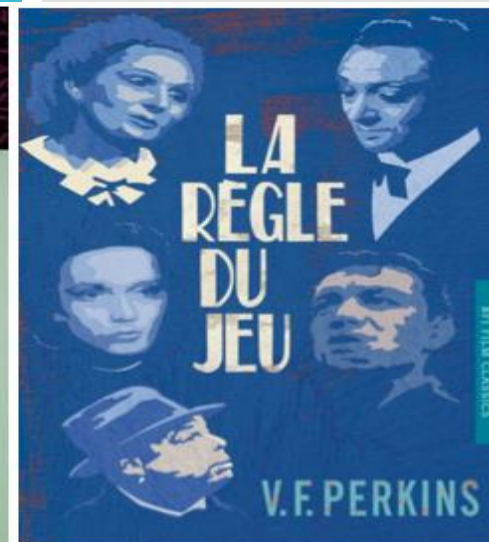
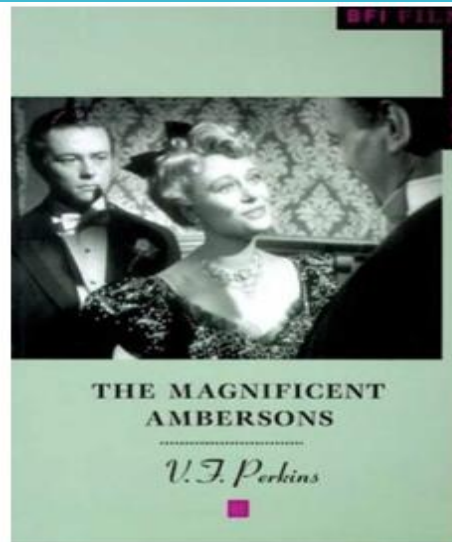
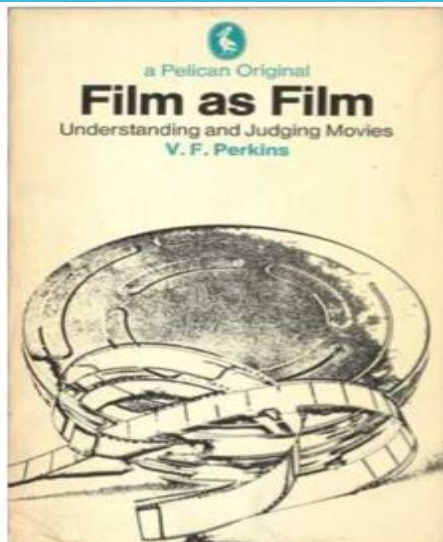
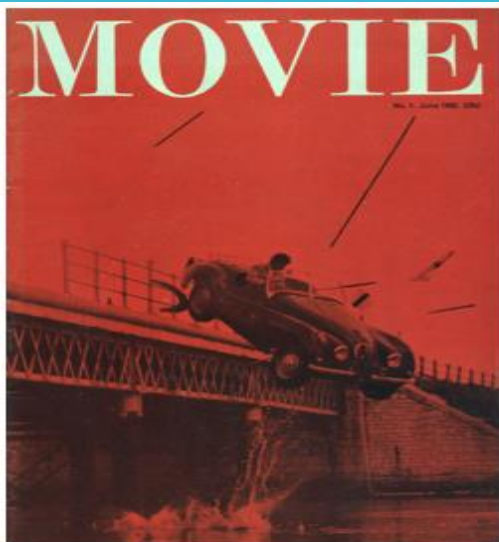


Unit 4: Film Form or System



Topic

- What is “form” in film system?
- Set of narrative elements
- Set of stylistic elements

Objectives

- Be able to recall important narrative elements in film making.
- Be able to recall important stylistic or film stylistic devices in film making.
- Be able to explain how the elements used in film making create cinematic effects.
- Be able to express viewpoints and feelings towards films being watched by using the elements learned.

What is 'form' in film system?

Definition

FORM can be defined as **the total system of relationships at work in the film and viewer can perceive**. These relationships are ones between parts and elements; stylistic or narrative entities.



FORM involves:

- Expectations
- Pre- knowledge and convention
- Feeling and prejudice
- Meaning, from the referential-explicit to the implicit-symptomatic, i.e., from the obvious to the concealed and repressed.

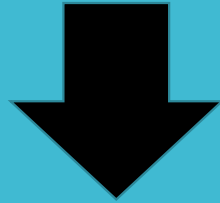


Films are not random collections of signifiers, but rather dynamic sets of relations.

