High Storrs Sixth Form

2024 Bridging Work

Subject: Film Studies

Name: _____

Bridging the Gap

Welcome to Y12 Film Studies! We're glad to have you onboard; we are sure that you'll have a fun yet challenging time learning about the world of cinema. So let's kick straight off with the bridging the gap task.

Film is a product of movie making techniques that have been established, changed, and honed over 120 years.

Task 1: create a comprehensive timeline covering important and influential events and movements in cinema history. This should include:

- Early silent cinema
- Realism
- German Expressionism
- Soviet Montage
- "Talkies"
- Classical Hollywood
- Television
- Film Noir
- Italian Neo-realism
- French New Wave
- British social realism
- New Hollywood
- VHS
- Post-modern film making

Include one point about why each of these are significant and one important film associated with each area.

Task 2: choose one of the following films:

- *Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* – Robert Wein (German Expressionism)
- *Nosferatu* – FW Murnau (German Expressionism)
- *High Noon* – Fred Zinneman (Classical Hollywood)
- *Singing In The Rain* – Gene Kelly/Stanley Donen (Classical Hollywood)
- *Double Indemnity* – Billy Wilder (Film Noir)
- *The Maltese Falcon* – John Huston (Film Noir)
- *Bicycle Thieves* – Vittorio De Sica (Italian Neo-Realism)
- *La Strada* – Frederico Fellini (Italian Neo-Realism)
- *Bande a Part* – Jean-Luc Godard (French New Wave)
- *The 400 Blows* - Francois Truffaut (French New Wave)
- *Kes* – Ken Loach (British Social Realism)
- *Up The Junction* – Peter Collinson (British Social Realism)
- *Taxi Driver* – Martin Scorsese (New Hollywood)
- *The Godfather Part 1* – Francis Ford Coppola (New Hollywood)
- *Fight Club* – David Fincher (Post-modern Film Making)
- *No Country For Old Men* - Coen Brothers (Post-modern Film Making)

Please note: some of the above films may contain material classified at certificate 18. Whilst this is legally acceptable for educational purposes (and all of the above are considered classics of their movement), please be aware that some films contain scenes which you may find distressing. Consider the certification and ask advice at home first if you're unsure.

Write a brief report on your chosen film outlining the following:

- Anything significant about its context of production, i.e. the background "behind the scenes" of the making of the film
- What characteristics does it have that place it within its specific film movement, e.g. German Expressionism, British Social Realism etc.?
- Any significant information about the film makers?
- What is the legacy of this movie, e.g. what other movies or film makers has it influenced?
- How does the film maker elicit certain responses from the spectator?
- Your own brief review of the movie (approximately 500 words)

There's an exemplar on the next page:

Coraline

06 September 2020   11:23

Synopsis- Coraline moves into a new place and discovers a secret portal into the 'other' world where everything is perfect, at first. She soon has to battle against it however as she becomes trapped in the web of the 'other' mother.

Coraline (5/10) Movie CLIP - The Magical Garden (2009) HD

The horror of growing up

Mise en Scene is the culmination of many different elements that coalesce for the camera. (1) Different aspects and techniques can give conscious (or sub-conscious) messages to the audience and externalise internal messages of the film such as the character's feelings. Mise en Scene can include: setting, production design, lighting, depth of space and costume/make-up. I chose the film Coraline, and I'm going to look at the magic garden scene (and the tunnel)- clip linked to the left. I first watched this film whilst camping when I was in primary school. I remember how much of an effect it had on me, that was partly because it was during a storm at night and we could hear the rain really loud on the tent, but also the visuals. I remember being just so absorbed in the film and I wanted to look at it again.

Coraline sleeps whilst holding her teddy, perhaps a symbol of childhood and comfort, this is juxtaposed by the doll in the top right. Dolls are often a horror trope and can symbolise control, or loss of control. The doll watching over her, almost mirroring her body can be a reminder, not only of the 'other mother' watching over her, but the loss of control Coraline experiences as she moves into the new place and no longer has her parents' attention. The loss of control can also link to one of the main themes in the film- the fear of growing up, in a child's world everything can be seen as their own little world, that they are used to and they understand and losing that can be scary but also there can be a loss of self as you become a new person when you enter into adulthood and perhaps that is one of the things that Coraline fears.

