ANALYZING A SCENE

# MISE EN SCÈNE

- Are they defined by their clothes, their conversation…?
- Do the characters seem realistic? Are they meant to seem realistic?
- Does the arrangement of objects, props, and characters within that setting have some significance?
- Does the setting, have a special significance that relates to the characters, theme, and story?
- How much space is there between the characters?
- Is the framing tight or loose? Do the character have no room to move around, or can they move freely?
- Is there balance in the shot?

- Props and Make-up?
- What conflicts are revealed?
- What do the objects say about the characters state of mind?
- What does it reveal about the character/s?
- What does the clothing say about the character?
- What does the lighting suggest about the tone or mood of a scene, even about the psychological mindsets of characters?
- What part of the framed space do the characters occupy? Center? Top? Bottom? Edges? Why?
- What props are included? What purpose do they serve? How do they move the story forward?
- What themes are revealed?
- Where is our eye attracted first? Why?
- Are there any metaphors in the scene?

BOYS DON'T CRY

- 1999
- Director: Kimberly Peirce
- @13 min
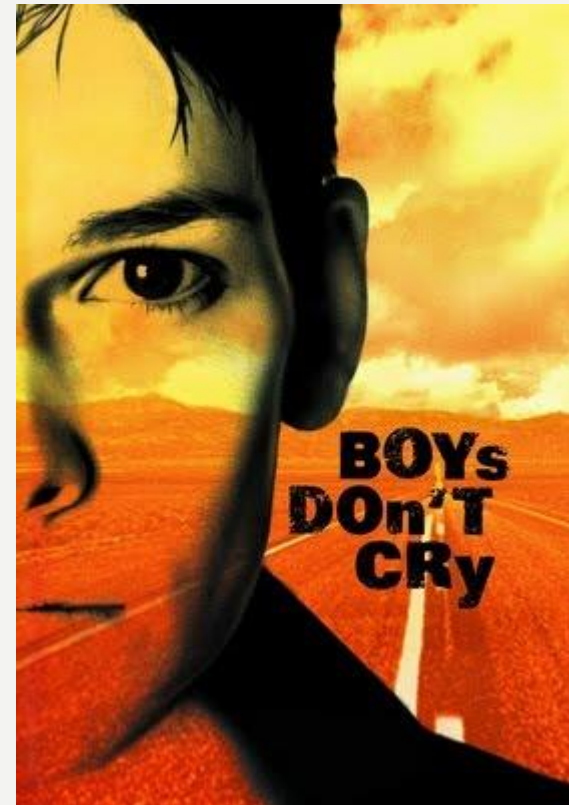
THE BREAKFAST CLUB

- 1985
- Director: John Hughes
- @ opening

NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN

- 2007

- Directors: Ethan Coen and Joel Coen

- @ 22 min

SOUND

- Diegetic and non-diegetic sound?

- Is there a soundtrack?

- How does the music add to the mood of the piece? Does it foreshadow aspects of the plot, heighten tension, or shape our understanding of key characters or plot lines?

- Are there sound effects?

- Are certain sounds or music related to key images or characters?

- Is there narration? Who is the narrator and what scenes do they narrate? What images accompany the narration?

- What is the relation of the sound to the image in specific scenes or sequences?

- Is the sound used to link images, or does the sound have the conventional role of beginning and terminating with the image?

- Does the sound ever become more important than the image? Reason?

- Do the musical numbers in a musical have any special relation to the narrative structure (for instance, do they occur when the characters need to escape?)?

- What role does silence play in the movie?

- Are there sound motifs that identify the characters or actions?

- If you had had to choose three key sounds from the scene/movie which would they be and why?

- Who is the sound designer? Sound mixer? History of working with the director? History of working in other mediums? With other directors?

Other Notes on Sound:
- Keep in mind that the director may have deliberately taken out any true ambient sounds and inserted others. Imagine what you might actually hear at the scene's location and whether the director made a good choice in the sounds he or she included.
- Take note if the director inserted sounds to evoke a particular emotion from the audience. For instance, a beat or ticking clock creates a sense of urgency or dread.
- Determine whether the movie contains original music or music the director has licensed from another artist. Why the choice/s?
- Close your eyes and listen to the audio/music.

ARGO

- 2012
- Director: Ben Affleck
- @ 1hr 30min

EDITING

- Are the shots highly fragmented or relatively lengthy? Are there longer scenes with fewer cuts or shorter edits? Or is there a mix?

- Is suspense create with the editing?

- Does the editing seem manipulative (making the audience feel a certain way)?

- What kind of rhythm does the editing establish with each scene?

- Is the personality of the filmmaker apparent in the editing?

- How are individual scenes edited? Fades? Dissolves? Abrupt cuts? Straight-forward cuts? Why? How does it affect the scene/story?

- Is there parallel editing? Expected or unexpected conclusion?

- How does the editing advance the story?

- Is there continuity editing? Does the scene (movie in general?) create the sense of a logical and safe world?

- Is there a break from continuity editing?

- Are you supposed to be aware of the editing?

- Are you supposed to be unsure where an action takes place because the scene begins with a close-up of a character or inside an unidentified room? How does the editing affect the overall narrative or our understanding of certain characters or plot lines?

