

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Film Techniques

Film techniques is the term used to describe the ways that meaning is created in film.

Lighting

Lighting is a very important aspect for shaping meaning in films. What kind of atmosphere is created in a room lit by candles? Have you ever heard of mood lighting? A room that is brightly lit by neon lights might seem to be sterile or a shadowy room might be eerie or scary. The lighting technicians in a film crew have the task of creating lighting to suit the mood and atmosphere of each scene in a film.

Consider the animations *Lighting example one*, *Lighting example two*, *Lighting example three* and think about what type of atmosphere is created in each.

For each example, do you think the lighting suits the characters in the frames? For instance, in Example Three the two people are very happy and the scene is lit brightly. What would be the effect on the atmosphere if the lighting were dark and shadowy, similar to Example Two?

Remember that lighting is used in still image visual texts as well as in films.

Cinematography

Cinematography is the combination of the techniques described in this chapter. This includes camera shots, camera angles, camera movement and lighting. Use the term cinematography to group all of these together, for example, 'The cinematography in that film was exceptional.'

Camera Shots

A camera shot is the amount of space that is seen in one shot or frame. Camera shots are used to demonstrate different aspects of a film's setting, characters and themes. As a result, camera shots are very important in shaping meaning in a film. Reviewing the examples on the right hand side of this page should make the different camera shots clearer.

An **extreme long shot** (*animation on right*) contains a large amount of landscape. It is often used at the beginning of a scene or a film to establish general **location** (setting). This is also known as an establishing shot.

A **long shot** (*animation on right*) contains landscape but gives the viewer a more specific idea of setting. A long shot may show the viewers the building where the action will take place.

A **full shot** (*animation on right*) contains a complete view of the **characters**. From this shot, viewers can take in the costumes of characters and may also help to demonstrate the relationships between characters. For more information on costumes and acting refer to Chapter 4.

A **mid shot** (*animation on right*) contains the characters or a **character from the waist up**. From this shot, viewers can see the characters' faces more clearly as well as their interaction with other characters. This is also known as a social shot

A **close-up** (*animation on right*) contains just **one character's face**. This enables viewers to understand the actor's emotions and also allows them to feel empathy for the character. This is also known as a personal shot.

An **extreme close-up** (*animation on right*) contains one **part of a character's face** or other object. This technique is quite common in horror films, particularly the example above. This type of shot creates an intense mood and provides interaction between the audience and the viewer.

When analysing a film you should always think about the different camera shots and why they are being used. The next time that you are at the cinema or watching television see what camera shots are being used.

Important: These camera shots are used in all forms of visual texts including postcards, posters and print advertisements.

Camera angles

It is important that you do not confuse camera angles and camera shots. Camera shots are used to demonstrate different aspects of setting, themes and characters. Camera angles are used to position the viewer so that they can understand the relationships between the characters. These are very important for shaping meaning in film as well as in other visual texts.

The following examples will help you to understand the differences between the different camera angles

A **bird's eye angle** (*animation on right*) is an angle that looks **directly down upon a scene**. This angle is often used as an establishing angle, along with an extreme long shot, to establish setting.

A **high angle** (*animation on right*) is a camera angle that looks **down upon a subject**. A character shot with a high angle will look vulnerable or small. These angles are often used to demonstrate to the audience a perspective of a particular character. The example above demonstrates to us the perspective or point of view of a vampire. As a viewer we can understand that the vampire feels powerful.

Composition > Angles > High Angle

Ever stand up and shoot videotape of your kid doing something cute on the floor? The resulting shot is sub-par because you are looking down on the youngster.

Most of the time you want to shoot people at **their** eye level. It makes the camera a neutral observer. Shooting down on people gives the impression that they are submissive. This is called a "**High Angle**" shot. While this is a technique advanced users can use to achieve a desired effect--it's not appropriate for general shooting.



"High Angle" is the name for this kind of shot, because the camera is high. Unless you have a special purpose, you'll want to avoid shooting from above.



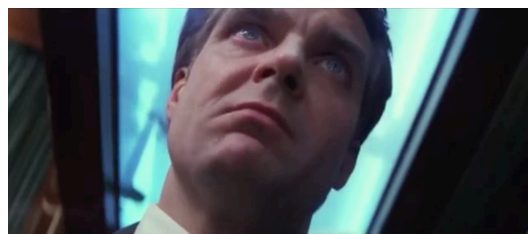
An **eye-level angle** (*animation on right*) puts the audience on an **equal footing with the character/s**. This is the most commonly used angle in most films as it allows the viewers to feel comfortable with the characters.

A **low angle** (*animation on right*) is a camera angle that **looks up at a character**. This is the opposite of a high angle and makes a character look more powerful. This can make the audience feel vulnerable and small by looking up at the character. This can help the responder feel empathy if they are viewing the frame from another character's point of view.



As with camera shots, you will be able to see many examples of camera angles in any film or visual text that you view. The next time that you watch television or see a film, take note of the camera angles and think of how they affect your perception (idea) of different characters.

Another camera angle that you might come across is a Dutch angle.





A **Dutch angle** (*animation on right*) is used to demonstrate the confusion of a character. The example above should disorientate you.

Lighting is the intensity, direction, and quality of lighting have a profound effect on the way an image is perceived. Light affects the way colors are rendered; both in terms of hue and depth, and can focus attention on particular elements of the composition. Much like movement in the cinema, the history of lighting technology is intrinsically linked to the history of film style. Most mainstream films rely on the three-point lighting style, and its genre variations. Other films, for example documentaries and realist cinema, rely on natural light to create a sense of authenticity.

THREE-POINT LIGHTING is the standard lighting scheme for classical narrative cinema. In order to model an actor's face (or another object) with a sense of depth, light from three directions is used, as in the diagram below. A backlight picks out the subject from its background, a bright key light highlights the object and a fill light from the opposite side ensures that the key light casts only faint shadows.

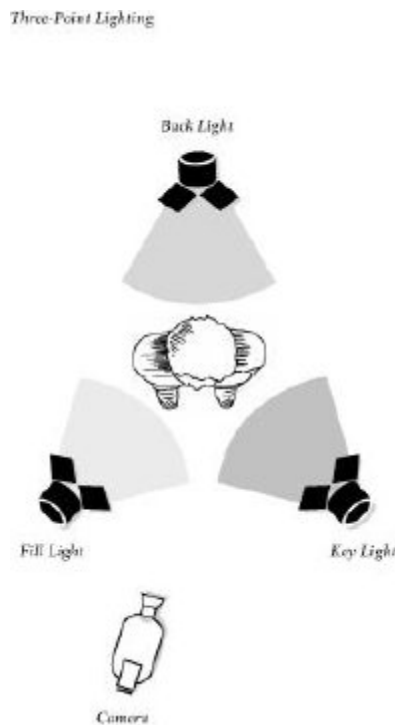


Illustration courtesy of <http://www.tcf.ua.edu/TVCrit/>

These shots from *Written On The Wind* (Douglas Sirk, 1956) demonstrate the classical use of three-point lighting. Laurel Bacall and Rock Hudson are rendered glamorous by the balanced lighting. Compare this to the manipulation of lighting for expressive purposes on the high-key lighting and low-key lighting pages.



