**GLOSSARY OF FILM TERMS**

I.          VOCABULARY RELATING TO THE SHOT:

            Take:   The length of film exposed between each start and stop of the camera.  Thus, a shot that goes on for a long time without an edit is called a "long take."  During filming the same piece of action may be filmed from the same camera setup several times (e.g., trying for different emotions on the part of the actors); each time is called a take.

            Shot:    A take, in part or in its entirety, that is used in the final edited version of the film.  In a finished film we refer to a piece of the film between two edits as a shot.  Whereas an edit can take the story to a different time or a different place, the action within a shot is spatially and temporally continuous.  We can therefore think of a shot as a "piece of time."

                                    Shots are described by distance from the subject (ECU, CU, MCU, MS, MLS, LS, ELS), by camera angle (low, high, eye-level), bycontent (two-shot, three-shot, reaction shot, establishing shot), and by any camera movement (pan, track, dolly, crane, tilt).  The average feature film contains between 400 and 1,000 shots.

            Scale:  The "bigness" of the subject in a given shot, determined by the camera's distance from it.

                                    Extreme closeup (ECU):  Closer shot than a closeup; a single detail occupies most of the screen image.  e.g., a mouth, a gun.  Sometimes called an "insert."

                                    Close-Up (CU):  The camera is close to the subject, so that when the image is projected most of the screen shows a face and its expression, or some relatively small part of a larger whole.

                                    Medium closeup (MCU):  Shot whose scale is between MS and CU:  a character shown from the chest up.

                                    Medium Shot (MS):  A human subject in MS is generally shown from the waist up; background begins to be visible and potentially important, and two-shots are possible.

                                    Medium Long shot (MLS): Human subject is shown from the knees up.  Also called an American Shot because Hollywood movies of the Thirties and Forties used it so often for dramatic action.

                                    Long shot (LS):  The camera is a considerable distance from the subject(s) being filmed.  The whole human figure from head to feet is included in the frame, with the surrounding environment very visible.

                                    Extreme long shot (ELS):  The camera is very far away from the subject, giving us a broad perspective.  Often used to create an "establishing shot," setting up a new scene.

            Camera Angle:  The position of the camera (in terms of height from the ground) in relation to the subject being filmed.

                                    Low-Angle Shot (LA):  The camera is positioned below the subject, and shoots upward at it.  The effect is to make the subject look dominating, powerful, as if a child were looking up at an adult.  An extreme low angle (ELA) would be an extreme variant.

                                    Eye-Level Shot:  The camera is located at normal eye level (five to six feet from ground level) in relation to the subject.  Unless otherwise noted in the script, the camera will automatically be set up at eye level.  When analyzing a scene, eye-level shots do not need to be indicated as such; the reader will assume that this is the position of the camera, unless otherwise indicated.

                                    High-Angle Shot (HA):  The camera is positioned somewhere above the subject and shoots down at it.  An extreme high angle would be an extreme variant. In a bird's eye shot the camera is placed directly over the subject.

                                    Dutch or Oblique Angle Shot:  The camera is tilted so that on screen, the horizon appears to be tilted.  Often used as a subjective shot to indicate stress, such as when a character is drunk or drugged.

            Two-Shot: Medium or medium-long shot of two

                                    characters.

            Three-Shot:  Medium or medium-long shot of three characters.

            Moving Shot:  Produced when the camera moves.  When the camera remains fixed but swivels horizontal-ly, it is called a pan; when it swivels vertically, it is a tilt.  When the camera itself travels horizontally, it is a tracking shot.  When the camera travels in closer to a subject or away from a subject, it is called a dolly shot.  When the camera travels vertically, it is a crane or boom shot.  More info:

                                    Crane Shot:  Shot taken from a crane or boom (a sort of huge mechanical arm, which carries the camera and cameraman, and can move in virtually any direction--vertically, forward-backward, transversely, or in a combination of the above.

                                    Tracking Shot:  The camera is mounted on a dolly or truck, and moves horizontally on wheels or railroad-like tracks to follow the action being filmed or to survey the setting.

                                    Dolly Shot:  The camera is mounted on a dolly and moves forward (dolly-in) or away from (dolly-out) the subject.

                                    Hand-Held Shot:  The camera operator carries the camera while filming the action; this has become possible over the last thirty years with the invention of lighter cameras.  Can be used with a "Steadicam" system, a hydraulic harness device that allows the movement to be kept very smooth, almost as smooth as a dolly or crane shot.  Usually, however, hand-held shots are used for their lack of smoothness, to give the impression of the point of view of a person walking--for greater naturalism or to create suspense.

                                    Zoom Shot:  Technically not a moving shot because the camera itself does not move, the zoom is made by the zoom lens, which has variable focal length  (see Section IV).  The zoom became a popular technique in the Sixties.  On screen a zoom-in resembles a dolly-in, but its telephoto optics as it moves in on the subject differ from the more realistic, dynamic look that a dolly or hand-held shot retains.

                                    Pan Shot:  The view sweeps from left to right or from right to left.  Differs from the tracking shot in that the camera is not mounted on a movable object but stays fixed.  It pans on a horizontal axis (short for "panorama").  In a Flash Pan or Zip Pan the movement is very rapid, so that the filmed action on the screen appears as only a blurred movement.

                                    Tilt:  Like a pan, but the camera tilts up or down along a vertical plane.

                        Stock Shot:      A shot "borrowed" from the archives of a studio.  Generally, this would be a shot made for another film, frequently a documentary--e.g., the New York Skyline, the White House, a WWII naval battle scene.

            Subjective Shot:  The camera is positioned at an angle, or has something about its content (distortion through misfocus or strange color, etc.) to suggest that the shot is seen from the viewpoint of a particular character in the film, usually a character in an abnormal frame of mind (e.g., through drunkenness, or fear, or heightened sensitivity).

