

Specialism Report

Student Number – 1901317

Course Title - Film & TV (Hons)

Word Count – 2,322 words.

Tutor – Rob Jones.

Question:

“From the film & music cluster lectures, choose a theme, movement, or selection of artists or designers that relate to your practice or interests, and construct a 2,500-word essay (or equivalent). Critically assess primary themes, key writers, and relevant practitioners.”

Within this essay question, I will be taking this opportunity to construct an informative report that relates to the specialisms I have chosen to pursue in my second year of University. I have picked to fixate on my interests for this report because I feel it will be a necessary subject in the near future, especially with next year being my final year. I need to focus on these specialisms to pursue them. Throughout this report, I will include the specialisms themselves, it will comprise of relevant artists and designers for each specialism, and finally, include the primary themes. I know that factoring these points into my work will make for a strong, informative, and professional final report.

The specialisms I chose for my second year are comprised of screenwriting, cinematography, and photography. Originally, I wanted my main focus to be on the role of director, but have little experience in my first year, I know now directing won't be for me. I would consider myself a novice screenwriter, mostly because I love doing it. I love writing scripts, describing the thoughts and feelings of a character, describing shot types, describing what I want a scene to feel like, it is a brilliant obsession but, time-consuming to say the least.

Cinematography is a sector of the film industry I have had little experience with, but I feel I could further develop my skills to a professional standard. It's so much as photography, and that itself is a fantastic hobby. Using various lenses and cameras, you are able to get a feel for what you want a shot to look like, even more so if you plan and storyboard it beforehand. The types of various types of shots you can get through cinematography is astonishing. Focusing back on photography, I would consider myself a some-what professional photographer. I have a keen eye for lighting, angles, and lens types. It is a hobby I started only a few years ago, and have developed my skills ever since. I plan to create a photography business once I finished here at the university.

Theme One:

A theme I would like to consider for this report is drama.

“Drama is the specific mode of fiction represented in performance:

a play, opera, mime, ballet, etc., performed in a theatre, or on radio or television. Considered as a genre of poetry in general, the dramatic mode has been contrasted with the epic and the lyrical modes ever since Aristotle's Poetics the earliest work of dramatic theory.”

I have chosen this as a focal point in my work because I feel that drama is a very popular theme in both films and books. It is a theme that is intriguing to me, though I have not seen many dramas, may these be films or books. To focus more on this theme, I should consider watching more drama movies, and reading more drama books as this may help me potentially get a job in the future, having experience with the theme.

In terms of screenwriting, I am currently writing a short drama/thriller film titled ‘The Secret That Lies’. I am writing this as part of my university course. On the side, I am writing several different projects I would like to make or to be made in the future. These vary between ten and thirty different film-related projects. I even finished writing a short film in April 2019, which I then filmed, edited, and uploaded to YouTube, later in June. I do not have much experience with writing drama, but I am aiming to get a lot better at it.

In terms of cinematography, I think there are certain shot types specified with drama. These may vary from extreme close-ups to wide shots, dimly-lit shots, and darker scenes to intensify a scene if need be. I am unfamiliar with shooting a drama, but I know with a bit of time and research, I can change that all the better.

In terms of photography, drama can mean many different things. Drama can be related to a world issue, a personal issue someone is experiencing, a simple black and white photograph, a picture of someone alone, or even an older photograph, representing a difficult time or place. Drama photography again is not something I am familiar with but is something I can look into and have experience with to use as both parts of my university course and my curriculum vitae.

Theme Two:

The second theme I would like to consider for this report is a thriller.

“Thriller, a broad genre of literature, film and television.”

I have selected this as another focal point in my work because I know that the thriller theme/genre has a broad audience behind it. It is a theme that I have seen many films on, including Hide and Seek, What Lies Beneath, and The Mothman Prophecies. It is a theme that I’m well experienced in and adore very much. Thriller is exciting because you never know what will happen next. I do believe that just like the drama theme, I should watch more films and read more books within this sector to get a broader understanding of what it means to create the intensity of a thriller book or movie.