The low-key lighting is also a staple of horror, with most of Coraline's face concealed (and the doll's), a chiaroscuro lighting effect is created, this adds a sort of suspense and an unsettling feeling to the scene.

Coraline is led to the rabbit hole/portal to the 'other' world and the image, I think can be compared to the similar rabbit tunnel in Alice in Wonderland (Disney- 1951). Both characters go to similarly strange and spooky worlds in which they have to battle against. Alice's world is full of confusion, with mazes, bottles, growing and shrinking, all used to perhaps represent the passage into adulthood. Alice has to overcome her fears in wonderland and comes out of it a stronger person, it is pretty much a coming-of-age story. Coraline also battle's against the 'other' world, and though I would argue she doesn't grow but is rather re-assured, there is a lot that can be made from the plot, and visual, comparison. Perhaps Coraline's journey down a rabbit hole also represents a sort of growing up, passage to adulthood story, she has to learn to be less reliant on her parents and in doing so, she discovers more about her own life, self, and world. This idea, I would also link to the actual appearance of the rabbit hole. Though it has great depth, if you take that away, it sort of looks like an eye, and the film has lots of references to eyes throughout, particularly with their link to the soul- 'the eyes are windows to the soul'. Coraline travels down this chilled blue/purple eye into the 'other' world, facing fear and learning about herself.

Another visual comparison that can be made is in the design. As Coraline walks down the stairs, the camera twists and turns and the stairs cast these shadows, this creates a disjointed look that could be compared to Nosferatu (1922), and the German expressionist style. In the early 20th century, German films often used an expressionist style involving exaggerated acting, high-contrast dramatic lighting, dramatic and skewed camera angles, and stylized sets, the movement rejected realism and tried to portray inner and subjective experiences through external means. These techniques often created feelings of horror, fear and pain (2). This comparison in the Mise en Scene perhaps solidifies Coraline as part of the horror genre and conveys ideas about themes such as the fear of growing up. A lot of what Coraline appears to be afraid of in the film, is becoming like her parents, who she sees as dull and un-interesting. With growing up there can seem to be a loss of innocence, imagination and a sense of adventure (some of Coraline's defining features) and as Coraline goes into the 'other' world, she confronts, head-on, this horror. The 'other mother' tries to steal Coraline's soul as well as other children's, and this can be simplified to an adult stealing a child's soul, exactly what Coraline fears- her childhood being taken , growing up. The 'other mother' takes souls through the eyes, she takes away that which is unique, a child's point of view, the sense of excitement and wonder that a child sees in the world. Coraline has to escape the trap of adulthood, in a way. This is seen at the climax, when the 'other mother' traps Coraline in a web- this same web is almost echoed here in this scene (the picture in the right above). The shape and design of the staircase, as well as the shadow it casts, looks like a cobweb. All of these effects tie together to show the horror of growing up and losing one's childhood identity.

To analyse the garden scene, I would first comment on Coraline's dress. Though she is not in her classic outfit, she wears some fiery orange pyjamas and this could represent something about her character. She is not the classic, innocent fairy tale victim, she is stronger than that, and perhaps this is shown in the costume.

The garden in the 'other' world is drastically different, it is filled with light, warm and glowing flowers; it is vibrant and alive with twists and turns. The camera moves constantly and so do the flowers, these together create a colourful and dizzying effect that is almost hypnotic. To Coraline everything is perfect but there is a sense of unease created through:

* The half lit moon and garden with the exaggerated chiaroscuro effect and low-key lighting creating a sense of foreboding and un-ease
* The gates Coraline opens are rusty, old and un-kept, which contrasts with the fresh and lively garden which could show a lack of control or just a

Bring all this your first lesson and be prepared to discuss the following:

Task 3: we'd like you to go the cinema to see a movie on your own. This does not involve going with a friend and sitting separately; it means going alone! Think about the difference in the experience. Please note, this task is actually **very** important for some areas of study!

Make notes on how the experience was different to your usual cinema experience.

Was it better or worse?

Did you enjoy the movie more or less as a result?