

NOTES ON GRIFFITH

I. TECHNIQUES

A) facilitate acceptance of virulence of extra-cinematic codes of racism

Close-up

Cross-cutting – parallel editing-successive temporality vs. simultaneous spatial relations;

Frontal staging, little scene dissection, few POV shots

Placement of edit to break continuity of editing & build suspense

Impressionistic lighting

B) Interframe, narrative: 180 degree system, MS, LS, subjective camera, flashback

C) Intraframe narrative: panning, tilting, camera angle (high, low), Iris, Split screen

1) optical printer to create dissolve OR

in camera: scene shot through slowly closing lens diaphragm

film was stopped & rewound & scene was shot again

2)) increased scene length

II. TWO PLOTS:

Courtship & war-note dissolve from still photo to actual chambers of legislature

III. Spectator's relation to film:

Cinema of attractions = extra-diegetic

Griffith: spectator not in fixed place but undergoes transformation in the narrative

ELSAESSER ON GRIFFITH

I. IMR (institutional mode) vs.

PMR (Primitive Mode): use of character movement between spaces instead of cut on action

II. Symmetry, Doubling of spaces, families, characters, time, visual field

(300) Alternation (parallel editing = a formal feature that aligns with diegetic principle of doubling)

III. Griffith the story teller (298)

Insert (alternative to cut)

CU (can be disruptive, not narratively motivated)

Pov shot (technical or optical); narrative pov (=focalization); narrational pov = spectator

Cross-cutting & moralism of titles PMR

IV. Multi-reel film – related to middle class audience (300)

V. inscribing spectator

As recording device, camera abstracts visible from context; narration re-inserts causation, agency, context (304)

Spectator transforms in course of narrative trajectory (314)

Spectator = link between characters (315)

JAMES SNEAD ON *BIRTH OF A NATION*

37: Metz's distinction between "cinematic" & "extra-cinematic" codes, e.g., "Loyalty to father"

39: Film form & racism coalesce into myth here:

Cinematic devices: close-ups, pans, tracking shots, parallel montage to facilitate succession, temporal brakes, causality, adversary relations, spatial relations.

These facilitate acceptance of virulence of extra-cinematic codes (racism)

39: 2 courtship plots + war or revenge against black usurpers -> political parts are represented as obstacles to romantic outcome

40: basic ideological message = blacks must be barred from intercourse of any kind with white purity

41: "historical facsimiles" = crucial to ideological rather than narrative aims

DONALD BOGLE, "BLACK BEGINNINGS: FROM UNCLE TOM'S CABIN TO THE BIRTH OF A NATION"

5 BASIC STEREOTYPES: the Tom – old faithfuls

The coon, the pickaninnies, Topsy, Rastus (steals turkey or chicken)

Uncle Remus

The tragic mulatto = victim of divided racial inheritance

Mammy

Brutal Black Buck & *birth of a nation*

18: Formal innovations:

Griffith developed close-up, cross cutting, rapid fire editing, the iris, split screen shot, realistic & impressionistic lighting

21: Black bucks = Lynch & Gus: show tie between sex and racism; tied to mulatta character Lydia