            Long Take:  A shot that lasts a long time (as distinguished from a long  shot, where "long" refers to camera distance.

            Mise-En-Scene: A theoretical term coming from the French, meaning, more or less, "staging."  In general, concerns everything within a shot as opposed to the editing of shots; includes camera movement, set design, props, direction of the actors, composition of formal elements within the frame, lighting, and so on.  In film theory Mise-En-Scene is one of the two major categories of film analysis; "Montage" (Editing) is the other.

II.         VOCABULARY RELATING TO EDITING AND SEQUENCE CONSTRUCTION

            Cross-Cutting:  Cutting back and forth between shots from two(or more) scenes or locales.  This alternation suggests that both actions are occurring simultaneously.

Cut:                             The most immediate, and common, of transitions from shot to shot.  It is effected in the laboratory simply by splicing one shot onto another. On screen the appearance of the second shot immediately replaces the first.  "To cut" also means to edit; in addition, during filming "to cut" means to stop the camera.

Editing:                       The joining together of shots to make a sequence or a film.  This also includes the process of matching the soundtrack and the visuals.  The European word for editing is montage, which has become the critical term for editing.

            Establishing Shot:                   Also called a master shot.  A long shot usually at the beginning of a scene, to establish the spatial relationships of the characters, actions, and spaces depicted in subsequent closer shots.

Insert:                          A shot of a static object, such as a book, letter, clock, murder weapon, pile of cash, inserted during the editing process, generally between two shots of a character looking offscreen, usually to indicate that this is what s/he is looking at.

Jump Cut:                    A break or cut in a shot's temporal continuity, caused by removing a section of a shot and then splicing together what remains of it.  On screen the result is abrupt and jerky; in certain films it is deliberate.  Also, a jump cut is a transition indicating a break in temporal continuity between two adjacent shots.  For example, a shot of a character opening a car door followed by a shot of him driving the car; we don't see the character actually getting into the car, starting the motor, beginning to drive.  The term is also used to indicate an abrupt and unexpected shift in locale.

            Match Cut:       A transition that involves a direct cut from one shot to another, which "matches" it in action, subject matter, or actual composition.  This kind of transition is commonly used to follow a character as s/he moves or appears to move continuously.  Film continuity is often dependent on match cutting.  Match cutting can also be used in a montage sequence, to show a similar activity occurring over a passage of time.

 Montage:                    (1)       Editing; putting together shots and creating a "film reality."

                                    (2)       a short, impressionistic sequence used to show either the passage of time or an accumulation of objects or events used descriptively.

                                    (3)       In critical terms, montage is often opposed to mise-en-scene, to refer to the creation of a film reality through piecing together fragments of reality (or shots).  Montage is all that happens between shots.  A filmmaker who stresses this tendency (i.e., using much editing) has a montage style; a filmmaker who tends not to cut--who favors long takes, lots of camera movement, etc.--is considered a mise-en-scene director.

Parallel Editing:          Same as cross-cutting.

Reaction Shot:             A shot showing the reaction of a character to something or someone seen in the previous shot.

            Reverse Angle Shot:  In filming conversations, an alternation or cross-cutting of shots filmed from an over-the-shoulder position of each character in turn is reverse angle shooting.  Each shot shows the face of one character and the back of head and shoulders of the other.

Scene:                         A portion of the film in which all of the action occurs in the same place and in the same time span.  A scene may be composed of any number of shots.

Sequence:                    Any section of a film that is self-contained enough to be intelligible when viewed apart from the rest of the film.  Unlike a scene, it can consist of action occurring in various places and at different times.

Splice:                         The physical point at which two shots are joined by glue or tape during editing.  A machine called a splicer aids in creating a splice.

III.       TRANSITIONS

            Burn in:                       Gradually going from a white screen to a an image.

            Burn out:                     Gradually going from an image to a white screen.

            Cut:                             The most immediate, and common, of transitions from shot to shot.  On screen the appearance of the second shot immediately replaces the first.  The cut is increasingly being used as a transition between sequences as well (traditionally the fade and the dissolve have been used for this purpose).

            Dissolve:                     The end of one shot merges slowly into the beginning of the next; as the second shot becomes increasingly distinct, the first slowly disappears.  Traditional way of moving from sequence to sequence.

            Fade-in:                       Slow brightening of the picture from a black screen to normal brightness.  Suggests passage of time.

                        Fade-out:                     Reverse of the fade-in.  The shot gradually darkens to blackness, usually signalling the ending of a sequence.

            Iris-In:                         A shot that opens from darkness in an expanding circle of image, as if a circular window were opening on the image.  Frequently used in the silent cinema.

            Iris-Out:                      The opposite of an iris-in, ending with a shot with a progressively narrower iris.

            Jump Cut:                    See Section II above.

            Match Cut:                   See Section II above.

            Wipe:                          Transition from one shot to the next, in which the second appears and wipes or pushes off the first, looking kind of like a windshield wiper.

IV.       VOCABULARY RELATING TO PHOTOGRAPHIC AND TECHNICAL PROPERTIES OF FILM

            Aspect Ratio:              The proportions of the frame, the ratio of the width to the height of the image area.  The traditional aspect ratio for 35 mm. film is 1.33:1 and is known as Academy Aperture.  For wide-screen processes such as Cinemascope, the aspect ratio may range from 1.65:1 to 2.55:1.  All film gauges are wider than they are high, a factor affecting formal composition within the frame.

            Depth of Field:            The degree to which an image is in sharp focus in depth (usually a function of the size of the camera lens opening).  In shallow focus(shallow depth of field), a very narrow zone of depth is in focus at any one time (foreground or midground or background), and everything closer and further from the camera is out of focus.  In deep focus all distance planes (foreground, midground, andbackground) remain clearly in focus, from close-up range to infinity.

            Film Stock:                  The "raw," unexposed film that is loaded into the camera for shooting.  Film stock can be color or black-and-white, "fast" or "slow."

