

New Essays on Everything in Component 2

Strike

1) Film Form and Aesthetics [20]

Film form in *Strike* is used to create meaning in many different ways, including aesthetically. For example, the use of cinematography in the opening of the movie. Such as, the high angle tracking shot of the factory, working as an establishing shot to tell the audience where we are, and therefore to help set up the theme of workers rights in relation to the ideology of communism. This is an expressive/formalist camera movement, instead of realist, but was a useful way to provide the audience with the needed information, as well as it being done in a quick and aesthetically pleasing way. Furthermore, the opening uses expressive lighting to convey certain meaning and messages to the spectator. Such as, the high contrast, silhouetted lighting and mise-en-scene of the two workers in front of the wheel, which they are framed by. This could be aesthetically symbolic of how the workers are surrounded by and consumed by their work, linking in with the film's ideologies and meanings, as started by the opening quote from Lenin promoting the Communist propaganda message that the film exists to convey. In terms of Hall's reception theory, this message can almost only be taken in its preferred form, due to it being a propaganda film and having its message unmistakably clear. Cinematography is also used in the ending of the movie to create meaning, again linking in with the ideologies of the film. Such as, the tilt up of the camera displaying the police on horses attacking the people, which is an expressive film movement conveying to the audience the power of these policemen which they are using to mistreat the workers. The cinematography is therefore a way that the film is using expressive film form to convey meanings, making up for the absence of sound. It is therefore unusual that filmmakers like Bazin preferred realist cinema, believing it was pure in comparison to formalist cinema, as expressive uses of film form were a great way to express and create meaning during the absence of dialogue. It's possible his distaste for formalist cinema was due to how it tends to break the verisimilitude. Such as, the silhouette lighting during the opening, which while conveys meaning is stylised and not representative of real life.

Throughout *Strike*, editing is also used in an expressive/formalist way as well, again to convey meaning to the audience, making up for the lack of dialogue due to being a silent film. This in some way addresses the audience directly, as we are told what to think and feel through the expressive editing. Such as, during the opening, the use of the Kuleshov effect between the factory owner and the busy workers, with his exaggerated performance (again making up for lack of sound), showing his power, and how he finds it funny that these people are struggling under his power. The Kuleshov effect, as named after the key thinker Kuleshov, relates to images together, as does the use of the cross fade edit, which is also used during this specific example of the Kuleshov effect, and together this editing tells the audience the meaning behind these two images; the workers are powerless under the unmerciful factory owner (this message is made even clearer through the performance, due

to the exaggerated and expressive acting). Editing is also used in the middle sequence in expressive ways to convey meaning to the audience. Such as, the use of the collision principle when the powerful man is squeezing a lemon, which is then cut to the police trying to control the workers while on horseback. These two images together create a separate meaning of how these men who are sitting comfortably at the table are the reason for the workers' suffering, largely due to lack of workers' rights and unequal power. This again is linking in with the communist message of the movie. The ending also uses formalist editing to create meaning. Like, the use of tonal montage (one of the five types of Soviet montage) which is used to create feelings, in this case anger and disturbance, of the workers quickly trying to save their lives; the panic is also emphasized by the use of fast paced editing. Furthermore, the montage and mise-en-scene of the cow being slaughtered and the people being massacred is metaphorical for the higher up men treating the workers like cattle. However, there is also use of realist editing in the ending of Strike, as the use of a long duration shot of the killed child would be considered more realistic than expressionist. This long duration shot allows the audience to feel the disturbance, grief and anger that the film wants you to feel against the men in power, as it's again supporting and fuelling the communist message of the movie.

The performance throughout the movie tends to be expressionistic to make up for the lack of dialogue, and convey to the audience meanings. This tends to be done through exaggerated and expressive acting. Such as, during the middle sequence, the way that the men laugh at the workers rights note, and then how one man uses the same note to wipe the lemon juice off his shoe, after menacingly squeezing it. This is all an example of how performance was used to create meaning, again linking in with the film's ideology, partially as a way to make up for dialogue not being able to tell the story and ideology, due to being a silent film. However, mise-en-scene is also used in this sequence in the same way. Such as, the use of title cards/on screen text to address the audience directly and tell them what dialogue would have if the film were made today. Such as, the title card that states that the workers rights note is what the man wipes his foot with. The use of title cards was used right from the opening equilibrium of the movie, as a Lenin quote explaining the communist message of the power in unity was displayed right at the start, making the films ideological messages clear, as it is a propaganda film. Mise-en-scene is used throughout the film to create meaning, like during the ending, when the man makes the table shake, and the ink spills over, covering where the workers live in thick ink, metaphorical for the violence that is taking place through aesthetics, and the blood that is being spilt. He then puts his hand on the ink, symbolic of the blood being on his hands. However, while this metaphor is usually used to symbolise a sense of knowing guilt, like in Macbeth where this metaphor originated, the audience gets a sense that this man is evil and feels no remorse, furthering the film's message that these men are evil, and the workers are good.