Focusing back on screenwriting, I will need to research into the structural integrity of a screenplay for a fantastic thriller to get an idea of how to make one. I know that thriller relies on darker sequences, desaturation, aloneness, and limited sound. All of these points factor into what makes a thriller. I would like to have a go at writing a genuine thriller soon, as I believe with a lot of time and research, I would be able to create something phenomenal.

In terms of cinematography, I believe it comes down to shot types. I know this is the necessity for any thriller movie. Nevertheless, if done correctly and professionally, it can empower a scene in a Grande manner. The cinematography in a thriller is critical because you need to be able to see what your character is thinking, what they are feeling, in a scene. It is paramount to get that raw emotion to make you feel connected to the characters on screen, and their story, and what will unfold for them in the movie, going forward.

Photography in a thriller is a unique fashion. It is not incredibly common unless it is a poster for a movie, book, or a live play. Thriller photography could be used for photographers' portfolios online, discussing what their skills are in terms of photographing. I believe that thriller photography is mostly used for advertisement and/or awareness.

Relevant Practitioners:

Screenwriters:

- **Dave Filoni.**

“David Filoni is an American film and television director, voice actor, television writer, television producer and animator.”

Dave Filoni is a writer that has inspired me for many years and many more years to come.

He is a brilliant writer and is in my eyes, a true legend of TV screenplays. Dave Filoni is mostly known for his work on Star Wars | The Clone Wars and Star Wars | Rebels animated series.

- **Eric Kripke**

“Eric Kripke is an American writer and show creator. He is best known as the creator of The WB/The CW fantasy drama series Supernatural, the NBC post-apocalyptic drama series Revolution, the NBC science fiction series Timeless, and the Prime Video superhero action series The Boys.”

Eric Kripke is a phenomenal writer. Eric Kripke is the man who gave us fifteen years of Supernatural. He is another writer I consider a legend of TV screenplays. Whatever he has planned for the future, I’m excited for.

- **Jon Favreau**

“Jonathan Favreau is an American actor, director, producer and screenwriter.”

Jon Favreau’s current work on The Mandalorian is beyond a basic screenwriter. He has a keen eye for attention to detail, emotion, and consistency in his screenwriting. Jon Favreau is the man who kicked off the Marvel Cinematic Universe with Iron Man back in 2008.

- **Quentin Tarantino**

“Quentin Jerome Tarantino is an American film director, screenwriter, producer, and actor. His films are characterized by nonlinear storylines, aestheticization of violence, extended scenes of dialogue, ensemble casts, references to popular culture and a wide variety of other films, soundtracks primarily containing songs and score pieces from the 1960s to the 1980s, alternate history, and features of neo-noir film.”

Quentin Tarantino’s career kicked off with his screenplay hit for True Romance, the money he made from his screenplay funded his first-ever movie – Reservoir Dogs. To this day, through many directed and written movies, he is still one of the greatest writers to ever walk the Earth. Like Favreau, Tarantino has a keen eye for the smallest attention to detail and making sure every word of his scripts are 100% accurate and exciting.

- **Martin Scorsese**

“Martin Charles Scorsese is an American film director, producer, screenwriter, and actor. One of the major figures of the New Hollywood era, he is widely regarded as one of the most significant and influential directors in film history.”

Scorsese started in 1968 when he made his first feature-length film. This though was not released until 1976 after his cult classic hit, *Taxi Driver*. Scorsese is more a director than a screenwriter, but a screenwriter, nonetheless. A brilliant one at that. Scorsese wrote the two classics, *Goodfellas* and *Casino*.

Cinematographers:

- **Roger Deakins**

“Roger Alexander Deakins is an English cinematographer, best known for his collaborations with directors like the Coen brothers, Sam Mendes and Denis Villeneuve on their films.”

