

Sylvia Chen

Professor Anne Bello

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### Two Kinds of Special Languages in Film Studies

“We can find a lot of kino-eyes in this film.”

“The mise-en-scene means a lot to shape these characters and the plots of the film.”

“Wipe erases a shot away to reveal another as if it was on a lower layer, like turning a page.”

The more I hear these words, the more deeply I remember them.

I’ve learned this special language in my comm140 class. This class focuses on introducing how film style, form and genre contribute to the meaning and experience of movies. In every lesson, I learned myriads of jargon. “Kino-eye” means cinematic eye because a camera “sees” differently than a human eye does. “Mise-en-scene” is originally from French. It means something you put into the scene, including settings, costume and makeup, lighting, highlights, shadows and so on. These words are used in the film studies discourse community. “A discourse community is a group of people who share a set of discourses, understood as basic values and assumptions, and ways of communicating about their goals.” (Swales 3) To have a better understanding of them, we have watched a movie every week. For instance, we watched "A Man with a Camera" to better understand how a cinematographer can take a scene through the eye of a movie; in this film, the audience watches through the screen as the cinematographer shoots the scene, which is a selective presentation of a social phenomenon. Likewise, we learned a lot of jump cuts through “Breathless”. It breaks the space-time and action continuity, highlights the necessary content,

and provides a strong sense of freedom. It makes the characters' appearance jumpy, creating a sense of abruptness, trading spatial and temporal continuity for a sense of rhythm in the film.

This kind of language is jargon used in a discourse community, which is meant to create collectivities among people. My experience with the language of film is similar to what was mentioned about medical language in Klass's article. She said, "This special language contributes to a sense of closeness and professional spirit among people who are under a great deal of stress." (40) In her article, she used a baseball metaphor to show that "for better or for worse, you move closer and closer to being a doctor instead of just talking like one." (Klass 42) It is the mechanism of intercommunication and contributes to a sense of closeness and professional spirit among members. "I found it exciting to discover that I'd finally cracked the code, that I could understand what doctors said and wrote, and could use the same formulations myself." (Klass 40)

But there is another kind of language I've found in the films. The colors in "Vertigo" play an important role which indicates the relationship between the hero and heroine at different stages, which is also a language in films. In the scene where the hero rescues the heroine from the sea and they talk indoors and their relationship qualitatively changes, the hero wears a green sweater and the heroine wears a red nightgown, foreshadowing the two passionate and dangerous relationships that were about to collide together. The next day, they met again with the doorway in a red and green color scheme. The heroine is in a white and black contrasting color, while the big red door foreshadows the dangerous relationship journey they are about to embark on. Another example of this other language is from "Life Aquatic," where the comedic sound effects enhance the sense of humor in the film. When Steve and Ned dropped into the sea from the plane, I thought there would be the sound of huge waves crashing, the heating of the water, the explosion and high-pitched screams. But the world was silent, every sound disappeared, which was beyond my expectations.

This kind of language such as colors and sounds is special since they create meaning within film. I can understand them in the way whatever I want. When I watch the movie, this language gives me room for imagination and leaves suspense. It's very common that there are different voices about the same point of the same film in class. These opinions are all reasonable and related to the plots closely so the professor agrees with all of them. What's more, he even encourages us to have some unique ideas about these languages in the films.

This language is the component that makes a movie, which aims to create differences between people in the same community to show our identities and make us view the same object from different perspectives. They never tell us any information directly but need us to think about some deeper connections between them, which attracts me a lot. They are more subtle so there are so many infinite ideas and perspectives we don't need to give certain answers to them, which is more personal and unrestricted and shows our identity. After my classmates and I watched "Life Aquatic", we started a discussion about these elements of the film at class. The sound effect is the main feature of this film. I focused more on the sound of instruments which can reflect the characters' inner world because I have learned guzheng (a traditional Chinese instrument) since I was a child. This experience made me feel more sensitive and connected when I heard the guitar, piano, violin and some other instruments instead of the sound of marine creatures and so on. In this reflection assignment, I explained my opinions about these sounds in detail from the perspective of music, unlike my classmates, who focused more on the sound of nature. It demonstrates how our experiences and identities reflect and shape our interpretation of a film.

The functions of these two languages are quite the opposite. But they are all indispensable. The first one is jargon used in the film discourse community contributing to a sense of collectivity and belonging so that we are in a league of our own. The second one are various components such as sound and color, which make us distinguish from each other

because of different thoughts and identities even in the same discourse community. These two complementary languages play irreplaceable roles in film studies.

Works Cited

Klass, Perri. "Learning the language," *Not Entirely Benign Procedure*. Penguin, 1994. pp. 39-42.

Swales, John. "The Concept of Discourse Community: Some Recent Personal History." *Composition Forum*, Vol. 37, 2017.