**Narrative
subsystem
(plot)**



**Stylistic
subsystem
(camera, color,
music, etc.)**



**Total
System**

What is mise-en-scene?

Mise-en-scene is the arrangement of scenery and stage properties in a play. Translated from French, it means "setting the stage" but, in film analysis, the term mise-en-scene refers to everything in front of the camera, including the set design, lighting, and actors. Mise-en-scene in film is the overall effect of how it all comes together for the audience.

Narrative elements



A FILM NARRATIVE is a movie story that includes plot, characters, setting, climax and resolution.

“A chain of events in cause-effect relationship occurring in time and space”

Film narrative is composed of the following:



- Plot
- Cause and Effect
- Time
- Space
- Beginning, Story Development, Conflict and Ending

Types of film narratives

LINEAR NARRATIVES

vs

NON-LINEAR
NARRATIVES might skip
around to different points
in time

Present stories in a logical manner by telling what happens from one point in time to the next without using flashbacks or flash-forwards and then returning to the present.

**Clear
beginning,
middle, and
ending**

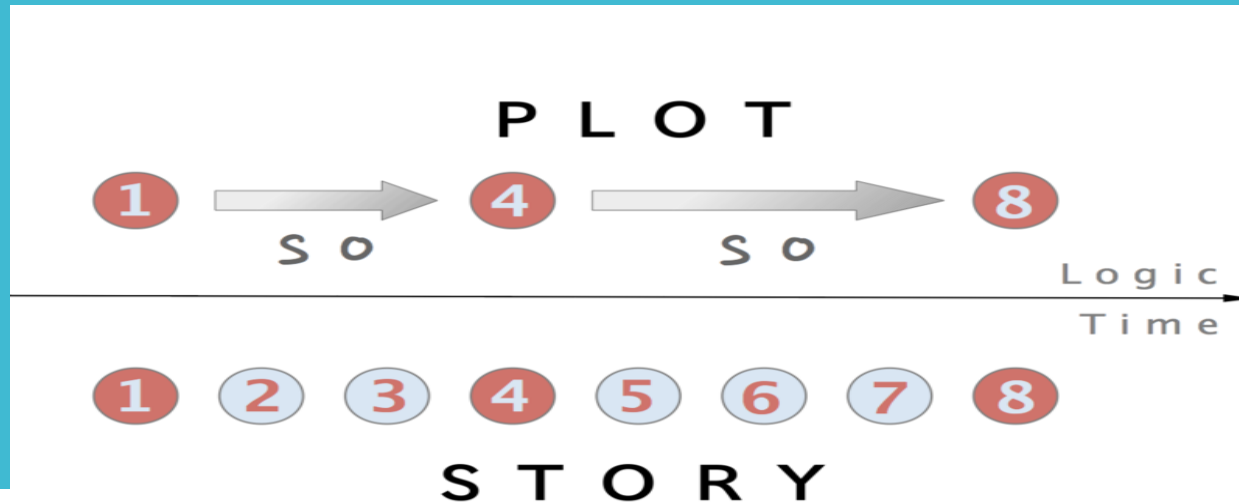
The order in which events are portrayed corresponding to the order in which they occur



Plot/ Cause and Effect / Time / Space / Beginning, Story Development, Conflict and Ending

- Plot is main events in a story
- Plot is the sequence of events where each affects the next one through the principle of cause-and-effect.