HIGH-KEY LIGHTING is a lighting scheme in which the fill light is raised to almost the same level as the key light. This produces images that are usually very bright and that feature few shadows on the principal subjects (low contrasts). This bright image is characteristic of entertainment works such as musicals and comedies such as *Peking Opera Blues* (*Do Ma Daan*, Tsui Hark, Hong Kong, 1986)



LOW-KEY LIGHTING is a lighting scheme that employs very little fill light, creating strong contrasts (high contrasts) between the brightest and darkest parts of an image and often creating strong shadows that obscure parts of the principal subjects. This lighting scheme is often associated with "hard-boiled" or suspense genres such as *film noir*. Here are some examples from *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles, 1958.)



Section 3 - Space -The representation of space affects the reading of a film. Depth, proximity, size and proportions of the places and objects in a film can be manipulated through camera placement and lenses, lighting, decor, effectively determining mood or relationships between elements in the diegetic world.

DEEP SPACE is used when significant elements of an image are positioned both near to and distant from the camera. For deep space these objects do not have to be in focus, a defining characteristic of deep focus. Staging in deep space is the opposite of staging in shallow space.

Deep space is used throughout many Iranian films such as *The Color of Paradise* (*Rang-e Khoda*, 1999). Director Majid Majidi likes to integrate the characters into their natural surroundings, to map out the actual distances involved between one location and another in order to emphasize just exactly how hard it is for a particular character (especially children) to move from one place to another.



In this composition, Mohammad's father looks in apprehension at the school where his blind son is visiting. In the far background, Mohammad is playing with his sister and other "normal" children, but his father does not believe Mohammad should try to mingle with them since he could never be their equal, due to his disability. On the other hand, Mohammad enjoys the company of his new friends in the countryside much more than the School for the Blind in Tehran, where he spends most of the year. The distance between the two points of view, as well as the impossibility of communication between Mohammad and his father (the son is too respectful of his father, the father finds his son's situation too painful), is reflected in the deep use of mise-en-scene.

FRONTALITY refers to the staging of elements, often human figures, so that they face the camera square-on. This arrangement is an alternative to oblique staging. Frontal staging is usually avoided by the invisible style of continuity editing, since it supposedly breaks the spectator's illusion of peeking into a separate world, by having characters look directly into the camera as if they were aware of the viewers' presence. Some films may go even further and have the characters speak to the camera, in what is called a *direct address*. Accordingly, frontality is often used in films that are more willing to play with, or openly defy, the distance between the screen and the spectator. In this shot from *The Stendhal Syndrome* (*La Sindrome di Stendhal*, Italy, 1996) Dario Argento exploits the iconicity of frontal staging in multiple ways.



First, he situates his characters on a parallel plane with the famous profile portraits of The Duke of Urbino and his wife by Piero Della Francesca. Then, he flattens the characters by making the space between them and the paintings shallow with the use of a zoom lens, while keeping all planes in focus. As a reflexive auteur, Argento thus uses frontality to equate his characters with the paintings: both are

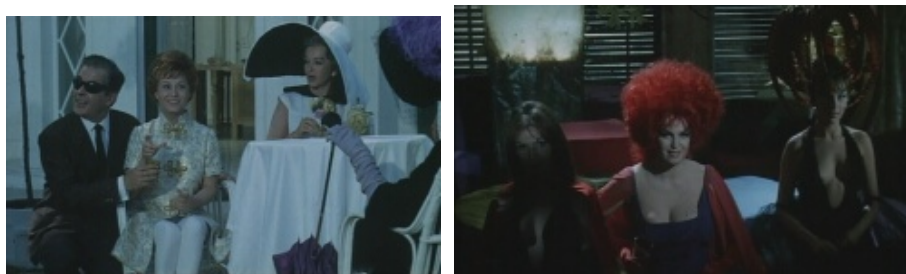
fictional creations, the product of an artist's work. As a final self-referential pun, Argento has his Japanese tourist taking a picture of us!

Section 1 - Quality -This section explores some of the elements at play in the construction of a shot. As the critics at *Cahiers du cinéma* maintained, the "how" is as important as the "what" in the cinema. The look of an image, its balance of dark and light, the depth of the space in focus, the relation of background and foreground, etc. all affect the reception of the image. For instance, the optical qualities of grainy black and white in *Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo, *Maarakat madinat al Jazaer*, Algeria, 1965) seem to guarantee its authenticity. On the other hand, the shimmering Technicolor of a musical such as *Singin' in the Rain* (Stanley Donen, 1952) suggests an out-of-this-world glamor and excitement.



COLOR -Early films were shot in black and white but the cinema soon included color images. These images were initially painted or stencilled onto the film but by the 1930s filmmakers were able to include color sequences in their films. Apart from the added realism or glamour that a color image could provide, color is also used to create aesthetic patterns and to establish character or emotion in narrative cinema.

In Federico Fellini's extravagant *Juliet of the Spirits* (*Giulietta degli Spiriti*, 1965) colors separate the bourgeois reality and the fantasy day dreamings of the title character, who party hops between black and white and reds and purples.



Juliet of the Spirits was the first Fellini film in color, and he intended to make full use of it. In order to further enhance the contrast with his previous work, he cast his favorite actress and wife Giulietta Massina, the protagonist of Fellini's earlier successes such as *Nights of Cabiria* (*Le Notti di Cabiria*, 1957) in which she plays a destitute hooker in a grim suburban environment. Now Fellini has the same actress

play a rich housewife in luscious technicolor, obviously signaling a clear turning point from his early Neorealism-inspired films.



Contrary to popular belief (and Goethe), colors do not necessarily carry exclusive meanings. Compare the use of red in Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers* (*Viskingar Och Rop*, 1972),



and Zhang Yimou's *Ju Dou* (1990), for example.



While Zhang exploits red as a cliched signifier of unrestrained passion, Bergman associates the color with stagnation and contaminated blood.

CONTRAST is the ratio of dark to light in an image. If the difference between the light and dark areas is large, the image is said to be "high contrast". If the difference is small, it is referred to as "low contrast". Most films use low contrast to achieve a more naturalistic lighting. High contrast is usually associated with the low key lighting of dark scenes in genres such as the horror film and the film noir. A common cliché is to use contrast between light and dark to distinguish between good and evil. The use of contrast in a scene may draw on racist or sexist connotations.