2) Representation and Context [20]

As a propaganda film from 1925, Strike is filled with specific representations, as well as relating to specific context. For example, the film makes the representation of the workers,

against the factory owners, very clear, in some ways the two are binary oppositions. Such as, during the ending, the expressive use of editing. For example, the use of tonal montage (a type of Soviet montage) and fast paced editing to show the fear and panic of the workers running and fighting for their lives, while the police on horseback or killing them (these policeman are shown as powerful through the expressive upwards tilt of the camera, showing them up high fighting, which is metaphorical for power). Furthermore, also during the ending, the man knocks the table, spilling the ink over where the workers live. This mise-en-scene is metaphorical for the violence and blood being spilt at the hand of these factory owners, against workers who just wanted their rights. This is then taken a step further when the man puts his hand in the ink, symbolic of the blood being on his hands. However, you can tell from his performance that he feels no guilt, emphasising the representation of the factory owners being evil, and the workers innocent. This message is also portrayed right at the very beginning of the film, again through the use of expressive editing, making up for the lack of dialogue due to being a silent film. For example, the use of cross fade and Kuleshov effect (named after Kuleshov). Both of these editing techniques create meaning, and the use of both of that at the same time emphasises this meaning further. There is a cross fade and Kuleshov effect of the factory owner, and the busy workers. Paired with this, there is the expressive and exaggerated performance of the factory owner, again making up for the lack of dialogue, of him laughing at the workers, and conveying the sense of power that he has. This again represents the workers as good and the factory owners as bad, fitting in with the communist message of the film, started by the opening Lenin quote on a title card (mise-en-scene) explaining the importance of power in unity. These are all examples of expressive film making used to create meaning, especially to make up for the absence of sound/dialogue, which is why it's interesting that Bazin was so against formalist cinema, and believed realist to be the true and pure form of movie making, as expressive filmmaking was often used to create meaning in the absence of sound, which is very necessary.

Expressive editing is also used in the middle sequence to get across the representation of the powerful men being evil, and the workers innocent and fighting for equality. Such as, the use of the collision principle. The cut between the man squeezing the lemon, and the workers running away from police on horses, creates a whole new meaning of the powerful man being the one who is effectively bringing harm to these innocent workers, therefore furthering the film's communist message. Furthermore, the title card of stating that the paper is the workers' rights, allows the performance to have a more impactful meaning, as the man wipes his foot with the worker's rights paper, symbolic of his evilness, the inequality, and how he doesn't care. Furthermore, all of the powerful men shown in this scene are men, which in terms of representation of gender is showing the men as the powerful ones. While in a film made today this may be seen as problematic, *Strike* was released in 1925 and would have been politically and socially accurate. Moreover, some of the workers that the audience are told to align with are women, which is suggestive of positive gender representation as women are also included as the good guys who also have power when in unity with the rest of the workers.

3) Specialist Study Areas [20]

The opening of the communist propaganda film *Strike* creates meaning in many different ways. Right from the opening equilibrium, the film starts conveying its political message through the mise-en-scene of the title card with a Lenin quote written on it, addressing the audience directly, expressing the power in unity. This ideology is then continued throughout the rest of the narrative. For example, the use of expressive cinematography and mise-en-scene. Such as, the high contrast, silhouetted workers who are framed by the factory wheel in the background. As well as being aesthetically pleasing, this use of film form could be considered metaphorical for how the workers are surrounded by and encompassed by their work, linking in with the communist ideology of the movie, critiquing the working situations of the workers. This specific use of film form breaks the verisimilitude, as it's stylised rather than realistic, linking into it being an expressionist film rather than realist; Eisenstein tended to create formalist movies. Furthermore, the opening also uses expressive editing. Such as, the use of the Kuleshov effect, created by and named after Kuleshov, as well as the use of a cross fading. The Kuleshov effect and crossfade are used to cut between the factory owner and the busy workers, creating meaning. Especially when paired with the expressive and exaggerated performance of the factory owner, who's performance shows his power, partially through his laughter at the busy workers. This is an example of formalist techniques being used to create meaning, making up for the absence of sound, more specifically dialogue, as it's a silent movie. It's therefore interesting that Bazin favoured realist cinema, and had such a distaste for formalist cinema, during a time when expressionistic elements were very useful to create meaning due to absence of sound.

