

Cinema and Music Analysis Worksheet

Movie: *Clash of the Titans*

Year Released: 2010

Part 1: Cinematic Elements

Pay close attention to the technical cinematic elements of the film you watch. Be sure to use specific terminology and description when addressing each section.

Framing, Angles, and Camera Movement: Describe a significant element and explain its effect.

1. As Perseus learns the story of his birth from Io, Perseus is positioned as the center of the frame, with nobody around him. As a result, Perseus becomes the focal point of this scene. As Io narrates, having Perseus at the center of the frame allows viewers to register Perseus' emotions towards finally learning about his origins, as he has questioned it for so long. Thus, allowing Perseus to serve as the focal point of the frame, the viewers empathize with Perseus as we watch the varied emotions flash across his face.

2. In the beginning of the film, there is a scene where Perseus and his family begin to approach a statue of Zeus. As they approach the statue, the camera begins to circle around the statue. The scene is shot from a low angle, looking up at Zeus. The director's choice of using this angle displays the statue of Zeus, and Zeus himself, as a powerful figure. This is in part due to the fact that the low angle makes the viewer feel as if they are looking up at Zeus, which creates a feeling of inferiority in the viewer.

3. In the beginning of the film, *Clash of the Titans*, panning is used as a female narrator begins to tell the backstory of the gods, and leads into the beginning of the film. Panning is a film technique where the camera keeps moving in a vertical or horizontal direction to create a panoramic view of the scene. The director's choice to use panning in the beginning of the film gives the effect of time passing, as the narrator tells Perseus' origin story.

Editing Choices and Length of Takes: Describe a significant editing choice and explain its effect.

1. After the narrator has finished introducing the story of the gods, the panning ends with an underwater view of a casket. Then, the director and editors made the decision to utilize a jump cut, to jump to present time in the film, where Perseus is found in the casket floating at sea. A jump cut is a quick transition from one scene to another. As a result, the jump cut was utilized to end the backstory scene that introduces some of the characters, and begins the storyline of the film.

2. During the most heightened aspects of the fight scenes, the editors often choose to use slow motion during impactful moments. For example, when Perseus and the other men are fighting the large scorpions in the desert, one of the men is stabbed in the back by one of the scorpions. In this scene, the camera focuses on the man and the music slows. In slow motion, the scorpion thrashes the man to the ground. As a result, the use of slow motion builds dramatic effect. When viewers watch this scene, the extreme violent act is emphasized, and this scene becomes an iconic moment within the film.

3. After the tragic scene of Perseus' family's death, the camera zooms out from Perseus in the ocean, to the sky, then to the palace of the God's. In this case, by zooming out the editors can smoothly transition from Perseus' emotional scene to that of the God's discussing the events of humans destroying their statues, and losing their devotion to the gods. Thus, the zoom effect allows for a smooth transition to a different scene without taking away from the sad even of Perseus' family's death.

Color and Lighting: Describe a significant element and explain its effect.

1. After Perseus has successfully attained the head of Medusa, along with losing many of his men, he is confronted by Calibos. During Perseus' fight scene with Calibos, Perseus uses the

sword granted to him by his father for the first time. The overall lighting of this scene is very dark to symbolize Calibos' wickedness. However, once Perseus draws his sword, the lighting brightens only on Perseus, and he becomes the focal point of the scene. As a result, lighting is effectively used in this scene to bring the viewer's attention to Perseus in this iconic moment when he finally chooses to use the weapons, his sword and Pegasus, that were gifted to him from Zeus. As well, I believe this marks the point where Perseus accepts his identity as a demigod.

2. Throughout the film, when Hades appears, low key lighting is used. As well, his face is colored in a way that makes the actor look sickly and pale. The use of low key lighting creates a sharp contrast between the deep shadows, and Hades deathly features. As it is explained in *Clash of the Titans*, Hades is the king of the Underworld, and has spent centuries underground. The use of low lighting and pale coloring are symbolic of evil and danger. Thus, not only does the use of low lighting and pale coloring detail the effects of life in the underworld, but it also signifies Hades as the bad guy within the film.