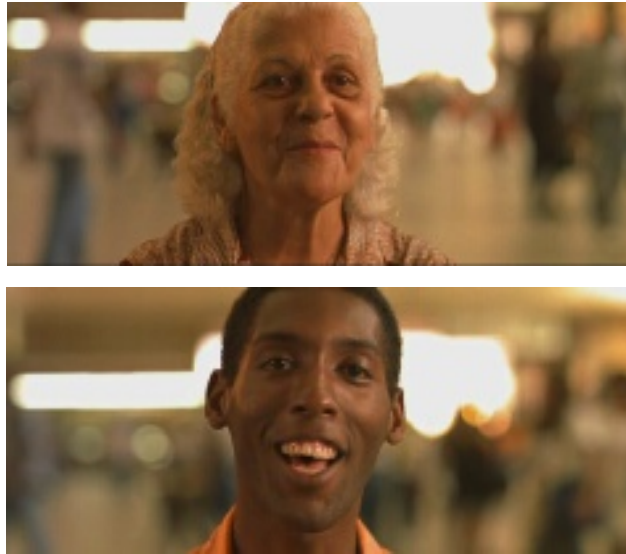
For instance, this shot from Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil* (1958) employs high contrast to further emphasize racial differences between a blonde American woman and a menacing Mexican man.

DEEP FOCUS involves staging an event on film such that significant elements occupy widely separated planes in the image. Unlike deep space, deep focus requires that elements at very different depths of the image both be in focus. In these two shots from *Touch of Evil* (Orson Welles, 1958) *Besieged* (*L'Assedio*, Bernardo Bertolucci, 1998) all of the different planes of the image are given equal importance through deep focus, not only to the characters (like the man peeking at the window in the first image), but also to the spaces (Shanduray's basement room in the second).



While deep focus may be used occasionally, some auteurs use it consistently for they believe it achieves a truer representation of space. Directors like Jean Renoir, Orson Welles, Hou Hsao-Hsien, or Abbas Kiarostami all use deep focus as an essential part of their signature style.

SHALLOW FOCUS - A restricted *depth of field*, which keeps only one plane in sharp focus; the opposite of *deep focus*. Used to direct the viewer's attention to one element of a scene. Shallow focus is very common in close-up, as in these two shots from *Central Station* (*Central do Brasil*, Walter Selles, Brazil, 1998).



Shallow focus suggests psychological introspection, since a character appears as oblivious to the world around her/him. It is therefore commonly employed in genres such as the melodrama, where the actions and thoughts of an individual prevail over everything else.

DEPTH OF FIELD is the distance through which elements in an image are in sharp focus. Bright light and a narrow lens aperture tend to produce a larger depth of field, as does using a wide-angle rather than a long lens. A shallow depth of field is often used as a technique to focus audience attention on the most significant aspect of a scene without having to use an analytic cut-in.



Depth of field is directly connected, but not to be confused, with focus. Focus is the quality (the "sharpness" of an object as it is registered in the image) and depth of field refers to the extent to which the space represented is in focus. For a given lens aperture and level of lighting, the longer the focal distance (the distance between the lens and the object that is in focus) the greater the focal depth. For a given focal distance, the greater the level of lighting or the narrower the aperture, the greater the focal depth. For that reason, close-up shooting and shooting in low light conditions often results in images with very shallow depth of field. An image with shallow depth of field, as this frame from *Peking Opera Blues* (*Do Ma Daan*, Tsui Hark, 1986), has some elements in focus, but others are not.

EXPOSURE is when a camera lens has an aperture that controls how much light passes through the lens and onto the film. If the aperture is widened, more light comes through and the resultant image will become more exposed. If an image is so pale that the detail begins to disappear, it can be described as "overexposed". Conversely, a narrow aperture that allows through less light will produce a darker image than normal, known as "underexposed". Exposure can be manipulated to guide an audience's response to a scene.



In his film *Traffic* (2000), Steven Soderbergh decided to shoot all of the sequences in the Northern Mexico desert overexposed. The resulting images give an impression of a barren, desolated land being mercilessly burnt by the sun, a no-man's land over which police and customs have no control.

RACKING FOCUS refers to the practice of changing the focus of a lens such that an element in one plane of the image goes out of focus and an element at another plane in the image comes into focus. This technique is an even more overt way of steering audience attention through the scene, as well as of linking two spaces or objects. For instance in this scene from *Peking Opera Blues* (*Do Ma Daan*, Tsui Hark, Honk Kong, 1986), a connection is made between an activist in hiding and a police officer who is pursuing him.

Racking focus is usually done quite quickly; in a way, the technique tries to mimick a brief, fleeting glance that can be used to quicken the tempo or increase suspense.

RATE refers to a typical sound film is shot at a frame rate of 24 frames per second. If the number of frames exposed in each second is increased, the action will seem to move more slowly than normal when it is played back. Conversely, the fewer the number of frames exposed each second, the more rapid the resulting action appears to be. The extreme case of frame rate manipulation is stop-motion, when the camera takes only one frame then the subject is manipulated or allowed to change before taking another frame.

In this clip from Vertov's *Man with the Movie Camera* (*Chelovek s kinoapparatom*, USSR, 1929) stop motion is used to give the impression that the chairs open up by themselves.



In Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (*Shichinin no samurai*, Japan, 1954), slow motion is used to contrast the emotional rescue of a child with the death of the man who kidnapped him.



TELEPHOTO SHOT is an image shot with an extremely long lens is called a telephoto shot. The effect of using a long lens is to compress the apparent depth of an image, so that elements that are relatively close or far away from the camera seem to lie at approximately the same distance. In this first shot from *Payback* (Brian Helgeland, 1999), we can clearly see there is a considerable distance between the fallen body and the red car.