The middle of *Strike* also uses expressionistic ways of using film form to create meaning. Such as, the collision principle of the powerful man squeezing the lemon, cut to the workers running from the police on horseback. These two images create a separate meaning of how the powerful men are in fact directly mistreating and endangering the workers. Furthermore, the mise-en-scene title card telling the viewer that the piece of paper is the workers' right note is very crucial, as it tells the audience that it's the note that the powerful man wipes his foot with after accidentally getting lemon juice on it. This, especially when compared to later when the powerful men have stated that they handled their requests with care, is representing the evil nature of the powerful men, against the innocent workers, and therefore continuing the communist message of the film. As so many expressionistic elements are used to convey the propaganda message, it's possible that the very act of being a propaganda film makes the movie an expressionist film, as everything will be constructed to convey a certain message, like through the editing in this scene. However, so many expressionistic elements are also being used to make up for the lack of sound/dialogue, and are being used to create and convey meaning to the audience directly in the place of sound.

The ending equilibrium of *Strike* also uses expressionistic ways to convey meaning and messages to the audience. Such as, the tonal montage of the workers frantically running and fighting for their lives against the police on horseback. This positions us with the workers, and allows us to emphasise with them, especially with the fast past editing making it more

tense, and it being a tonal montage, which is a type of Soviet montage used to create feeling. Montage in general is a formalist technique, as is the montage of the cow being slaughtered and the people being massacred, which signifies the idea that the workers are being treated like cattle, linking in with the film's overall message. However, there is also a realist use of editing during the ending. There is a long duration shot of the killed child on the floor, which ignites fear and anger in the audience. All of these uses of editing are used to create anger, fear and disturbance, possibly used at the ending of the movie to try and convince members of the audience to stand up for the communist message that the film portrays in their real life. Interestingly, although the long duration shot of the child can be considered a realist technique due to being a long duration shot, it could also be considered formalist, as it's purposefully constructed to convey a very specific message. It's possible that as it's a propaganda film, it largely is expressionistic, as even seemingly realistic techniques are used in formalist ways. Furthermore, you could argue that the very act of being a purely propaganda film breaks the verisimilitude, as everything is constructed to convey a certain message, to some extent breaking the sense of reality and real world. Such as, during the ending, when the powerful man shakes the table, knocking over the ink, which then covers the map on where the workers live. This mise-en-scene is symbolic of how the powerful man is to blame for the harm of the workers, due to the symbolism of blood. This is then emphasised when his hand becomes covered in this ink, metaphorical for the blood being on his hand, and again supporting the communist message of the movie. This to some extent breaks the verisimilitude, while as it's not very stylised, and is conveying a very real point, it's very constructed, possibly taking the audience out of the movie, as it's all about the message; this moment as well as several others in the movie, can seem to break the verisimilitude because instead of being part of the world anymore, it's just about the message.

Pan's Labyrinth

1) Film Form, Aesthetics, Context and Representation [40]

The opening of del Toro's Pan's Labyrinth uses film form and aesthetics to create meaning in many different ways. Such as, it's use of cinematography. For example, how the camera goes from below to above the ground, making a clear distinction between the two worlds from the very beginning, and therefore establishing the fantastical elements of the film. The stairway shown that leads up to the real world was based off of the initiation wells design wise, and while underground, there is a tower like building that is reminiscent of the Tower of Babel especially since the mise-en-scene is of a ruined city, it's possible that this was included to start the religious theme of the film, as the film explores Christianity throughout. Mise-en-scene is also used in the opening to create meaning in many other ways. Such as, the prop of Vidal's watch, which in many ways is a metonym for him. This is because the watch face is cracked, symbolising how Vidal is damaged due to toxic masculinity passed down onto him by his father; which is symbolised by the cracked watch face as his father smashed it the time he died, to remind Vidal of the idea that he needs to die like man. The meanings of the watch are emphasized by the sound bridge of it's ticking noise. Furthermore, it's symbolic of him being punctual, emphasised by the diegetic dialogue of "15

minutes late”, which is the first thing that we hear him say. This personality trait makes sense, as he is a captain during the time period after the Spanish Civil War, which the film is set shortly after. Therefore, Vidal is a fascist, which is made clear during the opening by the fascist symbol on the cars that arrive at his house, letting the audience know where he stands politically. There’s also meaning making in mise-en-scene of the fantastical underground, which of course links in with the genre of fantasy. Such as, the mise-en-scene of the skull, while the voice over says “dead”, continuing the theme of death which was started from the opening shot when the audience is confronted with Ofelia dying. This skull is a symbol of the civil war aftermath, and links in with Vanitas, as the skull is a symbol for mortality and death. This aesthetically is unsettling, preparing the audience for the rest of the film and the dangers that Ofelia will face. Furthermore, the mise-en-scene of the fairy tale book is interesting, as on the one hand it is symbolic of Ofelia’s childish nature, in terms of the representation of her age, which changes as the film continues, as well as being challenged. But it also is a way of suggesting straight away that Ofelia is part of the fairy tale, as the silhouette in the book is her, as shown by a close up.