            Focus:                         The degree of sharpness and clarity in a film image.  "Out of focus": the images are blurred and lack linear definition.

            Footage:                      Exposed film stock.

            Frame:                         An individual image on a strip of film.  In silent films frames were projected at the rate of 16 frames per second; in sound film they are projected at the rate of 24 frames per second.

            Lenses of the Movie Camera:

                                                Wide-Angle: A lens with short focal length, having a wider than normal field of view.  Has the effect of appearing to expand the depth of the image, and can cause visual distortion when the subject is close to the camera.

                                                Normal

                                                Telephoto:  A lens with a long focal length, which gives a narrower than normal field of view, and compresses depth in space, appearing to bring distant subjects nearer, and giving the image a flattened effect (opposite of wide-angle photography).

                                                Zoom:  A composite lens that allows one to move from wide-angle to normal to telephoto or the reverse.  Makes it possible to move toward or away from the subject without moving the camera.

Optical Printer:           An elaborate mechanical device used to create special effects in a film print, such as fade-ins and fade-outs, dissolves, superimpositions, and other effects.  Much of this work is now done through Computer Graphics technology.

            Overexposure:             A shot brighter and more contrasty than normal, resulting from too much light having entered the lens and reading the film.

            Rack Focus:                When the zone of sharp focus changes from foreground to background (or vice-versa) within a single shot.  The viewer's attention is thus drawn from one plane to another.

            Soft Focus:                  The image is softened by diffusing the light and reducing the sharpness of the lens.

            Superimposition:         When two different shots are printed onto the same strip of film.  Every dissolve contains a brief superimposition.

V.        MISCELLANEOUS TERMS

            Auteur:                        French for "author."  The auteur theory was popularized by the New Wave French critics of the Fifties and Sixties, and emphasized the director as major creator of film art.  A strong director--an auteur--stamps her/his film with a personal vision, often in spite of external impositions such as producers and studio pressures.

            Exterior:                      A scene apparently shot out of doors.  The exterior may be simulated in the studio or it may be filmed "on location."

            Eyeline:                       The direction in which a character is looking.  Eyelines are often a way of letting us know what (or whom) a character is interested in.

            Genre:                         A recognizable type of film which depends on certain established conventions and expectations.  Common American genres are the Western, the Gangster Film, the Horror Film, the Musical, the Detective Film, and so on.  Examples of generic conventions would be the Gangster Film's urban setting, fast cars, drinking, moll, pistols, machine guns, flashy clothes.

            Interior:                       An indoor scene, filmed either on a studio set or on location.

            Intertitles:                    Frames with written text, coming between image shots, used in silent films to transmit necessary verbal information, such as explanations or dialogue.

            Lighting:                      The illumination of the set.  Lighting may be described in terms of the direction from which the light enters the set (front-lighting, back-lighting, side-lighting, top-lighting, cross-lighting).  Lighting may also be described in terms of the contrast between light and dark: High-key lighting (the main or key lights produce a diffuse illumination, with few shadows created); Chiaroscuro or low-key lighting(very contrasty, with some parts of the set  highlighted and the rest in darkness; lots of shadows.  Highlighting can also be a means of emphasizing a character's hair or eyes.

            Voice-Over:                The voice of a narrator is heard, although the character speaking is usually not presented visually.  If the character is visually present, there is no lip movement, a convention indicating that we are hearing the character's thoughts.

## Useful Vocabulary for Film Studies

**Story:  
In a narrative film, all the events that we see and hear, plus all those that we infer or assume to have occurred, arranged in their presumed causal relations, chronological order, duration, frequency, and spatial locations. Opposed to plot, which is the film's actual presentation of certain events in the narrative.**

**Plot:   
In a narrative film, all the events that are directly presented to us, including their causal relations, chronological order, duration, frequency, and spatial locations. Opposed to story which is the viewer's imaginary construction of all events in the narrative.**

**Narration:   
The process through which the plot conveys or withholds story information. The narration can be more or less restricted to character knowledge and more or less deep in presenting characters' mental perceptions and thoughts.**

**Diegesis:   
In a narrative film, the world of the film's story. The diegesis includes events that are presumed to have occurred and actions and spaces not shown onscreen.**

**Nondiegetic insert:   
A shot or a series of shots cut into a sequence, showing objects represented as being outside the space of the narrative.**

**Diegetic sound:   
Any voice, musical passage, or sound effect presented as originating from a source within the film's world.**

**Nondiegetic sound:   
Sound, such as mood music or narrator's commentary, represented as coming from a source outside the space of the narrative.**

### 1. "Incarnations of the Story"  Diegesis:  The narrative elements of a film that are shown or immediately inferred from the content of a film. Though implication is not the primary focus, diegesis is a methodological analysis for discerning the exact nature of the film including all of the action and dialogue.

### ["Diegetic" -- refers to things which exist within the "world" of the film's narrative. Non-diegetic or extra-diegetic elements of a film do not "exist" or "take place" in the same plane of reality that the character's inhabit. For example, presumably the characters within an action film do not "hear" the rousing theme music that accompanies their exploits. that music is extra-diegetic, but still part of the film. ]

### More on Diegesis:

### Diegesis: Greek thinkers, such as Plato and Aristotle, paired this term with mimesis to distinguish two methods of presentation. Diegesis described a speech in a play or any other artistic form in which the creator of the work does not ignore or disguise her own presence and addresses the reader or viewer or audience directly. Mimesis, on the other hand, describes a presentation in which the creator’s presence is ignored or disguised and the audience or viewer or reader is addressed by someone other than the artist. Thus, a diegetic narrative is one in which the writer speaks directly to her reader or audience, telling a story herself. In contrast, a mimetic narrative is one in which the artist attempts to create the illusion of being invisible or transparent and characters speak only for themselves.

