**NARRATIVE: GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**( Most relevant are highlighted in blue)**

**abstract form** A type of filmic organization in which the parts relate to each other through repetition and variation of such visual qualities as shape, color, rhythm, and direc­tion of movement.

**aerial perspective** A cue for suggesting represented depth in the image by presenting objects in the distance less distinctly than those in the foreground.

**anamorphic lens** A lens for making widescreen films us­ing regular *Academy ratio* frame size. The camera lens takes in a wide field of view and squeezes it onto the frame, and a similar projector lens unsqueezes the image onto a wide theater screen.

**angle of framing** The position of the frame in relation to the subject it shows: above it, looking down (a high angle); horizontal, on the same level (a straight-on angle); looking up (a low angle). Also called "camera angle."

**animation** Any process whereby artificial movement is created by photographing a series of drawings (see also *eel animation),* objects, or computer images one by one. Small changes in position, recorded frame by frame, create the illusion of movement.

**aspect ratio** The relationship of the frame's width to its height. The standard *Academy ratio* for many years was 1.33:1.

**associational form** A type of organization in which the film's parts are juxtaposed to suggest similarities, con­trasts, concepts, emotions, and expressive qualities.

**asynchronous sound** Sound that is not matched tempor­ally with the movements occurring in the image, as when dialogue is out of synchronization with lip movements.

**auteur** The presumed or actual "author" of a film, usually identified as the director. Also sometimes used in an eval­uative sense to distinguish good filmmakers *(auteurs)* from bad ones.

**axis of action** In the *continuity editing* system, the imag­inary line that passes from side to side through the main

actors, defining the spatial relations of all the elements of the scene as being to the right or left. The camera is not supposed to cross the axis at a cut and thus reverse those spatial relations. Also called the "180° line." (See also *180° system.)*

**backlighting** Illumination cast onto the figures in the scene from the side opposite the camera, usually creating a thin outline of highlighting on those figures.

**boom** A pole upon which a microphone can be suspended above the scene being filmed and which is used to change the microphone's position as the action shifts.

**camera angle** See *angle of framing.*

**canted framing** A view in which the frame is not level; either the right or left side is lower than the other, causing objects in the scene to appear slanted out of an upright position.

**categorical form** A type of filmic organization in which the parts treat distinct parts of some subject. For example, a film about the United States might be organized into fifty parts, each devoted to a single state.

**eel animation** Animation that uses a series of drawings on pieces of celluloid, called "eels" for short. Slight changes between the drawings combine to create an illu­sion of movement.

**cheat cut** In the *continuity editing* system, a cut which presents continuous time from shot to shot but which mis­matches the positions of figures or objects.

**cinematography** A general term for all the manipulations of the film strip by the camera in the shooting phase and by the laboratory in the developing phase.

**close-up** A framing in which the scale of the object shown is relatively large; most commonly a person's head seen from the neck up, or an object of a comparable size that fills most of the screen.

**closure** The degree to which the ending of a narrative film reveals the effects of all the causal events and resolves (or "closes off") all lines of action.

**continuity editing** A system of cutting to maintain con­tinuous and clear narrative action. Continuity editing relies upon matching screen direction, position, and temporal relations from shot to shot. For specific techniques of con-tinuity editing, see *axis of action, crosscutting, cut-in, es­tablishing shot, eyeline match, match an action, reestab­lishing shot, screen direction, shot/reverse shot.*

**contrast** In cinematography, the difference between the brightest and darkest areas within the frame.

**crane shot** A shot with a change in framing accomplished by having the camera above the ground and moving through the air in any direction.

**crosscutling** Editing that alternates shots of two or more lines of action occurring in different places, usually si­multaneously.

cut 1. In filmmaking, the joining of two strips of film to­gether with a spliee. 2. In the finished film, an instanta­neous change from one framing to another. See also jump *cut.*

**cut-in** An instantaneous shift from a distant framing to a closer view of some portion of the same space.

**deep focus** A use of the camera lens and lighting that keeps both the close and distant planes being photo­graphed in sharp focus.

**deep space** An arrangement uf mise-en-scene elements so that there is a considerable distance between ihe plane closest to the camera and the one farthest away. Any or all of these planes may be in focus.

