

CONTENT: Film and TV

LEARNERS: Grades 11 & 12

RATIONALE: Film and TV as genres are referenced specifically on page 131 section B3 in the BC Ministry of Education IRP concerning ELA. Students are to view “both collaboratively and independently, to comprehend a variety of visual texts” including “film and video” and “student generated material”.

OBJECTIVES: to introduce students to visual grammar/rhetoric, the educational rationale for student-produced video, and the literary theory of defamiliarization, and how these very different frames can be applied in a critical reading of a visual text in order to identify/embed bias, ideologies and conventions in visual texts; to interrogate the notion of fidelity to an original work in adaptation discourses.

MATERIALS/RESOURCES:

- Laptop, projector, speakers
- PP presentation
- Vimeo clip (<http://vimeo.com/16048720>)
- Two clips from the film *Mulholland Drive*, from .30 to 3.25 for Activity 1 and from 11.50 to 14.35 for Activity 2
- A clip from an interview of David Lynch, from 1.15 to 2.25 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gf1sfVpw9OY&feature=related>)
- Lisa Owen’s LP (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/comparing-literary-work-film-1048.html?tab=4#tabs>)

OPENING/HOOK:

4 mins Vimeo clip “A demonstration of visual rhetoric in time-based media”.

TIMED LESSON SEQUENCE:

5 mins PP elaborating on the techniques illustrated in the Vimeo clip. Students are informed on how visual grammar/rhetoric deployed by a film/TV producer manipulates the viewer vis-à-vis the characters, objects, or events in an image, including most importantly the image sequencing that we call “montage”, to elicit responses that have been conditioned by the viewer’s experience of equivalent interrelationships with real-life people, things, and actions. These specifically filmic devices (dramatic close-ups, zoom-ins to significant objects, low angles of important people, and so forth) are seemingly obvious, but actually require a specific conceptual vocabulary to pick them out. In fact this critical sense is important since “the long term Hollywood trend has been increasingly to *avoid* the use of conventions like fades and dissolves to explain the transition from one scene to the next, to rely on the viewer’s ability to intuit/parse the implied relationship between scenes on the basis of contextual cues”, presumably because the

public's increasingly visually literate... but more likely this is because the seeming transparency of visual representation makes the task of criticism more difficult.

5 mins PP slides on educational rationale for student produced video. Students become more than passive consumers, for as producers they will have opportunities to "discover, reflect on, and reinterpret their identities and experiences, and "understand how media acts as a frame and a filter on the world while appearing as a clear window". A film's "mode of address" operates from an ideological standpoint, inviting the viewer to take up particular kinds of physical, social, and ideological involvements in the unfolding of the film's discourse, and when the student wrestles with the mechanics of creating a visual text, he/she must determine how the viewer is to be manipulated by physical space (via positioning of camera), social space (via setting and format), and an ideological space (via the seemingly "natural" visual semantics we have imbibed since childhood).

13 mins 1st Activity

- Watch opening scene from Mulholland Drive
- Discuss/write in small groups a hypothetical plot/ending based on what was seen
- Watch last scene
- Regroup to discuss if it differs from your first group's plot/end

13 mins 2nd Activity

- Watch nightmare scene from Mulholland Drive
- Discuss/write in small groups hypothetical scene resolution
- Watch the end of the scene
- Regroup to discuss the end and if it differs from your first group's hypothesis

5 mins PP slides as debrief on theory of defamiliarization and the violation of narrativistic conventions on display in the film

3 mins video clip with Mulholland Drive's director David Lynch discussing his view that the mechanistic three act structure of typical screenplays kills the "idea", the experience he wants to convey; he goes on to suggest that talk of theme is beside the point as that presupposes there are 'better' interpretations rather than just endless opportunities to re-interpret.

10 mins 3rd Activity

- Briefly ponder individually the idea of how faithful an adaptation must be to the "original" ie for example Hunger Games
- PP slides on fidelity discourse using a quote from a typical LP in which the teacher assumes that an adaptation should be faithful to some degree to the "original"

CLOSURE:

5 mins open class discussion for clarification of points covered

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT:

- Participation in groups
- Written contributions to group
- Summative assessment to be performed on student produced videos at end of unit

MODIFICATIONS:

- Hard copies of the lecture notes, links and resources will be made available
- Students who do not have tech and the skills to produce their own videos will be assisted by those who do

WORKS CITED:

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Bortolotti, Gary R., Hutcheon, L., (2007). On the Origin of Adaptations: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse and "Success" Biologically. *New Literary History*. 38(3), 443-458.

Farmer, Lesley S.J. (2007). I See, I Do: Persuasive Messages and Visual Literacy. *Internet @ schools*, 14(4), 30-33.

Gainer, Jesse S., (2010). Critical Media Literacy in Middle School: Exploring the Politics of Representation. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. 53(5), 364-373.

Hudson, Jennifer A., (2004). "No Hay Banda, and yet We Hear a Band": David Lynch's Reversal of Coherence in *Mulholland Drive*. *Journal of Film and Video*. 56(1), 17-24.

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Wall, A. (2009). On Defamiliarization. *Myth, Metaphor and science*. (1 ed., pp. 20-22). Chester: Chester Academic Press.

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