

ABAN

Accademia di
Belle Arti di Nola

CINEMA, TELEVISIONE E FOTOGRAFIA

INGLESE

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Aerial Shot

A shot taken from a crane, plane, or helicopter. Not necessarily a moving shot.

Backlighting

The main source of light is behind the subject, silhouetting it, and directed toward the camera.

Bridging Shot

A shot used to cover a jump in time or place or other discontinuity. Examples are

- falling calendar pages
- railroad wheels
- newspaper headlines
- seasonal changes

Camera Angle

The angle at which the camera is pointed at the subject:

- Low
- High
- Tilt

Cut

The splicing of 2 shots together. this cut is made by the film editor at the editing stage of a film. Between sequences the cut marks a rapid transition between one time and space and another, but depending on the nature of the cut it will have different meanings.

Cross-cutting

Literally, cutting between different sets of action that can be occurring simultaneously or at different times, (this term is used synonymously but somewhat incorrectly with parallel editing.) Cross-cutting is used to build suspense, or to show the relationship between the different sets of action.

Jump cut

Cut where there is no match between the 2 spliced shots. Within a sequence, or more particularly a scene, jump cuts give the effect of bad editing. The opposite of a match cut, the jump cut is an abrupt cut between 2 shots that calls attention to itself because it does not match the shots seamlessly. It marks a transition in time and space but is called a jump cut because it jars the sensibilities; it makes the spectator jump and wonder where the narrative has got to. Jean-Luc Godard is undoubtedly one of the best exponents of this use of the jump cut.

Continuity cuts

These are cuts that take us seamlessly and logically from one sequence or scene to another. This is an unobtrusive cut that serves to move the narrative along.

Match cut

The exact opposite of a jump cut within a scene. These cuts make sure that there is a spatial-visual logic between the differently positioned shots within a scene. thus, where the camera moves to, and the angle of the camera, makes visual sense to the

spectator. Eyeline matching is part of the same visual logic: the first shot shows a character looking at something off-screen, the second shot shows what is being looked at. Match cuts then are also part of the seamless, the reality effect, so much favoured by Hollywood.

Deep focus

A technique in which objects very near the camera as well as those far away are in focus at the same time.

Diegesis

The denotative material of film narrative, it includes, according to Christian Metz, not only the narration itself, but also the fictional space and time dimension implied by the narrative.

Dissolve/lap-dissolve

These terms are used inter-changeably to refer to a transition between 2 sequences or scenes. generally associated with earlier cinema but still used on occasion. In a dissolve a first image gradually dissolves or fades out and is replaced by another which fades in over it. This type of transition, which is known also as a soft transition (as opposed to the cut), suggests a longer passage of time than a cut.

Dolly

A set of wheels and a platform upon which the camera can be mounted to give it mobility. Dolly shot is a shot taken from a moving dolly. Almost synonymous in general usage with tracking shot or follow shot

Editing

Editing refers literally to how shots are put together to make up a film. Traditionally a film is made up of sequences or in some cases, as with avant-garde or art cinema, or again, of successive shots that are assembled in what is known as collision editing, or montage.

ellipsis

A term that refers to periods of time that have been left out of the narrative. The ellipsis is marked by an editing transitions which, while it leaves out a section of the action, none the less signifies that something has been elided. Thus, the fade or dissolve could indicate a passage of time, a wipe, a change of scene and so on. A jump cut transports the spectator from one action and time to another, giving the impression of rapid action or of disorientation if it is not matched.

eyeline matching

A term used to point to the continuity editing practice ensuring the logic of the look or gaze. In other words, eyeline matching is based on the belief in mainstream cinema that when a character looks into off-screen space the spectator expects to see what he or she is looking at. Thus there will be a cut to show what is being looked at:

- object
- view
- another character

Eyeline then refers to the trajectory of the looking eye.