**depth of field The** measurements of the closest and farthest planes in front of the camera lens between which everything will be in sharp focus. A depth of field from five to sixteen feet, for example, would mean everything closer than five feet and farther than sixteen feel would be out of focus.

**dialogue overlap In** editing a scene, arranging the cut so that a hit of dialogue or noise coming from shot A is heard under a shot of character B or of another element in tin-scene.

**diegesis** In a narrative film, the world of the film's story. The liiegesis includes events that are presumed to have occurred and actions and spaces not shown onscreen. See also *diegetic sound, nondiegflic insert, nondiegetic sound.*

**diegetic sound** Any voice, musical passage, or sound ef­fect presented as originating from a source within the film's world. See also *nondiegetic sound,*

**direct sound** Music, noise, and speech recorded from the event at the moment of filming; opposite of *postsynchron-izalicm.*

**discontinuity editing** Any alternative system of joining shots together using techniques unacceptable within *con­tinuity editing* principles. Possibilities would include mis­matching of temporal and spatial relations, violations of the *axis of action,* and concentration on graphic relation­ships. See also *elliptical editing, graphic matrh. intellec­tual montage, jump cut, nondivgetic insert, overlapping editing.*

**dissolve** A transition between two shots during which the first image gradually disappears while the second image gradually appears; for a moment the two images blend in *superimpos ition.*

**distance of framing** The apparent distance of the frame from the mise-en-scene elements. Also called "camera distance" and "shot scale." See also *close-up, extreme close-up^ extreme long shot, medium close-up, medium shot, plan americain.*

**distribution One** of **the** three branches of the film indus­try; the process of supplying the finished film to the places where it will be shown. See also *exhibition, production.*

**dolly** A camera support with wheels, used in making *track­ing shots.*

**dubbing** The process of replacing part or all of the voices on the sound track in order to correct mistakes or rerccord dialogue. See also *postsynr:hror;ization.*

**duration In** a narrative film, the aspect of temporal ma­nipulation that involves the lime span presented in the *plot* and assumed to operate in the *story.* See also *frequency, order.*

**editing** 1. In film making, the task of selecting and joining camera takes. 2. In the finished film, the set of techniques thai governs the relations among shots.

**ellipsis** In a narrative film, the shortening *of plot* duration achieved by omitting intervals of *story* duration. See also *viewing timv, elliptical editing.*

**elliptical editing** Shot transitions that omit parts of an evenl. causing an *ellipsis* in plot and story duration.

**establishing shot A** shot, usually involving a distant fram­ing, lhat shows the spatial relations among the important figures, objects, and setting in a scene.

**exhibition** One of the three general areas of the film in­dustry; the process of showing the finished film to audi­ences. See also *distribution, production.*

**exposure** The adjustment of the camera mechanism in order to control how much light strikes each frame of film passing through the aperture.

**external diegetic sound** Sound represented as coming from a physical source within the story space and which we assume characters in the scene also hear. See also *internal diegetic sound.*

**extreme close-up** A framing in which the scale of the object shown is very large; most commonly, a small object or a part of the body.

**extreme long shot** A framing in which the scale of the object shown is very small: a building, landscape, or crowd of people would fill the screen.

**eyeline match** A cut obeying the *axis of action* principle, in ivliich the firsl shot shows a person looking off in one direction and the second shows a nearby space containing what he or she sees. If the person looks left, the following shot should imply lhat the looker is offscreen right.

**fade** 1. *Fade-in:* A dark screen lhat gradually brighlens as a shot appears. 2. *Fade-out:* A shot gradually darkens as the screen goes black. Occasionally fade-outs brighten to pure white or to a color.

**fill light** Illumination from a source less bright than the a-pv *light,* used to soften deep shadows in a scene. See also *three-paint lighting.*

**film noir** "Dark film," a term applied by French critics to a type of American film, usually in the detective or thriller genres, with low-key lighting and a sombre mood.

**film stock** The strip of material upon which a series of still photographs is registered; it consists of a clear base coated on one side with a light-sensitive emulsion.

**filter** A piece of glass or gelatin placed in front of the camera or printer lens to alter the quality or quantity of light striking the film in the aperture.

**flashback** An alteration of story order in which the plot moves back to show events that have taken place earlier than the one already shown.

