Lion Study Notes

Director: Garth Davis

Characters

Fill out the table answering the questions about each character in detail. Insert a picture of the character.

Character	Who are they? Describe them.	What is their role in the film? If they change, how do they change?	What is the director's purpose for their character? Do they stand for anything more i.e. are they symbolic of anything?
Young Saroo			
Saroo			
Guddu			
Mantosh			
Sue Brierley			
Lucy			

Relationships

Which characters have important relationships in the film? Remember relationships can be positive or negative. What do we learn from these relationships? How do they affect the characters?
E.g. Saroo's relationship with Guddu. We learn… (about ideas, society, human nature) This relationship affects Sarool because…

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Events

In your own words, define the concepts below drawn from Aristotle's *Poetics*. If you are interested in reading more, here is a link to a PDF of the text.

Anagnorisis -

When do we see this concept at play in the film? Why is this important?

Peripeteia -

When do we see this concept at play in the film? Why is this important?

Catharsis -

When do we see this concept at play in the film? Why is this important?

How do these ideas affect your perception of the events of the film?

What other events do you think are the most important and why? Consider character development, the ideas they convey, what we learn about human nature etc.

Settings

Settings can often be used to convey main ideas, particularly through what they represent. Setting is not limited to places either. It can also refer to a time period. Fill out the table below with the settings you think are most important in the film and why.

Setting	Description	Importance - what do we learn from it? Is it symbolic in some way? What is the director's purpose for it?

Conflicts

As you know there can be a wide range of conflicts in a text: person vs person (external conflict), person vs society, person vs self, internal conflict and so on. There can also be a conflict between different ideologies or ideals. Fill out the table with a list of specific conflicts we see in the film. Think of as many as you can, but fill it out in detail for at least five.

Conflict	Type of Conflict	What we learn from it/What the director's purpose is
E.g. Saroo's conflict with himself - guilt	*Internal conflict*	

Themes

Write down five themes (main ideas/messages) you feel are important to the text and that you are confident writing about (You can include themes from your notes in your Film folder). Then fill out the columns that follow with characters, events and/or settings that demonstrate your theme. You may not have examples for each category and that is fine. You may find it helpful to flesh out your examples in more detail so you can refer back to them later on.

Themes	Characters	Events	Settings
E.g. Being obsessively tunnel-visioned on one goal can become detrimental to our hauora & health.	1. Saroo 2.		1.

Film Techniques

One of the most important parts of a film essay is being able to successfully identify, describe and discuss the effect of film techniques. Basically, to analyse them. The techniques and their effect must be used as evidence in support of your argument regardless of whether the question mentions techniques or not. I recommend using at least one unique film technique per paragraph in addition to some dialogue. (In other words, a quote, but you will need to label it as dialogue.)

FILM TECHNIQUES REVISION GUIDE

There are six main aspects of film language that we focus on for visual texts in English.

You need to be familiar with all of them, as you will have to *analyse how* the director uses film techniques as language features in your essays.

1. **Camera work**: shot types, camera angles, camera movement.
2. **Sound**: diegetic (dialogue) and non-diegetic (voiceover, soundtrack).
3. **Lighting**: backlighting, side-lighting, high-key and low-key lighting.
4. **Mise-en-scène**: This term means put on stage or into the scene *en français.* It includes costume, setting, props, and aspects of the actors' performance - facial expressions, body language, gestures and movements.
5. **Symbolism & Motifs**
6. **Editing**: Editing occurs in post production. Techniques include montage, archival footage (when we see footage from Saroo's real life at the end) fades in or out, cutting, dissolve, special effects.

Task: Complete the third row - Questions to ask yourself.
A good idea is to include your OWN screenshots of the film below the examples I have provided.

CAMERA WORK

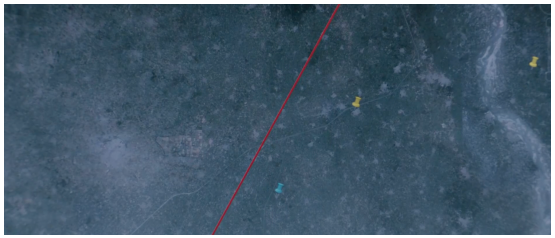
Type of technique	Definition & Effect	Example(s)	Questions to ask yourself:
Close-up shot	Focuses on detail / expression / reaction. Person - shows either head or head and shoulders. Used to show the emotion on a character's face. Shows their expression is important.		*Who or what are we focusing on in this close up?* *What facial expressions is the character showing? Why?* *What are they feeling/doing in this scene that would cause them to react with this type of expression?*