### Both terms have a long history of use in which their meanings have varied and come to carry extra meanings. In particular, mimesis has come to be associated with the creation of reality and with the practice of following the rules of established forms or genres. (As such mimetic art has sometimes been contrasted with expressive art, to suggest that the latter, freed from literal reality, could express the free range of the artist’s fantasies and dreams.) Mimesis has been associated in the history of English-language art with the concept of imitation.

### The shifts in the meaning of mimesis are also reflected in the changes the term diegesis has undergone, particularly when used by narrative theorists. At the beginning of the century, diegesis and mimesis were associated with "telling"and "showing." For such proponents of realism and modernism as Henry James and the critic Percy Lubbock, diegesis was connected to the practice of a writer’s presenting events indirectly (telling) by summarizing action and describing in general a character’s thoughts and emotions. In contrast, a more desirable and more artful approach for these critics was showing (mimesis), in which a writer dramatized action and the reader was forced to surmise a character’s interior thoughts and emotions from his external actions and speech.  Later narratologists, such as Gérard Genette, have used the term diegesis as the basis of an elaborate theory of narrative structure. For these theorists, diegesis was made to mean roughly "story," or the primary narrative of a work of fiction. They could then speak of aspects of the work in terms of its diegetic level. For example, these narratologists defined the extradiegetic level of a work as the events, characters, and narrator that are not part of the main narrative. Genette created a number of other terms based on this use of diegesis.

### If you use these terms, either limit them to a specific kind of criticism, or to the theory of a particular critic, or connect diegesis to the level of the text in which the writer speaks directly to the reader and mimesis to the level of the text in which dramatization, or direct speech and action of the characters, takes place. For related topics, see Bedford Glossary, implied author, narrator, and point of view.

### Narrative:  A term denoting a story in any form of human expression where no single individual is telling the story.

### Narrative Film:  Narrative films can include a large corpus of fiction and nonfiction films including documentaries and dramas though the genre is predominantly fictitious. Narrative films primarily concentrate on story lines and can include character development but the drama and usual fiction are emphasized.

### Plot:  The events in an individual narrative and how they are arranged. Arguably the plot and the story are not the same.  {Narrative includes everything that is supposed to have happened in the "story"; plot is more concretely the scenes that are presented in the film, in the precise order in which they are presented.

### Story:  The specific unfolding of a sequence of events in a film. It includes character involvement, settings, and an order that superimposed in an arbitrary manner by the screen writer or by a parallel historical sequence through which the themes are developed. The story is general whereas the plot is specific and includes both internal and external relations to the work.  2. "Basic Elements of a Film"  Frame:  Frames in essence are still images that are collected in quick succession, developed, and projected giving the illusion of motion. Each individual, or still, image on motion picture film is referred to as a frame.

### Shot:  In the process of photographing a scene a shot refers to one constant take by the camera. It is most often filmed at one time with a solo camera.

### Sequence:  Segments of a film narrative that are edited together and unified by a common setting, time, event or story-line.

### Sound Track:  That portion of the sound film medium to which are recorded the dialogue, music, narration and sound effects. The sound head and film gate on a film projector are physically separated from one another. This gap is covered during the recording of a sound-film by keeping the soundtrack recording a few frames head of the photographic image. The sound passes over the projector head at the same time the photographic image passes before the projector's light aperture/lens (the film gate).  3. "Basic Manipulations, and Assemblings of the Basic Elements"  Cutting (a.k.a. Editing):  The process of changing from one shot to another accomplished through the camera or by the splicing of shots together by the cutter (editor). This is also referred to as editing, the preferred term, and includes the decisions, controls, sensibilities, vision and integrative capabilities of the individual editing (cutting) artist.

### Invisible Cutting:  Editing procedures that are so well-formed that the viewer is not aware that a splice has taken place. This is particularly important in action sequences because the audience is psychologically intent on the moving images that a cut in the film -- an unobstrusive cut -- is not noticed. This can easily be contrasted with Eisenstein's technique of quick cuts and jump cuts from one scene to the next without transition so as to unnerve the audience and evoke emotional responses in them.

### [From the Complete Film Dictionary:

### Shot/Reverse Shot Technique: A technique of cutting developed by the Hollywood studios in which the camera switches between two conversants or interacting individuals. ... See invisible cutting.]

### Montage:  In the production and editing of film this term has come to refer to a seemingly unrelated series of frames combined so that one scene quickly dissolves into the next, shifting categories, effects and settings in such a manner as to convey a quick passage of time or an abstract unity through thematic devices such as meter, rhythm, tonality, and intellectuality (viz Eisenstein). Continuity, if it exists, is not captured in a frame by frame juxtaposition but rather through an abstraction. (Also see "mise-en-scene".)

### Synchronization:  Correctly aligning the photographic and audio portions of a film so that the image and sound is heard and seen simultaneously.

### Framing:  Properly surrounding the subject of a shot by the edges of the actual boundaries of the film. All that is seen in the viewfinder of a camera does not always translate directly into the proper centering of the subject. Framing is a technical nuance learned in the process of photography.

### [Involves camera angle, distance, and arrangement of objects and people in front of the camera (the "mise-en-scene". Important in framing is the way that the edges of the screen make a sharp distinction between what is seen and what is not seen, what is included and what is excluded, in a particular frame.] 4. "Basic Elements of the Camera Setup"

### Camera Angle:  This term refers to the point of view held by the focal point of the camera when it is positioned for shooting. Included in the angle is the perspective given by the camera to the depth of focus, height and width of the particular object and action being photographed. The angle also refers to whether the shot is taken from behind, in front, from the side or from the top or bottom of the particular view. Terms appropriated for these various angles include eye-level angle, high-angle, low-angle, sideview angle and the "Dutch" angle.