3. There is a scene where Perseus and his family are approaching an island, and the statue of Zeus rises high from the edge of this island. However, Perseus becomes aware that soldiers are breaking down the statue of Zeus from its base. Once the statue of Zeus is destroyed by the soldiers and falls into the ocean, the lighting changes from bright to dark. This dramatic change in lighting foreshadows a coming danger. It emphasizes the fact that by destroying the statue of Zeus, the soldiers have angered the gods. As a result, the director's choice of darker lighting during this scene conveys to the viewer the danger the soldiers have created through their actions, and creates a sense of suspense, as the viewers question what is about to happen next.

Part Two: Theatrical Elements

Pay close attention to the theatrical elements of the film as you watch.

Costume Choices: Describe a significant element and explain its effect.

1. In the film, Perseus' adopted family makes most of their income from fishing. The costume choices made by the director effectively define Perseus' family socioeconomic status to the audience. Their clothing is dirty and often worn out with holes from days at sea. One may determine that Perseus' family does not make much money, but they try to get by with what they can. Thus, the costume choices within the film define the character's as lower class.

2. When Zeus first appears in the film, he is wearing a suit of armor with a cape. Not only is he wearing armor, but this armor appears to shine like no other. Through the use of armor, the costume designer can depict Zeus as a powerful warrior. However, with the added glint to his armor, Zeus is also portrayed as a God, as if the shine to his armor gives it its own magical, godly power. Thus, through the costume choices made for Zeus, the viewers can determine that this is Zeus, the powerful King of the Gods, before it is stated by any of the other characters.

Props: Describe a significant element and explain its effect.

1. As Perseus is preparing to fight, Draco tests Perseus' sword fighting skills. When Perseus excels at sword fighting with no training, Draco asserts that he must have Godliness in him. After this assertion, Zeus gifts Perseus with a sword. He is the only one who is able to summon the blade of the sword. As well, Zeus gifts Perseus with a Pegasus. At first, Perseus refuses to use the sword because he believes it is a trap by the gods. However, later in the film Perseus finally decides to use the sword to defeat Calibos. Though the Pegasus may not be considered a prop, the sword along with Pegasus serve to symbolize Perseus as a demigod, and becomes a label of Perseus, much like a lightning bolt is used to signify Zeus.

2. Many of the props used within *Clash of the Titans* are forms of weaponry. For example, shields, swords, and arrows. These weapons are similar to those that were used by the Ancient Greeks. In a film set in modern times one would expect weapons to include different

types of guns, rather than a sword or arrows. As a result, the weaponry used by Perseus and his men serves to further define the setting and era of the film as Ancient Greece.

Acting Choices: Describe a significant element and explain its effect.

1. In the film, the actors speak in an old English style. The wording used by the actors conveys to the viewers the period that the film takes place. It cannot be exactly determined what era it is solely by the language, but one may conclude that the film does not take place in modern times. Furthermore, as the characters begin to speak about the Gods, such as Zeus, viewers can determine that the film is set in Ancient Greece. Thus, the language used within the film, as well as context cues given by the script, allow the viewers to understand where and when the film is taking place.

2. Voice inflection becomes a very important aspect of acting within this film. Voice inflection is often used to denote power in many of the characters. For example, when Zeus speaks to the other gods, he annunciates his voice in a way that captivates his people. As well, Perseus uses the same power in his voice when he is threatening to destroy the witches' eye if he does not answer his question. The way in which the actors are able to inflate their voice in a way that commands attention is imperative for characterization. If Zeus spoke softly, he would not be taken seriously as the ruler of the Gods. Similarly, if Perseus did not speak in a way that drew the attention of the witches, he wouldn't be able to get the information he needs to defeat the Kraken. Thus, voice inflection is utilized by the actors to define certain characters as powerful and authoritative.

Set Design: Describe a significant element and explain its effect.

1. The director did a very effective job at choosing the locations for this film. A majority of the film was filmed in the Canary Islands. However, many of the landscapes are like that of

Greece. For example, the architectures are built into the mountains. This is very characteristic of the way in which the Greeks used to build their homes. As a result, the choice of location is very effective in setting the scene of Greece within *Clash of the Titans*.