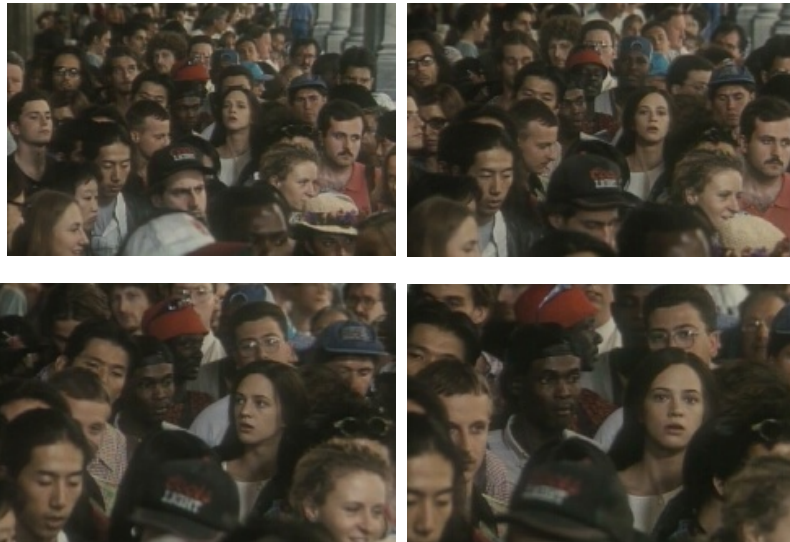
Yet, when a telephoto lens is used for a close-up of Mel Gibson, his face looks like it is pressed against the car! Here a telephoto lens create a shallow space, which combines with extreme canted framing to suggest the physical and psychological disarray of a man who has been betrayed, shot, and left for dead.



ZOOM SHOT uses a lens with several elements that allows the filmmaker to change the focal length of the lens (see telephoto shot) while the shot is in progress. We seem to move toward or away from the subject, while the quality of the image changes from that of a shorter to a longer lens, or vice versa. The change in apparent distance from the subject is similar to the crane or tracking shots, but changes in depth of field and apparent size is quite different. Zooms are commonly used at the beginning of a scene, or even a film, to introduce an object or character by focusing on it. In the initial sequence of *The Stendhal Syndrome* (*La Sindrome di Stendhal*, Dario Argento, Italy, 1996), the camera zooms from a medium long shot of people cueing up at a museum's entrance to a medium close-up of the female protagonist.



Few cinematic techniques are used in isolation. Notice how the woman "helps" the zoom to achieve its purpose of singling her out by moving around.



In another clip from the same film, a zoom is used to offer a more detailed view of an object. Furthermore, as we move closer and closer to the painting (Caravaggio's *Head of Medusa*, 1590-1600), both our attention and tension are increased.



Section 2 - Framing -In one sense, cinema is an art of selection. The edges of the image create a "frame" that includes or excludes aspects of what occurs in front of the camera -- the "profilmic event". The expressive qualities of framing include the angle of the camera to the object, the aspect ratio of the projected image, the relationship between camera and object, and the association of camera with character. In *Cruel Story of Youth* (*Seishun zankoku monogatari*, Oshima Nagisa, 1960) the radical decentering of the character in relation to the frame marks their failed struggle to find a place in their world.



ANGLE OF FRAMING -Many films are shot with a camera that appears to be at approximately the same height as its subject. However, it is possible to film from a position that is significantly lower or higher than the dominant element of the shot. In that case, the image is described as low angle or high angle respectively. Angle of framing can be used to indicate the relation between a character and the camera's point of view. Or can simply be used to create striking visual compositions.

Camera angle is often used to suggest either vulnerability or power. In *The Color of Paradise* (*Rang-e Khabda*, 1999) the father, who rules absolute over his family, is often portrayed from a low angle, therefore aggrandizing his figure.

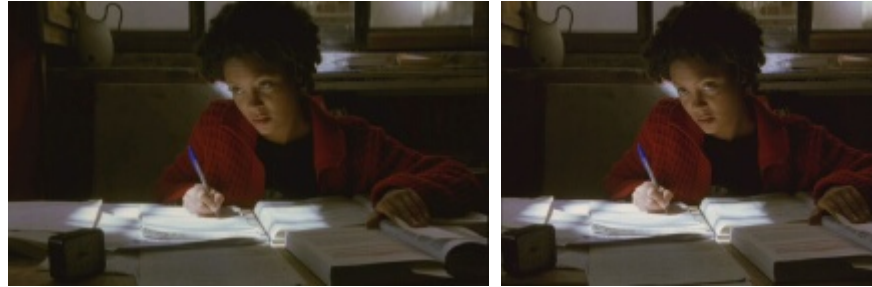


On the other hand, his blind son Mohammad and his elderly grandmother are often shot from a high angle, emphasizing their dependence and smallness. These interpretations are not exclusive, however. The relation between camera and subject can be rendered ironic, or it may suggest more the subject of perception than to the state of the object. The father in this film is so busy smiling at his fiancée that he falls off his horse, while Mohammed and her granny seen from above may also indicate that God is watching over them, and keeping them under protection.

ASPECT RATIO is the ratio of the horizontal to the vertical sides of an image. Until the 1950s almost all film was shot in a 4:3 or 1.33:1 aspect ratio. Some filmmakers used multiple projectors to create a wider aspect ratio whereas others claimed that the screen should be square, not rectangular. Widescreen formats became more popular in the 1950s and now films are made in a variety of aspect ratios -- some of the most common being 1.66:1, 1.76:1, 1.85:1, and 2.35:1 (cinemascope).

Widescreen films are often trimmed for television or video release, effectively altering the original compositions. Some DVD's have the option of showing the film in its original format and in a reduced

ratio that fits the TV screen. Compare the same frame from Bertolucci's *Besieged* (*L'Assedio*, 1998). Objects appear much more cramped with the reduced aspect ratio, giving an impression of physical (and psychological) space different from the theatrical release.



LEVEL OF FRAMING - Not only the angle from which a camera films but the height can also be a significant element in a film. A low-level camera is placed close to the ground whereas a high-level camera would be placed above the typical perspective shown in the cinema. Camera level is used to signify sympathy for characters who occupy particular levels in the image, or just to create pleasurable compositions. Camera level is obviously used to a greater advantage when the difference in height between objects or characters is greater. In *The Color of Paradise* (*Rang-e Khoda*, Iran, 1999) Majid Majidi uses different camera height to emphasize the difference between Mohammad and his father.



In the first image, the camera concentrates on Mohammad as he recognizes his father's hand, after patiently waiting for him for hours. The father is almost absent from the scene; only the part of him that Mohammad touches is visible, therefore increasing our empathy with the blind boy. On the second image, camera level is adjusted to the father's size, making Mohammed a puny, defenseless figure in a world that overcomes him. The first shot is on Mohammad's School for the Blind, while the second is on a shop in Tehran. Through different camera levels, the director makes clear where Mohammad fits and where he does not.

CANTED FRAMING (also known as Dutch Angle) is a view in which the frame is not level; either the right or left side is lower than the other, causing objects in the scene to appear slanted out of an upright position. Canted framings are used to create an impression of chaos and instability. They are therefore associated with the frantic rhythms of action films, music videos and animation.



Many Hong Kong films of the 80s and 90s blend elements of the genres mentioned above, for instance Tsui Hark's *Peking Opera Blues* (*Do Ma Daan*, 1986). These films employ unconventional framings to achieve their signature dizzing, freewheeling style. Canted framings are also common when shooting with a Steadycam.