**flashforward** An alteration of story order in which the plot presentation moves forward to future events, then returns to the present.

**focal length** The distance from the center of the lens to the point at which the light rays meet in sharp focus. The focal length determines the perspective relations of the space represented on the flat screen. See also *normal lens, telephoto lens, wide-angle lens.*

**focus** The degree to which light rays coming from the same part of an object through different parts of the lens recon-verge at the same point on the film frame, creating sharp outlines and distinct textures.

**following shot** A shot with framing that shifts to keep a moving figure onscreen.

**form** The general system of relationships among the parts of a film.

**frame** A single image on the strip of film. When a series of frames are projected onto a screen in quick succession, an illusion of movement is created by the spectator.

**framing** The use of the edges of the film frame to select and to compose what will be visible onscreen.

**frequency** In a narrative film, the aspect of temporal ma­nipulation that involves the number of times any *story* event is shown in the *plot.* See also *duration, order.*

**front projection** Composite process whereby footage meant to appear as the background of a shot is projected from the front onto a screen; figures in the foreground are filmed in front of the screen as well. This is the opposite of *rear projection.*

**frontal lighting** Illumination directed into the scene from a position near the camera.

**frontality** In staging, the positioning of figures so that they face the viewer.

**function** The role or effect of any element within the film's form.

gauge The width of the film strip, measured in millimeters.

**genres**  Various types of films which audiences and film-makers recognize by their familiar narrative conventions. Common genres are musical, gangster, and Western films.

**graphic match** Two successive shots joined so as to cre­ate a strong similarity of compositional elements (e.g.. color, shape).

**hand-held camera** The use of the camera operator's body as a camera support, either holding it by hand or using a harness.

**hard lighting** Illumination that creates sharp-edged shad­ows.

**high-key lighting** Illumination that creates comparatively little contrast between the light and dark areas of the shot. Shadows are fairly transparent and brightened *by fill light.*

**height of framing** The distance of the camera above the ground, regardless of the *angle of framing.*

**ideology** A relatively coherent system of values, beliefs, or ideas shared by some social group and often taken for granted as natural or inherently true.

**intellectual montage** The juxtaposition of a series of im­ages to create an abstract idea not present in any one image.

**internal diegetic sound** Sound represented as coming from the mind of a character within the story space. Al­though we and the character can hear it, we assume that the other characters cannot. See also *external diegetic sound.*

**interpretation** The viewer's activity of analyzing the im­plicit and symptomatic meanings suggested in a film. See also *meaning.*

**iris** A round, moving *mask* that can close down to end a scene (iris-out) or emphasize a detail, or it can open to begin a scene (iris-in) or to reveal more space around a detail.

**jump cut** An elliptical cut that appears to be an interrup­tion of a single shot. Either the figures seem to change instantly against a constant background, or the background changes instantly while the figures remain constant. See also *ellipsis.*

**key light** In the three-point lighting system, the brightest illumination coming into the scene. See also *backlighting, fill light, three-point lighting.*

**lens** A shaped piece of transparent material (usually glass) with either or both sides curved to gather and focus light rays. Most camera and projector lenses place a series of lenses within a metal tube to form a compound lens.

**linearity** In a narrative, the clear motivation of a series of causes and effects that progress without significant digres­sions, delays, or irrelevant actions.

**long shot** A framing in which the scale of the object shown is small; a standing human figure would appear nearly the height of the screen.

**long take** A shot that continues for an unusually lengthy time before the transition to the next shot.

**low-key lighting** Illumination that creates strong contrast between light and dark areas of the shot, with deep shad­ows and *little fill light.*

**mask** An opaque screen placed in the camera or printer that blocks part of the frame off and changes the shape of the photographed image, leaving part of the frame a solid color. As seen on the screen, most masks are black, al­though they can be white or colored.

**masking** In exhibition, stretches of black fabric that frame the theater screen. Masking may be adjusted according to the *aspect ratio* of the film to be projected.

**match on action** A continuity cut which places two dif­ferent framings of the same action together at the same moment in the gesture, making it seem to continue unin­terrupted.

**matte shot** A type of process *shot* in which different areas of the image (usually actors anil sotting) are photographed separately and combined in laboratory work.

