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FIM111.1 Form and Narrative Analysis

YouTube link to Project 1: <https://youtu.be/9ADv3nLJ3zI>

YouTube link to original clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMDZa5WRczI>

Script:

The opening scene from 'Whiplash' (Directed by Damien Chazelle) is a microcosm of the whole film; an artist seeking greatness, who must first endure suffering and sacrifice.

The first shot is a stark, blank, and black background. The audience hears the non-diegetic sound of a snare drum, a single stroke roll mounting. Immediately the military-like soundscape sets an unnerving tone for the audience.

At the crescendo of the drum roll, a smash cut cuts to a silent, long shot where we establish the protagonist, 'Andrew', centre framed at the end of a hallway. The low-key lighting and green tones create shadows making the hallway look eerie and unwelcoming. However, the blues create contrast which immediately draws your eye to the drummer.

A dolly shot is used to slowly push closer towards Andrew, timed to the now diegetic continued rapid drumming creating an undercurrent of dread as the audience senses this is not just a movie about the joys of musicianship but also menace.

The camera reaches a medium shot to show him and the drum set, where he is suddenly interrupted by the teacher, 'Fletcher', who had been watching him through the stylistic POV shot down the hallway.

Fletcher emerges from the shadows and embodies evil; guided by the mise-en-scene of his dark clothing, dark lighting, and the intense stillness his character possesses. He is positioned always alone in a mid-shot, framed on the right third that conveys his superiority position as seductive yet scary. The slight low angle intentionally highlights Fletcher's desire to command authority through his poise, rigid body posture, sharp and calculated movements, and purposeful expressions.

A stark contrast to Andrew's innocence; his sweaty white shirt, lit space around him and centre framing to elicit a likeability. The slight high angle captures his boisterous yet awkward and uncertain movements and expressions making him powerless compared to Fletcher.

During conversation, a shot/shot reverse is used to cut when someone is talking. Despite them being in the same room, they are never in the same shot, this is done to emphasise their dysfunctional teacher/student relationship.

It is during this scene, that Fletcher acts as the mentor challenging the student to play faster, more precisely and fully commit himself to being the greatest.

Fletcher sets the musical tempo, as another dolly moves in closer to Andrew's face, we come to a close-up of his extreme focus and visible perspiration. This intimate moment is abruptly ended by the non-diegetic sound of the door slamming. The camera quickly pans right to a mid-shot of the door confirming to Andrew and the audience of Fletcher's absence. The camera cuts back to Andrew, left confused and shocked as he failed to live up to the standard Fletcher set for him.

Mid-Point Reflection

Process: This Scene Analysis Project has immersed me in identifying how and understanding why practitioners use the elements of film form to convey meanings to audiences. In doing so, the weekly lecture content, scholarly readings and films have provided the fundamental knowledge and skills needed to complete this task successfully. This project has reinforced the importance of project management and time management skills needed for the development of my work. I have had to relearn study techniques and skills as I've been out of the school since 2021 and not completed academic work since. Initially, I underestimated how much time and effort would be needed to begin this project, as I needed to source a clip from a film or tv series that was going to be the basis of the overall project. I spent so much time making a big list of potential options that I started to fall behind. To overcome this, I created a visual timeline of what needed to be done before the submission date and utilised deadlines for certain points of the project, for example, sourcing a clip, writing the script, editing, finalising, and recording the script, having the mid-point and project completion reflections done. By doing this I created accountability for myself. Additionally, during this project, I discovered that the template provided didn't work for me, I found it too overwhelming. I instead used a strategy that I am familiar with; note taking, whereby I watched the 3-minute clip over and over and each time noted down what I wanted to include in the script. For the second half of project 1, I have a focus on following my deadlines as I have to manage three other projects.