The eyeline match creates order and meaning in cinematic space. Thus, for example, character A will look off-screen at character B. Cut to character B, who-if she or he is in the same room and engaged in an exchange either of glances or words with character A-will return that look and so 'certify' that character A is indeed in the space from which we first saw her or him look. This "stabilising" is true in the other primary use of the eyeline match which is the shot/reverse angle shot, also known as the reverse angle shot, commonly used in close-up dialogue scenes. The camera adopts the eyeline trajectory of the interlocutor looking at the other person as she or he speaks, then switches to the other person's position and does the same.

Extreme long shot

A panoramic view of an exterior location photographed from a considerable distance, often as far as a quarter-mile away. May also serve as the **establishing shot**

Fade in

A punctuation device. The screen is black at the beginning; gradually the image appears, brightening to full strength. The opposite happens in the **fade out**

Fill light

An auxiliary light, usually from the side of the subject that can soften shadows and illuminate areas not covered by the key light

Flashback

A scene or sequence (sometimes an entire film), that is inserted into a scene in "present" time and that deals with the past. The flashback is the past tense of the film.

Flash-forward

On the model of the flashback, scenes or shots of future time; the future tense of the film.

Focus

The sharpness of the image. A range of distances from the camera will be acceptably sharp. Possible to have deep focus, **shallow focus**.

Focus in, focus out: a punctuation device whereby the image gradually comes into focus or goes out of focus.

Follow shot

A tracking shot or zoom which follows the subject as it moves.

Framing

The way in which subjects and objects are framed within a shot produces specific readings. Size and volume within the frame speak as much as dialogue. So too do camera angles. Thus, for example, a high-angle extreme long shot of two men walking away in the distance, (as in the end of Jean Renoir's *La Grande Illusion*, 1937) points to their vulnerability - they are about to disappear, possibly die. Low angle shots in medium close-up on a person can point to their power, but it can also point to ridicule because of the distortion factor.

gaze/look

This term refers to the exchange of looks that takes place in cinema but it was not until the 1970s that it was written about and theorised. In the early 1970s, first French and then British and American film theorists began applying psychoanalysis to film in an attempt to discuss the spectator/screen relationship as well as the textual relationships within the film. Drawing in particular on Freud's theory of libido drives and Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, they sought to explain how cinema works at the level of the unconscious. Indeed, they maintained that the processes of the cinema mimics the workings of the unconscious. The spectator sits in a darkened room, desiring to look at the screen and deriving visual pleasure from what he or she sees. Part of that pleasure is also derived from the narcissistic identification she or he feels with the person on the screen. But there is more; the spectator also has the illusion of controlling that image. First, because the Renaissance perspective which the cinematic image provides ensures that the spectator is subject of the gaze; and second, given that the projector is positioned behind the spectator's head, this means that the it is as if those images are the spectator's own imaginings on screen.

Feminists took up this concept of the gaze and submitted it to more rigorous analysis. Laura Mulvey's vital and deliberately-polemical article, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) started the debate by demonstrating the domination of the male gaze, within and without the screen, at the expense of the woman's; so much so that the female spectator had little to do, gaze upon or identify with. The exchange or relay of looks, (as it is also known) within film reproduces the voyeuristic pleasure of the cinematic apparatus **but only for the male**. In fact, given that woman is normally, both within the film and on screen, the prime object that is being looked at, (and thus controlled) much feminist film theory has argued that the gaze is male through and through. It has thus been held that by attempting to expose how woman is constructed cinematically as an object of the male gaze, it is possible to deconstruct the normalising or naturalising process of patriarchal (male) socialisation.

Iris in/iris out

An old technique of punctuation that utilises a diaphragm in front of the lens, which is opened (iris in) or closed (iris out) to begin or end a scene. The iris can also be used to focus attention on a detail of the scene.

Key light

The main light on a subject. Usually placed at a 45 degree angle to the camera-subject axis. In high key lighting, the key light provides all or most of the light in the scene. In low key lighting, the key light provides much less of the total illumination.

Master shot

A long take of an entire scene, generally a relatively long shot that facilitates the assembly of component closer shots and details. The editor can always fall back on the master shot: consequently, it is also called a *cover shot*.

Medium shot

A shot intermediate between a close-up and a full shot.

