

APPROACHES TO FILM ANALYSIS (TYPES OF FILM CRITICISM)

Auteur Approach:

- Assumes the director is the controlling factor in the film but can be extended to any individual who exerts a strong creative influence over the film. (Screenwriter, cinematographer, etc.)
- Just like authors or artists, filmmakers often have a personal style.
- For this approach, the director must have a significant body of work. (More than 3-4 films)
- Problem: Some filmmakers don't exhibit a consistent style. (Kubrick).

Sociological/Historical Approach:

- Assumes that a film is a consumer product and therefore analysis of the film's effect on society is more important than the film itself.
- A film is a product of a specific time and culture. What does this film say about the culture that created it? Its values, ideals, fears, etc.?

Mythic Approach:

- Assumes films are modern versions of earlier myths; the emphasis here is on Archetypes.
- This approach is based on the theories of Carl Jung and the theory of the "collective unconscious."
- Films that follow the classic genres of the epic, the tragedy, or the comedy are best analyzed using this approach.

**Formalist Approach: (Must be used to some extent in every project)

- Assumes the merits of the film lie in its construction/ structure.
- The fundamental question: How well are the film's goals achieved by the way it looks?
- You must look at the technical aspects of the film – camera angles, special effects, cinematography, music, etc.

Movement/Genre Approach:

- How well does the film exemplify traits of a specific movement or genre in film?
- Some movements: Film Noir, French New Wave, *Cinema Verite*, etc.
- Genres listed on handout.
- In this approach, the analysis looks at how the aesthetics elements of the film combine to support or betray the genre to which it belongs.

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Other approaches:

- **Feminist**
- **Marxist**
- **Mise-en-scene – everything in a single frame has meaning, purpose. Deconstructing a shot. Could be used as a part of the project. This approach takes very careful analysis and repeated viewings. You are looking for subtle manipulation of the audience.**