Plot may have subplots: additional supporting story lines



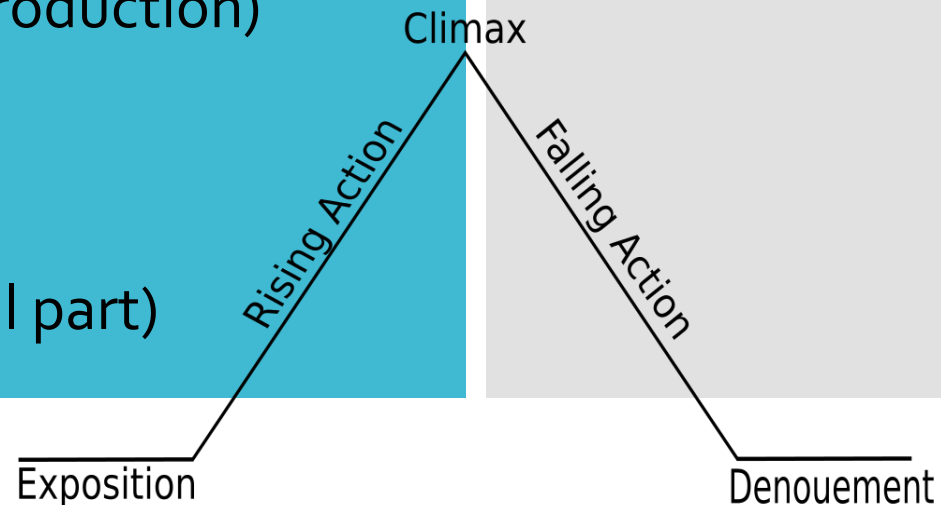
Story
synopsis

Freytag's Pyramid in film

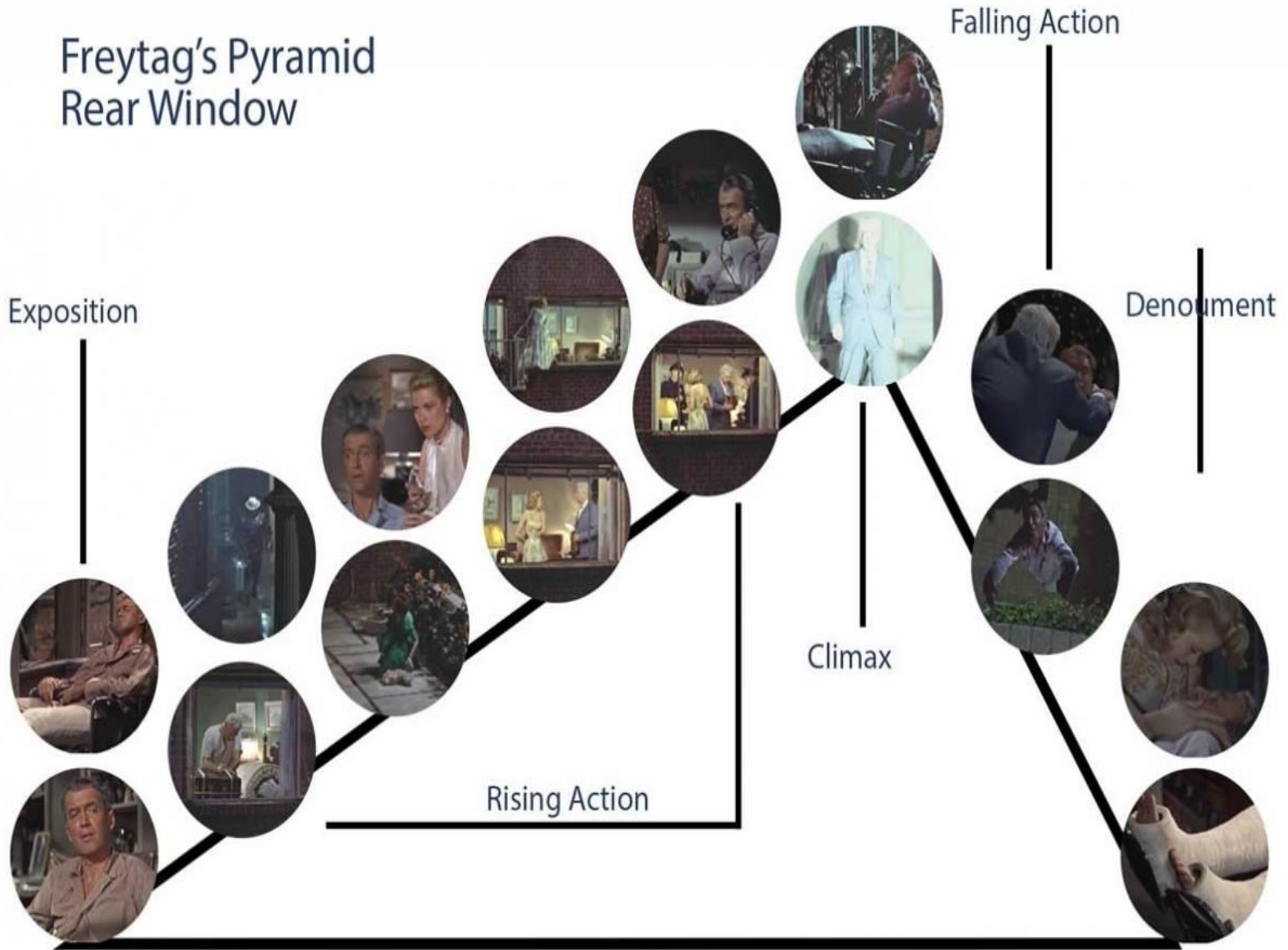
Freytag's Pyramid was created by Gustav Freytag, a German novelist and playwright. *The Freytag's Pyramid is a dramatic structure or the structure of a dramatic work such as a play or film.*

