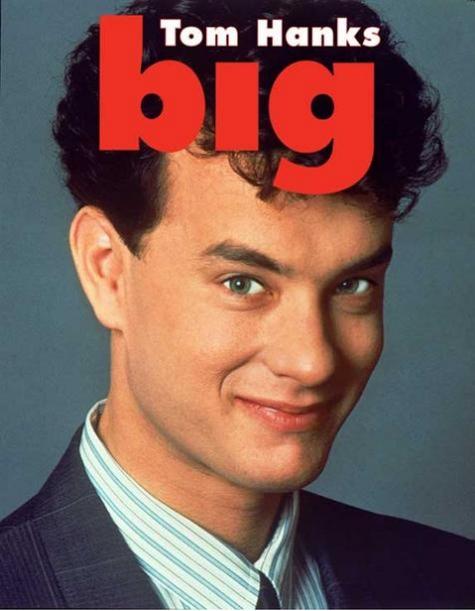
In film, an out of body experience is when a character's consciousness (soul) detaches from their physical body, whether plucked from their body by an otherworldly guide like in A Christmas Carol and It's A Wonderful Life or otherwise.



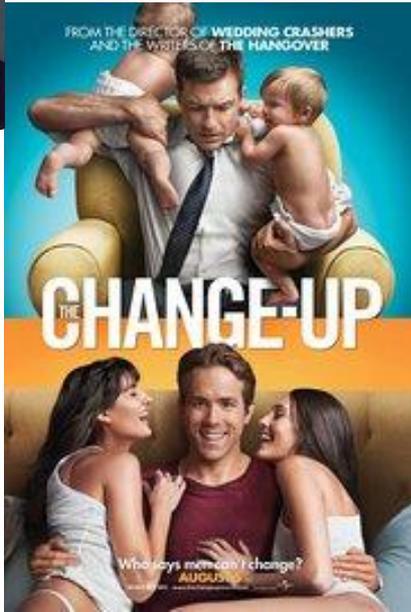
- ★ While Scrooge sleeps, he is visited by ghosts who take his conscious mind on a journey of self discovery while his physical body is still asleep in bed.
- ★ After being shot by police, Oscar's soul leaves his body and he watches the succeeding events during an out-of-body experience

- ★ When George Bailey is about to commit suicide on Christmas Eve, an angel arrives and takes his soul on a journey showing him what the world would be like if he'd never been born.





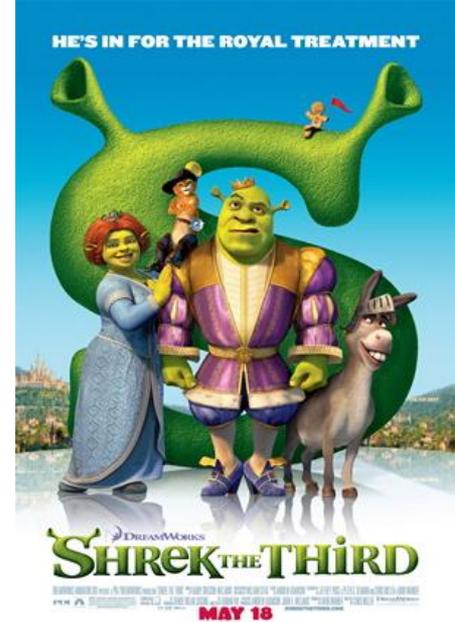
- ★ A frustrated 12 year old wishes to be “big” and finds himself in the body of his 30 year old self

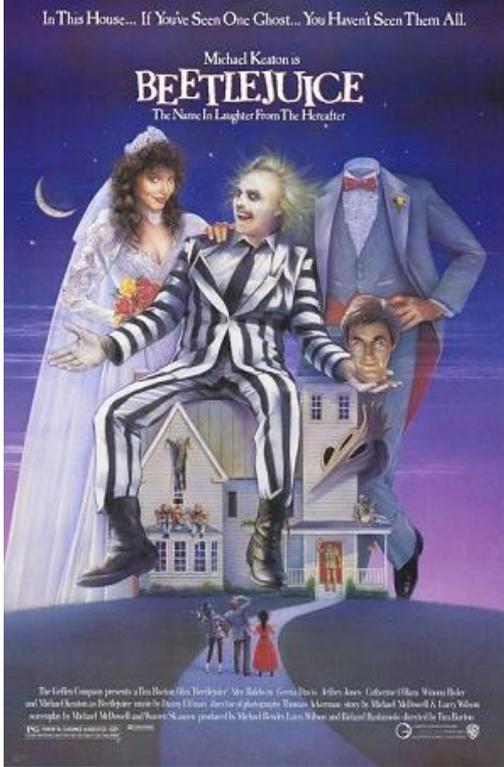


- ★ After making a deal with con man Rumpelstiltskin, Shrek's consciousness is transferred to an alternate reality where he never met his wife or had kids
- ★ Two friends, a responsible family man and a carefree bachelor, pee into a wishing fountain and wake up with their minds in each other's bodies

