Part 3: Scene Analysis

We have been looking at the aesthetics of still images, or the look & style of the visuals, we now need to look at the constructed scene, so we also need to consider SOUND and EDITING, to gain a total picture of the directors' intentions.

Sound:

Diegetic: The source of the sound is visible, it is on the screen and of the scene, and the actors can hear it.

Non diegetic: These are added sounds they can be sound effects and music

Ambient: This is background sound.

Sound bridge: When sound is used to connect scenes, when sound continues, or bleeds in, from one scene to another.

Editing:

Cut: Dissolve: Fade: The transition from one shot to the next. Dissolves and fades can be used to connote the passing of time.

Continuity: this is where a cause and effect rule is enforced; it establishes relationships between characters and creates a sense of realism for the audience.

Shot reverse shot: In order for the audience to experience something with a character we will see the character looking, have a Point of View (POV) shot then a reaction shot of the characters. Similarly, in a sequence where two characters are talking, you will have a series of over the shoulder shots (OSS) that go back and forth between the two.

Cross-cutting: When cutting from one scene to another and back again, it builds tension and implies that both scenes are happening at the same time.

Pace: An editor can use a 'long take' to create tension or an uncomfortable feeling, or an editor can create a fast paced montage effect.

Post production effects: visual effects are added as part of post-production, a visual artist can alter colours, add explosions… anything.

Opening scenes are an excellent place to start your analysis.

The stop/start game:

1: Watch the scene through once, and take basic notes on what the key moments of the scene are.

-Teachers note: you might like to split the class into different groups to focus on different aesthetic elements. To break the exercise down further you might like to screen grab a series of images from the scene.

2: Use the Denotation & Connotation columns in table below to explore the constructed elements of the scene.

Consider: How is the location introduced and why? How are characters introduced and why? What does the director want us to think and feel about the world created? How would you describe the look and style of the film? Why do you think the director has used this aesthetic? What you think the director is trying to say?

You may wish to add an additional screening with just sound, so the class are not distracted by visuals.

3: Watch the scene one last time, allow the students to 'buzz in' when they feel there is a visual point to discuss and explore. Use the last column of the table to make notes from the discussion.

4: Write a summary of the sequence:

'How has the director used aesthetic elements to construct meaning and generate response in the opening sequence of…'

Aesthetic elements:	Denotation	Connotation	What messages, values and representations are explored via aesthetics:
Cinematography			
Mise-en-Scene			
Editing			
Sound			

Example:

Opening Sequence of Skyfall 0.00 – 2.13

Aesthetic elements:	Denotation/Screenshot	Connotation	What messages, values and representations are explored via aesthetics:
Cinematography inc lighting.	An out of focus LS of Bond stepping out of the shadows into the centre of the frame. He walks towards the camera and into focus. POV shots are used to introduce us to the room. A smooth handleld camrea moves behind Bond into the room, the camera briefly takes a POV position to survey the room, a fight has clearly taken place. The style of cnemtography in this scene is primaritly handheld stedicam. High Key light pours in the window. LA close ups are used as Bond tends to Ronson. A focus LA shot focus pull from Ronson to Bond as he exits the room. (02.01) Return of the venetian blind effect. Return of the iconic Bond shillioette. .(02.09)	The aesthetics of this shot are used to construct an iconic 'Bond' look, firstly the back lighting creates a silhouette in a classic 007 style, the audience immediately recognise Bond the gun and his hand in his pocket enhance the look of the iconic character. The back lighting creates a 'venetian blind effect' through the blinds, they look like prison bars (connoting that Bond is trapped somehow), this along with the low key light and use of shadow create an almost black & white 'Film Noir' aesthetic, demonstrating that this film presents a mature, dark, disillusioned Bond that we may not have seen before. Bond walks towards us, into close up, from out of focus/ almost black and white, to clear focus (Shallow focus)	It is important to note that this is a pre-credits sequence, which is why we have the iconic silhouette repeated, to replicate the famous shot of Bond and the Gun barrel that the audience expect to see in the opening credits. Several aesthetic motifs are identified in this opening scene, that follow a Film Noir style, which can mostly be attributed to the lighting aesthetic used, deep shadows and venetian blind effect are classic indicators of the genre. The high key beams of light and shadows cast across Bond's face could symbolise his internal struggle between light and dark or even heaven and hell.