Montage

Simply, editing. More particularly: Eisenstein's idea that adjacent shots should relate to

each other in such a way that A and B combine to produce another meaning, C, which is not actually recorded on the film.

Mise-en Scene

The term usually used to denote that part of the cinematic process that takes place on the set, as opposed to editing, which takes place afterwards. Literally, the "putting-in-the-scene":

- the direction of actors
- placement of cameras
- choice of lenses etc

Pan

(abbreviation of panorama) Movement of the camera from left to right or right to left around the imaginary vertical axis that runs through the camera. A panning shot is sometimes confused with a tracking shot.

Point of view shot

(Often abbreviated as 'pov'). A shot which shows the scene from the specific point of view of one of the characters.

Pull back shot

A tracking shot or zoom that moves back from the subject to reveal the context of the scene.

Rack focusing

A technique that uses shallow focus (shallow depth of field) to direct the attention of the viewer forcibly from one subject to another. Focus is "pulled", or changed, to shift the focus plane, often rapidly, sometimes several times within the shot.

Reverse angle

A shot from the opposite side of a subject. In a dialogue scene, a shot of the second participant.

Scene

A complete unit of film narration. A series of shots (or a single shot) that takes place in a single location and that deals with a single action. Sometimes used interchangeably with sequence.

shot

In terms of camera distance with respect to the object within the shot, there are basically 7 types of shots;

1. extreme close-up
2. close-up
3. medium close-up
4. medium shot
5. medium long shot
6. long shot
7. extreme long shot or distance shot

In addition, the terms *one-*, *two-*, and *three-*shots are used to describe shots framing

one, two, or three people - usually in

- medium close-ups
- or
- medium shots

Close-up/extreme close-up (CU/ECU)

The subject framed by the camera fills the screen. Connotation can be of intimacy, of having access to the mind or thought processes (including the subconscious) of the character. These shots can be used to stress the importance of a particular character at a particular moment in a film or place her or him as central to the narrative by singling out the character in CU at the beginning of the film. It can signify the star exclusively (as in many Hollywood productions of the 1930s and 1940s). CUs can also be used on objects and parts of the body other than the face. In this instance they can designate imminent action (a hand picking up a knife, for example), and thereby create suspense. Or they can signify that an object will have an important role to play in the development of the narrative. Often these shots have a symbolic value, usually due to their recurrence during the film. How and where they recur is revealing not only of their importance but also of the direction or meaning of the narrative.

Medium close-up (MCU)

Close-up of one or two (sometimes three) characters, generally framing the shoulders or chest and the head. The term can also be used when the camera frames the character(s) from the waist up (or down), provided the character is right to the forefront and fills the frame, (otherwise this type of shot is a medium shot). An MCU of two or three characters can indicate

- a coming together
- an intimacy
- a certain solidarity.

Conversely, if there is a series of two and one shots, these MCUs would suggest a complicity between two people against a third who is visually separate in another shot.

Medium shot (MS)

Generally speaking, this shot frames a character from the waist, hips or knees up (or down). The camera is sufficiently distanced from the body for the character to be seen in relation to her or his surroundings (in an apartment, for example).

Typically, characters will occupy half to two-thirds of the frame. This shot is very commonly used in indoor sequences allowing for a visual signification of relationships between characters. Compare a two-shot MS and a series of separate one-shots in MS of two people. The former suggests intimacy, the latter distance. The former shot could change in meaning to one of distance, however, if the two characters were separated by an object (a pillar, table or telephone, for example). Visually this shot is more complex, more open in terms of its readability than the preceding ones. The characters can be observed in relation to different planes, background middle ground and foreground, and it is the inter-relatedness of these

planes which also serves to produce a meaning.

Medium long shot (MLS)

Halfway between a long and a medium shot. If this shot frames a character then the whole body will be in view towards the middle ground of the shot. A quite open shot in terms of readability, showing considerably more of the surroundings in relation to the character(s).

Long shot (LS)

Subject or characters are at some distance from the camera; they are seen in full within their surrounding environment.