Person: Even though this project was an individual task, communication and collaboration skills were utilised during class time to gather feedback from my peers and teacher regarding the development of my script. I shared my draft script with my teacher and was able to clarify if I was meeting the brief. I had questions mainly about the structure of the script and if I had thoroughly described the elements of film form and provided a correct analysis of why they are used in my particular clip. From this feedback, I refined my script. The class time also provided an opportunity to listen to other students' questions and the teachers' answers. It was during class when the teacher had emphasised choosing the opening scene from a movie or tv series, as an opening scene typically has a lot to unpack. I took on this advice and chose an opening scene from Whiplash. Other students had also taken on this advice, and it was evident of the wealth of information an opening scene can provide. For the second half of project 1, I plan to continue to seek positive and negative feedback whenever possible as it will help the development of my script.

Proficiency: The weekly content, scholarly readings and films were a crucial guide to the development of my critical thinking and research skills throughout the first half of project 1. They provided fundamental knowledge and skills to source the correct terminology, identify and analyse elements of film form and more. It was clear that this project had a focus on the narrative, and from the week 2 reading Film, Form, and Culture Fourth Edition, Robert Kolker

(2015, p. 48) states that structure allows “the viewers to enter and move into the story and the emotions of the characters.” This is evident in my chosen clip from the movie *Whiplash*, a film centred around music, whereby “sound plays a paramount role in not only the development of the narrative but also in the development of the characters.” (Sizemore, 2020). Through extended research, I was able to gain further insights and perspectives to shape my understanding and therefore translate that into my script. For the second half of project 1 I will continue to research and challenge my understanding of the elements of film form to accurately analyse my clip.

Reference List

Kolker, R. (2015). *Film, Form, and Culture: Fourth Edition*. Taylor & Francis.

Sizemore, G. (2020, May 9). *Analysis of Andrew Neimann and Terence Fletcher in Whiplash*. Medium. <https://medium.com/@greysizemore/analysis-of-andrew-neimann-and-terence-fletcher-in-whiplash>

Project Complete Reflection

Appraisal: Overall, I am quite pleased with my final project. I feel I have learnt a lot during class time which has been developed and reflected in my choice of movie clip and my script. I believe I have correctly identified and justified the elements of film form used and their reasons for use. In doing so, I believe I made a well-considered decision to choose the opening scene from *Whiplash* as it exhibits an array of technical and stylistic choices made by the Director, which I was able to dissect during the 3-minute timeframe. The scene gave me the opportunity to explore the use of sound which is something I previously hadn't had much of an interest or opportunity to explore before.

The project did match my expectations as the brief specifically detailed the intended outcomes. I definitely benefited from the deadlines I set myself as it provided me with a framework for the completion of this project. As well as just showing up to class, as this was time to gain feedback to apply to my work. I was unfortunately ill with the flu for one week which halted the progression of my project, but to handle this setback, I adjusted my deadlines and made sure I caught up.

Challenges: The main obstacles I encountered was within the editing stage of this project. I am new to premier pro and didn't feel comfortable to use that software, so I went with iMovie which I have used in the past. It was a lot easier to import my clip, turn down the audio and then record over it. However, I ran into difficulty lining up my script with the video itself. There were sometimes where I had too much or too little analysis for the length of what was happening visually, which meant sometimes the recorded audio didn't match properly. To fix this, I had to move around my recorded script to the best of my ability. These obstacles have made me realise that I should have allocated more time to the editing component of the project.

Future Goals: For future projects, I plan to allocate more time to the areas I am not so confident in. For example, APA7 referencing, video editing and accurately matching the voice recording and the clip together. One thing I worked hard on was to make sure I was clear and paced during the voice recording. I tend to speak quite fast naturally so I made sure I slowed down and pronounced the words properly. The teacher provided us with exemplars during the initial stages and one student was slightly too rushed and it made it hard to keep up with, so I tried to avoid that problem. For future projects, I will repeat my diligence in choosing material with substance, because it allowed my analysis to properly identify how and why elements were used.