From my understanding, Deakins started as a cinematographer back in 1983, when he shot the movie *1984*. Since then, he has become one of the most famous cinematographers in the industry, even being a part of both the American and British Society of Cinematographers. Deakins in my own humble opinion is one of the best cinematographers alive today.

- **Caleb Deschanel**

“Joseph Caleb Deschanel is an American cinematographer and director of film and television. He has been nominated for the Academy Award for Best Cinematography six times.”

Deschanel kickstarted his cinematography career with the movie *The American Graffiti*. Since his initial release in 1979, he has go on to work on films such as the recent remake of *The Lion King*, *National Treasure*, *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, and *Jack Reacher*. Specifically his work on *The Lion King*, was an incredibly beautiful piece of cinema.

- **Lawrence Sher**

“Lawrence Sher is an American cinematographer and film director, best known for comedy films such as Garden State, The Dictator, and The Hangover series, frequently collaborating with directors Todd Phillips and Zach Braff.”

Lawrence Sher started his career as a gaffer on a video shoot and an assistant on commercials before working his way up to cinematographer. The first movie he shot was *Kissing Jessica Stein* and has since worked on movies such as *The Hangover*, *The Dictator*, *Godzilla | King of the Monsters*, and most recently, one of last year’s biggest hits; *Joker*. His work on such films has inspired me over the years. Sher is a true icon.

- **Dan Mindel**

“Ivor Daniel Mindel is a South African-American cinematographer best known for his work on blockbuster action films like Enemy of the State, Mission: Impossible III, Star Trek, Star Trek Into Darkness, Star Wars: The Force Awakens, and Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker, working with directors like Tony Scott and J. J. Abrams.”

Mindel began his career as a camera loader before becoming a clapper loader and assistant cameraman on John Boorman's 1985 film, *The Emerald Forest*, under French cinematographer Philippe Rousselot.

- **Robert Richardson**

“Robert Bridge Richardson is an American cinematographer. He has won the Academy Award for Best Cinematography three times, for his work on JFK, The Aviator, and Hugo.”

Richardson’s career blew up when his work on the documentary *Crossfire in El Salvador* and moved on to shoot for both Martin Scorsese and Quentin Tarantino. His most recent work is on last year’s *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* and is currently shooting the upcoming Sony/Marvel Studios sequel *Venom / Let There Be Carnage*. His many works over the years with Scorsese and Tarantino are beyond phenomenal. One of my favourites of his work is *Kill Bill Vol. 1*.

Photographers

- **Cindy Sherman**

“Cindy Sherman is widely recognized as one of the most important and influential artists in contemporary art.”

Sherman started back in 1972 where she enrolled in the visual arts department at Buffalo State College and began painting. During this time, she began to explore the ideas which became a hallmark of her work: She dressed as different characters, cobbled together from thrift-store clothing.

- **Paul Strand**

“Paul Strand was an American photographer and filmmaker who, along with fellow modernist photographers like Alfred Stieglitz and Edward Weston, helped establish photography as an art form in the 20th century.”

When he was just seventeen years old, Strand began to study photography with Lewis W. Hine, who was later noted for his photographs of industrial workers and immigrants. These works inspired him to emphasize abstract form and pattern in his photographs, such as *Shadow Pattern*, *New York*, and *Wall Street*.

- **Dorothea Lange**

“Dorothea Lange was an American documentary photographer and photojournalist, best known for her Depression-era work for the Farm Security Administration.”

From 1917-1919, Lange began as an independent portrait photographer in San Francisco but soon began photographing the homeless in order to bring attention to their plight.

Conclusion:

Closing in on this report, I would like to reflect on everything I have written and back to the main question at hand. After discussing my specialisms, the themes I have selected and all the relevant practitioners for each specialism, I have come to the conclusion that I have critically assessed both the themes and practitioners. In the future ahead and looking back on this report, I know that I would like to focus more on screenwriting and photography.

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