### Distance:  Distance refers to the amount of relational space between the audience and the character on the screen. Though the characters are two-dimensional and the audience is distinctly separate from the screen by dead space (virtual reality in the theatre has not yet been developed) the camera's perspective, in effect, attempts to provide the amount of space desired subject to the director's discretion. This space often results in the interaction and psychological connection between the characters and the audience. The connection is achieved through the dynamics and varying degrees between long shots, medium shots and close-ups.

### Establishing Shot (a.k.a. "Master Shot") At the beginning of a film, episode or scene within a film, a wide-angle or "full-shot" is photographed for the purpose of identifying the location or setting. Thus the audience has established, or been given the opportunity to surmise an orientation. It also helps to establish the distinctions between the general locale and the specific details -- from subsequent shots -- within the general context.  [The Establishing shot is a wide-angle shot and/or a long shot.]

### Perspective:  Spatial relationships. In film (painting, photography, theatrical performances, et cetera) perspective refers to the accurate depiction of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface. (In experimental forms of film, of course, the accurate depiction is redefined.) Height and breadth come naturally to the surface but the added dimension of depth must be constructed through cameras, lenses, sets, and designs during composition. (See "anamorphic lens" and "composition").  5. "Basic Camera Movements"  Camera Movement:  Conventional uses of the camera to obtain camera angles and various perspectives while filming include panning, tilting, tracking or zooming of the camera. These camera ploys are also known as camera movement and rarely does the camera remain static. When a movement does occur, however, the camera comes to a rest providing a smooth transition to the scene. Movements are coordinated with the action in a scene so that the camera does not go in the opposite direction of the action (i.e. action left-to-right.) Of course, many alternative and experimental methods are used in the film industry and camera movement is no exception.

### Dolly:  Cameras and other equipment, such as microphones and lights, are often carried around the set on movable platforms. These are dollys and are independently moved by the dolly grip so that the technician, be s/he cameraman, audio or lighting technician, can keep their concerns focused. Dollys are often run on tracks for special dolly pans, chinese dollys, or for mere structurally smoothness. Most of the time, dollys are used for camera work and can include booms for the cameras which allows for the lowering, raising and pivoting of the camera. All of these shots can be achieved simultaneously with an horizontal movement of the camera upon the dolly track.

### Dolly Shot:  A camera perspective, on a moving or stationary subject, obtained while the camera is in motion on either a dolly or a camera truck. When the camera is so mounted and moves toward a closer proximity of the subject it is called "dolly-in"; likewise, when the camera is so mounted and moves away from the subject it is referred to as "dolly-out".

### {From the Complete Film Dictionary: Tracking Shot: ... So called because it is sometimes photographed from a dolly that moves on tracks, also refers particularly to a shot in which the camera follows the movement of a subject.}

### Crane:  A large camera dolly that can raise the camera as much as twenty feet above the ground. The crane has the capacity to move forward and backward and is usually operated by electronic controls. Motions are generally silent and the crane allows shots to be made over a wide ranging area providing great access to cover shots.

### Pan:  From the Greek "pan" meaning "all" this movement of the camera is achieved by moving the camera while turning it on an horizontal access. At least four functions are served by this technique including an all encompasing view of the scene, a device for leading the audience to a particular person or place, following a person or vehicle across a distant scene, or giving the audience the visual images and perspective as seen by a character when turning her/his head.  {A turn of the camera up or down on the vertical axis is called a "tilt."}

### Zoom Shot: A shot taken with a zoom lens in which the focal length of the lens changes from wide angle to long focus or the reverse so that the camera seems to move in to (i.e., "zoom in" to) or away from (i.e., "zoom out" from) the subject while the camera actually remains stationary.]

**“HITCHCOCKIAN” ELEMENTS**

**Typical Hitchcock Story Elements**

a man (or woman) wrongly accused

morally flawed “heroes”

a pursuit

characters who are doubles for one another

frightening, but relatively inept police

Peeping Toms

dominant mothers

mistaken identities

suspense

**Typical Hitchcock Icons (Images)**

Hitchcock in a cameo role

birds

a knife

a staircase

a fall

national monuments

an extended “talking kiss”

a mirror

blondes (primly and/or stylishly dressed)

**Typical Hitchcock Stylistic Devices**

Point-of-View Shots

Subjective close-ups

Fluid camerawork

Rapid pace, fluid transitions

Expressive use of sound (and silence)

“McGuffins,” “Red Herrings”

Suspense by telling audience more than characters know

grotesque side-comments

foreshadowing, ironic details and dialogue (only meaningful upon subsequent viewings)

a one-word title

**Typical Hitchcock Themes**

Guilt

The many forms of obsession

the vulnerability of the innocent

the ironies of life

conflict between “love” and “duty”

moral ambiguity

horror in everyday settings

extraordinary things happening to ordinary people

the foolishness of pride

the indifference of public institutions (government, police, military)

miscommunication between men and women

the essential instability of life

psychic self-entrapment

the interpenetration of dream and reality

**KUBRICK “TYPICALS”**

Stories set in the “cosmic labyrinth of fate”

Heroes who are outsiders

Flawed heroes

The constraints of institutionalization

Perfect reason destroying the thinker

Complex endings

Genre films

Big issues

Failure

Alexander Walker : “The humanist in Kubrick hopes that man will survive his own irrationality; the intellectual in him doubts it”

The complacency, hypocrisy, sanctimoniousness of institutions

Few women

Abuse of power

Adaptations of literary works

Long, Tracking shots

The absurd

Violence

Role reversal

Pushing the artistic/technical envelope

Underlying humanism masked by satire and apparent cynicism

Cosmic irony

**MIRA NAIR “Typicals”**

A search for family

The swirling colors of life

Powerful music

Crossing borders

Outsiders

Fighting stereotypes

Breaking free of social expectations

Generational conflict

The old and the new: culture in transition

Deep humanism—non-judgmental

Choosing to live with a full life

**NEOREALISM**

**Roots in Post-War Italy**

*Rome, Open City* (Rossellini, 1944)

