

Who really tells the story in films?
Comparison of the Director and Editor.

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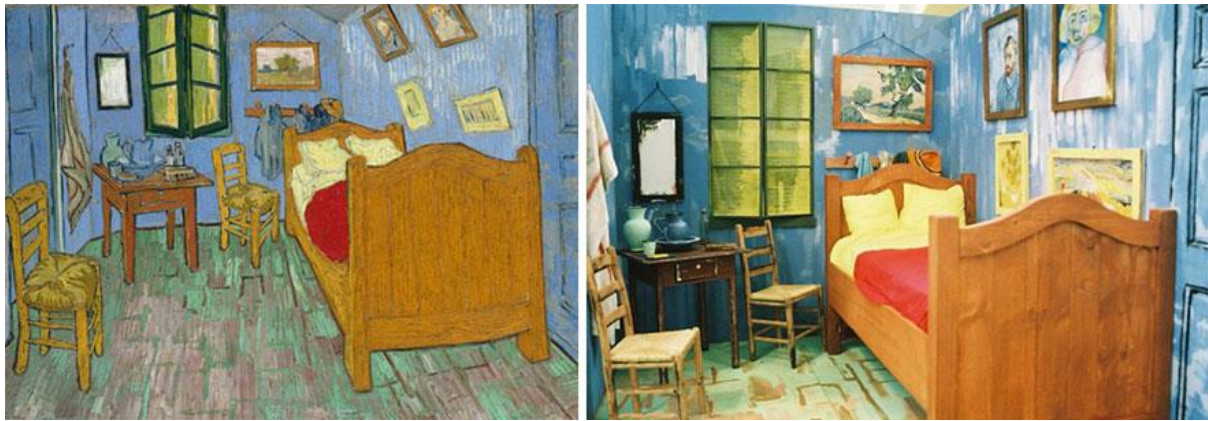
This proposal for my dissertation will show and discuss the impact the role the director has along with the editor and their effect on bringing across the story in films, to the audience. I will compare their roles with each other and what contribution they have, whilst explaining the 'hierarchy' involved during the final outcome. I will reveal true elements of their jobs and how both can be main focal point of storytelling, but yet, not so much. There is more than just the editor and director so I will bring in other elements that may contribute towards film for a more balanced outlook. I will bring to light the films I plan on exploring and why they will be useful for this particular project. Films that are known for great directing, editing and favoured story by the public. I've also collected information from books that focus on storytelling, directing, editing and their origin, which will help me make non-biased decisions when linking them to the roles I've selected to investigate. Looking into other people's opinions I believe is valid, especially with people within the industry. Trustworthy, neutral people have been chosen by myself to take their viewpoint and bring it into this proposal. I personally believe that this research will be of value to myself and possibly others, when approaching and creating my own films to show which areas and roles within the film industry are the most valuable assists when conveying the story.

Interpretation I believe is a key aspect when approaching a story. Every one of us hopes for a meaning and purpose within all narratives. Within film there are many different opinions about what makes the story great or told in a compelling way. Many people believe that all stories need a happy ending or must follow suit of a theory; Propp and Todorov being examples. Although, some people just enjoy the genre, the style, the music or just even the celebrity protagonist. All of which could be explored and viewed as valuable assets to plot, and I will take all these aspects in to consideration when writing my dissertation. I aim to research what role and question, whether that be within the pre-production process, someone on set, or the person pressing export, are they the one conveying the story. Falling back onto the key word interpretation, I've always believed the editor; the assembler of film footage, was the person that could change the way the story was portrayed. This can be done even by the simple use of holding or quick cutting of shots. A quote that could be linked to pacing and work of the editor which I will use in my dissertation is "...the cut, the sudden switch from one image to another – which mimics the acrobatic nature of thought itself" – Walter Murch. To briefly explain this, in the moments when we hear about Jack's death on the phone in 'Brokeback Mountain', the cuts between the two characters are paced where we are able to see their emotions with enough impact. Also, many horror films such as 'The Shining' and 'Woman in Black' tell us that if there is an awkwardly long shot of an empty corridor, it's not going to remain like that, usually in the most gruesome of ways. If there were quick cuts of just someone walking to work we as the audience may interpret that incorrectly. A book called 'Art of the Cut' will be of great use to me in this topic as it explores many things I've mentioned such as pacing and purpose. Other than editing, other elements we see may be interpreted and explain some of the story, another example being colour, either done by costume and set design or the colourist. I will look into colour and their purpose majorly through the use of a book called 'If It's Purple, Someone's Gonna Die'. As the title suggests, some colours have connotations towards the narrative or character, instead of it just being a pleasing aspect. For example, 'Baby Driver' and other Edgar Wright films are known that each character has a colour. The character 'Baby', for example is mainly dressed in black and white, possibly to show almost his double life of crime and family. I will explore more into this in my dissertation to show that colour is an incredibly useful and subtle tool to add towards the story,

along with other areas such as lighting and music to be an opportunity for further communication. Artwork relating to interpretation will assist me greatly in my research, the works of Oleg Shuplyak is incredible in regards to illusion and perception on imagery. Each person will look at this image and view it in multiple ways, arguably like a film script.