Body Switching

In body switching films, duality is used by having a character's consciousness transferred into another physical body. Often, they switch bodies as the result of a wish on a magical object or person, or they suffer a wrongful death and have their soul transferred to another body.





Afterlife

The concept of afterlife is used as a device in films to exploit mind/body duality. In afterlife films, characters find themselves diseased but continue to live on as ghosts, or in a traditional afterlife like purgatory, hell of heaven, and continue on the story from there.



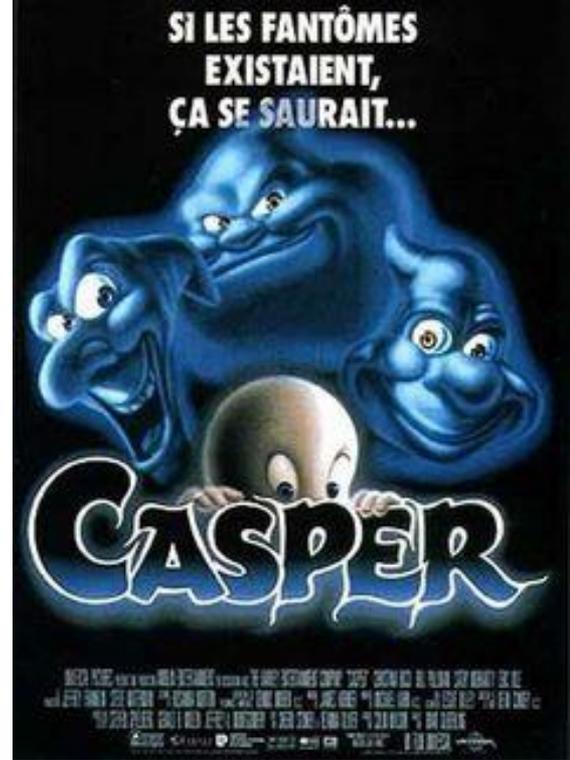
★ After Adam and Barbara die, they have to “haunt” their house as ghost for 125 years, and struggle to evict the new tenants who seemingly can’t be scared into leaving

★ After being dumped, Zia slits his wrists and ends up in a parallel purgatory reserved for people who have committed suicide. When he learns his former girlfriend has also killed herself, he embarks on a roadtrip to find her



Possession/Ghosts?

Any trope involving souls/spirits living outside earthly bodies or living on after a physical death employs duality. Duality is very popular in the horror genre, with many different subgenres employing it. Ghost films, like Casper, bodily possession films, like The Exorcist or The Conjuring, and object possession films like Child's Play or Anabelle are all examples of dualist philosophy in modern media.



★ Serial killer Charles Lee Ray is shot and killed while in a toy shop, and his soul possesses a doll named Chucky through which he continues his murderous rampage

★ When a paranormal therapist and his daughter Kat move into Whipstaff Manor to investigate a haunting, Kat is befriended by Casper, a friendly teenage ghost who haunts the mansion with his uncles.

Just “mind stuff” and “body stuff”?

- ★ The dualist philosophy denotes two opposite parts of a system that make up the whole. Everything has its other half, light has dark, left has right, addition has subtraction, etc. This can also be explored thematically in movies instead of the mind and body duality that is often seen. A good example of this is *A Clockwork Orange*, where the theme of Good and Evil and their parts in the system, government VS delinquent, and the distinction between them are present throughout the film