*The Bicycle Thief*(DeSica, 1948)

**Popular Around the World, influential in Europe and even in the U.S.**

**Its Primary Influence has been in the developing countries of the "Third World"**

**COMMON ELEMENTS:**

* Inexpensive
* Location Shooting
* Natural Lighting
* Sound post-synchronized
* “Native” Languages/Dialects
* Not much interest in "production values"
* Not "action-oriented"
* Many Non-Professional Actors
* Even when professional, actors don’t look like "stars"
* Protagonists are ordinary people
* Few Subplots
* Children often important
* "Humanistic"--emphasis on the importance of community and family solidarity
* Characters are not simply "good" or "bad"
* A spirit of compassion

**AUTEUR**

French for "author". Used by critics writing for Cahiers du cinema and other journals to indicate the figure, usually the director, who stamped a film with his/her own "personality". Opposed to "metteurs en scene" who merely transcribed a work achieved in another medium into film. The concept allowed critics to evaluate highly works of American genre cinema that were otherwise dismissed in favor of the developing European art cinema.

**DIEGESIS**

The diegesis includes objects, events, spaces and the characters that inhabit them, including things, actions, and attitudes not explicitly presented in the film but inferred by the audience. That audience constructs a diegetic world from the material presented in a narrative film. Some films make it impossible to construct a coherent diegetic world, for example*Last Year at Marienbad* (*L'année dernière à Marienbad*, Alan Resnais, 1961) or even contain no diegesis at all but deal only with the formal properties of film, for instance *Mothlight*(Stan Brakhage, 1963). The "diegetic world" of the documentary is usually taken to be simply the world, but some drama documentaries test that assumption such as *Land Without Bread*(*Las Hurdes*, Luis Buñuel, 1932).

Different media have different forms of diegesis. *Henry V* (Lawrence Olivier, England, 1944) starts with a long [crane shot](http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/htmfiles/cinematography.htm#23575)across a detailed model landscape of 16th century London. Over the course of its narrative, the film shifts its diegetic register from the presentational form of the Elizabethan theater to the representational form of mainstream narrative cinema.

**EDITING**

The joining together of clips of film into a single filmstrip. The cut is a simple edit but there are many other possible ways to transition from one shot to another

**FLASHBACK FLASHFORWARD**

A jump backwards or forwards in [diegetic](http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/htmfiles/basic-terms.htm#25890) time. With the use of flashback / flashforward the order of events in the plot no longer matches the order of events in the story. *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941) is a famous film composed almost entirely of flashbacks and flashforwards. The film timeline spans over 60 years, as it traces the life of Charles Foster Kane from his childhood to his deathbed -- and on into the repercussions of his actions on the people around him. Some characters appear at several time periods in the film, usually being interviewed in the present and appearing in the past as they tell the reporter of their memories of Kane. Joseph Cotten, who plays Kane's best friend, is shown here as an old man in a rest home (with the help of some heavy make-up) and as a young man working with Kane in his newspaper.

**FOCUS**

Focus refers to the degree to which light rays coming from any particular part of an object pass through the lens and reconverge at the same point on a frame of the film negative, creating sharp outlines and distinct textures that match the original object. This optical property of the cinema creates variations in depth of field -- through shallow focus, deep focus, and techniques such as racking focus.

**GENRES**

Types of film recognized by audiences and/or producers, sometimes retrospectively. These types are distinguished by narrative or stylistic conventions, or merely by their discursive organization in influential criticism. Genres are made necessary by high volume industrial production, for example in the mainstream cinema of the U.S.A and Japan.

Thriller/Detective film: *The Maltese Falcon* (John Huston, 1941)

Horror film: *Bride of Frankestein* (John Whale, 1935)

Western: *The Searchers* (John Ford, 1956)

Musical: *Singin' in the Rain* (Stanley Donen, 1952)

**MISE-EN-SCENE**

All the things that are "put in the scene": the setting, the decor, the lighting, the costumes, the performance etc. Narrative films often manipulate the elements of mise-en-scene, such as decor, costume, and acting to intensify or undermine the ostensible significance of a particular scene.

**STORY / PLOT**

Perhaps more correctly labelled fabula and syuzhet, story refers to all the audience infers about the events that occur in thediegesis on the basis of what they are shown by the plot -- the events that are directly presented in the film. The order, duration, and setting of those events, as well as the relation between them, all constitute elements of the plot. Story is always more extensive than plot even in the most straightforward drama but certain genres, such as the film noir and the thriller, manipulate the relationship of story and plot for dramatic purposes. A film such as *Memento* (Christopher Nolan, 2000) forces its audience to continually reconstruct the story told in a temporally convoluted plot.

**SCENE / SEQUENCE**

A scene is a segment of a narrative film that usually takes place in a single time and place, often with the same characters. Sometimes a single scene may contain two lines of action, occurring in different spaces or even different times, that are related by means of [crosscutting](http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/htmfiles/editing.htm#51525). Scene and sequence can usually be used interchangeably, though the latter term can also refer to a longer segment of film that does not obey the spatial and temporal unities of a single scene. For example, a montage sequence that shows in a few shots a process that occurs over a period of time.

**SHOT**

A single stream of images, uninterrupted by [editing](http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis/htmfiles/basic-terms.htm#63716). The shot can use a static or a mobile framing, a standard or a non-standard frame rate, but it must be continuous. The shot is one of the basic units of cinema yet has always been subject to manipulation, for example stop-motion cinematography or superimposition. In contemporary cinema, with the use of computer graphics and sequences built-up from a series of still frames (eg. *The Matrix*), the boundaries of the shot are increasingly being challenged.

**Literary Terms**

**Atmosphere or Mood**: The prevailing feeling created in or by a work.  It may be suggested by the writer’s choice of words, by events in the work, or by the physical setting.

