

John Golden's *Reading in the Dark*

Film Terminology

The Shot: a single uninterrupted piece of film

Framing: How the object is positioned within the shot; how much of the frame of the movie screen the object will occupy

- a. **Long Shot:** the object on the screen appears small or appears to be seen from some distance away. If a person is shown, then generally you will be able to see his or her entire body; used to establish setting
- b. **Close-up or Close Shot:** the object or subject takes up most of the screen space and therefore appears to be very large. This shot can be used to direct the viewer's attention or show emotion
- c. **Medium Shot:** between a long and short shot, a character shown from the waist up, most common and naturalistic of the three types, since it is the most common in real life; can be called a "neutral shot"

Focus:

- a. **Soft Focus:** a slightly out-of-focus shot which creates texture
- b. **Rack Focus:** used to bring either the background or the foreground suddenly into focus
- c. **Deep Focus:** all objects in the foreground as well as the background are in focus

Angles: where the camera will be placed in relation to the subject

- a. **Low Angle:** when the camera is below the subject; used to emphasize dominance and power
- b. **High Angle:** when the camera is above the subject; used to emphasize weakness
- c. **Eye Level:** Characters are on an even balance, character at eye-level with camera; another "neutral shot"
- d. **Dutch Angle:** "canted" angle; the camera is tilted slightly producing a sideways image within the frame

Camera Movement: the way a camera moves, or appears to move

- a. **Pan:** when the camera pivots along a horizontal axis without moving from its original location; used to introduce setting
- b. **Tilt:** when the camera moves along a vertical axis; used to show power
- c. **Zoom:** when the object appears to grow larger in the frame; used to direct attention
- d. **Tracking or Dolly Shots:** movement of the camera itself

Lighting:

- a. **Low-Key Lighting:** a small source of lighting is used, characterized by the presence of prominent shadows. Used to show suspicion, mystery, and danger. Suggests that characters are evil, hiding something
- b. **High-Key Lighting:** an even light source and few shadows, as in an office building. Suggests honesty, nothing to hide, lack of threat
- c. **Neutral Lighting:** even and balanced throughout the shot
- d. **Bottom/Side Lighting:** light illuminating from below, highlighting only parts of the face/light shining from the side illuminating only half of the face. Creates characters that may be evil. Are hiding something, are morally ambiguous, or conflicted
- e. **Front Lighting:** no shadows on a character's face, shows innocence or openness

Sound:

- a. **Diegetic Sound:** any sound that could be heard by a character
- b. **Nondiegetic Sound:** sound that cannot logically be heard by the characters, a sound intended solely for the audience
- c. **Internal Diegetic Sound:** if only the one character can hear the sounds

Editing:

- a. **Fade:** the image on screen slowly fades away; makes a connection between two objects or characters
- b. **Dissolve:** one image fades in as another image fades in so the two images are on the screen briefly at the same time
- c. **Crosscut:** also known as parallel editing; the director cuts between two different episodes; builds suspense.
- d. **Flashback/Flash-Forward:** gives viewer important information about what has happened in the past/future.
- e. **Eye-Line Match:** begins with the shot of a character looking in one direction; the camera then cuts to whatever the character was looking at, from that character's perspective, and then the series usually returns to a shot of the person so see their reaction. Reveals what the character is thinking.
- f. **Editing Rhythm and Duration:** how long a shot is permitted to stay on-screen before it is replaced by another shot. Shorter takes capture the rapid pace of the scene, and longer takes can represent a calmer, more peaceful environment

Mise-en-Scène: a way to describe what appears onstage; when applied to film, it refers to some of the elements that a film has in common with the stage: sets, costumes, lighting, and acting and how these things relate to the meaning/themes of the film.