**meaning** 1. *Referential meaning:* Allusion to particular pieces of shared prior knowledge outside the film which the viewer is expected to recognize. 2. *Explicit meaning:* Significance presented overtly, usually in language and often near the film's beginning or end. *'A. Implicit meaning* Significance left tacit, for the viewer to discover upon analysis or reflection. 4. *Symptomatic meaning:* Signifi­cance **which** the film divulges, often "against its will." by virtue of its historical or social context.

**medium close-up** A (ruining in which the scale of the object shown is fairly large; a human figure seen from the chest u]i would fill most of the screen.

**medium long shot** A framing at a distance which makes an object about four or five feel high appear to fill most of the screen vertically. See also */>lan umerirain,* the special term for a medium long shot depicting human figures.

**medium shot** A framing in which the scale of ihe object shown is of moderate size; a human figure seen from ihc waist up would fill most of the screen.

**mise-en-scene** All the dements placed in front of the cam­era to be photographed: the settings and props, lighting, costumes and make-up, and figure behavior.

**mixing** Combining two **or more** sound tracks by recording them onto a single one.

**mobile frame** The effect on the screen uf the moving camera, a *zoom tens,* or certain *special effects;* the framing shifts in relation to the scene being photographed. See also *crane shot, pan, tilt, tracking shot.*

**monochromatic color design** Color design which em­phasizes a narrow set ol shades of a single color.

**montage** 1. **A** synonym for *editing.* 2. An approach to ed­iting developed by the Soviet fihnmakers uf the 1920s: it emphasizes dynamic, often discontinuous, relationships between shots and the juxtaposition of images to create ideas not present in either one by itself. See also *discon­tinuity editing, intellectual montage.*

**montage sequence** A segment of a film that summarizes a topic or compresses a passage of time into brief symbolic or typical images. Frequently *dissolves, fades, superimpo-sitioiis,* and *wipes* are used to link the images in a montage sequence.

**motif** An clement in a film that is repeated in a significant way.

**motion control A** computerized method of planning and repeating camera movements on miniatures, models, and process work.

**motivation** The justification given in the film for ihc pres­ence of an element. This may be an appeal to the viewer's knowledge of the real world, to genre conventions, to nar­rative causality, or to a stylistic pattern within the film.

**narration** The process through which the *plot* conveys or withholds *story* information. The narration can be more or less restricted to character knowledge and more or less deep in presenting characters' mental perceptions and thoughts.

**narrative form** A type of filmic organization in which the parts relate to each other through a series of causally rdalcd events taking place in a specific lime and space.

**nondiegclic insert** A shot or series of shots cut into a sequence, showing objects represented as **being** outside the space of the narrative.

**nondiegetic sound** Sound, **such** as mood music or a nar­rator's commentary, represented as coming from a source outside the space of the narrative.

**nonsimultaneous sound** Diegetic sound ilia! comes I mm a source in lime cither earlier or later than that ol the images it accompanies.

**normal lens** A lens that shows objects without severely exaggerating or reducing the depth of the scene's planes. In 35mm filming, a normal lens is 35 to 50mm. See also *telephoto* /ens, *wide-angle lens.*

**offscreen sound** Simultaneous sound from a source as­sumed to be in the space of the scene but in an area outside what is visible onscreen.

**offscreen space** The six areas blocked from being **visible** on ihc screen but still part of the space of the scene: to each side and above and below the frame, behind the set, and behind the camera. See also *space.*

**180° system** The continuity approach to editing dictates thai the camera should slay on one side of the action to ensure consistent spalial relations between objects to the right and left of the frame. The 180° line **is the** same as Ihe *axis of action.* See also *continuity editing, screen direction.*

**order** In **a** narrative film, the aspect of temporal manipu­lation that involves the sequence in which the chronological events of the *story* are arranged **in** the *plot.* See also *duration, frequency.*

**overlap** A cue for suggesting represented depth in the film image by placing closer objects partly in front of more distant ones.

**overlapping editing** Cuts that repeat part or all of an action, thus expanding its viewing time and plot dura­tion.

pan A camera movement with the camera body turning to the right or left on a stationary tripod. On the screen, it produces a mobile framing which scans the space horizon­tally.