FOLLOWING SHOT is a shot with framing that shifts to keep a moving figure onscreen. A following shot combines a camera movement, like panning, tracking, tilting or craning, with the specific function of directing our attention to a character or object as he/she/it moves inside the frame. In this shot from *Eyes Wide Shut* (Stanley Kubrick, 1999) the camera pans slightly to accompany a couple into the ballroom floor.



REFRAMING -Short panning or tilting movements to adjust for the figures' movements, keeping them onscreen or centered. An important technique of continuity editing, thanks to its unobtrusive nature. The characters' actions take precedence over the camera movements, as in this dancing scene from Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999)



POINT-OF-VIEW SHOT is a shot taken with the camera placed approximately where the character's eyes would be, showing what the character would see; usually cut in before or after a shot of the character looking. Horror films and thrillers often use POV shots to suggest a menacing and unseen presence in the scene. Films that use many point-of-view shots tend toward dynamic and non-naturalistic style. In this clip from *Peking Opera Blues* (*Do Ma Daan*, Tsui Hark, Hong Kong, 1986) the female impersonator's fear of the soldier who attempts to procure him for his general is rendered comic by the cut to POV and wide angle.



POV is one of the means by which audiences are encouraged to identify with characters. However, it is actually a relatively rare technique: identificatory mechanisms rely more on sympathetic character and the flow of narrative information than on simple optical affiliation.

WIDE ANGLE LENS is a lens of short focal length that affects a scene's perspective by distorting straight lines near the edges of the frame and by exaggerating the distance between foreground and background planes. In doing so it allows for more space to enter the frame (hence the name "wide"), which makes it more convenient for shooting in a closed location, for instance a real room, rather than a three-wall studio room. In addition, a wider lens allows for a bigger depth of field. In 35mm filming, a wide angle lens is 30mm or less. See also telephoto lens.



Since a wide angle lens distorts the edges of an image, as in this frame from *Yi Yi* (Edward Yang, Taiwan, 2000), extreme wide lenses are avoided in naturalistic styles, or they are used in unrestrained or open spaces, with no converging lines around the edges of the frame.

Section 3 - Scale -If the same object were filmed at different shot scales it would often signify quite differently. Shot scale can foster intimacy with a character, or conversely, it can swallow the character in its environment. Orson Welles exploited divergent shot scales in *Citizen Kane* (1941) to demonstrate the changing power relationship between Charles Foster Kane and his lawyer. As a boy, his figure is lost in the snow at the back of the shot as the lawyer arranges for his adoption. As a young man he rebels against Bernstein's oversight, rising in the frame as he asserts himself.



EXTREME LONG SHOT -A framing in which the scale of the object shown is very small; a building, landscape, or crowd of people will fill the screen. Usually the first or last shots of a sequence, that can also function as establishing shots.. The following examples of framing from *Eyes Wide Shut* (Stanley Kubrick, 1999) and *A Summer Tale* (*Conte d'Été*, Eric Rohmer, 1996) well illustrate the range of uses for this particular shot scale.



These two extreme long shots are also establishing shots. However, their primary function is different. Whereas Rohmer give us a standard establishing shot that introduces the locale where the main characters are about to meet, Kubrick uses the ballroom shot mainly as a brief transition between two more important scenes. While the two shots above have similar sizes, some extreme long shots can be significantly larger, particularly if shot from the air with the help of cranes or helicopters. This kind of extreme long shot is also called *bird's eye view* shot, since it gives an aerial perspective of the scene.

LONG SHOT -A framing in which the scale of the object shown is small; a standing human figure would appear nearly the height of the screen. It makes for a relatively stable shot that can accomodate movement without reframing. It is therefore commonly used in genres where a full body action is to be seen in its entirety, for instance Hollywood Musicals or 1970s Martial Arts films.



Another advantage of the long shot is that it allows to show a character and her/his surroundings in a single frame, as in these two images from *Eyes Wide Shut* (Stanley Kubrick, 1999) and *A Summer Tale* (*Conte d'été*, Eric Rohmer, 1996).

MEDIUM LONG SHOT -Framing such than an object four or five feet high would fill most of the screen vertically. Also called *plain américain*, given its recurrence in the Western genre, where it was important to keep a cowboy's weapon in the image.

Eyes Wide Shut (Stanley Kubrick, 1999)



A Summer Tale (Conte d'Été) France Eric Rohmer, 1996

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP -A framing in which the scale of the object shown is fairly large; a human figure seen from the chest up would fill most of the screen. Another common shot scale.

Eyes Wide Shut (Stanley Kubrick, 1999)



A Summer Tale (Conte d'Été, Eric Rohmer, 1996)

CLOSE-UP -A framing in which the scale of the object shown is relatively large. In a close-up a person's head, or some other similarly sized object, would fill the frame. Framing scales are not universal, but rather established in relationship with other frames from the same film. These two shots from *Eyes Wide Shut* and *A Summer Tale* can be described as close-ups, even if one starts at the neck and the second at the upper chest..



Framing scales are usually drawn in relationship to the human figure but this can be misleading since a frame need not include people. Accordingly, this shot from *The Color of Paradise* (*Rang-e Khoda*, Majid Majidi, Iran, 1999) is also a close-up.



EXTREME CLOSE-UP -A framing in which the scale of the object shown is very large; most commonly, a small object or a part of the body usually shot with a zoom lens. Again, faces are the most recurrent images in extreme close-ups, as these images from *The Color of Paradise* (*Rang-e Khoda*, Majid Majidi, 1999),



The Stendhal Syndrome (*La Sindrome di Stendhal*, Dario Argento, 1996),



and *My Neighbor Totoro* (*Tonari No Totoro*, Miyazaki Hayao, 1988) demonstrate. With regard to the latter, it should be noted that while all of these film terms equally applies to animation, the technical procedure to achieve a particular effect can be very different. For instance this last frame is a drawing of Totoro's teeth, not a zoom on his face, as it would have been the case in a live-action film.



Section 4 - Movement -There are many ways to move a camera: in fluid long takes, rapid and confusing motions, etc. that establish the rhythm and point of view of a scene. A film such as *Man with the Movie Camera* (*Chelovek s kinoapparatom*, Dziga Vertov, USSR, 1929) features a full catalog of the creative possibilities open to the film camera. In one famous sequence, we get to see the cinematographer using a car as a mobile support for a tracking shot. Furthermore, one soon realizes that the whole process is probably being mirrored by a second car, in order to film the first one.



Scenes taken from both cameras are playfully incorporated into the film. Was this image of the car passing by taken by the first or the second car/camera unit?



