

Dramaturgy and Direction Course for Cinema Based on Aristotle's "Poetics"

With Sophia-Louise von Wrangell

I. INTRODUCTION

The eternal present.

Visualization.

Cinematographic Language vs. Literary Language.

The structure of a short film: beginning, development, and sudden upturn of the situation.

The twist. The message.

This section is meant to give the students an insight into the formal use of literary language in order to create images, and the tools they need to structure this idea so as to be able to transmit a message. To exemplify this, there will be several short film screenplays with an accompanying analysis. Then the students will think of examples themselves, which we will discuss together.

For the following session, the students will visualize and write a 5 – 10 minutes screenplay with:

Beginning

Development

Sudden upturn of the situation.

The twist will transmit the message intended by the author.

The use of dialog is limited to a sentence per screenplay, if unavoidable.

II. ELEMENTS OF CINEMATOGRAPHIC LANGUAGE

The frame. Composition. The artistic frame.

The shot.
The sequence.
The rhythm.
Light. Darkness.
Movement. Composition in movement.
The angle. The dramatic angle.

Without the intimate knowledge of the elements of cinematographic language the author is limited. But with it, the creative material will be visual, in detail.

For the following session, the students will visualize and write a 5 – 10 minutes screenplay with

Beginning
Development
Sudden upturn of the situation.
The twist will transmit the message intended by the students.
The students will consciously include the use of specific elements of cinema language in their screenplay.
The use of dialog is limited to a sentence per screenplay, if unavoidable.

III. THE PRINCIPLE OF DOUBLE MIMIC

Reality vs. verisimilitude.
The inherent character of cinema is not reality.
The creative process.
Cinematographic medicine, law, engineering and other 'exact sciences'.
Cine Verita.
Documentary.

This section will deal with the use of a narrative that will convince our spectators of the 'truth' of our statements. We will let go of reality in favor of *credibility* and *make believe*.

For the following session, the students will visualize and write a 5 – 10 minutes screenplay with

Beginning.

Development.

Sudden upturn of the situation.

The twist will transmit the message intended by the students.

The students will consciously include the use of specific elements of cinema language in their screenplay.

The students will write a fake documentary in which everything will have the “flair” of reality.

The use of dialog is limited to a sentence per screenplay, if unavoidable.

IV. THE CHARACTER

Its construction.

The protagonist.

The antagonist.

The anti-hero.

The abstract characters.

Characterization. Consequence.

Characterization of the absent character.

An author has to be able to create a character that will be consequent with itself and with the plot. We will describe the kinds of possible characters, how to build them and how to use them. We will brainstorm characters.

V. DIALOG

Cinematographic dialog vs. literary inner dialog.

Cinematographic dialog vs. theatrical dialog.

Cinematographic dialog vs. broadcast dialog.

Dialog in counter point.

The spoken word in cinema has a definite character. It can't be descriptive or narrative of the image. In this segment we will explore and exemplify the ways to use it for maximum effect.

For the following session, the students will visualize and write a 5 – 10

minutes screenplay with

Beginning

Development

Sudden upturn of the situation.

The twist will transmit the message intended by the students.

The students will consciously include the use of specific elements of cinema language in their screenplay.

Extra care will be giving at respecting the Principle of Double Mimic.

The characters will be defined and strong.

Dialog in counterpoint will be explored.

VI. ELEMENTS OF SYNTAX

Rhythm.

Time. Ellipsis. Cine time vs. real time.

Space. Symbolic space. Conventional space.

Continuity. Raccord.

Music.

Noises.

Silence.

The Alpha and Omega. The circle.

The last shot.

As in the written language, cinema has its syntax. The narrative must follow certain rules in order to assure continuity, and the description and use of the elements of syntax open ways of expression for the author and the director that would otherwise take them years of experimentation to discover.

For the following session, the students will visualize and write a 5 – 10 minutes screenplay with

Beginning

Development

Sudden upturn of the situation.

The twist will transmit the message intended by the students.

The students will consciously include the use of specific elements of cinema language in their screenplay.

Extra care will be given at respecting the Principle of Double Mimic.

The characters will be defined and strong.

Dialog in counterpoint can be used.

The students will choose one or more of the elements of cinematographic syntax and make of it/ them the main character in this screenplay.

VII. OTHER STRUCTURES.

The moment of suspense. Hitchcock. Modern suspense. The semantic ellipsis.

Surrealism. Luis Buñuel. Free association. Fantastic Realism.

Comedy. Out of limits: laughter as defense against extreme pain.

Feedback about the course.

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