The middle of Pan’s Labyrinth also uses film form and aesthetics to create meaning in several different ways. Such as, the use of mise-en-scene. For example, how the mise-en-scene is church like, furthering the theme and exploration of religion and christianity. This is done through mise-en-scene elements like the pillars, and the horrific images around the room, which are not similar to church paintings in content, but painting style. Furthermore, the Paleman has stigmata on his hands linking him in with Jesus. The Paleman’s room has lots of negative connotations, like the use of red (such as, the food) and the fire which is symbolic of hell. Associating such a negative place, and such a terrifying creature (such as, eyes on his hands), with the church, is therefore a negative representation of the church, and may have been done as a way of criticising the churches involvement, or more so lack of involvement during the Spanish Civil War. Furthermore, the horrific images around the room also have more meaning to them. They are reminiscent of Goya’s painting of Saturn eating his son, and Saturn was afraid of his son growing up and overpowering him. This relates to world war 2, which the film may have been referencing, as the Nazi’s targeted Jewish children to try and wipe out Judaism. It would make sense if this was a WW2 reference, as the pile of shoes can also be seen as a WW2 reference, as a reference to the pile of clothes at the concentration camps, as well as being aesthetically unnerving, and building tension in the audience.

Furthermore, the mise-en-scene in the Paleman sequence is also used to further the coming of age genre and bildungsroman elements of the film. Such as, how in the book that Ofelia has been gifted, the Paleman’s arms form a fallopian tube shape, continuing the fallopian tube imagery that has been used throughout the film (such as, the shape of the tree). This is used to symbolise how Ofelia is growing up, probably much faster than she should be, due to the events going on around her. This would make sense, as del Toro likes to explore how war affects children, and also explored this theme in his other movie *The Devil's Backbone*, which he describes as the sister film to *Pan’s Labyrinth*. Furthermore, the red food being red has connotations of danger (aesthetically building tension in the audience), as does the mise-en-scene of the sharp dagger, which has it’s dangerousness emphasized by the fantastical sharp noise when Ofelia runs her finger along the blade, which also adds to the

fantastical genre. This danger that Ofelia overcome links in with the representation of gender and age, as Ofelia a young girl is powerful and survives the dangers of being in the same room as the Paleman. This representation is further emphasised with the editing when Ofelia is running away from the Paleman. The parallel action of Ofelia and the sand timer running out builds tension in the audience, as do the action reaction shots of her and the Paleman as she runs away, especially when paired with the foley animal noises attached to him, only making her escape more impressive, and therefore creating a positive representation of girls and children. Plus, the fact that Ofelia could have easily overpowered the Paleman with her newfound dagger, but didn't even consider this option, is also a positive representation, as it shows her choice of passivity rather than violence, contrasting her to the fascist villain of Vidal.

This is not the only way that Ofelia is contrasted against Vidal in the middle sequence of Pan's Labyrinth. Such as, how in the book Ofelia is shown using her left hand to cover up the middle lock. But once she is confronted with the locks, she ignores the book's and the fairies instructions and opens the left lock, which was the correct choice. This links in with the theme of defiance, and associates her with left wing politics. Contrasting to Vidal who is always associated with the right, such as through his performance during the opening when he shakes hands with his right hand, and tells Ofelia she should do the same. This deviation from obeying and following what is symbolic of right wing politics is a way of showing how children were the hope and future after the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, as well as being a positive representation of Ofelia.

The ending of Pan's Labyrinth is also filled with meaning. Such as, through the cinematography. For example, the use of coloured lighting. Like, how Vidal and the real world tend to be associated with the harsh blue colour, connoting coldness and harshness. For example, how Vidal and his men come round the corner from where the blue lighting is. To contrast, the yellow lighting tends to be associated with the fantastical world, furthering the fantastical genre, and has connotations of warmth. In the ending, Mercedes is associated with the yellow lighting when she goes to find Ofelia in her room, which is a way of showing her as a good and loving person. These two colours come together during the ending of the film, when Vidal is running towards the Labyrinth, as the sky is filled with blue and yellow, symbolic of how the two worlds have collided with one another. Furthermore, there is a full moon in the sky, which provides a gothic feel to the movie.

Also during the ending, sound is used to create meaning. Such as the diegetic and non-diegetic lullaby music that Mercedes sings to Ofelia, and that becomes non-diegetic. This links back to the coming of age genre, reminding us that Ofelia is just a child, and has brutally died at the hands of facism, making the audience feel even sadder. Sound is also used in terms of Vidal. For one, there is a foley noise letting us know that Vidal has been drugged (in combination with manipulated cinematography), as well as the sound bridge of his watch again, which he looks at before he dies, linking back in with the theme of toxic masculinity and death. Linking on from this, the proxemics before Vidal dies are very interesting, as although bleeding heavily, and without doubt about to die, he stands in the

center in front of the rebels, as if in control and strong. This links back into the idea of toxic masculinity that was passed down to him, which links in with the representation of men, which is exploring the dangers that toxic masculinity can have on a person. It to some extent explains some of Vidal's behaviours, but does not excuse him. It is made clear by Mercedes that Vidal's son won't even know his dad's name, making it clear to the audience that this toxic masculinity will not be passed down on to him. This is to some extent another way of expressing the idea that the children were the hope after the Spanish Civil War.

