

Educational material

Long Hot Summer



CLASS DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION: 1st grade

TEACHING AREA: Culture and media

TEACHING UNIT: *Long Hot Summer*

CLASS TYPE: Analysis of a short documentary film

DURATION OF A TEACHING UNIT: 45 minutes

LONG HOT SUMMER

Blank_film incubator, Zagreb, 2023

MOTIVATION

Conversation with the students

1. How would you describe the summer season? How does your place of residence change during the summer?
2. How difficult is it to make a film? What are some problems that can arise while working on a film?
3. A meta film is a film about a film i.e. a film that thematizes the process and making of films. Give examples of such films or specific scenes that you've seen before.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FILM

You will watch a short film *Long Hot Summer*, produced by Blank_film incubator from Zagreb, made in 2023.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR WATCHING

1. Pay attention to the film's structure. Who leads us through the story? How are the main characters introduced?
2. Pay attention to the cinematography. What is the function of the black and white shots?
3. How do we find out the time the film's story is set in?
4. Name the methods, kinds of shots or scenes that indicate that this film is actually a meta film i.e. that this is a film that thematizes itself and the process of its creation.
5. Determine what type of film this is.

WATCHING THE FILM

EXPRESSION OF STUDENT IMPRESSIONS

Did you like this film? Why?

Are there any parts of the film that are confusing?

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FILM

1. How does the film begin? Which editing transition is used?

The film begins with its name written in red letters on a black background. The editing transition used is a fade out/fade in.

2. What is the first shot we see in the film? What do we call all the written information in the film?

The first shot of the film is a handwritten message on a pink piece of paper (like a post-it note) that defines the time of the action as "Friday, July 29th". We hear non-diegetic light jazz music in the background.

Film caption (captions) is a general term for all types of text in a film, including the name of the film, opening and closing credits, intertitles, subtitles...

3. How are the viewers introduced to the protagonist? Describe the shot where we first see him.

After the opening credits and the reveal of the date of action, we see a series of extreme wide shots of Zagreb accompanied by non-diegetic light jazz music. According to the shots and what we see in them (as well as bearing in mind the name of the film), it becomes clear that we see Zagreb in the middle of a hot summer. One of the extreme wide shots (at the bus station) lasts longer than the others and the camera tracks a young man with a pan from right to left. The duration of the shot, as well as the tracking, suggest that this is the protagonist of the film.

4. As the protagonist observes people in a café, how are they depicted? Why? What else contributes to this effect?

The protagonist sits in a café. In the first shot, we see him from behind in a medium shot, while the background is deliberately out of focus. In the next shot, he takes a notebook and a pen out of his pocket (an extreme close-up shot), places them on the table and seems to want to write something down, but in that same shot, the camera moves over his hands and stops on his face (a close-up shot), while he's looking around. We hear another non-diegetic song, followed by a series of subjective shots in black and white, all medium shots and extreme close-ups. We see people in the café talking or reading (in medium shots) and extreme close-ups such as a wedding ring, an earring, a shoe, sneakers, a bottle, etc. We can conclude that this is the way the protagonist sees the world around him.

A subjective shot (subjective point of view, subjective camera) is a shot that shows a point of view of an individual character, the way that character sees something.

5. What happens after a series of black and white shots in a café?

The protagonist is riding a tram. In an extreme wide shot of the tram, we see a girl come in and, despite the tram being half-empty, she sits right in front of the protagonist. He leans away from her. Although the girl says he can continue leaning against her seat, he keeps his distance because he "really doesn't know how to talk to pretty girls."

6. What is the purpose of a film roll effect after the scene in the tram?

The shots showing extreme close-ups of a filmstrip, projector lights and film rolls suggest that this is a film about the filmmaking process, i.e. that the film is a meta film, a film about film. After the next caption, "Monday, August 1st", we see shots of the young man who broke his leg and a girl sitting on a couch. They talk about shooting their film and how the young man broke his leg. We see the tram again, this time from the filmmakers' perspective, so we see the film crew, the clapperboard, the actors preparing, etc. The entire time, we don't hear any diegetic noises or speech. Instead we hear the dialogue between the young man and the girl in the apartment.

7. What is the structure of the film like?

The film is structured in chapters, each chapter beginning with a film caption, or rather, an extreme close-up of the pink paper on which the day of the week and the date are written. Only the last chapter of the film does not have a date.

8. How would you determine what type of film this is? What film type is the first chapter?

This is a hybrid film because it has characteristics of a fiction, documentary and experimental film.

The opening sequence of Zagreb in the summer has the characteristics of documentary film (real locations, no actors), but the scene that follows (the young man in a café and then in a tram) refers to the conventions of fiction film (black and white shots, a screenplay, rehearsed lines). The sequence of film rolls and projectors can be seen as a characteristic of experimental film (due to the way it is set up, almost "inserted" into the film, colour and sound prevail over the clarity of what is shown).

The first chapter of the film can be classified as a fiction film. Later chapters (travelling to Cres, vacationing on Cres) feature strong characteristics of documentary film.

9. Which chapter comes second?

A documentary chapter. The pink paper indicates that it is "Wednesday, August 10th". The protagonists (a young man and a girl) travel to Cres for summer vacation. The sound is dominated by their conversation off camera (narration), as they talk about their failed trip to Prague (the young man broke his leg and has to use crutches). A contrast between public and private is achieved: the handheld camera follows their trip to Cres as a documentary, while their dialogue, i.e. their private conversation, gives us insight into their intimacy.

10. How is Cres portrayed? And the time spent on Cres?

The chapter on Cres is similar to the beginning of the film and the way Zagreb is shown. Descriptive shots of Cres such as window shutters, extreme close-ups of street signs, extreme wide shots of stone streets, daytime and nighttime alternating to suggest a longer period of time. The entire chapter is accompanied by non-diegetic cheerful music that was first used in a café where the young man observes the world around him in black and white shots. "Saturday, August 13th" consists of static photographs of the time they spent on Cres, accompanied by their intimate conversations off camera. Intermediality is the introduction of one medium into another. Here, photographs are introduced into film (photographs mix with recorded shots).

11. List the recurring topics in the film.

Meta film, filmmaking, a romantic relationship, travelling, worldview, real life and life in films, disappointment, summer, relationship challenges.

12. Describe the last chapter of the film. What does it suggest?

The last chapter begins with an extreme close-up of the pink piece of paper, but this time the paper is blank and doesn't contain a day or date. The lack of an exact date may suggest that what follows is a potential future time that has not yet happened or that it's just a fantasy. The protagonists enter a café and sit at a table. They observe the people around them, who are shown in black and white. This is accompanied by the familiar non-diegetic music while we see their subjective shots of the people in the café (people's faces, ashtrays, sneakers, glances, lips, glasses, etc.). In the last shot, they are hugging and are also shown in black and white. The black and white technique in their last shot where they are visibly happy and hugging may suggest that their love story is part of someone else's view or perhaps that they are now observing the world around them together. This is followed by the French caption "fin" and the closing credits with a list of the people who worked on this film.

EVALUATION

- monitoring student activities while watching a film
- checking the understanding of the film by asking questions
- teaching sheet (quiz)

THE TEACHING SHEET (QUIZ) is available on the Film EDUcation website.