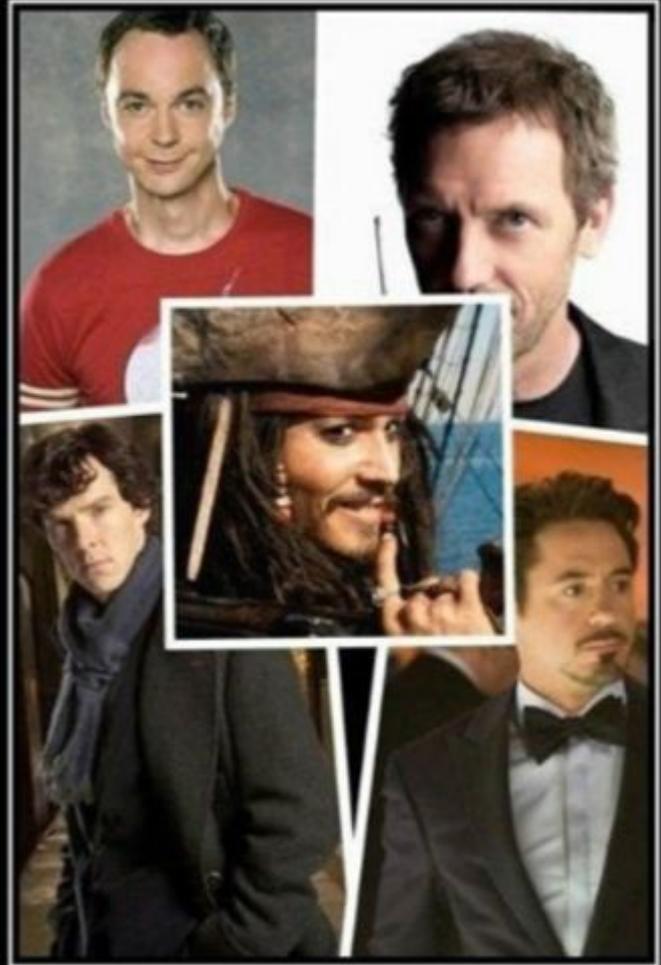
- ★ Exploring duality is a great way to add depth to your films, strengthening your chosen theme by presenting the perils of its opposite, or you can make creative fantasy films by working with mind and body duality that lets you have ghosts, possessions, body swapping, time travel, and other fun plot devices to play with.

The Role of the Antihero

Alethea Ng

What is an Antihero?

An antihero is a protagonist (or main character) who does not have traditional “heroic” qualities. Instead of traits like courage, kindness, or selflessness, the antihero often has darker, more disagreeable qualities that contradict traditional heroic archetypes. Although the antihero may end up doing the “right thing”, he will probably do this for his personal self-interest, not because his strong moral compass dictates it.



Captain Jack Sparrow, Drunkard

The world first met Captain Jack Sparrow in the 2003 movie *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*. He is a most unlikely hero — always drunk or drinking, with a decided preference for rum. As shown in this clip, he makes no secret that he values his rum above his own life and the lives of others.



Captain Jack Sparrow, Traitor



In this clip, we see Jack's more unsavory traits, including his dubious morality and his self-preservation instinct. Not only is he willing to betray his friends and strike a deal with his enemy in order to save his own skin, he is completely unfazed by the battle and carnage happening on the deck. Instead, he simply thinks of getting himself to safety.

Captain Jack Sparrow, Hero

However, what sets Jack apart as an antihero, instead of a supporting character or a villain, is that he eventually does the right thing of his own free will. In this scene, after Davy Jones has mortally wounded Will Turner, Jack gives up his own chance at immortality and eternal adventure on the high seas, just so that his friend can live.



(1:45 - 2:07)



Why the Antihero?

After all this, though, the question remains. Why is the antihero so popular? What does that say about us? Surely we don't identify with Captain Jack Sparrow because we're drunkards and traitors who will stop at nothing to save our own skins. I think the reason we identify so much with the antihero is that he is inherently human, with faults, foibles, and the lot. None of us can claim to be constantly heroic in the traditional sense of the word — but maybe we don't need to be.

A Formal Formalist Theory

By Gabriel L.



The Elements

One of the most major film today, a formalist theory studies the use of score, camera shots and sound in order to create a multitude of feelings and emotions in any given scene. Different from other film theories, in that it, “embraces both ideological and auteurist branches of criticism”(1).

Formalist theorist wanted to bring awareness to the “less prestigious” and B-movies that were overlooked or criticized for not having similar qualities to larger film productions. One such example was Hitchcock.

While popular, he was never given any thought by reviewers, even being nominated for best director five times, but never winning.

– Bayhem



Another example of a director who is renowned, for worse this time, is Michael Bay. Known for creating blockbuster movies with lots of explosions, Shia Leboief and even more explosions. Rarely is he criticized from a more technical perspective, but when he is, one can find some recurring techniques in his films. His main problem, is that he will use the camera movement, angle and lens whether it fits or not.

His most famous being the, spinning camera shot.

Far far away...