Furthermore, the fantastical world that Ofelia goes to after dying also has a lot of meaning. Such as, the use of yellow and red colours in the mise-en-scene, such as Ofelia's outfit, which aesthetically have warm and happy connotations, contrasting to the harsh blue reality where she is lying dead. Her red shoes are a reference to The Wizard of Oz, and the idea of going home, as this scene is saying to the audience that Ofelia is home now, and that everything will be okay. However, due to the editing, it can be interpreted that this is all in her head, as after seeing this fantasy world, it cuts back to a close up of Ofelia, who is still awake. However, the mise-en-scene later of the flower on the tree solidifies the idea that the fantastical world is real, and that Ofelia is actually happy now with her parents and brother, making it a bittersweet ending. The film ends with the fantasy voice over again, meaning the film is bookended by the fairytale structure, solidifying the fantasy genre and element to the film.

House of Flying Daggers

1) Film form, aesthetics, context and representation [40]

The middle of House of Flying Daggers portrays so much meaning through the film form choices. Such as, through the mise-en-scene. Fitting in with Zhang Yimou's auteur signature style, the set of the Peony Pavilion can be described as baroque. Although aesthetically seemingly stylised, it's extravagant decor is based in reality. At the time, Bordellos were beautiful places, hence the elaborate set with saturated colours, the specially made flooring with butterflies on it and more. Contextually, this links in with the Tang Dynasty period, which is often referred to as the "golden age" of Chinese civilization, and during this time culture flourished, and the Bordello fits in with this, due to its artistic expression through the elaborate set design. The opening also sets up the theme of deceit, not just amongst the characters, but to the audience as well. Such as, the juxtaposition of the performance and mise-en-scene of the men picking up their weapons and the women with their instruments, this is suggesting that men are the fighters and the powerful ones, and women the entertainers, which the film turns on its head very quickly. The performance of Mei walking cautiously deceives the audience and the other characters, leading us all to believe that she is blind, which is false, as she's secretly working for the House of Flying Daggers. There is however a hint of this side to Mei through the mise-en-scene. Such as her red lipstick. Which not only separates her from the other women, can be interpreted as associating her with the soldiers, due to the colour choice. Mei being a strong and powerful woman is a good

representation of women, and also makes sense given the context as in the Wuxia genre, strong female characters are a major part of the tradition of the genre. Hence, during the middle sequence, her incredible fighting ability. For example, this is shown through the editing, as the slow motion of Mei climbing up trees and defending herself (while pretending to be blind) while being outnumbered. Furthermore, in this scene the House of Flying Daggers can be seen, and are all women, the proxemics of them standing in a line connotes their power to the audience. Interestingly, this positive representation of women was also in the opening of the movie. Such as, when Mei is being attacked by the bordello guest Jin, all of the lady's quickly head over and aid Mei. This again contextually makes sense, as courtesans were known for being clever, creatively talented with skill and good conversational talent.

The middle of House of Flying Daggers also portrays lots of meaning and messages to the audience through film form elements. Such as, through the cinematography. The cinematography is used to highlight the power and skill of Mei, again linking in with the strong female women in the Wuxia genre, as the scene in particular includes wire work. Such as, the long shot of Mei being surrounded makes her battle only more impressive as she is able to fight despite being outnumbered. Plus the tension of the scene, created by cinematography like the close ups of the bamboo splitting through other pieces of bamboo, only make her fight even more impressive. Furthermore, during this part in the movie, the audience is still led to believe that Mei is blind, deceiving the audience with moments like a mid-shot of Mei concentrating as a reaction shot of the leaves falling, convincing the audience she is surviving by listening, furthering the theme of deceit.

The middle sequence also furthers the theme of togetherness, and the relationship between Mei and Jin. Such as, through the non-diegetic punctuation sound when Jin comes to save Mei. Furthermore, how when they are trapped in the bamboo cage together, proxemics wise they are close, and non-diegetically the song she danced to plays, which is the song played when they first meet, emphasising their romantic relationship in that moment, as well as the close up of them holding hands. Interestingly, the bamboo cage may also serve another purpose. The cage forces the closeness in terms of proxemics, and aesthetically creates a claustrophobic feel, which may be a way that Zhang Yimou is exploring context, in terms of the regime due to a sense of oppressiveness. It would make sense if Zhang Yimou was exploring a political context, as he is part of what is known as the 5th generation. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1978) the Beijing Film Academy shut, and didn't re-open until 1978. The first academy students since the reopening graduated in 1982, they were known as the 5th generation and Zhang Yimou was among them. They had been through the hard times of the Cultural Revolution and reacted by making exploratory films that examined the issues so far unexplored by cinema in China.