2. I found it very odd that the director chose to make Perseus' travels be set in a desert. From a realistic perspective, there are not any deserts in Greece, which is where the film takes place. However, the desert does serve as an effective setting for the first fight scene within the film. As well, it introduces many new creatures to the storyline. For example, the Djinn, the ancient sorcerers living in the desert, are helpful in moving the storyline forward, as they heal Perseus once he is poisoned by Hades, and provide Perseus and his men with a mode of travel that will quicken their passage across the desert. Therefore, though the choice of a desert as a setting is not geographically correct, it does allow the storyline to move forward while also providing a playing field for a fight scene that draws the viewers' attention.

Part Three: Sound and Score

Pay close attention to the auditory elements of the film as you watch. Be sure to use specific terminology and description when addressing each section.

Dynamic Shifts: Describe a significant element and explain its effect.

1. In the beginning of the film, a quite melody plays behind the narrator's voice as she describes the story of the gods and Perseus' birth, which adds to the story like ambiance of the scene. However, once the scene jumpcuts to the beginning of the storyline where Perseus' adoptive father finds him and his deceased mother in a casket, the music fades into silence. Thus, the ceasing of the music is another element that is used by the directors and the editors to end one scene, the backstory, and begin another scene.

2. As Perseus and his men begin to enter Medusa's lair, Perseus and Draco discuss Perseus' fate, as the witches foretold that Perseus would die. However, Draco promises Perseus

that they will survive to the end. During this scene, the music is very upbeat, but slow. However, as the boat inches closer to Medusa's cave the music crescendos, and becomes louder. This technique conveys to the viewer that Perseus and his men are approaching danger. As well, the crescendo in the movie serves as a transition into the next scene, where they have entered Medusa's cave and possible death. The music decrescendos as Perseus gives a short speech to the men, thanking them for accompanying him on this journey. As a result, the rise and fall of the melody within the film can change to the overall dynamic – the softer melody conveys the significance of Draco and Perseus conversation, and has the same effect during Perseus' speech, but when the music becomes louder the viewers understand that Perseus and his men are approaching danger.

Rhythm: Describe a significant element and explain its effect.

1. Within the film, Hades received permission from Zeus to punish the humans for defying them. Accordingly, when the queen of Argos claims that her daughter is more beautiful than Aphrodite, Hades begins to rise and confront the royal court. It is in these scenes that a dissonant harmony is played. The music played includes what I believe to be a horn, which creates a very deep, cacophony of sounds. The music appears to ascend, or become louder, as Hades approaches the royal court and as he makes his exit. Yet, the rhythm of the music is slow, much like the way in which Hades talks and moves. As a result, the music not only adds to the ambiance of the scene, but also reflects the dark nature of Hades to the viewers.

2. In *Clash of the Titans* there were many fight scenes, all of which were accompanied by similar music. The music always had a fast-paced rhythm that went hand in hand with the quick movement of the warriors. For example, when the men were attacked by the witches, each inflection in the music seemed to accompany an attack by either the men or the witches. As well,

the quickened beat of the music creates excitement within the viewer, and creates anticipation for an action filled scene. Thus, the use of fast paced rhythm is effective during action, or dramatic scenes, as it goes well with the quick movements of a fight, and generates the viewers' primal response.

Primal Response: Describe a significant element and explain its effect.

1. From my perspective, I believe it was many of the diegetic sounds that generated my primal responses to the film. For example, in many of the fight scenes the warriors would scream, either in triumph or defeat. It is these realistic tones that drew me into the scene, and made me feel as if I were there ready to fight. As a result, the use of diegetic sounds in the film are very effective in summoning the fight or flight response within the viewers, which draws the viewers in and makes them feel like they are a part of the action.

2. The directors and editors chose a fantastic ensemble of music to go along with the film. Though the music is simplistic, it is the changes to the melodic contour, such as an increase in rhythm that adds to the film. These changes in the melody are effective in creating an emotional response in the viewer. For example, during fight scenes, a very rapid rhythm is used. This rapid beat creates a sense of excitement and anticipation of action within the viewer, as they revel in the fight that is unfolding before them.