Freytag's Pyramid in film suggests that a film or drama is divided into five parts and provides function to each part. These parts are the following:

- (1) exposition (originally called introduction)
- (2) rising action (rise)
- (3) climax
- (4) falling action (return or fall)
- (5) denouement (catastrophe/ final part)



Freytag's Pyramid Rear Window



Rear Window follows Freytag's Pyramid.



**CONTROLLING
THE AUDIENCE IN
REAR
WINDOW**

Plot/ Cause and Effect / Time / Space / Beginning, Story Development, Conflict and Ending

- Cause and effect connect events and actions in a movie.
- Usually the characters in a film drive the story forward by performing certain actions (the cause) that in turn creates a response in other characters (the effect).



Characters can be flat or well-rounded and have particular traits (attitudes, skills, habits, tastes, psychological drives, etc.) which play causal roles in the story action.

Plot/ Cause and Effect / **Time** / Space / Beginning, Story Development, Conflict and Ending

- The chronology, duration, and frequency of events
- One of the central components which the filmmaker has at his disposal.
- In screenplay and filming, time can be compressed, stretched, and can run both forwards and backwards.
- In screenplay, time and place must be clearly described, so that audience will be immediately engaged in the plot and know where and when the story takes place.

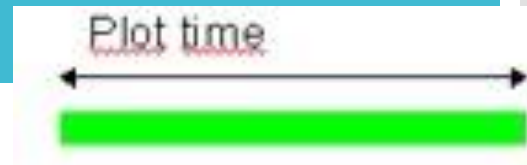
Story time

Story time consist of order, duration and frequency of all the events pertinent to the narrative whatever they are shown to us or not.



Plot time

Plot time consists of temporal qualities (order, duration, and frequency) of the events presented in the film. Plot time shows us selected story events but only refers to others. It usually covers a shorter span than the complete story.



Five types of film time

“the time of the thing being told”,
and “the time of the telling”

film time vs. our time

Scene – where story time is the same as real time – e.g. in soap operas, which feel like they’re playing out in real time – or a film like *Victoria*, which was shot and performed ‘live’ in a single take, between 5am and 7.30am early one morning in Berlin.

Stretch – where story time stretches out real time, like in adventure film sequences of countdowns to a bomb going off – 30 seconds of countdown seems to last 2 minutes, because there’s lots of cross-cutting – to the clock, to the action, to a close-up.

Ellipsis – where the story cuts out real time – woman gets into her car outside a building, there’s one shot of the journey, then cut to her arriving at a house. The actual journey might take 10 minutes in real time, but in the film it lasts 20 seconds.


Summary – where real time is summarised by clock hands winding forward, or newspaper pages spinning, or the example in *Notting Hill*, where Hugh Grant walks up Portobello Road through winter rain, spring, summer, and autumn.

Pause – which is in some ways the hardest type of film time to spot. Sometimes in a film, time is ‘paused’ while a voice-over updates us on the action; sometimes the opening credits show us the world of the film, but the time of story hasn’t started yet.

Source:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/short-film-language-teaching/0/steps/31039>

FILM BLOCKING

 studio binder



Plot/ Cause and Effect / Time / **Space** / Beginning, Story Development, Conflict and Ending



Space, or the illusion of space

- The concept of space in film is used in controlling what filmmaker wants the audience to see and feel.

Positive and negative space

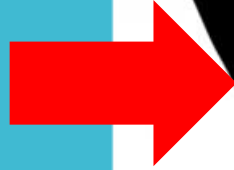
NEGATIVE SPACE is the space or the area around and between the subject (person or object) that a shot focuses on. It can also be used to convey a lot more than what you see just in the frame.

Whereas POSITIVE SPACE is the space the object inhabits on screen.

The larger the subject is in frame, the less negative space there is.



The subject
(the vase)
(positive space)



Negative
space

The subject is a vase, but within the negative space could be the greatest love story ever told.