**Characterization**: The techniques used to portray or describe a character. ( ie- through a character’s dialogue, actions and interactions, or thoughts. )

**Climax**: In a plot, the height of tension in the conflict. The final, major turning point.

**Conflict**: The central struggle or problem of a narrative, which moves the plot forward and motivates the protagonist.  In most stories, the conflict is both internal and external.

External Conflict:  person versus person

                                          person versus society

                                          person versus nature / the environment

Internal Conflict:  person versus himself or herself

**Falling Action:**In a plot, the story’s end or conclusion; also called the resolution.

**Dialogue**: The conversation of two or more characters involving an exchange of ideas or information.  Good dialogue can disclose character traits, convey mood and advance the plot.

**Diction:**A word or combination of words used to support a specific tone.

**Foreshadowing**: A hint is provided about important events that will occur later in the work.

**Imagery**: The collected images in a text that evoke the senses through language.  Can evoke images of sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell and movement through the use of language.

**Inciting Force**: A very important incident which compels the central character to act.

**Irony**:

Dramatic Irony: Based on a situation that contrasts what the character perceives with what the audience and/or other characters know to be true. Often the character expects the opposite of what fate actually holds in store for him.

Verbal Irony: The actual meaning intended by a speaker is different from (and usually opposite to) what he or she expresses.

            Situational Irony:  An outcome that turns out to be very different from what was expected, the difference between what is expected to happen and what actually does

**Metaphor:**A figure of speech that creates a comparison but does not use ‘like’ or ‘as’.

**Onomatopoeia:**When a word sounds like what it describes.

**Personification**: A technique in which inanimate objects or concepts are given human qualities, form, or actions.

**Plot**: The series of connected actions and events in a story.  Includes rising action, conflict, climax, falling action, and a denouement / resolution.

**Point of view**: The perspective and voice from which information and impressions are conveyed.  Determined by choice of narrator.

First person: One character serves as narrator, telling the narrative from their point of view.  Includes words such as “I”, “me”, “mine”, “we”, “our”, etc.

Third Person: The writer never refers to himself or herself, or to the reader as “you”. It can be omniscient (seeing and hearing everything) or limited to the thoughts and impressions of one character.

**Repetition**: Deliberate use of repetition can emphasize character portrayal and give an object symbolic value.

**Rising Action**: A series of increasingly important incidents that lead from the inciting force to the major crisis.

**Satire**: A form that uses irony, ridicule, or sarcasm to expose human flaws. Exposes popular vices in order to bring about reform (greed, arrogance and hypocrisy are common targets)

**Setting**: The time and place of the action in a literary work (the “where” and “when”).

**Simile**: A comparison that uses ‘like’ or ‘as’.

**Symbol**: Something that represents or stands for something else.  It expresses a concrete image, but below the surface, it represents an abstract idea or emotion.

**Theme**: The central insight, idea, focus, or message of a work, stated indirectly or directly. Theme analysis: 1) What generalization about life does the story illustrate? 2) What idea is the author emphasizing by his use of repetition? 3) To what emotion has the author appealed? Why has he or she tried to arouse this particular emotion?

**Tone:**The attitude toward or the manner in which the author addresses his subject and/or his audience.

**Film Terminology**

Filmmaking is a collaborative effort. The following are categories and definitions of each task involved in making a film. Hold on to this handout as we will refer to it when discussing all these aspects of movies. You will also need it for exam preparation.

1. **Cinematography** can be defined as a visual language that tells the audience

* Where to look
* What to pay close attention to
* How to respond

**Cinematographers** use the following to create this visual language:

* light and shadow

high key lighting – more areas of brightness so that more detail can be seen.

Result is a happy, cheerful mood.

low key lighting – fewer areas of brightness results in less detail seen. Mood is

mysterious, suspenseful, sad.

* color
* movement

Cinematographers work with the director to plan how to photograph the scenes, decide where to place the camera for each shot, decide how to light each shot and scene (following the director’s vision of how the film should look). The cinematographer often, though not always, operates the camera.

2. **Film Editing** involves the following:

Raw footage – all the photographed images made during production

Cuts and splices – the selected shots and the joining of those shots

Continuity and pacing – the smooth flow and timing of shots, not too slow and not

too fast

Rough cut – the first draft of the film

Final film – as distributed in theaters

**Film Editor**’s Tasks:

* Decides which shots to keep and which to cut
* Determines where shots should begin and end so that the story flows
* smoothly and the pacing, or timing, is neither too slow nor too fast
* Determines the best order in which to arrange the shots according to the film’s three act structure
* Determines the type of transition between shots or scenes so that the shots and scenes flow smoothly one to the other.

3. **Screenplay** - Approximately 65% of movie scripts are based on novels, plays or short stories. The scriptwriter’s job is to adapt these works into movie scripts.

4. **Art Direction/Set Decoration** encompasses the following tasks:

* Creates the physical world of the film
* Works with the director to plan and design all sets
* Finds exterior locations when they are needed
* Sketches set designs; builds models of sets
* Makes a list of props for all scenes
* Oversees set construction
* Works with the costume designer and makeup artists

5. **Music Composition** – the way the music sounds, encompassing the following:

* Rhythm – duration and pattern of sound
* Dynamics – strength of sound, changes in volume
* Pitch – highness or lowness of sound
* Tone – color or quality of sound

**Music Composer** does the following**:**

* Reads the script or views the edited film
* Researches music that would best fit the characters and conflicts in the story
* When necessary, writes original music for the soundtrack
* Write the score, noting when each piece of music will begin and end
* Usually conducts the musicians

6. **Costume Designer** – Works with the Art Director to design costumes for the actors.

Best Costume Design Oscars (begun in 1949) went to *West Side Story*, *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), *The Sting*, *Star Wars*, *Titanic* and *Chicago.*

7. **Makeup Artist** - Works with the Art Director to design and apply makeup to the actors.