CRANE SHOT is a shot with a change in framing rendered by having the camera above the ground and moving through the air in any direction. It is accomplished by placing the camera on a crane (basically, a large cantilevered arm) or similar device. Crane shots are often long or extreme long shots: they lend the camera a sense of mobility and often give the viewer a feeling of omniscience over the characters.



Crane shots can also be used to achieve a flowing rhythm, particularly in a long take, as in this clip from *The Player* (Altman, 1992)

HANDHELD CAMERA, STEADYCAM -The use of the camera operator's body as a camera support, either holding it by hand or using a gyroscopic stabilizer and a harness. Newsreel and wartime camera operators favored smaller cameras such as the Eclair that were quickly adopted by documentarist and avant-garde filmmakers, notably the *cinéma vérité* movement of the 1950s and 1960s. They were also used by young filmmakers since they were cheap and lent the images a greater feeling of spontaneity. At the time this challenge to prevailing standards was perceived as anti-cinematic but eventually it came to be accepted as a style. Whereas hand held cameras give a film an unstable, jerky feel, they also allows for a greater degree of movement and flexibility than bulkier standard cameras --at a fraction of the cost. Filmmakers now are experimenting with digital video in a similar way. Gyroscopically stabilized "steadicams" were invented in the 1970s and made it possible to create smooth "tracking" shots without cumbersome equipment. More recently, they are extensively used in music

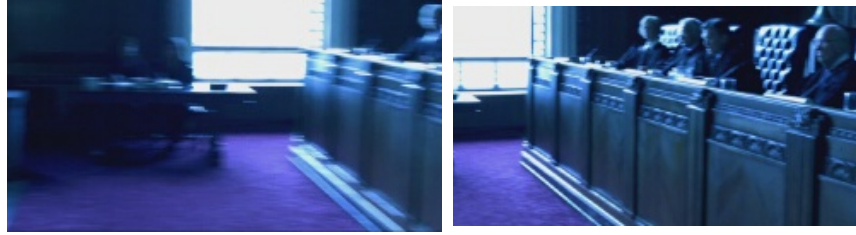
videos and in the films of the *Dogme* movement, such as Lars Von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark* (Denmark, 2000)



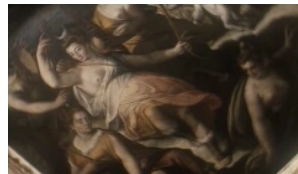
Ironically, while today's steadicams allow for a fairly stable image, Lars Von Trier and his accolites prefer to exacerbate the jerkiness and unstability traditionally associated with these cameras as a marker of visceral authorial intervention. In fact, combining steadicam shooting with aggressive reframings and jump cuts, or even by shooting on low definition formats, *Dogme* and other radical filmmaking movements attempt to create a new cinematic look as further away as possible from mainstream Hollywood.

PAN -A camera movement with the camera body turning to the right or left. On the screen, it produces a mobile framing which scans the space horizontally. A pan directly and immediately connects two places or characters, thus making us aware of their proximity. The speed at which a pan occurs can be exploited for different dramatic purposes. For instance, in a Mizoguchi or a Hou film, two characters may be having a conversation in a room, and after several minutes, the camera might pan and reveal a third person was also present, thus changing the whole implication of the scene. In a film like *Traffic* (Steven Soderbergh, 2000), on the other hand, pans are usually very quick, suggesting that characters have no time to waste, and that decisions must be taken fast, therefore contributing to the sense of imminent danger and moral urgency that the films tries to communicate.





In the clip above, the defense lawyer has just finished a long, clever speech, yet the judge has no second thoughts on his verdict, nor any pity for the (presumably guilty) accused and their rich legal cohorts. Lastly, a pan does not necessarily mean that the camera moves along an horizontal line. This clip from *The Stendhal Syndrome* (*La Sindrome di Stendhal*, Dario Argento, 1996), illustrates what we could call a 360° pan.



TILT -A camera movement with the camera body swiveling upward or downward on a stationary support. It produces a mobile framing that scans the space vertically. Its function is similar to that of pans and tracking shots, albeit on a vertical axis. In this clip from *Besieged* (*L'Assedio*, Italy, 1998) Bernardo Bertolucci uses a tilt to establish the social (and even racial) distance between an African housemaid and her wealthy English employer.



A tilt usually also implies a change in the angle of framing; in this clip the camera starts with a high angle view of the woman and ends up on a low angle view of the man --which obviously reinforces the social inequality of their relationship. Lastly, a tilt is also a means of gradually uncovering offscreen space. This can be exploited for suspense, since a sense of anticipation grows in the viewer as the camera movement forces her/his attention in a precise direction, yet never knowing when it will stop, nor what will be found there.

TRACKING SHOT -A mobile framing that travels through space forward, backward, or laterally. See also crane shot, pan, and tilt. A tracking shot usually follows a character or object as it moves along the

screen. Contrary to the pan, which mimicks a turning head, a tracking shot physically accompanies the entire range of movement. It therefore creates a closer affinity with the character or object moving, since the spectator is not just watching him/her moving, but moving *with* him/her. A standard tracking shot, as it was devised in the Classical Studio filmmaking, consisted in placing the camera on a wheeled support called a *dolly*, and moving it along rails or tracks to ensure the smoothness of movement associated with the continuity editing style. As cameras became lighter and steadier, tracking shots became more flexible and creative: bicycles, wheelchairs, roller skates, and many ingenious wheeled artifacts augmented the range of movement of tracking shots. In this clip from *Central Station* (*Central do Brasil*, Walter Salles, Brazil, 1998), one uninterrupted movement is rendered with two different tracking shots, linked by a match on action.



The first is a classic tracking shot, with the camera on rails sideways to the character that is moving, following the child as the train departs. The second uses the train as a dolly, as it moves away from the running child. Indeed, tracking shots are one of the most suggestive and creative camera movements, one that can be accomplished in a number of clever ways. Not surprisingly, some auteurs like Max Ophuls or Orson Welles made virtuosistic tracking shots a staple of their films, often in conjunction with long takes.

WHIP PAN -An extremely fast movement of the camera from side to side, which briefly causes the image to blur into a set of indistinct horizontal streaks. Often an imperceptible cut will join two whip pans to create a trick transition between scenes. As opposed to dissolves, action or graphic matches, and fades --the most common transitions of the continuity style-- whip pans always stand out, given their abrupt, brisk nature. Commonly used in flashy action genres such as kung-fu movies from the 70s, like *Fists of Fury* (*Tang Shan Da Xiong*, Wei Lo, Honk Kong, 1971).