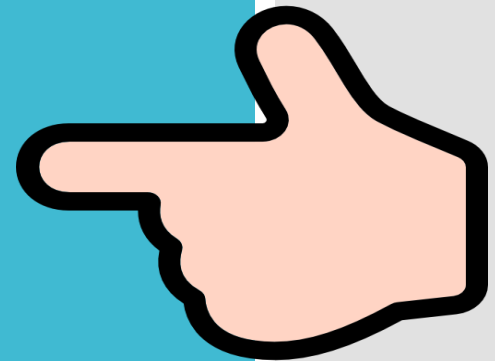
The blue sky is the negative space around the paraglider, which is the positive space.



■ Negative space:

- ✓ To isolate subject in film so that a viewer knows where to look (*to make the person isolated, their environment must be brought into focus*)
- ✓ To create a comedic effect
- ✓ To convey visual messages
- ✓ To raise tension by bringing attention to a space within the frame that is about to change

The effect of using negative space is that it can depict loneliness and isolation, and make a character stand out against their surroundings.



**WHAT
IS
NEGATIVE
SPACE?**



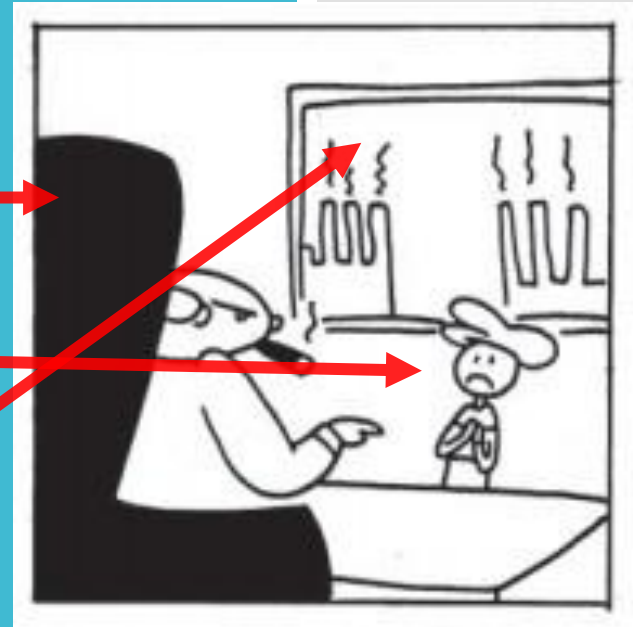
■ Adding depth to a composition

Using the foreground, midground and background to create depth in a scene

foreground

midground

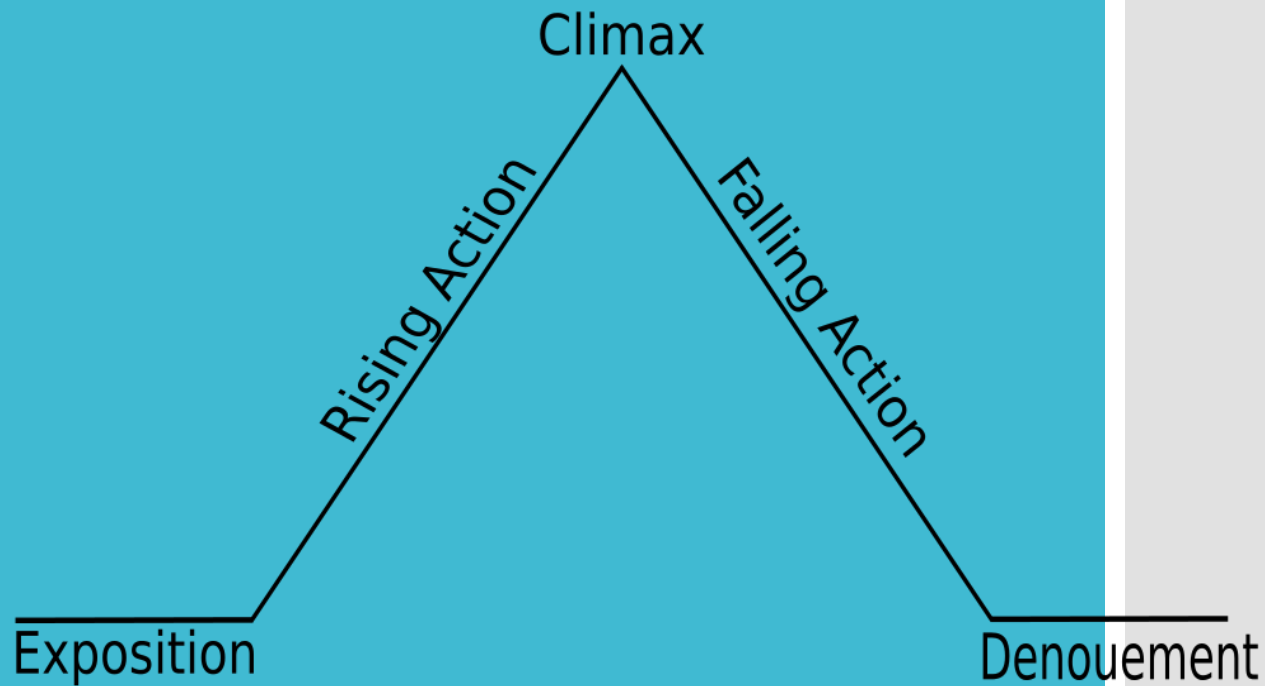
background



Add depth to a composition. Rather than imagine the scene taking place on a single plane, use the foreground, midground and background to create depth in a scene. For example, a factory worker has entered his boss's office to ask for a raise. The subject of the scene, the worker, is in the midground, while the large, looming figure of his boss occupies the foreground. Behind them, the factory scene hums along with dozens of other workers. You have tied the three key elements of the scene (the worker, the boss, the factory machines) together in one visually rich composition.

Plot/ Cause and Effect / Time / Space / Beginning, Story Development, Conflict and Ending

- We may refer to the Freytag's Pyramid



Theme

Theme and plot are the same?

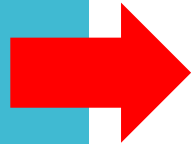
The theme is a common idea that is incorporated and repeated throughout a literary work.

A theme is often also called **“the moral of the story.”**

The theme weaves through the entire story and is highlighted by symbols, setting and character actions.