I don't want to confuse readers of my dissertation that makes them think firstly 'but surely the scriptwriter tells the story'. I aim to achieve that who in the industry portrays that story. The script however can be useful in giving actors queues and the director a sense of direction. Regardless of the person, whomever reads a script will picture it differently in their head. I will explore films that could have been done completely differently if it had a different director or films that have been re-made. Films such as 'Magnificent Seven', 'Annie' 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' and 'Physco'. I will do a short analysis of these films to show how story can be portrayed differently by directors and what trademarks they may have. There is a quote I'm going to be using in my dissertation by a known theatre director Anne Bogart, and she says "you cannot create results, you can only create conditions in which something may happen". I think this is a great way to look at the role of the director, as much as the director has an ideal way of things happening sometimes an actor may forget their lines and one the spot says something more fitting or change the atmosphere and it end up being 'better' and a happy accident. Going back to aforementioned director trademarks, some examples I will explore will be J J Abrams 'lens flares' and Wes Anderson's 'Symmetry'. A book I will be looking into is 'Aristoteles Poetics for screenwriters', although this is not a book about directing or editing it is essential for me to understand storytelling for me to compare how these roles do it. The key word here I would use is result. There are so many different results and outcomes possible due to people's creativity and outlook on story. The image bellow shows 'Bedroom in Arles' By Van Gogh and a recreation of it by Joshua Louis Simon. This will help support my research into how people create different results. One part of us will automatically dislike the second image as we've seen it before and it looks like a copy. However, we can respect the new version as it feels updated and is Simon's interpretation. These artists are almost their own director of the image.



Relating all this to my final major project will be useful. I have written my own script and I plan on directing and editing it too. This links to my dissertation as I am researching these roles and how they impact on the overall storytelling within films. Dead Radio, my film I plan on making is a sci fi, horror spoof, so it is useful to look into films of these genres and where the story elements are highly shown in job roles in the making of. I've personally favoured the art of editing since I got into film and am excited to do this and learn more here. I've also never really directed anything and finding out as much as I can through my dissertation research will be of great value. To add another quote which I stand by for this section would be "I believe more in the scissors than I do the pencil" – Truman Capote. This is a great quote as even a writer believes that the overall edit of any art form is of better value than the original concept. I will not be biased in my dissertation but these accounts will be brought to attention. I believe a key term here could be refining. In all crafts there is the refinement, adaptations and change, all of which are natural and all of which are necessary. Writing my script had led me to have 6 drafts, due to minor improvements that overtime I believe were essential and in every role in every industry everyone believes there can be the smallest improvements which make the overall outcome greater. There is a painting called the Art Of Refinement by Tom Shropshire and it really shows that intricate elements and details are just as important as and makes up the whole image, which I think is essential for all art forms and medias.



In regards to other potential questions and other questions I hope to answer is maybe the importance of the roles I will be exploring besides their impact on the story, and ask what really makes a film memorable. I would also enjoy exploring what other elements impact the story as mentioned in my first section. Examples being the colour, music and compositions of shots and what they mean in regards to the narrative, also how they make us feel as an audience. It is common knowledge that music is a key component with film and some may say more important than the visuals at times. A guess a rule of thumb would be would you rather watch a silent film or listen to a radio play? I think that would be a good section to focus on too, as it would also take into consideration other components; rounding off the fairness of the dissertation. Exploring the roles in detail is something that would be necessary, so looking into what makes a good director, is it experience, luck or raw talent and the same with the editor. Experience tends to be of great value within the industry as work to show yourself is always required and luck just sometimes happens fortunately. It may also be beneficial to do an almost distribution of questionnaires on this topic to people that may seem fit and explore that's effectiveness. To conclude I'm pleased to focus on a subject in which I am keen and am interested to learn more on, this motivation will hopefully let me achieve what I need towards my final film and better my skills for it. Along with answering essential questions in regards to the roles I will be doing, to hopefully benefit me from doing anything unnecessary or outright incorrect.

References

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