CINEMATOGRAPHY PART B

Shot: basic element **Scene:** group of shots, **building block** of screen play **Sequence:** group of scenes, unified by common theme, time, idea, location

Camera Distance **Extreme Long Shot (XLS, ELS):** give viewer a **panoramic overview** of location or set

- **establishing shot:** orients viewer to larger physical context
- **provides information** about **time period** and **location**

Long Shot (LS): focuses on a **human figure or object** in relation to its environment **Full Shot (FS):** to show **the entire body** of character in a limited screen environment

- can show **body carriage**
- still enough **defined background** to put character in a recognizable visual context.
- good for **dance sequences**

Medium Shot (MS): used a great deal in filmmaking • covers the actor from **the knees or waist to the head**

Close Shot (CS): includes the **shoulders and face** of actor, can study **face** **Close Up (CU):** more personal view, **chin to hairline or crown**

- get most **subtle** of **facial expressions**
- focuses **attention** on something, someone = **something about** to happen

Extreme Close Up (ECU, XCU): exaggerated detail \

- points out a piece of **visual information essential** to story
- **magnified portion** of something familiar

Camera Angle **High Angle:** **bird's eye view**, can show off surroundings or make a person seem small.

Low Angle: to stress the **physical or psychological** dominance of a character **Mid-Range:** made in the spirit of **realism**

Camera Movements **Pan Shot:** moves **horizontally** on fixed axis.

Tilt Shot: moves **vertically** on fixed axis. **Mimics** looking **up or down**. **Dolly Shot:** camera moves **w/ tripod on wheels** toward or away from subject. **Tracking Shot:** camera moves **on tracks**, generally **left & right** but follows movement. **Zoom Shot:** brings **subject closer to or farther from viewer**, **lens adjustment**

Body Supported Shots **Hand held:** documentary films, cinema verite **Steadicam:** allowed camera operator **more mobility and freedom**.

Vehicle Assisted Shots

Crane Shots: camera, operator and (sometimes) **director** on the arm of crane. • anything can be shot

from almost any **reasonable height** • gives a **different perspective** and **meaning** to the image

Camera Cars: designed with **platform extensions** for mounting camera • in **fixed position** or with **Steadicam operator, trucks** with **crane** built on them

Helicopter Shots **Mise-en-scene:** placement of total elements within a film frame

3 distinct areas or **planes:**

- **Foreground**
- **Middle Ground**
- **Background**

Connotation of Lines

Horizontal Lines: serenity, harmony, stability, boredom and dull uniformity

Vertical Lines: potency and vigor, as well as enclosure and visual overwhelm

Diagonal Lines: imply movement, striving, urgency or confusion, can disorient viewer.

Straight Lines: uniformity, exactness, agreement, or monotony, can give order and dependability.

Curved Lines: hold more **intrinsic interest** than straight **Division of Thirds:** general rule is to start with those on left (facing screen)

- **Left Third:** more impact, subject of the shot
- **Center Third:** natural focal point of attention
- **Right Third:** heaviest part of the screen, direct object of action in screen

Graphic Weight

- **size:** whether from **actual size** or **camera-to-subject distance** (screen space)
- **intricate patterns** on clothes, furniture, etc.
- **colors**
- **dramatic character weight:** magnetic force of actors, power of acting

Movement Within The Frame

- **Vectors:** a **directional force** associated with the **movement of objects** which **carry our eyes** with its thrust.
- movement of characters, objects and camera

Frame Composition **Frame Size:** standard frame & image size is described as **Aspect Ratio** (width to height)

- Before 1950's
- **Cinerama:**
- **Cinemascope:**
- **Todd-AO:**

- **Widescreen:**

1.33:1 - squarish, now the standard tv set 2.6-2.8:1 2.35:1 2.2-2.35:1

1.85:1 - vast majority of **America films** use this format.

Lighting

Quality and Direction

- High-Key, Low-Key Lighting • Three-Point Lighting: Key, Fill, Back • Kicker • Eye Light • Diffusion • Gels

Color: Hue, Saturation, Luminance (brightness)

- Energy: high or low
- Warm or Cool colors
- Saturated or Desaturated
- Symbolism • red for passion or danger, black = bad, white = good **FILMSTOCKS Gauge:** width of film • Super 8mm, 16mm, Super 16mm, 35mm, 70mm **Grain** • small grains work with large amount of light • large grains work with small amount of light • Fast film: high ASA or EI, use small amount of light, coarser grain • Slow film: low ASA or EI, use with large amount of light, finer grain • High, Low and Normal Contrast

Cinema: Camera Shots

Important information to know and understand: **Shots**

All shots are subject to four elements that differ in one simple way. The elements either move or they do not move. These elements are:

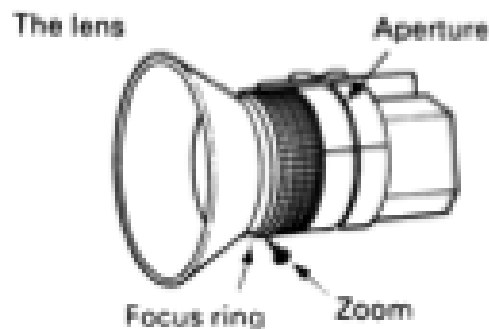
* **The Lens:**  There is different kind of lenses with different characteristics. The content of the shot is influenced if the lens is changed or its setting altered.

* **The Camera:**  The camera can be altered to shoot up or down, which is called a tilt, or to the right or left, which is called a pan.

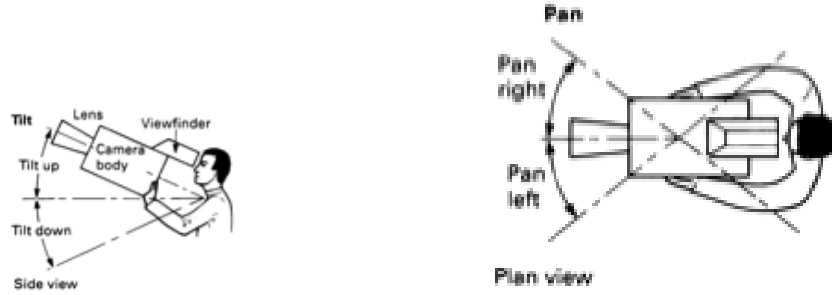
* **The Mounting:**  The camera sits on a mounting, which can also be moved up or down, elevate or crane up, depress or crane down. It can be moved to the right or left, called a crab, or the mounting can be moved either towards the subject or away from the subject, called a track in or track out. The mounting can be a number of devices ranging from a camera operator's shoulder or a tripod to a fully automated and mechanized camera crane.

* **The Subject:**  The subject can be a person or persons, a living thing, an animate object or an inanimate object. If the subject is an actor or actors, their movements may be planned in a formal way but, alternatively, there may be no movement at all.