Extreme long shot (ELS)

The subject or characters are very much to the background of the shot. Surroundings now have as much if not more importance, especially if the shot is in high-angle. A first way to consider these shots is to say that a shot lends itself to a greater or lesser readability dependent on its type or length. As the camera moves further away from the main subject (whether person or object) the visual field lends itself to an increasingly more complex reading - in terms of the relationship between the main subject and the decor there is more for the spectator's eye to read or decode. This means that the closer up the shot, the more the spectator's eye is directed by the camera to the specified reading.

Shots, in and of themselves, can have a subjective or objective value: the closer the shot, the more subjective its value, the more the meaning is inscribed from within the shot; conversely, the longer the distance of the shot the more objective its value, the greater the participation of the spectator or reader in the inscription of meaning. Other factors influence the readability of a shot. A high or low camera angle can de-naturalise a shot or reinforce its symbolic value. Take, for example, an ELS that is shot at a high angle. This automatically suggests the presence of someone looking, thus the shot is implicitly a point of view shot. In this way some of the objective value or openness of that shot, (which it would retain if angled horizontally at 90 degrees) is taken away, the shot is no longer 'naturally' objective. The shot is still open to a greater reading than a CUC, however; although the angle imposes a preferred reading (someone is looking down from on high). In terms of illustrating what is meant by reinforcing symbolic value, the contrastive examples of a low- and high-angle CU can serve here. The former type of shot will distort the object within the frame, rendering it uglier, more menacing, more derisory; conversely, when a high-angle CU is used, the object can appear more vulnerable, desirable.

Subjective camera

The camera is used in such a way as to suggest the point of view of a particular character.

1. High- or low-angle shots indicate where she or he is looking from
2. a panoramic or panning shot suggests she or he is surveying the scene
3. a tracking shot or a hand-held camera shot signifies the character on motion.

Subjective shots like these also implicate the spectator into the narrative in that she or he identifies with the point of view.

Story board

A series of drawings and captions (sometimes resembling a comic strip) that shows the planned shot divisions and camera movements of the film.

Take

One version of a shot. A film-maker shoots one or more takes of each shot or set-up. Only one of each group of takes appears in the final film.

Tilt shot

The camera tilts up or down, rotating around the axis that runs from left to right through the camera head.

Tracking shot/travelling shot/dollying shot

Terms used for a shot when the camera is being moved by means of wheels:

- on a dolly (a low tracking shot)
- in a car
- or even a train.

The movement is normally quite fluid (except perhaps in some of the wider car chases) and the tracking can be either fast or slow. Depending on the speed, this shot has different connotations, eg:

- like a dream or trance if excessively slow
- bewildering and frightening if excessively frenetic

A tracking shot can go

- backwards
- left to right
- right to left

The way in which a person is framed in that shot has a specific meaning, (for example, if the camera holds a person in the frame but that person is at one extreme or other of the frame, this could suggest a sense of imprisonment).

Steadicam

The invention of cameraman Garret Brown (developed in conjunction with Cinema Products, Inc.), this is a system which permits hand-held filming with an image steadiness comparable to tracking shots. A vest redistributes the weight of the camera to the hips of the cameraman; a spring-loaded arm minimises the motion the camera; a video monitor frees the cameraman from the eyepiece.

Swish pan

Also called

- flick pan
- zip pan
- whip pan.

A panning shot in which the intervening scene moves past too quickly to be observed.

It approximates psychologically the action of the human eye as it moves from one subject to another.

Wipe

An optical effect in which an image appears to "wipe-off" or push aside the preceding image. Very common in the 1930s; less so today.

Voice-over

The narrator's voice when the narrator is not seen. Common in television commercials, but also in film noir.

Zoom

A shot using a lens whose focal length is adjusted during the shot. Zooms are sometimes used in place of tracking shots, but the differences between the two are significant. A zoom normally ends in a close-up, a zoom-back in a general shot. Both types of shot imply a rapid movement in time and space, and as such create the illusion of displacement in time and space. A zoom-in picks out and isolates a person or object, a zoom-out places that person or object in a wider context. A zoom shot can be seen, therefore, as voyeurism at its most desirably perfect.