Academy Awards for Best Makeup (begun in 1981) went to *Amadeus*, *Mask*, *Beetlejuice*, *Braveheart*, *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.

Questions to ask a Film

(to analyze mise en scene)

1. **Placement of Characters:** Where are they in the frame? High, low, left, right, center?
2. **Center of Interest:** Where does your eye go? What is the center of interest?
3. **Camera Placement:** What is the camera’s point of view? From above, at eye level, or from below? What is the camera focused on? Something near or something far?
4. **Framing of Subject:** How is the subject framed? Think about texture, perspective, and light source.
5. **Camera Lens**: What sort of lens is being used? Are you aware of width or depth?
6. **Lighting**: Describe the lighting. Is it intense, low-key, or somewhere in-between?
7. **Sets:** How and where are the objects and characters arranged on the set?

**Cinematic Terms**

1. **crosscutting** – an editing technique that shows two simultaneous actions in alternating shots
2. **composition –** the arrangement of elements within the shot or scene to create a certain effect
3. **cut –** an instantaneous transfer from one shot to the next
4. **dissolve –**a visual effect in which one image seems to blend into the next. A dissolve is made by superimposing a **fade-out** over a **fade-in.**
5. **fade-in –** the gradual emergence of a shot out of darkness
6. **fade-out** – a transition from an image to complete black
7. **frame –** individual photograph on a strip of film
8. **shot** – those images that are recorded continuously from the time the camera starts to the time it stops (before a cut).
9. **high angle shot –** a segment of film taken from above the subject
10. **low-angle shot –** a segment of film taken from below the subject
11. **long shot –** shot in which the camera is far from the subject
12. **medium shot** – a relatively close shot, revealing a human being from the knees or waist up
13. **close-up** **shot** – shot in which the camera is close to the subject (subject takes up 80% of frame).
14. **establishing shot** – sets the scene or shows the space of a scene; often a long shot or series
15. **mise en scene –** placing in the scene or staging the action. This term describes

what appears in the film frame including setting, lighting, costume and actions

and reations of the characters.

1. **pan**  – a shot taken by a camera while it pivots horizontally left or right
2. **reverse shot –** a shot that reverses the point of view, created when the camera turns 180 degrees in the opposite direction.
3. **tracking shot** or **dolly shot** – a shot taken from a moving vehicle, moving towards or away from the subject.
4. **tilt -**  a shot taken by a camera while it pivots up or down along a vertical axis.
5. **storyboard –** a sequence or drawings (or pictures) of events, as seen through the camera lens that outline the various shots for a scene
6. **montage –** combines related shots in quick succession
7. **high-key lighting** – bright, open lighting characterized by a lack of contrast between light and dark.
8. **low-key lighting** – characterized by darkness, shadows and patches of bright light.
9. **flashback** – shots representing the past.
10. **flash-forward** – shots representing the future
11. **wipe** – an editing device (for transitions), usually a line that travels across the screen, “pushing off” one image and revealing another.

**27. voiceover –** spoken commentary in a movie, often used to convey a character’s thoughts of memories.

**Cinematic Terms**

1. **close-up** **shot** – shot in which the camera is close to the subject (subject takes up 80% of frame).
2. **composition –** the arrangement of elements within the shot or scene to create a certain effect.
3. **crosscutting** – an editing technique that shows two simultaneous actions in alternating shots (also called **intercutting**).
4. **cut –** an instantaneous transfer from one shot to the next.
5. **deep focus shot –** a technique of photography that permits all distance planes to remain clearly in focus, from close-up ranges to infinity.
6. **dissolve –**a visual effect in which one image seems to blend into the next. A dissolve is made by superimposing a **fade-out** over a **fade-in.**
7. **establishing shot** – sets the scene or shows the space of a scene; often a long shot or series.
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10. **flashback** – shots representing the past.
11. **flash-forward** – shots representing the future.
12. **frame –** individual photograph on a strip of film.
13. **hand-held shot** – shot taken with a moving camera that is often deliberately shaky to suggest documentary footage in an uncontrolled setting.
14. **high angle shot –** a segment of film taken from above the subject.
15. **high-key lighting** – bright, open lighting characterized by a lack of contrast between light and dark.
16. **long shot –** shot in which the camera is far from the subject.
17. **low-angle shot –** a segment of film taken from below the subject.
18. **low-key lighting** – characterized by darkness, shadows and patches of bright light.
19. **medium shot** – a relatively close shot, revealing a human being from the knees or waist up.
20. **mise en scene –** placing in the scene or staging the action. This term describes how the visual materials are staged, framed and photographed.
21. **montage –** combines related shots in quick succession.
22. **pan shot**– a shot taken by a camera while it pivots horizontally left or right.
23. **proxemic patterns** – the spatial relationships among the characters within the

mise en scene and reations of the characters.

1. **reverse shot –** a shot that reverses the point of view, created when the camera turns 180 degrees in the opposite direction.
2. **shot** – those images that are recorded continuously from the time the camera starts to the time it stops (before a cut).
3. **storyboard –** a sequence or drawings (or pictures) of events, as seen through the camera lens that outline the various shots for a scene.
4. **tilt shot-**  a shot taken by a camera while it pivots up or down along a vertical axis. (also called **oblique** angle shot).
5. **tracking shot** or **dolly shot** – a shot taken from a moving vehicle, moving towards or away from the subject. A **crane shot** is taken from a crane.

what appears in the film frame including setting, lighting, costume and actions.

1. **voiceover –** spoken commentary in a movie, often used to convey a character’s

thoughts of memories.

1. **wipe** – an editing device (for transitions), usually a line that travels across the screen, “pushing off” one image and revealing another.
2. **zoom shot** – although the camera doesn’t actually move, the effect for the viewer is a breathtaking sense of being plunged into a scene, or an equally jolting sense of being plucked out of it.