**A movie/film
is regulated
by the
theme.**

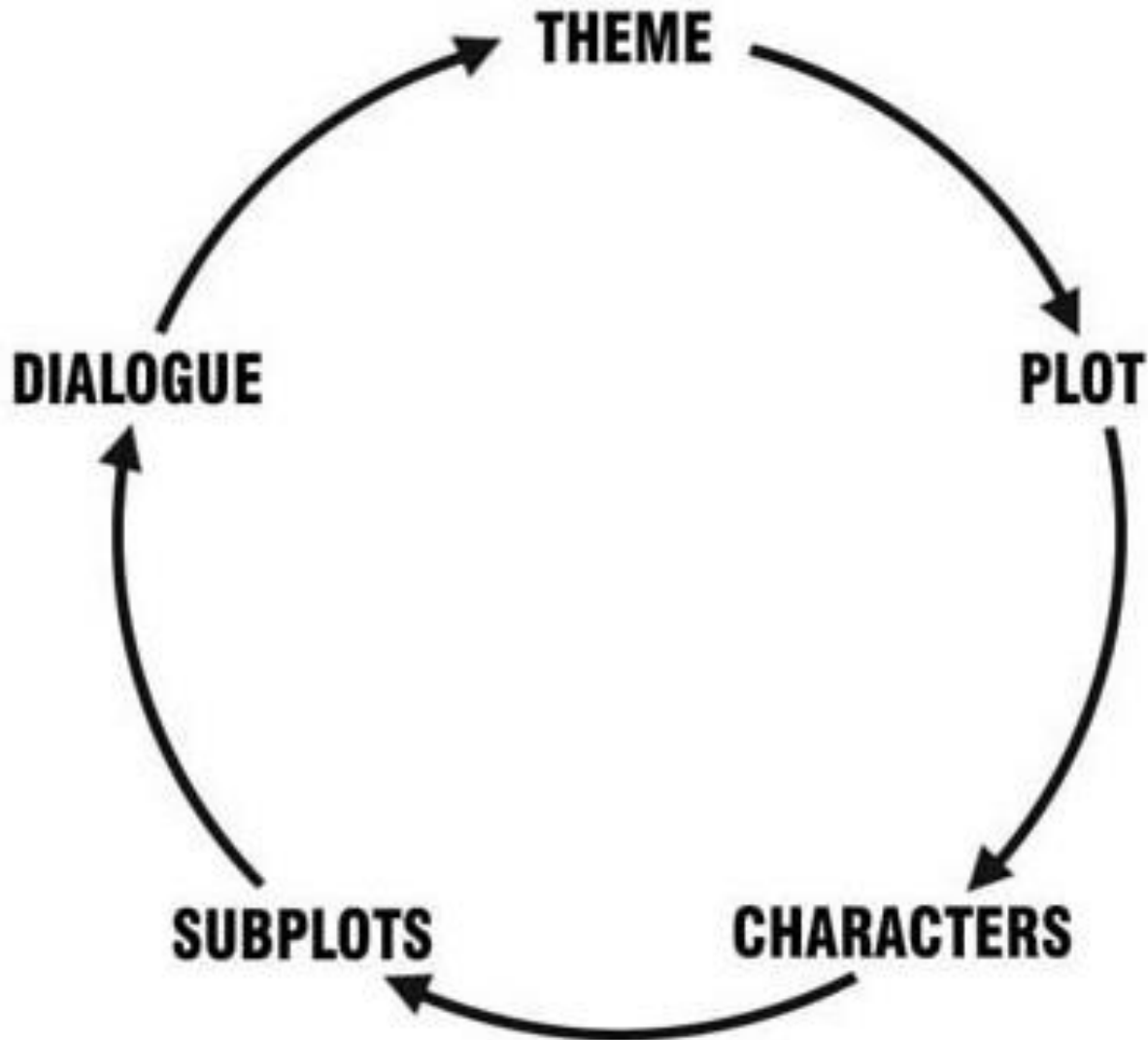
**Thematic
Elements**



- THEME refers to the unifying central concern of the film, the special focus that unifies the work.
- Ideas
- Plot
- Emotional Effect or Mood
- Character
- Style or Texture

**These all devices above are used
to build and enhance the theme.**

Theme aligns and focuses the plot, subplots, characters and dialogue



Common themes in film

Conflict

Good vs. evil

The battle

Overcoming adversity

The power of friendship

Live conquers all

The quest/ the journey

Maintaining balance

Coming of age

Spiritual enlightenment

The hero

Death

Revenge

Racism

Stylistic elements or film stylistic devices (film techniques)

Film stylistic devices create cinematic effects. These include the following:

- ✓ Visual design
- ✓ Cinematographic design (use of camera)
- ✓ Editing or montage
- ✓ Sound design

VISUAL DESIGN

VISUAL DESIGN includes:

- ✓ The choice of sets
- ✓ Costumes
- ✓ Makeup
- ✓ Lighting
- ✓ Color
- ✓ Acting style
- ✓ Actors' arrangement before the camera

CINEMATOGRAPHIC DESIGN

CINEMATOGRAPHIC DESIGN

includes:

- ✓ The choice of framing
- ✓ Shot distance
- ✓ Lenses/angle of view
- ✓ Film speed
- ✓ Camera angle