			Why is this expression/emotion important to the scene?
Extreme close-up	Shows part of an object or person in extremely close detail, e.g. eyes. Used to show details on a character's face OR on an object.	  	*Who or what are we focusing on in this extreme close up?* *Is there any detail that the director is trying to make us notice or focus on? What is it and why?*
Mid/medium shot	Shows a person from the waist up. Allows the viewer to see the character's expression and gestures.		*Who or what are we focusing on in this mid shot?* *What facial expressions is the character showing? What gestures are they making? What is their body language showing?* *Why does the director want us to see the character's face and gestures at the same time?*

Long Shot	Overall view from a distance of a whole scene that may show the body of a person from head to toe. Shows a character in their environment. Gives detail about the character and the setting.	 	*Who or what are we focusing on in this long shot?* *What do we learn about the character and the setting?* *What actions is the character performing? Why does the director need us to see their whole body?* *What do we learn from the juxtaposition of the character and their environment?*
Establishing shot	A shot of the setting at the start of a scene or film. Introduces the mood and setting.	 	*What setting or location are we introduced to? What do we learn about it from this shot?* *Is this a new place or a place we have been to before in the film? If it is an old location, has anything changed?* *What mood or atmosphere is created through the composition of the setting? What genre is established?*
Two shot	A shot of two characters side-by-side, often in conversation. Shows the relationship between characters.		*Who or what are we focusing on in this two-shot?* *What type of relationship do these two characters have?* *Based on how they are standing and interacting with one another, is their relationship good or bad?*

			
Low Angle shot	Camera is placed low, looking up at the subject. Makes the character look strong and powerful. They are dominant in the scene. Also called the 'hero shot'.		*Who or what are we focusing on in this low angle shot?* *Why is the director trying to make them appear powerful, heroic and/or dominant?*
High Angle shot	Camera is up high, looking down at the subject. Makes the characters look small, weak and /or vulnerable. The audience is literally 'looking down' on them.	 	*Who or what are we focusing on in this high angle shot?* *Why is the director trying to make them appear small, weak and/or vulnerable?*
Bird's Eye View shot **Also called Aerial shot, or Crane shot.**	When the camera is directly above the subject, looking down. Used in timed lapses to show the passing of time. The use of aerial shots, shot by drones, has a very particular purpose in Lion.		*Who or what are we focusing on in this bird's eye view shot?* *What does looking at the scene from above teach us about the setting, situation or character(s)?* *What dramatic irony is in play here?*

Dutch Angle	Camera stays in one spot but tilts to give a diagonal/ slanted shot. Gives a sense of unease or disorientation. Can represent madness, sickness, intoxication, etc.	Not used in 'Lion', **that I can find*, but hand-held cameras are used very effectively throughout the train scene.	*Who or what are we focusing on in this dutch angle shot?* *Where does the sense of unease or disorientation in the scene come from? What is this used to represent?*
Point-of-view shot (POV)	Audience sees through the eyes of the character. We see what they see. Allows the audience to see from the character's perspective.	 Not used very often in 'Lion', as it can be quite a clichéd technique. Instead, the director Garth Davies positions the camera at young Saroo's level a lot. Good examples are used while trapped on the train, in Howarth station, and when Saroo enters the orphanage.	*Who or what are we focusing on in this point of view shot?* *Whose point of view are we seeing the scene through? Why are we looking through their eyes and not someone else's?* *How does the character's point of view change how we view the scene?*
Over-the-shoulder shot (OTS)	Camera shoots from over the shoulder of one character, from behind. Shows relationships between characters, often through conversation.	 	*Who or what are we focusing on in this over-the-shoulder shot?* *What type of relationship do these two characters have? Based on how they are interacting with one another, what do we learn about their relationship?*

Camera movement.. Zoom	Camera stays in the same spot, while the lens moves closer (zoom in) or further away (zoom out). Puts focus on a character/object, showing its importance OR widens to reveal more about the surroundings/context of the scene.	 During Saroo's Google Earth scrolling searches.	*Who or what are we focusing on in this zoom shot?* *Has the shot zoomed in? If so, to focus on what?* *Has the shot zoomed out? If so, to reveal what?*
Tracking	Camera follows the subject, usually at a similar speed. Help to immerse the audience in a particular setting. Also can create tension and urgency.	Occurs during the train scene, from the window. (Hard to show in a still)	*Who or what are we focusing on in this tracking shot?* *What movement is being tracked?* *Is a sense of urgency being created? If so, why?*
Panning	The horizontal movement of the camera (from side to side) from one spot. Used to follow action such as a character moving from one spot to another. Panning shots can also be used to establish locations, slowly revealing information about a place as we take it in.		*Who or what are we focusing on in this panning shot?* *What do we learn about the setting or location?* *What information is revealed to us through this shot?*
Tilting	The vertical movement of the camera (up and down). Expresses either attention or head motion.		*Who or what are we focusing on in this tilting shot?* *What do we learn about the character(s)/situation?* *Whose point of view are we seeing the scene from in this movement?*