**pixillation A** form of single-frame animation in which three-dimensional objects, often people, are made lo move in staccato bursts through the use of slop-action cinema­tography.

**plan americain** A framing in which the scale of the object shown is moderately small: the human figure seen Irom the shins **to the** head would fill mosl of the screen. This is sometimes referred to as a *medium long shot,* especially when human figures are not shown.

plan-sequence French term for a scene handled in a sin­gle shot, usually a *long take.*

plot In a narrative film, all the events thai are directly presented to us. including their causal relations, chrono­logical order, duration, frequency, and spatial locations. Opposed to *story,* which is the viewer's imaginary con­struction of all the events in the narrative. See also *dura­tion, ellipsis, frequency, order, viewing time.*

**point-of-view** ghol IPOV shutl A shot taken with the cam­era placed approximately where the character's eyes would be, showing what the character would see; usually cut in before or after a shot of the character looking.

**Post synchronization The** process of adding sound to im­ages after they have been shot and assembled. This can include *dubbing* of voices, as well as inserting dietetic music or sound effects. It is the opposite *of direct sound.*

process ***shot*** Any shot involving re photography to combine two or more images into one. or to create a special effect: also called "composite shot." See also *matte shot, rear projection, special effects.*

**production** One of the three branches of the film industry; **the process of** creating the film. See also *distribution, exhibition.*

**racking focus** Shifting the area of sharp focus from one plane to another during a shot; the effect on the screen is called "rack focus."

**rale In** shooting, the **number** of **frames** exposed per sec­ond; in projection, the number of frames thrown on the screen per second. If the two are the same, the speed of the action will appear normal, while a disparity will create slow or fast motion. The standard rate in sound cinema is 24 frames per second for both shooting and projection.

**rear projection** A technique for combining a foreground action wilh a background action filmed earlier. The fore­ground is filmed in a studio, against a screen: the back­ground imagery is projected from behind the screen. The opposite *affront projection.*

**reestablishing shot** A return to a view of an entire space after a series of closer shots following the *establishing shot.*

**re framing** Short panning or tilting movements to adjust for the figures' movements, keeping them onscreen or centered.

**rhetorical form** A type of filmic organization in which the parts create and supporl an argument.

**rhythm** The perceived rate and regularity of sounds, series of shots, and movements within the shots. Rhythmic fac­tors include beat (or pulse), accent (or stress), and tempo (or pace).

**rotoscope** A machine **that** projects live-action motion pic­ture film frames one by one onto a drawing pad su (hat an animator can trace the figures in each frame. The aim is to achieve more realistic movement **in an** animated cartoon.

**scene** A segment in a narrative **film** that **takes place in** one time and space or that uses crosscutting **to show** two or more simultaneous actions.

**screen direction** The right-left relationships in a scene, set up in an establishing shot and determined by the po­sition of characters and objects in the frame; by the direc­tions of movement; and by the characters' eyelines. *Con­tinuity editing* will attempt to keep screen direction consistent between shots. See also axis *of action, eyeline match, 180° system.*

**segmentation The** process of dividing a film into parts for analysis.

**sequence** Term commonly used for a moderately large segment of a film, involving one complete stretch of action. In a narrative film, often equivalent to a *scene.*

**shallow focus** A restricted *depth offielil,* which keeps only those planes close to the camera in sharp incus: the op­posite of *deep focus.*

**shallow space** Staging the action in relatively few planes of depth; the opposite of *deep space,*

**shot** 1. **In** shooting, one uninterrupted run of the camera to expose a scries of frames. Also called a *take. 2.* In ihe finished film, one uninterrupted image with a single static or mobile framing.

**shot/reverse shot** Two or more **shots** edited together thai alternate characters, typically in a conversation stiuation. In *continuity editing,* characters in one framing usually look left, in the other framing, right. Ovcr-the-shoulder framings are common in shot/reverse-shol editing.

**side lighting** Lighting coming from one side <if a person or object, usually in order to create a sense of volume, to bring out surface tensions, or to fill in areas left shadowed by light from another source.

**simultaneous sound** Diegetic sound that is represented as occurring at the same time in the story as the image it accompanies.

**size diminution** A cue for suggesting represented depth in the image by showing objects that are further away as smaller than foreground objects.