Even in the far reaches of the galaxy, there is depth... and daddy issues. A pinnacle piece in sci fi history, the reveal of Darth Vader's fatherhood. In the moment that he speaks to his son, just before the great reveal, the music silences and the camera centers as he slowly walks towards Luke. In that moment, as we emotionally prepare ourselves for what secret he is about to reveal. Then where there was nothing, everything is ramped up to 10.

The music blares and the camera zooms in as Luke comes to the realization that what he says, is the truth.

Take Away

From my research, I have learned a lot about my chosen theory. Its history, its impact, how important it is in the modern age of film. Like any art, it is simple to follow but difficult to master. As is shown in my second example. Redundancy turns the most beautiful of things into the most boring of things.

But in the hands of someone who knows how to properly use the many elements of film in perfect synthesis, to make something that touches the soul. A moment that is forever etched into the minds of many.

In short, Formalist is within the basis of film, from my perspective, it is a basic theory that is necessary in any student of the arts.

Sources

- (1) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Formalist_film_theory
-

Apparatus Theory

By: Matthew Mikus

Apparatus Theory

- Apparatus theory is the theory that everything in movies has meaning because it was all pre rehearsed and planned to be a certain way...
- This is important as it shows that everything is planned and well organized.
- You can say even the film that was used to film with has meaning along side the color and color correction..



PSYCHO!

- The theory proves that every movie ever made apparently has meaning whether it is a romance or horror.



Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

- Use of an apple shows that even the sweetest things can be deadly



The Shining

- Johnny poking his head through a splintered door can show the true evil in this steven king film



Conclusion

- I see important moments in movies all the time. I feel this theory is somewhat true but not completely. Sure there might be meaning but perhaps something as simple as grabbing a glass of water in an interrogation can add to the intensity in the scene.

MARXIST

By: Andrew Turner

WHAT IS MARXIST FILM THEORY?

It was used by soviet film makers.

It was used to express the ideas of marxism through film.

Marxism is a method of analysis to analyzes class relations and societal conflict. Used to view social transformation.

Marxism has 3 main points.

1. Everyone is equal.
2. Capitalism is evil and corrupt.
3. Government should protect their people.



EXAMPLE 1

The reason this is a marxist film is because it is a more left wing stance on the spectrum of government. Communist governments often promoted this type of film because it was revolved around a group instead of a main character showing that everyone is equal.



EXAMPLE 2

This short film socially accuses the work force and the conflict between the rich and poor which is on the the basis Marxist theory. As he works, he is trying to work in a place where he doesn't fit. This is a symbolic scene that shows the problem between modernizing technology and the workers standard of living. What i mean by this is that the jobs were starting to be taken over by automated technology therefore leaving the worker in a place where he is in conflict.



EXAMPLE 3

This is probably the most famous movie with the marxist film theory in it. It is called Battleship Potemkin. It shows that even though the ships reaches its goal it needs to continue to conquer. It also shows the viewer that the mutiny is the only way for the oppressed people.



IMPACT ON WORLD TODAY

Although marxism was one of the first film theories, it is the least used today. Marxism is a way for communist governments to promote the ideas of equality.



THANK YOU



COMMUNISM
IT'S A PARTY

Film Theory

A Contextualist Perspective

By Dillon G.

Bourne Identity VS Bourne Legacy

- Bourne Identity
 - Director: Doug Liman
 - Was original and revolutionary at the time
 - Portrayed a protagonist who had peak mental performance
 - Enjoyable to watch.
 - Matt Damon is Jason Bourne
- Bourne Legacy
 - Director: Tony Gilroy
 - Was completely Irrelevant
 - Had no story line
 - No classic Bourne “moments”
 - Jeremy Renner is Jason Bourne

Bourne Identity “Moments”



Bourne Identity Reviews

- 83% Rotten Tomatoes
- 7.5/10 IMDB Rating
- What makes "The Bourne Identity" so good is Damon's ability to merge the physical with the emotional; he's strong, skilled, and smart, but he's also generous, honest, and tender.
- The Bourne Identity is a clever action/thriller that is well blended in regards to the formulaic tone within the script. Matt Damon is impressive in Doug Liman's film of a super agent who has no knowledge of his identity and his ventures to avoid trouble and gain it back.

Bourne Legacy “Moments”



Bourne legacy Reviews

- 56% Rotten Tomatoes
- 6.7/10 IMDB
- It's twists and turns and nothing else. And fast and furious as it may be, if this is the best this once-smart series has to offer, this is no legacy.
- A fine movie, in the end. And that's the problem. It's just fine. The first three "Bourne" movies were incredible.