The ending of House of Flying Daggers can also be interpreted as exploring a political context. Such as, how the only part of the major fight we see, between the state and the house of flying daggers, is the performance of the states men advancing towards the House of Flying Daggers, ready to fight. The film chooses to focus on the romantic, and more personal fight. Which can be seen as a political statement in itself. This is seen again later, when Mei removes her blade to try and save Jin. The audience is shown the close up of

Leo's dagger in his hand, the final act of deceit, killing Mei. Mei's dagger hits the tree, rather than saving Jin, or killing Leo. This could be symbolic of not picking a political side (as the two men represent very different things), and instead the importance being the personal things. This is emphasized by the foreshadowing of this moment earlier in the film, when Leo throws the sword past Mei, which hits the tree. As well as also being emphasised by the brutality of the scene, such as, the mise-en-scene on the blood flying across the screen, and how there is no wire work like in the rest of the film, making it aesthetically more real and personal. Plus, the editing emphasises the brutality, like the slow motion of the blood, of the break of continuity editing to show the same fight moment twice between Jin and Leo. Furthermore, the mise-en-scene of the snow storm while accidental, could have been kept due to the romantic connotations of it, as well as the contrast of the white snow and Mei's red blood (again something that was foreshadowed, during the the opening credits with the red dot), making her death even more tragic due to her personal connection with Jin. Furthermore, the performance of Jin cutting off Leo's hat, which is symbolic of his status, can also be seen as political. It's interesting that Zhang Yimou was able to explore a political context, as his films often were censored by the state due to Zhang's exploration of social life in China. It is possible that this film wasn't censored due to the disguise of making it a period piece, and setting it in the past, as well as being filmed after the Cultural Revolution. This is because after the Cultural Revolution, there were discussions about artistic freedom, and since Zhang has had major success with his Wuxia films. The political aspects of the film are linked in with the deceit, as characters' loyalties are actually aligned with people we did not know, like Mei's loyalty to the house of flying daggers. The deceit is again shown in the ending, by the performance of Jin and Leo stabbing one another in the back at the same time, showing that they are equals regardless of all the politics surrounding them.

Amy

1) Specialist Study Areas (and everything else) [20]

Amy uses film form in many different ways to create meaning. Such as, the use of cinematography during the opening. The footage used is found footage, that uses hand held camera and unprofessional camera work due to being a home video. Out of thousands of video options, the director chose this video specifically because of the meanings that it creates. The very act of this aligns director Kapadia with Michael's Moore's way of filmmaking, as he has chosen footage specifically, and in this scenario to counteract pre-conceived media representations of Amy right from the start, instead of being unbiased like Longinotto. For example, in this opening video, it's of Amy as a child with her friends, celebrating her friend's birthday. This performance makes her seem like an ordinary person, rather than the famous Amy that everyone knows. Moreover, during this opening sequence, she sings happy birthday in a way that is mimicking Maryln Monroe. This relates Amy to Monroe, making her death and life seem tragic just like Maryln's, again to counteract pre-conceived media representations of Amy. Furthermore, the opening also uses digitally added lens flares due to their positive connotations, as does the recording session scene,

again to try and create a positive representation of Amy, to work against what the film's audience may already believe about her. This could be seen as a way that digital technology can help convey meaning in filmmaking.

The middle sequence of Amy also uses film form to create meaning in many different ways. Such as, the use of cinematography and mise-en-scene, as there is a close up of Amy's dirty shoes with a homeless man's dirty shoes, seemingly comparing the two. This could be considered as a negative representation of Amy. However, the long shot of Amy having fun with the homeless man is a positive representation as it shows her as caring to the audience. This contrast of positive and negative representations could mean that Kapadia is more in line with Longinotto's style of documentary making, and her documentary theory, as it's suggesting that Kapadia didn't have a biased view, and instead just portrayed the truth. However, this then feels untrue when the editing and sound is taken into consideration, because unlike in Longinotto's films, Kapadia has used editing to construct specific meanings. Such as, the use of Ken Burns effect and zoom on the long shot of Amy in the bar pulling an inappropriate hand gesture, while a man has a voice over discussing how he slept with her. The film is using this in a negative way to represent Amy, which is not only constructing the footage in a certain way to tell the audience what to feel, but a bad way to represent women, as Kapadia is suggesting that women who may be provocative are acting badly. This idea is emphasized later during the park scene, with the use of Ken Burns effect of a long shot of Amy's body (paparazzi photo) while wearing provocative clothing, with voice over of someone discussing the provocative nature of Amy. This goes against Longinotto's film making theory, as the director has used sound, editing and mise-en-scene to construct specific messages to tell the audience. However, it can also be interpreted as a way of telling the audience how the media treated and represented Amy, hence choosing a paparazzi picture (digital technology), rather than it being the film portraying its own opinion on Amy. This could make sense, given the use of so many paparazzi pictures during the park scene, that would have used long lenses, connoting the sense of being spied on to the audience. The park scene is however also used to give across information about Amy's romantic relationship to the audience. Such as, the voice over stating how Amy was in love with Blake, paired with the mise-en-scene of Amy's drawn love hearts next to his name. Despite this positivity, their relationship is bittersweet, and the audience is presented with the self-destructive side of it through the voice over interview, which is a way of using sound that Longinotto would never use, as it's constructed and edited it at a specific time, rather than just diegetic noise.