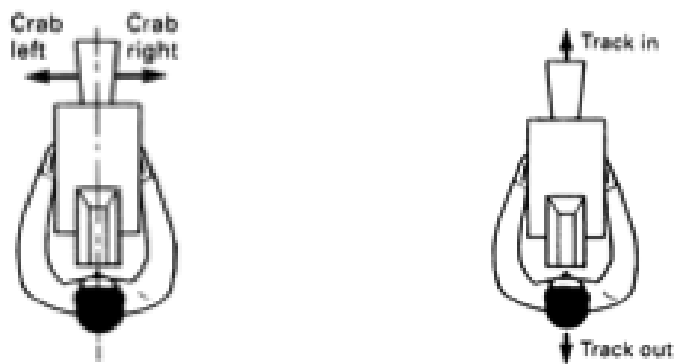
Lens Movements:



Camera Movements:



Mounting Movements:



Mountings:



or Steadicam

There are three types of shots. These are:

- * Simple Shots
- * Complex Shots
- * Developing Shots

The Simple Shot -

A simple shot is a shot containing usually one or more persons, or a shot of an animate or an inanimate object.

A simple shot has

*	No Lens Movement	NO	
*	No Camera Movement	NO	
*	No Mounting Movement	NO	
*	a Simple Subject Movement	YES	

There are only a limited number of simple shots of a single person, and an equally limited number of simple shots when a number of people are in the frame.

The simple shots are described as:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| * Extreme close up (XCU or ECU) | * Long shot (LS) |
| * Big close up (BCU) | * Very long shot (VLS) |
| * Close up (CU) | * Extreme long shot (XLS or ELS) |
| * Medium close up (MCU) | * Two shot (2S) |
| * Medium shot (MS) | * Over shoulder shot (OSS) |
| * Medium long shot (MLS) | |

These shot descriptions are part of the basic dialogue, which takes place between the editor and other people involved in postproduction. The correct identification of shots should be part of the editor's basic skills.

The Complex Shot -

A complex shot may contain one or more people (or things).

A complex shot has

* a Lens Movement	YES	
* a Camera Movement	YES	
* No Mounting Movement	NO	
* a Subject Movement	YES	

Complex shots are:

- * a pan
- * a tilt
- * a pan and tilt
- * a lens movement (a focus pull or a zoom)
- * a lens movement and pan a lens movement and tilt
- * a subject movement and pan a subject movement and tilt

or any combination of the three elements:

- * lens movement
- * camera movement
- * subject movement

The complex shot should have a static start and a static end. The shot is composed or framed in such a way that if the action or subject movement were frozen at any single point, then the resulting picture (frame) would resemble a simple shot.

The Developing Shot -

A developing shot may contain one or more subjects.

A developing shot has

*	a Lens Movement	YES	
*	a Camera Movement	YES	
*	a Mounting Movement	YES	
*	a Subject Movement	YES	

The developing shot is perhaps the most difficult shot to make. Like the complex shot it should have a static beginning and a static ending. Also, like the complex shot, if the shot were to be frozen at any point in time, it should ideally resemble a simple shot.

It differs from the complex shot mainly in the use of the camera mounting and its relationship to the subject movements.

It is important that the technique of making the shot never interferes with the impact of the visuals. Or, put another way, the good developing shot should never be noticed. Consequently, the good developing shot is complete on its own and often does not need to be edited.

Developing Shot is the most difficult to execute in the process of filmmaking.

All shots are difficult to incorporate into a film when filmmaking.

Different Camera Shots:



1 Extreme close up



2 Big close up



3 Close up



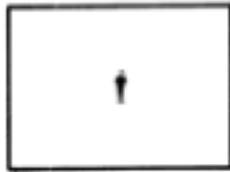
4 Medium close up



8 Very long shot



5 Medium shot



9 Extremely long shot



6 Medium long shot



10 Two shot



7 Long shot



11 Over shoulder shot

OBJECTIVES & FUNCTIONS OF LIGHTING

(Lighting is a major part of the design process so the Director of Photography must synchronize their work with the whole design team.)

Provide visibility: Generally, we have to be able to see the actors and/or scene...

Reveal shapes and forms: Lighting can (and should) be used to make things three-dimensional. This involves lighting from the side and the back in addition to the front. If actors were only lit from the front, they would look flat and two-dimensional.

Provide a focus: The viewer should be able to tell where they are supposed to direct their attention at least partly based on the assistance of lighting, as well as the camera shot.

Assist with mood and style: The way lighting is used should help to establish a clear atmosphere. Is it creepy? Romantic? Intense?

Help establish time and place: The viewer should be able to tell by the lighting if it is day or night, dawn, noon or dusk. They should also be able to tell if it is indoors or outdoors, if it's the harsh lighting of a doctor's office or the warm lights of a living room, etc.

Reinforce a central visual image: Lighting has to coordinate with the rest of the design elements to help facilitate the message the director is trying to convey.

Rhythm of visual movement: How the lighting changes say a lot about the world of the film. Are the shifts from one shot to another smooth or choppy? Fast or slow?

QUALITIES OF LIGHT:

1.) INTENSITY

INTENSITY typically refers to the 'strength' of a light source.

ILLUMINATION refers to amount of light falling on a surface. VISIBILITY depends on many factors, not just the intensity of a source or the brightness of an object. Color, contrast (Highlights and Shadows), distance(Distribution), movement and the conditions of the eye and visual system all play an important role towards visibility.

2.) DISTRIBUTION and/or DIRECTION

The direction of light is one of the most important attributes in lighting. All light has direction. A bare candle radiates light in all directions. A spotlight radiates light in a very specific direction. In nature, most light comes from the sky, from above. However, the sun creates so much light that the illumination is seen most everywhere unless there are clouds. (Three-Point Lighting System is most common.)

3.) COLOR

All light is colored. White light is simply a mixture of all visible wavelengths (colors). The human eye is most sensitive to light in the yellow-green portion of the visual spectrum, than it is to red or blue at the ends of the spectrum.

The primary colors of **light** are RED, BLUE, and GREEN. These three colors can be mix together to produce any other color, including white.

The primary colors of **pigment** are RED, BLUE, and YELLOW. These three colors can be mix together to produce any other color, including black.

4.) MOVEMENT

Movement in light is generally taken to mean any change in INTENSITY, COLOR, or DISTRIBUTION. Dynamic changes in all of these qualities take place in nature on a regular basis. Movement may also include the physical movement of a source, such as; a search light, police beacon, special optical effect, moving projections, mirror ball, etc. Movement may be rapid or very subtle, slow and unperceivable.