SOUND

Type of sound	Diegetic or non-diegetic	Definition	Questions to ask yourself:
Voiceover	Non-diegetic	The addition of narration over a scene by a character or narrator.	*What is being said in the voiceover? What is the significance of these words?* *Who is the one speaking? Why has the director used this character for the voiceover?*
Dialogue	Diegetic	Conversation between two or more characters.	*Who is speaking, and to who?*

			What is being said? What is the meaning behind these words/conversation? *What is the tone of the conversation? Describe the characters' voices.* *What is the volume of the conversation?*
Ambient sound	Diegetic	Ambient comes from what's natural. All the other sounds that make up the world of the film, e.g. birds chirping, footsteps, the sounds of the train tracks, the swirling winds, the wave etc.	*What sounds can you hear in the scene?* *How has the director used silence for effect?*
Soundtrack	Diegetic / non-diegetic	Specific songs/music added to the film.	*What type of song is playing? What genre of music is it?* *Are there any lyrics to the song? What are the words and why are they relevant to the scene?*
Score / mood music	Non-diegetic	Background music. The music added to the scene to create mood/atmosphere.	*What type of music is playing? Describe the pace, volume, instruments used, etc.* *What tone/mood/atmosphere does this music create? What emotions does this music inspire?*

MISE EN SCÈNE

Type of technique	Definition	Example	Questions to ask yourself:
Costuming	The outfit of a character, including makeup, clothing, props, etc.		*What is the character wearing? What colours are the clothes? What details do you notice?* *What do we learn about this character from what they look like?* *Is the clothing recognisable (e.g. branded, a uniform, from a particular time period)?*
Set design	The combination of elements that make up different sets (crafted locations where events take place).		*How has the set been arranged?* *What details can you notice? What colours have been used and why?* *How has the set/setting been used to achieve the director's purpose?*
Props	Objects used on stage or screen by actors during a performance or screen production. E.g. The spoon Saroo finds, the koala teddy bear the Brierleys give him, the pepper shaker, his computer.		*What objects/props recur throughout the film?* *What significance/symbolism do these props have in the film?*

Actor's performance	The expressions, actions, gestures and character decisions of an actor.		*What do the actors do in the scene? How do they do this?* *How do they react and interact with the other actors/setting?*
Casting	The process of selection of a particular actor to play a particular character.		*What actor has been cast in this role?* *Why do you think this actor was cast for this particular role?*

LIGHTING

Type of lighting	Definition & Effect	Example	Questions to ask yourself:
High key lighting	Many lights are used so that the scene is brightly lit. There are no shadows. To create a light, bright and often dream-like, happy atmosphere. The use of high key lighting in Saroo's dream sequences of his mother and Guduu is important!		*Where is the lighting coming from in the scene?* *What atmosphere is created through this lighting? What do we learn about the scene from the atmosphere that is created?*
Low key lighting	Only one light is used. The shot is full of shadows. To create a dark, eerie and sometimes sinister atmosphere. In the case of 'Lion', the low key lighting provided by candles often evokes poverty, or Saroo's fears.		*Where is the lighting coming from in the scene?* *What atmosphere is created through this lighting? What do we learn about the scene from the atmosphere that is created?*
Side lighting	Light comes from the side, throwing shadow onto half of the subject's face. To show the duality of characters - the contrast between light and dark (good and evil).		*What character is this side lighting used on?* *What are the character's motivations/actions in this scene? Where are they in their character journey/development?*
Back lighting	Light where the subject is lit from the back. Often, characters who are backlit, emerging from darkness, creates a sense of danger or foreboding.	 	*Where is the lighting coming from in the scene?* *What atmosphere is created through this lighting? What do we learn about the scene from the atmosphere that is created?*

Symbolism

	Definition & Effect	Example	Questions to ask yourself:
Symbol	A symbol is an object or image which represents a larger idea. The colour of a symbol is often important, and the ideas associated with that colour.		*How is the symbol portrayed by the camera in this scene?* *What could the symbol represent?* *Why does the director use this symbol? How effective is Davies' use of symbols throughout the film?*
			
			
Motif	A motif is a recurrent image, pattern, idea (or rift) throughout a piece of art.	 	*What motif(s) is employed throughout the film?* *How does the motif (**in this case, water**) become developed throughout the story?*

EDITING

Type of editing	Definition
Cutting	One image on a scene is suddenly replaced with another.
Cross-cutting	The camera will cut away from one action to another action. Used to establish action occurring at the same time, and usually in the same place.
Fade in/out	A slow transition from one scene to another OR to a black screen. 
Juxtaposition	Contiguous positioning of two images (characters, objects, etc.), in order to compare and contrast them.