The recording session sequence is also very constructed. Such as, the specific choice of this archive footage in particular, which would have been an active choice from the director. Moreover, the general unglamour nature of it, possibly to show how she is an ordinary human like the rest of us. Suggested by the mise-en-scene of the seemingly makeshift recording booth, and the amateur footage recorded with random crash zooms (like onto the buttons). Plus, this scene is constructed to show Amy's talent. The switch from diegetic, to non-diegetic and then back to diegetic singing emphasises her singing talent, and the mise-en-scene of having the lyrics written on screen shows the audience directly her talent for writing. There's also voice over of a man critiquing how the media calls her a procrastinator, as he doesn't see that, as shown through the performance in this scene. This

could be interpreted as linking in with Michael Moore's documentary theory, as it seems that Kapadia is using film form in specific ways to construct a positive representation of Amy in order to counteract pre-conceived representations of her. Hence, the voice over specifically critiquing the media's point of view of her.

The ending also uses various elements of film form to create meaning. Such as, the drone footage that goes from her home to the sky, emphasising how Amy was forced from her home and taken to the airport, which couldn't have been filmed without digital technology (actual film would have been too heavy); this may have been done to show the mistreatment of Amy which led to her downfall. There is also lots of meaning making in the scene of her not singing at her concert. The director uses found footage filmed from the crowd, positioning us with the audience. But, we are not aligned with them, as the audience rudely and diegetically shout 'sing' at Amy, but we understand her troubled mental state. There is also an included clip from TV, saying that Amy totally 'blew it' which is a very Michael Moore thing to do in a documentary as it's used to construct a meaning, and is specifically criticising social media. The ending of the film also includes Amy's funeral, which could either be critiquing the media's lack of privacy, or could be considered rude of the documentary itself. After the funeral, there is a montage of Amy smiling, singing and just being ordinary, this guides the audience to feel the grief more deeply. There's also a cross fade to a picture of Amy on the street, where she had taken her stud out, was wearing what can be interpreted as modest clothes, and may even be an edited picture, again with the use of Ken Burns effect. This is telling the audience to feel a certain way about Amy, and is trying to make the audience feel bad for her. Which, although is an appropriate reaction, is constructed by the director, and therefore fits more into Moore's documentary theory than Longinotto.

Fallen Angels

1) Specialist Study Areas (and everything else) [20]

The opening of Wong Kar-wai's *Fallen Angels* creates meaning in many different ways. Such as, through the use of editing. There is narrative repetition of both characters going to the same places (the train station, and their home) but at different times. This is emphasised by the experimental use of film form, as both character's journeys are edited the same way using experimental and dynamic editing that breaks the 180 degree rule and continuity. This is a way of exploring the auteur's signature theme of loneliness and connection, as the two characters cross the same paths but do not meet. This in general is true of the narrative structure, which focuses on characters intertwining lives rather than having a more stereotypical structure from opening equilibrium to disequilibrium to ending equilibrium. This is also explored through the mise en scene and deep depth of field. In one particular shot, the house is in the foreground, and the city in the background, denoting a sense of loneliness and lack of connection to the world. This is also done using the experimental uses sound. For example, how the sonic perspective of the train driving past isn't right, and instead seemingly louder than it should, just emphasising how far away the train actually is to the audience, and furthering the theme of loneliness. It's also during the opening that the

Auteur's signature as an experimental process can be seen through the fact that the man is played by a big star (Takeshi Kaneshiro), but never speaks diegetically, which breaks conventions of film. This could also be a way of exploring the sense of loneliness, as he never verbally interacts with the other characters.