- Who is the editor? History of working with the director? History of working in other mediums? With other directors?
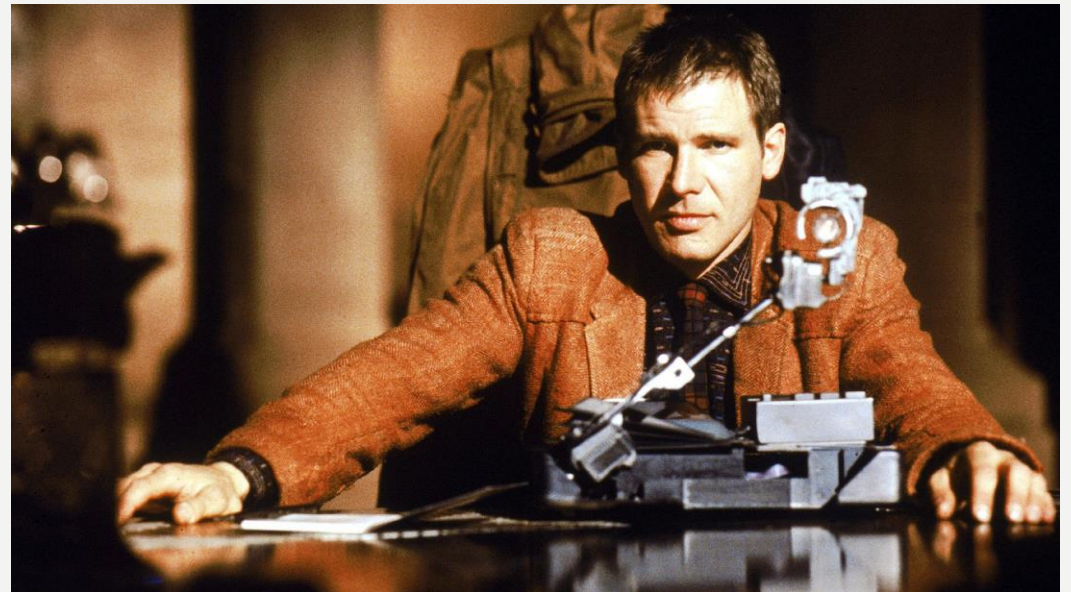
THE TRUMAN SHOW

- 1998
- Director: Peter Weir
- @ opening
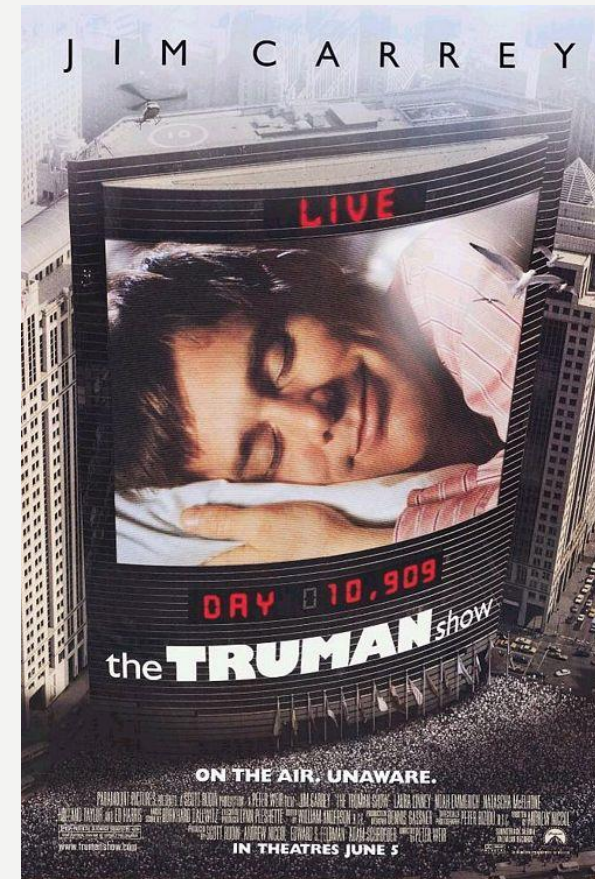
BLADE RUNNER

- 1982
- Director: Ridley Scott
- @ 3 min

Early in the 21st Century, THE TYRELL CORPORATION advanced Robot evolution into the NEXUS phase — a being virtually identical to a human — known as a *Replicant.*

The NEXUS 6 *Replicants* were superior in strength and agility, and at least equal in intelligence, to the genetic engineers who created them.

Replicants were used Off-world as slave labor, in the hazardous exploration and colonization of other planets.

After a bloody mutiny by a NEXUS 6 combat team in an Off-world colony, *Replicants* were declared illegal on earth — under penalty of death.

Special police squads — BLADE RUNNER UNITS — had orders to shoot to kill, upon detection, any trespassing *Replicant.*

This was not called execution.

It was called retirement.

- *Whiplash* film essay on editing and sound

CINEMATOGRAPHY

- How does cinematography affect the mood and tone of the scene?

- Does the time of day affect the scene?

- How does lighting contribute/affect the cinematography?

- How many people are in the scene? Does the camera angle/focus/shot-type change for different people?

- Physically where does the action happen in the scene?

- Do people move around in the scene?

- Speak to the framing – is it lose, tight, open, closed?

- Does the cinematography call attention to itself?

- What's in focus/what's the depth of field?

- Research:

    - Who was the cinematographer? History of working with director?

    - Particular cameras used? And film type? And what is the original aspect ratio? – anything unique/special about these choices?

For all the above, include WHY? All these choices were made for a reason – some give meaning to the story, other choices may have been financial, for convenience, etc. but make an educated assumption with support for your analysis.

TAXI DRIVER

- 1976
- Director: Martin Scorsese
- @ 2 min

PSYCHO

- 1960
- Director: Alfred Hitchcock
- @ 36 min