



Film Theory

What Films Do

Theory

: an idea or set of ideas that is intended to explain facts or events

: an idea that is suggested or presented as possibly true but that is not known or proven to be true

Film Theory

: Frameworks developed over time in order to understand the way films are made & received.

- borrows from philosophy, art theory, social sciences, psychology, technology, literary theory, linguistics, economics, and political science

: Developed to explain the nature of films and how they produce emotional and psychological effects on the audience.

: The power of a film &

: How it communicates meaning

: A way at looking at movies from a particular intellectual or ideological perspective.

(Some) Major Theories

- Auteur
- Genre*
- Gender (feminist, queer)
- Formalist*
- Realist
- Psychoanalytical
- Marxist

Genre Theory

- Concerned with identifying and analyzing the characteristics of particular genres
 - and the adhering or not adhering to the genre conventions (*conservative vs. progressive*)
- Looks at a film as a representative of a genre, comparing it with other films from the same genre and finding meaning by identifying shared conventions and variations

Formalist Theory

- Sees cinematic form as the most important source of a movie's meaning
 - Attempts to explain how the filmmakers' techniques/style/choices create the movie's layered meanings
 - Highlights film's ability to influence an audience emotionally and intellectually

- Other theories tend to use a lot of external evidence to analyze a film, a formalist approach will focus primarily on internal evidence.
 - film's use of mise en scene, framing, camera movements, editing, sound, etc.

- A theory of film study that is focused on the formal, or technical, elements of a film: i.e., the style of the lighting, scoring, sound and set design, shot composition, editing, etc.
- For example, the single element of sound:
 - The use of silence and ambient sound in movies made in the same year in different countries
- Can also be a synthesis of several elements (like: editing, shot composition, and music)

So...

- You've thought about film movements, you've thought about film genre and film theory – and you've briefly analyzed a couple films/scenes, and you know some film language, now it's time to put this all together for a Comparative Film Analysis assignment.
- Get out the tan IB Film Assessment Cheat Sheet (you got it the 2nd week of school).