The assassination sequence of *Fallen Angels* also conveys meanings to the audience in many different ways. Such as, the time manipulation through editing. Experimentally, there is use of slow motion on the unnamed assassin as he advances to his target, and kills them. Furthermore, there is use of a pop song (non-diegetic), which is part of the director's auteur signature, not for ironic purposes, but to convey a specific emotion along with the use of slow motion. The emotions evoked through this use of film form tell the audience that this unnamed assassin isn't scared, and we get the idea that he has done this many times before. In terms of experimental narrative style, this is the only explanation we get of the scene, a description of the character, rather than explaining why he is killing. This could be because Wong is using experimental, as well as auteur, ways of making a movie to explore very real human emotion, rather than a conventional plot. This is interesting, as Western cinema emphasises narrative to evoke emotion in the audience, but Wong Kar-Wai is experimentally doing this instead of conventionally. This is emphasised by the dynamic editing during this scene, as the random jump cuts while he is assassinating the people is experimental, and doesn't always focus on the shooting (for example, the cut to the shower curtain), suggesting that the action taking place isn't all that's important. Furthermore, the red colour of the shower curtain matches the red lipstick of the partner, aesthetically, this may be a way to remind the audience of the loneliness that these characters are feeling, as they are still separated. Hence, the jump cut to the shower curtain in the middle of a shooting scene. As well as auteur signature in narrative style during this scene (and the rest of the film) there are also other auteur signatures in this scene based off of the film form elements. Such as, the *mise-en-scène* of the Hong Kong cityscape, and the reflections off of the rain on the streets, which could connote a sense of emptiness, linking in with the films (and the auteurs signature) themes. Linking on from this, the use of step printing in the scene is not just experimental, but also an example of the auteur's signature way of making films. The use of step printing aesthetically connotes a sense of detachment to the audience, which therefore also links into the themes of loneliness and connection that are being explored, such as through the shower curtain.

Similarly to the opening and assassination sequence, there are also lots of examples of auteur signatures and experimental features that create meaning in the videoing dad sequence. Such as, the use of reflection again, which is part of Wong Kar-Wai's auteur signature, of the dad and son in bed together reflected in the mirror. As mirrors can be symbolic of the internal climate of the characters being reflected, the audience may interpret this as emphasizing the closeness and the connection of the father and son relationship. Therefore, the *mise-en-scène* of the reflection in the mirror furthers the exploration of themes like closeness and connection, which Wong Kar-Wai tends to explore in his films. Such as, in *Chungking Express*, which is the sister film to *Fallen Angels*, due to *Fallen Angels* meaning to be the third part of *Chungking Express*, but became a separate movie due to running time.

The videoing dad sequence uses deep focus with a deep depth of field like the rest of the movie to create a meeting. As, the father and son are separated by the wall, as shown through the mise-en-scene to the audience. The son is spying on his father watching the recorded video, and we can see both of them during this personal, yet secret and intimate moment due to the deep focus and depth of field, which furthers the theme of connection and closeness. What makes the film experimental, is partially it's focus on emotional themes rather than plot, such as closeness and connection. The father and son scene also conveys the themes of connection through the aesthetic links to homeliness and closeness. This is partially done through the experimental attitude towards making films, as the use of unfinished scripts, and therefore improvised performances and camera work makes the scene (and the film) feel more natural and authentic, which aesthetically connotes a sense of homelessness and the connection between these two people. The authenticity is also communicated to the audience through the cinematography. The main actor is holding the camera, amateurly filming, and there's mise-en-scene glitches in the video, as well as unflattering camera angles. This all supports the homely film of the scene, which ultimately continues the theme of closeness and connection; in this scene in particular, the connection between father and son, and the identity of being someone's son.

The ending of the film uses film form elements like cinematography to create meaning. Such as, experimentally, the use of a wide angle lens in combination with a close up of the woman's face. This is unflattering, and used to create meaning. It makes the lady's face fill the foreground, while everyone else can be seen through the deep depth of field in the background. The wide angle lens and deep depth of field emphasises the distance between them, again furthering the theme of loneliness and want for connection. The entire film has experimental narrative, partially through the structure and cinematic time and space. The film uses crossing paths of characters, ellipsis and parallel timelines. However, the ending shot is of two characters coming together. The performance and mise-en-scene of them on the motorbike together in the tunnel feels like a conclusion to the themes. Experimentally, no plot is concluded (open ending), and the audience doesn't know if these two characters will ever meet again, but the audience could interpret that this fleeting moment of connection is what the film has been building up to, and is ultimately representative of real life emotion like the rest of the movie. Especially since the only character motivation the audience is given, is that they desire closeness, which in this moment they have. The green lighting of the tunnel is interesting. As the director is experimental with colour, and doesn't follow colour theory, it can be hard to interpret what it's meaning was, but in a bizarre way it aesthetically connotes their closeness in this scene to the audience. Possibly because this was used before, like the green lighting during the videoing dad sequence. The use of phasing diegetic sound connotes the sense of emptiness during the entire movie including the ending, but the pop song (non-diegetic) is romantic, fitting in with the mise-en-scene, performance and cinematography, suggesting that these two people have momentarily found the closeness that they were craving.