- ✓ Camera movement (e.g., tracking, panning, tilt)
- ✓ Focus (“depth of field”)



EDITING OR MONTAGE

EDITING (or “montage”) is how the individual shots are put together in order to create meaning or tell a story.

EDITING includes:

- ✓ Choices about editing pace
- ✓ Types of shots (e.g., establishing, reaction, freeze frame)
- ✓ Types of cuts (e.g., match cut, jump cut, etc.)
- ✓ Length of shots (e.g., long, short, etc.)
- ✓ Scene transitions (e.g., fade-out, wipe, dissolve, etc.)

SOUND DESIGN

SOUND DESIGN includes:

- ✓ Choices made about music
- ✓ Score/soundtrack
- ✓ Audibility
- ✓ Sound effects and Foley
- ✓ Off-screen sound
- ✓ Dialogue



Sound effects and Foley

- ✓ Sound effects
- ✓ Foley (The reproduction of everyday sounds/ noises, to be the sound effects added to films to enhance audio quality)

AMBIENCE (psychological cue for space)
LIBRARY EFFECTS (pre-recorded sound effects)
FOLEY includes Footsteps, Cloth and Props)



Individual Assignment (10 Marks)

- 1. Study 2 cinematic techniques**
- 2. Use examples of films**
- 3. Explain your understanding on them**
- 4. Express how these 2 techniques create any effects to you as the viewer. Bring aspects in bullet points.**
- 5. Then, prepare power point presentation to share with friends next week.**