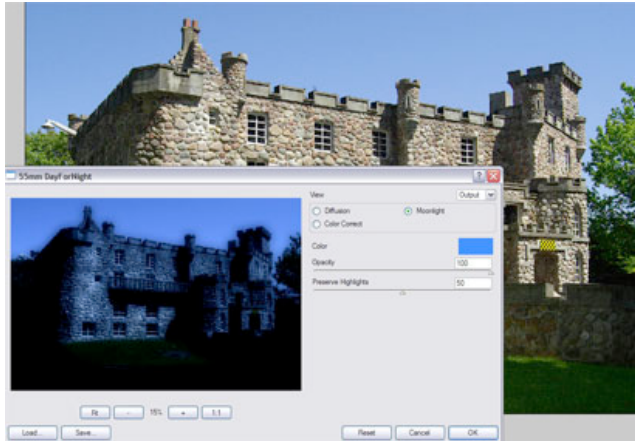


Film Form, Part III:

Cinematography

The Shot: Cinematography

- Film may be broken down into cells accordingly: frame (negative), shot, sequence, scene, act, film
- Range of tonalities in a shot can be manipulated by film stock, exposure, and developing
- Lighting & aperture, too, affect contrast level
- Filters affect exposure greatly; slices of glass or gelatin put in front of the camera lens or printer reduce frequencies of light reaching the film
- Before modern improvements in film stock & lighting, filmmakers used a blue filter to make day shooting look like night (hence, *day for night*)



- **THE LENS: PERSPECTIVE RELATIONS**

- The spatial and size relations in a shot make up *perspective relations*, and are manipulable primarily through the use of lenses (but also setting and lighting)
- Lenses function much as our eyes do, letting in light and refracting and transmitting that light onto a surface of the film to form an image that corresponds with the size, depth, and other dimensions of the subject

- *Focal length* is the distance from the center of the lens to the point where light rays converge to a point of focus on the film
- The *short-focal-length (wide-angle)* lens is less than 35 mm in focal length. Such lenses tend to distort straight lines lying nearing the edge of frames and to add greater depth to a shot
- The *middle-focal-length (normal)* lens is between 35 and 50 mm and is free of any noticeable perspective distortion



- The *long-focal-length (telephoto)* lenses tend to flatten the space, squishing the planes of action together. These longer lenses run between 75 and 250 mm or more and are able to magnify subjects shot from any distance
- The *zoom lens* is unique in that it can alter focal length while transforming perspective relations during a single shot. Here the camera can be stationary while the lens increases or decreases its focal length

● THE LENS: DEPTH OF FIELD

- Focal length can also affect what we call *depth of field*, the range of distances before the lens within which objects can be photographed in focus
- For the most part, the shorter the lens, the greater the depth of field
- There are types of depth of field: on one extreme, *shallow focus*, on the other extreme, *deep focus*, and in the middle, *deep space*

- *Deep focus*: all planes of action within a shot are in sharp focus; it's achieved with faster stocks, shorter focal-length lenses, and more intense lighting, all of which yield a greater depth of field
- *Deep space*: action is staged on several planes, regardless of whether all of them are in sharp focus
- *Shallow focus*: only one plane is in sharp focus and the others are blurry
- *Racking focus* alternates the plane of focus from the background to the foreground, or vice versa

- **DURATION OF THE IMAGE/SHOT**

- The *long take* is a shot of unusually long duration, at least 10 or 15 seconds and often longer
- The *sequence shot* is when an entire scene is rendered in one shot

FRAMING

- The frame and *framing* are crucial in cinema, even more so than in photography
- *Frame dimensions and shape*
 - *Aspect ratio: Academy ratio (1.33:1), American widescreen (1.85:1), Cinemascope (2.35:1)*

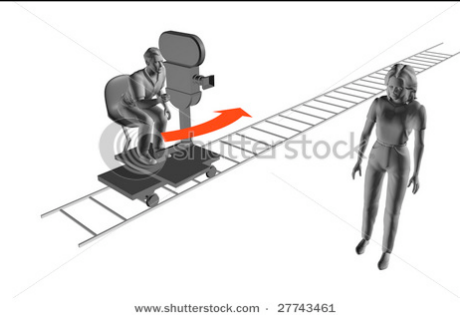


- A movie's image usually fills one rectangular frame, but it can be split into multiple ones (*split screen*)
- *Iris shot*: the frame is all black, save one circle in which the action is spotlighted
- *Onscreen* and *offscreen space*

- Angle, level, height, and distance of framing
 - *ANGLE*: any frame implies an angle of framing with respect to what is shown; *high-* (e.g., *overhead*), *low-*, and *straight-on angles* are the options
 - *LEVEL*: this is level in terms of “reading” the frame from left to right; it is either *level* or *canted*
 - *HEIGHT*: this refers to the *height* of the camera off the ground, with respect to the subject(s) being shot

- *DISTANCE*: this refers to the distance from the camera to the subject(s) being shot
 - *extreme long shot* (ELS)
 - *long shot* (LS)
 - *medium long shot*, aka *American shot*(MLS)
 - *medium shot* (MS)
 - *medium close-up* (MCU)
 - *close-up* (CU)
 - *extreme close-up* (ECU)

- Mobile Frame: within the image, the framing of the object changes due usually to camera movement
 - *pan*
 - *tilt*
 - *tracking* or *trucking* or *dolly*
 - *crane*
 - *steadicam*
 - *hand-held*
 - *air* or *helicopter shot*



- Functions of frame mobility
 - our view of characters within settings affects how we perceive them and in a variety of states
 - character-motivated camera vs. “unmotivated” camera movement
 - *reframing & following shot* = character-motivated techniques
 - mobile framing expends time and thus creates rhythms & patterns

Principal Players

- *Director of Photography (DP)* – works with the director and others to plan and execute the shooting style in each shot and scene
- *Camera Operator(s)* – operates the camera during the shoot
- *Focus Puller (or 1st Asst. Cameraman)* – works under the camera operator and keeps the shot in focus, as instructed by the camera operator
- *Gaffer (+ Best Boy)/Key Grip* – manage the lighting and electrical issues to set up each shot