

## Film Analysis Research

### History

- Film analysis is the process in which a film is analyzed in terms of mise-en-scène, cinematography, sound, and editing.
- One way of analyzing films is by the shot-by-shot analysis, though that is typically used only for small clips or scenes.
- Film analysis is closely connected to film theory.
- Observe following elements: (1) analysis of film space, (2) analysis of film time and (3) film sound. As they focus mainly on iconic aspects of film they further propose additional elements: the image, tone, composition and movement.

### Different Types

- Iconic Analysis: iconic analysis basically deals with image or picture (and sometimes also film sound).
  - try to understand how different pictorial elements convey the meaning of film
  - pictorial - of or expressed in pictures; illustrated.
  - There are several examples in film history where image was even more than just a key element of film (i.e. pre WWII avant-garde films, Italian neorealism, film noir, etc.).
  - most narrative films (Fictional film) we try to hide pictorial elements from the audience and mask them behind the story.
  - As iconic analysis derives from a single image and it is closely related to techniques of film production thus demanding at least brief understanding of these technical elements of film it is mostly useful method of research for film schools and other educational institutions.
- Semiotic Analysis: the study of meaning-making, the philosophical theory of signs and symbols.
  - This includes the study of signs and sign processes (semiosis), indication, designation, likeness, analogy, metaphor, symbolism, signification, and communication.
  - Semiotics is closely related to the field of linguistics (studies the structure and meaning of language more specifically)
  - Semiotics often is divided into three branches: Semantics is the relation between signs and the things to which they refer; their *denotata*, or meaning. Syntactics is relations among signs in formal structures. Pragmatics is the relation between signs and sign-users.
  - What might you be able to infer about characters from small hints?

- How are these hints (signs) used to construct characters? How do they relate to the relative role of those characters, or the relationships between multiple characters?
- Narrative Structure Analysis: analysis of the story elements, including plot structure, character motivations, and theme.
  - How does the story follow or deviate from typical structures?
  - What is the effect of following or deviating from this structure?
  - What is the theme of the film, and how is that theme constructed?
- Shot by Shot Analysis: written description of a given sequence in a film in order of the shots.
  - start with describing the techniques used in the shots or images we are analyzing.
  - elaborate what effects these techniques can produce when viewing the movie; for example, the camera leads what we see in the film so the changes in camera angles have impact on audience's interpretations of the meanings the movie tries to convey.
  - Some of the techniques used in film producing could be composition (foreground/background, frame/framing, etc.), cinematography (close-up, medium shot and long shot, pan shot, tilt shot, etc.), editing (montage, eyeline match, etc.),
- Psychoanalytical approach: understanding aesthetic.
  - I like this quote = "the true order of going...to the things of love, is to use the beauties of earth as steps...to all fair forms, and from fair forms to fair actions, and from fair actions to fair notions, until from fair notions he arrives at the notion of absolute beauty".

### Writing the Analysis

- When describing a sequence in a film, use the present tense, like you would write in the literary present when describing events of a novel, i.e. not "Elsa took off her gloves," but "Elsa takes off her gloves."
- When quoting dialogue from a film, if between multiple characters, use block quotes: Start the quotation on a new line, with the entire quote indented one inch from the left margin.
- Conventions are flexible, so ask your professor if you are unsure. It may also help to follow the formatting of the script, if you can find it.

Outline that I plan to follow:

### **1.Introduction**

- fundamental information about the movie, like the film title, release date, and director's name. In other words, the reader should get familiar with some background information about the film.
- research the filmmaker because it can reveal significant insights related to the movie which you can use in your analysis.
- point out the central theme or ideas in the movie, explaining the reason why it was made. Don't hesitate to say what you think; it's quite desirable to express your point of view.
- thesis statement and basically, explain what will be your focus.

### **2.Summary**

After presenting the main facts about the film, it's time to go deeper into analysis and summarise it.

The trick to making it more powerful is always to assume that your professor hasn't seen the movie. In that way, you won't leave out some important information.

- five Ws – who, what, when, where, why, and how, as well.
- discuss anything related to your opinion, structure or style.
- support anything you say with examples or quotes from the film itself

### **3.Analysis**

This is the core of your essay that involves your critical analysis of the film and impressions about it but supported by claims from the movie or any other relevant material.

Also, films are complex artwork that include many creative elements which are all connected and have their reason of existence.

- *Scenario*

A good script has a logical sequence of events, completion of scenes, characters development, and dialogs. So, these are the elements you should analyze when it comes to the scenario.

- reproduce the plot mentally and see if you understood the logic of events and the motives of the actors. If it's difficult to explain or find reasons for some scene, then it isn't such a great scenario.
- *Directing*

The director is responsible for every aspect of the movie process, such as scenario execution, selection of the plans, and even tasks for actors.

- focus on the fact how the director realized the script or compare this film to his other films. It will help you understand better his way of directing and come up to some conclusions relevant to your thesis and analysis.
- *Acting*

Casting is another significant element to take into consideration in your film analysis essay. Actors bring the script and director's idea into reality.

- think if the actors are realistic and if they portray the role of their character effectively? More importantly, consider how their acting corresponds to the main idea of the film and your thesis statement.
- *Musical elements*

This represents an important element of every movie. It sets the mood and enhances some actions or sceneries of the film.

- evaluate how music reflects the mood of the film or the impact it has on what is happening on the screen. Is it supportive or distracting?
- *Visual elements*

Visual elements, like special effects, costumes, and make-up, also have a considerable role in the overall movie impact. They need to reflect the atmosphere of the film. It is especially important for historical movies because visual elements need to evoke a specific era.

- pay attention to costumes and special effects and analyse their impact on the film.
- analyse only the elements that are related to your thesis statement, that can support it or help you make your point.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- restate your thesis and offer a summary of the previously mentioned concepts in a new and more decisive way, making a case for your analysis.
- recommend to your reader to watch this film or to avoid it completely.

#### **Final words**

**\*RECOMMENDATION\*** Writing essays about films should be an exciting and easy activity. Just follow these guidelines on how to structure it, details you need to pay attention to, and what

should be the essence of your essay, so you'll definitely look forward to writing your next film analysis essay and enjoy the whole process.

### **Movies I will be analyzing:**

The Incredibles - Released in 2004. This animated feature was written and directed by Brad Bird and distributed by Pixar Animation. The Incredibles follows the Parr family, a family full of superpowers who are forced to work together and disobey their government's ban on superheroes to save the world from a destructive robot.

Die Hard - Released in 1988. This action feature was written by Steven E. de Souza & Jeb Stuart and directed by John McTiernan. Die Hard follows a New York City policeman visiting his estranged wife and two daughters on Christmas Eve. He joins her at a holiday party, but the festivities are interrupted by a group of terrorists who take over the building and everyone in it.

La La Land - Released in 2016. This romantic feature was written and directed by Damien Chazelle. La La Land follows the love story between an aspiring jazz musician and an actress while they try to navigate their lives in Los Angeles.

### **My Basic Plan:**

I will watch each film and write a film analysis for all three. The final film product for my Zenith will go through my process of analyzing The Incredibles. I will still write an analysis for La La Land and Die Hard and display those in my presentation for reference.

<https://www.raindance.org/tell-me-everything-about-it-how-to-write-a-film-analysis-essay-correctly/>

<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/film-analysis/>

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject\\_specific\\_writing/writing\\_in\\_literature/writing\\_about\\_film/film\\_writing\\_sample\\_analysis.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/writing_about_film/film_writing_sample_analysis.html)

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