		with a warmer light, this could suggest the character has found his mission, or that the Bond franchise has gone 'back to basics', after 'losing its way' in 'Quantum of Solace'. The constant movement of the camera adds a sense of urgency to the scene, implying a fight or fight response, Bond and the audience are ready to run or fight the unseen enemy. We are often positioned behind Bond, connoting that he is in a protective position over us, going first into the fight. The light creates an angelic halo effect on Bond as he attempts to save Ronson. The focus pull from Ronson to Bond connotes that the power and authority has transferred as Ronson cannot go on, meaning that Bond must continue Ronson's mission.	The warm light of the room implies safety and warmth, which juxtaposes the situation at hand, but connotes Bond's caring attitude to Ronson. The role of M is off screen but very important, she is giving orders, the mic effect gives her voice a harsh cold tone, to imply an unfeeling female leader, Bond is a much more sympathetic character; he wants to tend to Ronson. The key question of the film is introduced in this scene. Are Bond and MI6 (they conduct their 'business' in the shadows) out of date? .
Mise-en-Scene	Performance: Daniel Craig plays Bond as determined, caring and rebellious. His dialogue is immediate concern for Ronson, rather than retrieving the data. Costume: Bond wears a grey suit. Location: Blinds over the windows, a room trashed. Props: Warm yellow furniture, lamps are knocked over, furniture is overturned.	The Mise-en-scene is ambiguous, we could be anywhere in the world, the expensive furnishings imply a British quality, but the blinds suggest an exotic location,	

		The gun is symbolic of male power.	as well as entrapment. The fight has clearly already happened, which is unusual for a Bond film, we expect, explosions and stunts in an opening. Bond is behind the action, which leads into the development of the character of Bond as 'out of date', this question is posed throughout the film, and his grey suit implies that he is a shadow of his former self. The room has a cluttered and overturned mise-en-scene, it is claustrophobic. Yellow is a warm and hopeful colour, promoting the idea of Bond as a saviour. His performance also shows a caring Bond that we do not usually see.	
Editing		Continuity editing throughout. Cross cutting to M in London begins after this scene, we only hear her comands.	Mendes decided not to cross cut to M, but to keep a continuity style of editing that is fluid and 'hides' the edits with character and camera movement.	
Sound		Non-Diegetic, Music: Iconic Bond motif when he steps out from the shadows. Later, when Bond enters the room, the music is similar to that of a ticking clock, a bomb or a fast heartbeat. A beat of silence when M commands: "Leave him" before strings are introduced. Diegetic: M's voice is off-screen, giving orders.	The iconic Bond music is used to introduce him. The music is used to anchor the audiences emotional response, the fast beat of the music alerts us to danger and suggests a chase is imminent.	

| | | 7 | M can be heard, as if she is in his head, his conscience perhaps. The line "Leave him" is given gravitas by the beat of silence after it, accompanied by a reaction shot of Bond. | |

What messages, values and representations are explored via aesthetics:

- **It is important to note that this is a pre-credits sequence, which is why we have the iconic silhouette repeated, to replicate the famous shot od Bond and the Gun barrel that the audience expect to see in the opening credits.**

- **Several aesthetic motifs are identified in this opening scene, that follow a Film Noir style, which can mostly be attributed to the lighting aesthetic used, deep shadows and venetian blind effect are classic indicators of the genre. The high key beams of light and shadows cast across Bond's face could symbolise his internal struggle between light and dark or even heaven and hell.**

- **The warm light of the room implies safety and warmth, which juxtaposes the situation at hand, but connotes Bond's caring attitude to Ronson.**

- **The role of M is off screen but very important, she is giving orders, the mic effect gives her voice a harsh cold tone, to imply an unfeeling female leader, Bond is a much more sympathetic character; he wants to tend to Ronson.**

- **The key question of the film is introduced in this scene, is Bond and MI6 (they conduct their 'business' in the shadows) out of date?**