**soft lighting** Illumination that avoids harsh bright and dark areas, creating a gradual transition from highlights to shadows.

**sound *bridge*** 1. At the beginning of one scene, the sound from the previous scene carries over briefly before the sound from the new scene begins. 2. At the end of one scene, the sound from the next scene is heard, leading into that scene.

**sound over** Any sound that is not represented as being directly audible within the space and time of the images on the screen. This includes both nonsimultaneous diegetic sound and nondiegetic sounds. See also *nondiegetic sound, nonsimultaneoits sound.*

**sound perspective** The sense of a sound's position in space, yielded by volume, timbre, pitch, and. in stereo­phonic reproduction systems, binaurai information.

**space** Most minimally, any film displays a two-dimensional graphic space, the flat composition of the image. In films which depict recognizable objects, figures, and locales, a three-dimensional space is represented as well. At any moment. three-dimensional space may he directly de­picted, as onscreen space, or suggested, as *offscreen spare. In* narrative film, we can also distinguish between story space, the locale of the totality of the action (whether shown or no!), and plot space, the locales visibly and audibly represented in the scenes.

special effects A general term for various photographic manipulations that create fictitious spatial relations in the shot, such as *superimpasition, matte shots,* and *rear pru-jection.*

***story*** In a narrative film, all the events that we see and hear, plus all those that we infer or assume to have oc­curred, arranged in iheir presumed causal relations, chron­ological order, duration, frequency, and spatial localions. Opposed to *plot,* which is the film's actual presentation of certain events in the narrative. See also *duration, ellipsis, frequency, order, space, mewing time.*

story board A tool used in planning film production, con­sisting of comic-strip-like drawings of individual shots or phases of shols wilh descriptions written below each draw­ing.

**slyle** The repeated and salient uses of film techniques char-aclerislic of a single film or a group of films (for example, a filmmaker s work or a national movement).

superimposition The exposure of more than one image nn the same film strip.

synchronous sound Sound that is matched temporally with the movements occurring in the images, as when dialogue corresponds to lip movements.

take In film ma king, ihe shot produced by one uninter­rupted run of the camera. One shot in the final film may be chosen from among several takes of the same action.

technique Any aspect uf the film medium that can be chosen and manipulated in making a film.

telepholo lens A lens of long focal length that affects a scene's perspective by enlarging distant planes and making them seem close io the foreground planes. In 35mm film­ing, a lens of 75mm length or more. Sec also *normal lens, wide--angle lens.*

**three-point lighting** A common arrangement using three directions of light on a scene: from behind the subjects *(backlighting),* from one bright source *(key light),* and from a less bright source balancing the key light *(Jill tight).*

tilt A camera movement with the camera body swiveling upward or downward on a stationary support. It produces a mobile framing that scans the space vertically.

top lighting Lighting coming In mi aliovc a person or ob­ject, usually in order Io outline the upper areas of the figure or Io separate it more clearly from the background.

**tracking shot** A mobile framing that travels through space forward, backward, or laterally. See also *crane shut, /run,* and *till.*

typage A performance technique of Soviet Montage cin­ema whereby an actor is given features believed to char­acterize a social class or other group.

underlighting Illumination from a point below the figures in the scene.

**unity** The degree to which a film's parts relate systemati­cally to each other and provide motivations for all the elements used.

variation In film form, the return of an element with notable changes.

viewing time The length of lime it takes to watch a film when it is projected at the appropriate speed.

whip pan An extremely fast movement of the camera from side to side, which causes the image to blur into a set of indistinct horizontal lines briefly. Often an imperceptible cut will join two whip pans to create a trick transition between scenes.

**wide-angle lens** A lens of short focal length that affects a scene's perspective by distorting straight lines near the edges of the frame and by exaggerating the distance be­tween foreground and background planes. In 35mm film­ing, a wide-angle lens is 30mm or less. See also *normal lens, telephoto lens.*

**wipe**  A transition between shots in which a line passes across the screen, eliminating the first shot as it goes and replacing it with ihe next one.

**zoom lens** A lens with a focal length lhat can be changed during a shot. A shift toward the *telepholo* range enlarges the image and flattens its planes together, giving an impres­sion of moving into the scene's space, while a shift toward ihe *wide-angle* range does the opposite.